

Department of Environmental Conservation / Environmental Facilities Corporation

Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant Program

1. Is it possible to view the EPG application questions in the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) before filling out the application?

Yes, they are available to view or download on the [CFA Program Questions webpage](#) (leaves DEC website).

2. Where can I find help filling out the CFA?

Neither DEC nor the Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) administer the CFA. For technical questions about the CFA, contact the CFA helpdesk at cfa-tech@ny.gov. Tips and resources are also available on the [CFA Help webpage](#) (leaves DEC website).

3. Are EPG funds only for planning activities?

Yes, the grant only funds services necessary for the planning and development of an engineering report. This includes field services, preparing an engineering report, and services related to an environmental review for the proposed project. The funding may not be used to pay for engineering services for design or construction costs.

4. Can the EPG be used for the purchase of equipment such as flow meters?

Yes, a municipality may use the EPG to purchase equipment essential for developing a complete engineering report, but EFC must review the potential purchase for eligibility prior to the procurement. The time spent operating the equipment by the municipality's personnel is also eligible under the technical force account.

5. Can EPG funds be utilized to prepare a Map Plan & Report (MPR)/engineering report for a new wastewater collection system or a new wastewater management district?

Yes, if the project is a publicly owned wastewater infrastructure project. A MPR is typically produced to support the creation of a new sewer district.

6. Can EPG funds be used to plan/engineer slip lining of an existing collection system where known environmental issues exist?

EPG funds could be used to prepare an engineering report for the slip lining project, but not for design services or rehabilitation.

7. Can a municipality apply for both the EPG and the Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP) for the same project in this round of funding?

No, the GIGP requires submission of a Feasibility Report for a stormwater project. The EPG funds the production of a wastewater infrastructure engineering report.

8. Can a municipality apply to EPG for a project that is already listed on the Intended Use Plan (IUP)?

Municipalities with projects listed on the IUP Multi-year list are eligible to apply if an engineering report for the listed project does not exist. Projects listed on the 2019 Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) IUP Annual Priority Project List, or already submitted to EFC for listing on the Annual List, are not eligible to apply for the EPG.

9. The engineering report used to list our municipality's project on the IUP Annual list is very broad. Is it okay to apply for EPG funding for a project that is mentioned in the report, but is not well defined in the report?

Yes, certain projects may have been listed on the 2019 CWSRF IUP Annual Project Priority List based on a generic long-term plan that may not include enough detail to implement the plan or portions of the plan. Such projects can claim their existing plan lacks project specific detail and may apply for EPG funding.

10. Can a municipality apply for an EPG for a project that is already in the planning stage, but not on the IUP?

Yes, if a municipality has already commissioned the preparation of an engineering report for an eligible activity, and the project is not on the 2019 CWSRF IUP Annual Priority Project List, the report could qualify for consideration as long as the report is not already completed at the time of application. However, if the value of the contract for engineering services exceeds \$25,000, state Minority and Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB) requirements apply.

11. What population and medium household income (MHI) data should an applicant use when applying for the EPG, (i.e., county, town, city, village or service area)?

Cities and villages should use the 2017 American Community Survey Data.

Towns and counties should use the 2017 American Community Survey Data for the area that is being served. In cases where the service area has not been established, provide an estimate for the envisioned service area. A summary of the United States Census, 2017 American Community Survey MHI data can be found on the [EPG webpage](#). In addition, [Directions \(PDF\)](#) are available to locate census data.

Municipalities in the Regional Economic Development Council regions of Long Island, New York City and Mid-Hudson must have an MHI equal to or less than \$90,000. Municipalities in all other regions of the State must have an MHI equal to or less than \$70,000.

12. Are Indian Nations eligible?

Yes, any Indian reservation wholly within New York State is eligible. Below is the definition of municipalities, which includes the reference to Indian reservations.

"Municipality means any county, city, town, village, district corporation, county or town improvement district, Indian reservation wholly within New York State, any public benefit corporation or public authority established pursuant to the laws of New York or any agency of New York State which is empowered to construct and operate a project, or any two or more of the foregoing which are acting jointly in connection with a project. [Reference: 21 NYCRR 2602.2(a)(49) New York State Clean Water Revolving Fund Regulations]"

13. Can a municipality use state funds as their local match?

No, state (or federal) grants may not be used for local match. Match can include cash and/or in-kind services.

