

Alternative Water Supply Funding FY 2021-2022

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



1. Alternative water supply funding has been available in the past. What's new and what are the changes?

In addition to general legislative appropriations, the Water Protection and Sustainability Program (WPSP) Trust Fund was established in 2005¹ to support the alternative water supply (AWS) program as provided in section 373.707, F.S. When the WPSP is funded, ten percent is allocated to the NFWFMD. In support of the Governor's Executive Order 19-12, AWS projects have been included in the [Protecting Florida Together](#) initiative. In June 2020, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issued funding guidance to assist with the selection of AWS projects seeking generally appropriated AWS funds and WPSP Trust Funds. The guidance provides clear policy direction for consistency as the District is reviewing, recommending, and submitting AWS projects to DEP for funding consideration.

2. What types of projects are eligible?

Alternative water supply projects as defined in section 373.019, F.S., such as water conservation and reuse, and within the 16-county NFWFMD, are eligible. Feasibility and land acquisition projects may be eligible if related to an AWS project and are necessary to implement a regional project. See the ***Application Guidelines*** for more information.

3. Who is eligible?

Eligible applicants and grant recipients are governmental entities as described in section 287.012(14), F.S., and public and nonprofit water supply and wastewater utilities. See ***General Conditions for Receiving Funds*** for more information.

4. What is the maximum funding allowable and how much funding is available?

Funding is subject to state appropriations. There is no limit on project cost; however, note that in addition to match requirements, there are statutory limits.² Special consideration is given to AWS projects implementing a Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) or projects otherwise benefitting MFLs.

5. Are there any special requirements for Water Protection and Sustainability Program (WPSP) Trust Funds?

Yes. The WPSP funds shall be used for the construction costs of AWS development projects or for the implementation of water conservation projects that result in quantifiable water savings. If WPSP funds are used for a construction project, WPSP funds cannot exceed 40

¹ Section 403.890, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

² Pursuant to section 373.707(8)(b), F.S., 90 percent of WPSP Trust Funds are allocated to the other four water management districts, ten percent to NFWFMD.

percent of the total construction cost with applicants required to pay 60 percent of the cost of construction. The District may totally or partially waive this requirement for:

- Financially disadvantaged small local governments, or,
- Projects in the public interest as defined in section 373.707, F.S., which are not otherwise financially feasible.

6. Is match funding required?

Funding awards normally may not exceed fifty (50) percent of the overall project cost, and as noted above, WPSP funds cannot exceed forty (40) percent of the total construction cost. The District's Governing Board and DEP may waive these requirements for projects serving rural, financially disadvantaged, or economically distressed counties or communities. Guidelines for claiming status as an economically distressed or "*financially disadvantaged small community*" are provided in the ***Application Guidelines***. Refer to the NFWFMD ***Quick Match Guide*** for further information on allowable match sources and funds.

7. Tell me more about RWSPs, MFLs, and Recovery and Prevention Strategies and where can I find further information about them?

As of November 2020, the District has one RWSP in water supply planning Region II: Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton counties. For further information, see the District's [Regional Water Supply Planning](#) webpage.

Also as of November 2020, one MFL has been adopted for the St. Marks River Rise in Leon County. At the time of rule adoption in June 2019, the St. Marks River Rise MFL was being met therefore no recovery or prevention strategies were required. Additional information, including ongoing and future water bodies on the MFL Priority List, is available on the District's [Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels](#) webpage.

8. How are projects with multiple segments or phases addressed?

The District recognizes that large capital improvement investments to increase water quantity may require multiple years of funding to complete. For such projects, applicants should develop a multi-year funding plan that lists the full costs of the project over the complete time period with realistic implementation goals and with at least one definitive project deliverable within the first 24 months. Partial funding may be recommended for one or more segment or phase, upon review by District staff and/or DEP. Multi-year applicants should consider leveraging multiple funding sources.

9. I was awarded AWS funding in previous years. Am I eligible for FY 2021-2022 funding?

Yes, previous funding does not preclude eligibility for the FY 2021-2022 funding cycle. However, unless the proposed project has a multi-year funding plan, repeat applicants should ensure that any additional projects can be implemented within the preferred 24-36 month timeframe without impacting the schedule of existing projects. Further, applicants who submit qualified projects that have not yet received funding may be given priority

consideration over existing grantees to ensure support and benefits are distributed as equitably as possible across the District.

10. How many projects am I allowed to submit?

There is no limit to the number of projects that may be submitted and may be funded in a given year. However, each project submitted will be evaluated independently and must meet the same timeframe and other requirements. If the applicant has several AWS projects, development of a multi-year capital improvement plan is recommended. Also note that applicants who submit qualified projects that have not yet received funding may be given priority consideration over existing grantees to ensure support and benefits are distributed as equitably as possible across the District.

11. Do projects need to be “shovel-ready?”

No. Projects may be conceptual, partially developed, or ready for implementation. However, unless the proposed project has a multi-year funding plan, projects should be capable of being completed within the preferred 24-36 month timeframe. Depending on the nature and scope of the project, construction projects that are well defined and close to shovel-ready may be ranked higher than others, since such a project would be more likely to be successfully implemented and completed within the given timeframe.

