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[EPA Taking WIFIA Loan Applications.](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is now accepting letters of interest for loans provided through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program to support water infrastructure projects. The WIFIA program is a federal loan and guarantee program within EPA that aims to accelerate investment in the nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental loans for regionally and nationally significant projects, including many county water infrastructure projects. The new funding announcement is designed to provide up to \$5.5 billion in loans and leverage over \$11 billion for water infrastructure projects.

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[How to submit a letter of interest for the current round of WIFIA funding](#)

Prospective borrowers seeking WIFIA credit assistance must submit a letter of interest (LOI) by July 6.

The funding announcement lists two major priorities for this round of funding: providing clean and safe drinking water and reducing lead exposure; and repairing, rehabilitating and replacing aging infrastructure and conveyance systems.

Nonetheless, WIFIA credit assistance can be used for a wide range of projects including drinking water treatment and distribution; wastewater conveyance and treatment; enhanced energy efficiency at drinking water and wastewater facilities; desalination; water recycling; and drought prevention or mitigation projects, many of which involve county-owned and maintained water infrastructure.

The WIFIA program received \$63 million in funding in the FY2018 omnibus appropriations package, more than doubling the program's overall funding from 2017. In 2017, EPA invited 12 projects across nine states to apply for WIFIA loans totaling over \$2 billion.

Generally, the WIFIA program helps finance larger water infrastructure projects — primarily those with an anticipated cost of \$20 million or more. However, recognizing the need for investment in both large and small communities, Congress has stipulated that 15 percent of WIFIA funds be set aside each year for small communities serving fewer than 25,000 residents. Such projects have a lower-cost threshold for eligibility, only requiring an anticipated cost of \$5 million or more.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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