



Emergency Funding for Water Systems

An emergency such as a flood, drought, or chemical spill can financially overwhelm your water system very quickly. While you may have reserve funds and insurance, many water systems facing emergencies find that they need additional funding to return to normal operations.

Basic steps for finding and getting emergency funding

If your water system needs additional funding during an emergency, several state and federal agencies and organizations provide emergency funding in the form of grants and loans.

You can take simple steps early in an emergency to position yourself favorably to apply for emergency funding.

First, create a short description of what happened, how it affected your water system, and what you need.

Many organizations provide emergency funding through a competitive process. You can improve the likelihood of success by having a good description of your water system and your needs.

Second, determine the following before you apply for emergency funding:

1. **Estimate project cost:** Come up with a “best guess” cost estimate. You can update the estimate later as you know more, but you need an estimate to start.
2. **Role of insurance:** How much will your insurance pay? What bills will the insurance cover? Are there bills the insurance won’t cover? When will you receive insurance payments?
3. **Grant or loan?** Does your system need a grant or can you afford to repay a loan?
4. **Who will do the work?** Water system operators may need additional licenses (such as a plumber’s license) to do some repair work. You may need to contract some repairs to certified individuals.
5. **What funding sources are you qualified to receive?** Each funding source has different guidelines and processes (See pages 3 and 4).
6. **When is the application deadline?**

Steps for Success

1. Start as early as you can.
2. Ask for help (see page 2).
3. Prepare an estimate of project costs and funding needs.
4. Contact your insurance company to find out how much they will cover.
5. Understand available resources and the requirements you have to meet to get them.



Third, gather important water system documentation including:

1. Water system plan or small water system management program. These documents contain much of the documentation discussed below.
2. List of board or council members.
3. Articles of incorporation and bylaws.
4. Water system budget and financial statements.
5. Recent water system audit, if available.
6. State and local emergency declarations.



Eligibility

Each grant or loan program has unique eligibility requirements. That is why it is important to start early and find the right funding to help you.

Such eligibility requirements may restrict the type of organization that can apply and receive

funding; set limits on how much funding you can request; limit the way you can use the funding; and set deadlines for applying.

If you want to apply for funding and you think you're not eligible, consider asking for a sponsor.

Funding sources may restrict the way you can contract for services. For example, to get help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Davis-Bacon fair labor standards require federally assisted construction projects over \$2,000 to include provisions for paying workers prevailing local wages and benefits.

Be Prepared for an Emergency

1. Develop and practice a Water System Emergency Response and Preparedness Plan.
2. Create an Emergency Reserve Fund.
3. Keep your insurance up to date and make sure it includes proper coverage.
4. Know what financial and technical resources are available.
5. Know who to contact to get the process started.
6. Develop a small works roster to use for contracting during an emergency.
7. Set up contracts with vendors for emergency supplies, such as bottled water, water hauling companies, and pumping or cleaning companies.
8. Learn from past emergencies how to be better prepared.

Technical Assistance for your Funding Application

If you are having trouble putting your application together, we recommend you contact one of the following resources right away:

Bruce Lund, Public Works Board

Call (360) 725-3163 or visit the website at www.pwb.wa.gov/

Gary Rhoades, Evergreen Rural Water of Washington

Call (800) 272-5981 or visit the website at www.erwow.org/

Jim Wilson, Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Call (509) 590-7310 or visit the website at www.rcac.org/

Available Grants and Loans

Community Development Block Grant Imminent Threat Grant

Department of Commerce

- Cities with fewer than 50,000 people or counties with fewer than 200,000 people are eligible.
- Use to repair damages that pose an immediate threat and pay for temporary fixes.
- A formal disaster must be declared.
- Project must be ineligible for the Public Works Trust Fund Emergency loan.

Visit the website at www.commerce.wa.gov/site/950/default.aspx

Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)

- Use for emergencies that cause treatment failure, or that cause non-compliance with state or federal regulations.
- Economically disadvantaged communities receive priority for funding.

Call Jim Wilson at (509) 590-7310, e-mail jwilson@rcac.org or visit the website at www.rcac.org/doc.aspx?82

USDA Rural Development Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- Use for emergency repairs from drought, earthquake, flood, chemical spill, fire, or anything else that causes a significant decline in quantity or quality of a water supply.
- The water system must serve fewer than 10,000 people.

Call Gene Dobry at (360) 704-7733, e-mail eugene.dobry@wa.usda.gov or visit the website at www.usda.gov/rus/water/index.htm

Public Works Trust Fund Emergency Program

Department of Commerce

- Use for emergencies from natural disasters or immediate threats to public health.
- Cities, counties, and special purpose districts are eligible (not private systems, schools, ports).
- The maximum loan amount is \$500,000 with a 3 percent interest rate.

Call Bruce Lund at (360) 725-3163, e-mail bruce.lund@commerce.wa.gov or visit the website at www.pwb.wa.gov/

NRWA Revolving Loan Program

National Rural Water Association (NRWA)

- Use for rural water projects. Not limited to emergencies.
- Evergreen Rural Water of Washington must identify projects as critical.
- Funds available year-round, and are disbursed quickly.
- The maximum loan amount is \$100,000 with an interest rate around 3 to 5 percent.

Call Gary Rhoades at (800) 272-5981, e-mail grhoades@erwow.org, or visit the website at www.erwow.org/

Public Assistance Grant

Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD)

- EMD awards this federal grant after a presidential disaster declaration.
- Public facilities and private non-profit organizations are eligible.

Call Gary Urbas at (253) 512-7402, e-mail g.urbas@emd.wa.gov or visit the website at www.emd.wa.gov/grants/grants_index.shtml

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant

Washington State Emergency Management Division

- Available annually.
- Use to develop or revise FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans.
- Use to retrofit facilities to prevent future disaster damage.
- Must provide non-federal funding as match for 25 percent of total project cost.

Call Mark Stewart at (253) 512-7072, e-mail m.stewart@emd.wa.gov or visit the website at www.emd.wa.gov/grants/grants_hazard_mitigation.shtml

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Washington State Emergency Management Division

- Available after a presidential disaster declaration.
- Used to develop or revise FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans.
- Used to retrofit facilities to prevent future disaster damage.
- Must provide non-federal funding as match for 25 percent of total project cost.
- The state typically pays half the non-federal match, upon approval.

Call Mark Stewart at (253) 512-7072, e-mail m.stewart@emd.wa.gov or visit the website at www.emd.wa.gov/grants/grants_hazard_mitigation.shtml

Additional Resources

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Public Assistance Grant www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/index.shtm

Mitigation Grant Program www.fema.gov/government/grant/hmgrp/index.shtm

Infrastructure Assistance Coordination Council (IACC)

Searchable database www.infracfunding.wa.gov/

Washington State Department of Ecology

Water quality grants and loans www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/funding/funding.html

For More Information

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