

Water Project Funding FY 2025-2026 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



1. Alternative Water Supply and Springs funding has been available in previous years. What's new and what are the changes?

Consistent with the Governor's Executive Order 19-12 and 23-06, springs restoration and alternative water supply are key elements in the [Protecting Florida Together](#) initiative. Both programs have guidance documents with more details about each program (see website for links). For FY 2025-2026, and based on prior annual funding amounts, an estimated \$55 million will be available for springs restoration and \$55 million for alternative water supply projects statewide, subject to the 2025 legislative session and state FY 2025-2026 adopted budget. Procedurally, the District has combined the application process for both projects into a single application, to assist communities in submitting project proposals.

2. What types of projects are eligible?

Eligible springs projects include land acquisition intended to protect springs and capital projects that protect the quality and quantity of water that flows to and from springs within the 16-county NFWFMD. Exclusions: Feasibility studies, data collection, or environmental reviews are not eligible.

Alternative water supply projects as defined in [s. 373.019, F.S.](#), such as water reuse and water conservation, 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 (s. 287.012(14), F.S.), and public and nonprofit water supply and wastewater utilities. Landowners and agricultural producers are also eligible grant recipients for land acquisition and the agriculture cost-share grant programs.

4. Is match funding required?

Funding awards normally may not exceed fifty (50) percent of the overall project cost. The District's Governing Board and DEP may waive these requirements for projects serving rural, or financially disadvantaged counties or communities. Guidelines for claiming status as an economically distressed or "*financially disadvantaged small community*" are provided in the ***Application Guidelines***.

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

Funding is subject to state appropriations. There is no limit on the total grant request per project. Note, however, that several evaluation criteria are used to decide which projects to fund on an annual basis, and projects that meet more of the criteria have a greater likelihood of receiving partial or full funding. Previous grant allocations have generally ranged from \$100,000 to \$5 million.

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

The District recognizes that large capital improvement investments to improve water quality may require multiple years of funding to complete. For such springs restoration projects, applicants should develop a multi-phase funding plan that lists the full costs of the project over the required time period. Multi-phase projects should have realistic implementation goals and including completion of the first phase within the 24-36 month timeframe. Partial funding may be recommended for one or more segment or phase, upon review by District staff and/or DEP. Multi-phase applicants should consider leveraging multiple funding sources.

Per the latest AWS Guidance (April 2023), multi-year funding is no longer awarded for alternative water supply projects.

7. I was awarded springs restoration and/or alternative water supply funding in previous years. Am I eligible for FY 2025-2026 funding?

Yes, previous funding does not preclude eligibility for the FY 2025-2026 funding cycle. However, applicants should ensure that any additional projects can be implemented within the 24-36 month timeframe without impacting the schedule of existing projects.

8. 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 springs restoration projects, development of a multi-phase capital improvement plan is recommended.

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

No. Projects may be conceptual, partially developed, or ready for implementation. However, all projects (including a phase within a multi-phase plan) 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.

10. 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 funds are not intended to replace existing sources of funds.

11. Can I resubmit my previously unfunded project?

Yes, applicants may resubmit projects that were not funded previously.

12. 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 financially disadvantaged communities on a case-by-case basis. See ***General Conditions for Receiving Funds*** for more information.

13. My community needs more funding to complete the overall project – are other funding sources available?

Yes, other loan and grant programs may be available to applicants for infrastructure projects. Among potential opportunities are:

- Protecting Florida Together: <https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/> under “Grants”
- 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 Rural Water Association Loan Program: www.frwa.net
- Legislative Appropriations

The DEP publishes a full list of *Water Resource Funding in Florida* on their website: <https://floridadep.gov/wra/wra/documents/water-resource-funding-florida>.