12. Would an “in-progress” project be eligible for consideration of funding?

A project that has already been initiated but not fully funded is eligible for consideration. This is especially true for multi-phased projects. However, financial need should be clearly demonstrated, as project funding is not intended to replace existing sources of funds.

13. What if I am not sure how much water will be made available, or how to estimate potable offset or water conservation savings?

Generally, AWS development is a construction project that requires engineering design and bid documents. The District suggests that applicants ensure the engineer’s scope of work includes at least preliminary estimates of water quantity flow, storage and distribution capacity, amount of potable offset, and water conservation savings, as applicable. Estimates may be updated during engineering and construction document development.

For some project types, and to supplement engineering analysis, DEP has issued guidance on how to estimate the quantity of water to be made available in [Springs Funding Guidance](#) dated October 2017, Appendix D. For example, for reclaimed water projects the quantity of water to be made available shall be calculated as the greater of:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Projected Reuse Flow x Percent Offset} \\ \text{OR} \\ \text{Projected Reuse Flow x Percent Recharge} \end{array}$$

The projected reuse flow, percent offset, and percent recharge are further defined in DEP's Funding Guidance.

14. Can you provide more information about eligible project types?

Yes. Eligible project examples are listed below but this is not intended to be all-inclusive. Applicants may contact District staff with questions or conceptual project proposals during the timeframe noted in the ***Application Guidelines***.

Reclaimed Water. The reuse of reclaimed water is generally divided into potable offset reuse flows and other reuse flows. Potable quality reclaimed water may be reused for public access irrigation in residential, public, and commercial areas. Other potable offset uses include cooling tower water supply and other industrial uses, toilet flushing, fire protection, and agricultural irrigation of edible crops. Other reuse flows such as sprayfields, rapid infiltration basins (RIBs), or recharge should not be an AWS project's primary benefit or outcome but will be considered in descriptions of *dual benefits* or *complementary efforts*.

Water Conservation. Proposed water conservation projects are expected to result in quantifiable water savings. Projects that typically result in quantifiable water savings include but are not limited to: plumbing fixture and appurtenant replacements/retrofits, irrigation system improvements, and industrial equipment upgrades.

Conservation strategies can be implemented through regulation, passive savings, incentive programs, and/or voluntary initiatives as further noted below:

- Regulation examples include conditions of water use permit compliance, water shortage declarations, and local landscape and irrigation ordinances.
- Passive savings refers to market improvements in product efficiencies, e.g., low-flow showerheads, high-efficiency toilets, and smart irrigation meters that save water when introduced in new construction, renovations, or developments.
- Incentive programs provide grants, cost-share funds, or rebates; and examples of disincentives are irrigation restrictions patrols and citations.
- Voluntary initiatives may arise from public awareness and education, media campaigns, water system inspections or audits, landscape and irrigation surveys or evaluations, and high water user or consumption notices.

Conservation projects as the primary project type without quantifiable water savings would likely not be recommended for funding but all proposed conservation strategies will be considered in evaluation of *dual benefits* or *complementary efforts*.

Stormwater and Other Surface Waters. Surface water captured predominately during wet-weather flows and stormwater may be developed into alternative water supplies. Storm and surface water projects often have *dual benefits* and *complementary efforts*. See *Evaluation Criteria* in ***Application Guidelines*** for more information.

Brackish Groundwater and Desalination. These project types have been implemented in other areas and have potential in northwest Florida. Brackish groundwater or desalination projects proposed in coastal areas with Floridan aquifer surface drawdown, in Region II in particular, would be the most likely candidates for a positive project evaluation.

Other Non-Traditional Source and Other Water Quantity. In the NFWFMD Region II, Santa Rosa County, withdrawals from the inland sand-and-gravel aquifer as an alternative to Floridan withdrawals in coastal areas is considered a non-traditional or alternative water source. Other water quantity projects include aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) as a component of an Individual Water Use Permit.

15. Is it possible for the District to provide funding up front, rather than on a reimbursement basis?

Funds are provided on a reimbursement basis upon receipt and approval of the required deliverables. Funding on a cost-incurred basis may be considered for projects serving economically distressed communities on a case-by-case basis.

16. My community needs more funding to complete an AWS project or a companion water project. Are there other funding sources available?

Yes, other loan and grant programs may be available to applicants meeting certain qualifications and if meeting eligibility criteria. Potential opportunities include:

- Protecting Florida Together: <https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/> and <https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/state-action/grants-submissions>
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection: <https://floridadep.gov/wra/wra/documents/water-resource-funding-florida>
- US Department of Agriculture – Rural Development: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program and Technical Assistance Planning Grants: www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/
- Florida Rural Water Association Loan Program: www.frwa.net
- Legislative Appropriations

For additional information and questions about funding options and opportunities, Mr. Darryl Boudreau, NFWFMD's Resource Planning Program Manager, may be able to assist. Contact Darryl at: Darryl.Boudreau@nfwfwater.com or at (850) 539-5999.