



Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Program

Trump Administration Announces \$10.8 Million in Available Grant Funding to Strengthen Water Sector Workforce

On August 19, 2026, EPA announced the availability of \$10.8 million in grant funding to support training for workers in the water sector. These essential workers play a key role in treating our nation's drinking water and providing wastewater services that protect human health and the environment. See the News Release <<https://epa.gov/newsreleases/trump-administration-announces-108-million-available-grant-funding-strengthen-water>>.

Enhancing recruitment and training for the water sector workforce is more important than ever in light of anticipated retirements, aging water infrastructure, evolving technologies used in the sector, and emerging risks like cyberattacks. This grant builds on the agency's recent roundtable <<https://epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-convenes-roundtable-focused-strengthening-water-sector-workforce>> discussing how to help recruit and retain individuals into meaningful careers in water and to identify opportunities where EPA can help reduce barriers and improve interstate coordination.

"Every time Americans turn on the tap or flush the toilet, they depend on qualified and dedicated professionals in the water

sector to ensure that drinking water is safe and wastewater is properly managed,” said EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Jess Kramer. “The Trump EPA is using every tool in the toolbox, including over \$10 million in new funding, to strengthen and fortify the nation’s water workforce. We are working collaboratively with states, the water sector, and local partners to advance practical, tangible, and demonstrated effective solutions.”

Nationally, drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems are facing a shortage of qualified workers due to expected retirements. This comes at a time when water systems are working to modernize while also managing aging water infrastructure. Additionally, new technical and scientific skillsets are needed to prepare for new challenges like strengthening resilience to cyberattacks.

The focus of the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant program is to develop a strong pool of skilled workers in the water and wastewater utilities sector. This grant program supports collaboration among federal, state, and local governments and institutions of higher education, apprentice programs, labor organizations, high schools, and other community-based organizations to provide access to workforce opportunities and build career pipelines in the water sector. The four program areas include:

- Targeted internships and apprenticeships for skilled water utility trades.
- Education programs designed for elementary, secondary, and higher education students.
- Regional industry and workforce development collaborations to hiring qualified candidates.
- Education and training programs designed for decentralized (septic) water workers to support public health for communities that rely on private wells for drinking water or septic systems.

Applications must be received by EPA through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov/)  <<https://www.grants.gov/>> (<https://www.grants.gov/>) by October 5, 2026.

See EPA Grant Opportunity EPA-OW-OWM-26-03  <<https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/363657>> (<https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/363657>).

EPA encourages all eligible organizations who have an interest in these projects to apply.

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How to Apply

- [EPA Grant Opportunity EPA-OW-OWM-26-03](#)  <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/363657> (<https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/363657>)
 - [Frequent Questions](#) <https://epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/innovative-water-infrastructure-workforce-development-program-2>
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Grant Program Overview

To accelerate career pipelines in the water utilities sector and provide access to water utility workforce opportunities, under the American Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, Congress authorized EPA to develop a grant program under Section 1459E of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The grant program will further the goal of ensuring a strong pipeline of skilled workers in the water utilities sector.

-  2025 Program Update (pdf) <<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2026-04/innovative-water-infrastructure-workforce.pdf>> (2.43 MB)
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Grant Awards

On July 11, 2024, EPA announced the selections for the Innovative Water Workforce Development Grant Program, which supports expanding career opportunities in the drinking water and wastewater utility sector and elevating public awareness about jobs in the water workforce. EPA is providing over \$10 million to 12 organizations across the nation.

- **Project Area 1:** Targeted internships apprenticeships for skilled water utility trades.
 - National Rural Water Association (Oklahoma)
 - The Water Tower Institute, Inc. (Georgia)
- **Project Area 2:** Education programs designed for elementary, secondary, and higher education students.
 - Board of Regents Nevada System of Higher Education (Nevada)
 - University of New Mexico (New Mexico)
 - Wichita State University (Kansas)
- **Project Area 3:** Regional industry and workforce development collaborations to hiring qualified candidates.
 - Baltimore City Department of Public Works (Maryland)
 - Center for Watershed Protection, Inc. (Maryland)
 - Grand Rapids Community College (Michigan)

- **Project Area 4:** Leadership development, occupational training, mentoring, or cross-training programs that support career advancement.
 - American Water Works Association (Colorado)
 - Multiplier/WaterNow Alliance (California)
 - Rural Community Assistance Partnership (District of Columbia)
 - **Project Area 5:** Education and training programs designed for decentralized (septic) water workers to support public health for communities that rely on private wells for drinking water or septic systems.
 - Pacific International Center for High Technology Research (Hawaii)
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Prior Funding

On October 15, 2021, EPA announced the selection of nine organizations to receive a total of \$3.8 million in funding under the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Program. These grants will build the nation's water workforce and connect individuals to career opportunities in the drinking water and wastewater utility sector, as well as expand public awareness about the opportunities in the drinking water and wastewater utilities. Information on the inaugural award announcement and recipients is below:

- EPA's October 15, 2023 Press Release <<https://epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-selections-38-million-grant-funding-help-build-water-workforce>> on the water sector workforce grant program
-  Inaugural Grant Request for Application (RFA) (pdf) <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/documents/final_workforce_rfa_ow.pdf> (334.93 KB)

- FY 2020 and FY 2021 Inaugural Recipients:

-  East Central University (Oklahoma) (pdf) <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/east_central_university-factsheet.pdf> (1.58 MB)
-  Rowan University (New Jersey) (pdf) <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/rowan_university-factsheet.pdf> (1.44 MB)
-  Wichita State University (Kansas) (pdf) <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/wichita_university-factsheet.pdf> (555.66 KB)
-  Grand Rapids Community College (Michigan) (pdf) <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/grand_rapids-factsheet.pdf> (1.29 MB)
-  Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Government (Ohio) (pdf) <<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/toledo-factsheet.pdf>> (1.28 MB)
-  Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust (Washington State) (pdf) <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-09/mountain_%20sound_factsheet.pdf> (1.05 MB)
-  Syracuse University (New York) (pdf) <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/syracuse_university-factsheet.pdf> (1.02 MB)
-  Rural Community Assistance Partnership (Washington, D.C.) (pdf) <<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/rcap-factsheet.pdf>> (879.51 KB)
-  American Water Works Association (Colorado) (pdf) <<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-05/awwa-factsheet.pdf>> (1.06 MB)

Last updated on August 19, 2026