14. A municipality has an old sewer system and wants to do an analysis to determine what needs to be replaced and what is still functioning. Can this work be considered "in-kind services?"

Yes, "in-kind services" can be eligible services performed by staff employed with the municipality that are necessary for the development of an engineering report, provided the applicant's staff are capable and qualified to provide the services. The plan must be consistent with EPG requirements. Field reconnaissance services and engineering services are acceptable if they are done under the direction of a NYS licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.).

15. A municipality wants to apply for an EPG and does not have a SPDES permit, but has failing septic systems. Can they still apply?

Yes, eligible municipalities can apply for the EPG to develop a plan for constructing public collection and treatment systems that will eliminate failing septic systems.

16. Is there any obligation on the part of the municipality to implement the project once the report has been approved?

No, however, some municipalities may be required by an Order on Consent or SPDES permit to implement the engineering report recommendations. The intent of this grant program is to fund engineering reports for the purpose of applying for CWSRF and Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program funding assistance to implement the recommended project.

17. If a municipality cannot afford a municipal sewage treatment system, can the municipality explore a decentralized wastewater treatment option?

Yes, that is an option eligible for funding. The engineering report must include consideration of a municipally owned decentralized wastewater system as a solution to the water quality issues.

18. If I receive an EPG will I have to conduct a SEQR review and a SHPO review?

Yes, both a SEQR and SHPO review must be completed for each planning activity, but EFC will be requesting a single SHPO review on behalf of all EPG recipients. A municipal resolution will need to be passed declaring the SEQR type for the planning activity (typically a Type II action - 6 NYCRR Part 617.5 (24) or (27)). The SEQR resolution must be completed before a grant agreement with EFC can be executed.

However, the scope of work for the EPG may include the costs to conduct an environmental review (SEQR and SHPO activities) for the proposed project identified in the engineering report. These project "environmental review requirements" are necessary to authorize approval and eligibility of the project under the CWSRF program to pursue financial assistance.

19. If a municipality wants to form a sewer district that would discharge wastewater to an existing county district, who should apply for the EPG?

If a municipality has not connected to a county or town sewer district, and neither owns its own wastewater infrastructure or wants to consider creating its own infrastructure, they cannot

directly apply for the grant. They would need a "municipal sponsor" to apply on their behalf. The municipal sponsor would be the town or the county district that they are planning to connect with.

20. Are green infrastructure projects that will address a combined sewer overflow (CSO) issue eligible?

Yes, these projects are eligible under the CWSRF and therefore are eligible to apply for funding under the EPG.

21. Are stormwater infrastructure projects eligible?

Yes, these projects are eligible under the CWSRF and therefore are eligible to apply for funding under EPG. However, priority will be given to municipalities proposing planning projects with a documented water quality impairment:

- required by an executed Order on Consent
- required by a draft or final SPDES permit (e.g. nutrient removal, inflow and infiltration, disinfection)
- upgrading or replacing an existing wastewater system
- constructing a wastewater treatment and/or collection system for an area with failing onsite septic systems
- addressing a pollutant of concern in a watershed implementation plan (i.e. Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), Nine Element Watershed Plan, or DEC HABs Action Plan)

22. Is the development of a Comprehensive Performance Evaluation for a wastewater treatment plant an eligible activity under the EPG?

No, the intent of the EPG is to provide funding to municipalities for the completion of an engineering report that would lead to the implementation of a capital improvement project.

23. Can a municipality submit an application for both the EPG and the Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) program?

Municipalities should not apply for both the EPG and WQIP at the same time for the same project. If a facility needs to have a preliminary engineering report completed under the EPG, then the project is not ready for construction, and therefore not ready for WQIP funding. In addition, for wastewater treatment projects, an engineering report is required to be attached with the WQIP application.

24. Are there any limitations to the EPG if a municipality has applied for, or received an EPG in the past?

No. Municipalities that have applied in the past, whether they received funding or not, are not limited in their chances to receive future awards. However, municipalities cannot have more than two active projects with EFC at one time. An active EPG project is defined as a project that has been awarded funding and is waiting for an executed grant agreement, or a project that currently has an active executed grant agreement with EFC but the engineering report has not been approved.