

Water Conservation Grant Program

Application Guidelines



PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Northwest Florida Water Management District was granted **\$250,000** in alternative water supply funding from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for FY 2025-26 to provide small-scale grants Districtwide to implement water conservation projects with quantifiable water savings.

STATE AND DISTRICT PRIORITIES

As outlined in Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, one of the District's core missions includes protecting and improving the quality and quantity of water resources and natural systems across northwest Florida. This mission is supported by the Governor's Executive Orders [19-12](#), [23-06](#) and the [Protecting Florida Together](#) initiative. The District supports and complements these efforts with a minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) program, Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) and sub-basin watershed plans, and collaboration with DEP and other partners on Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs).

The focus of this grant program is to demonstrate, through the implementation of multiple projects, water conservation savings throughout the District.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants and grant recipients are counties, municipalities, and public utilities.

DEFINITION, ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Definitions

For the purposes of this program, water conservation is the prevention and reduction of wasteful or unreasonable uses of water to improve efficiency of use. The overall water conservation goal of the state is to prevent and reduce wasteful, uneconomical, impractical, or unreasonable use of water resources. [Section 373.227(1), F.S.]

B. Eligible Projects Activities

Eligible project activities are those that have quantifiable water conservation or inform the public about water conservation strategies, including:

- Residential Fixture Upgrades
- Commercial Fixture Upgrades
- Public Education
- Irrigation Programs
- Leak Detection Programs
- Other measures that result in quantifiable water savings

C. Match Requirements

Although grant funding provided may cover 100 percent of the total project cost, a 50-percent match of the total project cost is required for projects that do not serve financially disadvantaged communities. Eligible match funding includes local sources, in-kind

contributions, and companion projects. Match funding and other local contributions will be considered in project rankings. Match funds will transfer to a contract requirement, so please only include committed funds.

D. Additional Project Requirements

Additional project requirements include:

- See ***General Conditions for Receiving Funds*** for more information.

WATER RESOURCES INFORMATION

Information to assist in completing applications is provided on the District's website. The ***Application Form*** includes areas to describe the project and estimated water conservation benefits. Additional programs and links are below.

- Northwest Florida Water Management District: <https://www.nwfwater.com/>. See the Water Resources pages for Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels (MFLs), and Surface Water Improvement and Management plans including maps of priority sub-basins.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria noted below.

Evaluation Criteria	Description (as applicable to each project type)
1. State and District Priorities	(1) Project is located within a Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) area; (2) Project is located within Water Resource Caution Area or Area of Resource Concern; (3) Project is located within a REDI area; (4) Will benefit waterbodies with adopted MFLs or on the District's MFL priority list; (5) Implements other District plans or priorities
2. Project Outcomes and Benefits	(1) Provides direct water conservation benefits; (2) Provides multiple benefits to water supply; (3) Complements other water conservation projects; (4) Clearly quantifies the amount of water conserved; (5) Has additional benefits to the community (e.g., economic)
3. Cost Effectiveness, cost sharing and leveraging, and resource strategies	(1) Demonstrates cost effectiveness, such as capital cost per 1,000 gallons of water conserved; (2) Represents a quality return on investment, i.e., the amount of local cooperator funding leveraged by the state grant, while recognizing funding limitations of economically disadvantaged communities; (3) Project is part of an applicant's long-term strategy to address water supply issues; (4) Is part of a local plan or budget; (5) Funding match (if required) and degree to which applicant has leveraged additional funding sources to complete the project
4. Applicant capacity, local commitment, and readiness for implementation	(1) Is ready to proceed and can be implemented in a timely manner; (2) Has demonstrated local commitment to the project, e.g., match funding and public support; (3) Is committed to complete project within 24 months or less; (4) If previous District grant recipient, projects and project activities have been completed on schedule and within budget; (5) Is in compliance with any District Consumptive Use Permits; (6) Has anticipated potential obstacles or challenges and has a plan or strategies in place to overcome them.

ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED/FINANCIALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

An economically distressed county or community is defined in [s. 288.0656, F.S.](#), under the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI). An economically distressed, or “financially disadvantaged small community” is also defined in [s. 403.1838\(2\), F.S.](#) For more information, visit www.floridajobs.org/business-growth-and-partnerships/rural-and-economic-development-initiative/rural-definition/rural-communities or call (850) 717-8506.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND SUBMITTAL

A notice of funding availability (NOFA) is announced through email, the District’s website (www.nwfwater.com), and in the Florida Administrative Register (www.flrules.org). Interested parties may obtain the application form from the District’s website.

Applications with supporting materials shall be transmitted by email to: grants@nwfwater.com. It is recommended that applications be sent with read receipt enabled. **Please note the maximum electronic mail size that can be received is 15 MB.** All applications must be received on or before the due date noted in the **Funding Cycle Schedule** below.

FUNDING CYCLE SCHEDULE

Activity	Date(s)
Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Posted	August 4, 2026
Application Due Date	2 p.m. ET, September 17, 2026
Evaluation of project applications	September 17, 2026 to October 8, 2026
Funding recommendations presented to the District Governing Board	October 14, 2026
Notice of funding status to applicants	October 14, 2026

PROJECT SELECTION AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

The District will review all applications for basic minimum requirements and eligibility then evaluate projects according to the **Evaluation Criteria**. Staff recommendations will be presented to the District’s Governing Board for approval. Recommendations may include partial funding of specific segments of project submittals. All applicants will be notified of final project funding decisions consistent with the **Funding Cycle Schedule**.

Note that communication between District staff and an applicant about a particular project does not imply funding for that project. **No funding decisions are final until 1) approved by the District Governing Board, 2) approved by DEP (if applicable), and 3) notice has been received in writing from the District.**

CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information or assistance, please contact:

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