

New Funding Opportunity for Nebraska Water Infrastructure Projects

Cities and towns in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska are facing an immediate and growing challenge--the aging drinking water infrastructure. Water mains are sometimes a century old. As the infrastructure breaks down it takes a toll on local economies, public health, and the environment. The near-term repairs and longer-term infrastructure improvements are seldom affordable, especially for small communities.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is actively seeking letters of interest from communities that need relief in the form of low-cost federal loans. The federal loan and guarantee program managed by EPA is the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program.

EPA wants to help communities accelerate investment in water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental loans for significant projects.

“By helping communities modernize the nation's aging water infrastructure, we support the safe drinking water systems upon which our public health depends,” said EPA Region 7 Administrator Jim Gulliford. “WIFIA is a resource that communities in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska can use to build, repair, or expand water and wastewater infrastructure.”

The city of Omaha, Nebraska, received Region 7's first WIFIA loan to help finance its Saddle Creek Retention Treatment Basin. Because WIFIA offers loans with low, fixed interest rates, the city is expected to save up to \$20 million. Further, the project is expected to create 165 jobs and will collect and treat up to 320 million gallons of runoff and wastewater per day that would have spilled into a nearby creek during wet weather.

“An investment in water infrastructure is an investment in our communities,” said Dr. Andrew Sawyers, director of EPA's Office of Wastewater Management.

“EPA’s WIFIA program helps improve water quality and protect public health while supporting the local economy.”

The WIFIA program recently announced the availability of up to \$5.5 billion in credit assistance. While the Agency will be prioritizing funding for projects that remove contaminants, like lead, in drinking water systems and projects that modernize aging infrastructure, WIFIA credit assistance can be used for a wide range of projects, including:

- **Drinking water treatment and distribution projects**
- **Wastewater conveyance and treatment projects**
- **Enhanced energy efficiency projects at drinking water and wastewater facilities**
- **Desalination, aquifer recharge, alternative water supply, and water recycling projects**
- **Drought prevention, reduction, or mitigation projects**

To offset immediate costs associated with water infrastructure projects like these, WIFIA loans also include flexible repayment schedules that can allow for rate increases to be phased in over a longer period.

***But act fast!* States, cities, tribes, utilities, and other public and private entities that are interested in applying must submit a letter of interest to EPA by July 31, 2018.**

The WIFIA program provides [resources online](#) to help submit a successful letter of interest, including a checklist and sample application materials.

Have Additional Questions?

Visit the WIFIA program’s website at www.epa.gov/wifia or send an email to the program at wifia@epa.gov.