



## **Project Solicitation**

to request inclusion on the

### **SFY 2027 Project Priority List (PPL)** for the **Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF)**

**PPL REQUEST APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026, by 5 p.m.**

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Office of Water Resources is pleased to open its annual solicitation for the submission of water pollution abatement and other eligible clean water projects for inclusion on the SFY'27 PPL.

Requesting to be on the PPL lets us know that you are interested in obtaining CWSRF financing within the next 18 months for your water quality improvement and protection project. More principal forgiveness is available now via the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (aka Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or IIJA) than has been available in the past when meeting certain eligibility requirements. This is an exciting and historic period of major investment in clean water infrastructure, and your participation is encouraged.

RIDEM is interested in increasing participation by entities planning projects that address stormwater pollution abatement, green infrastructure, non-point source pollution abatement, emerging contaminants, climate resiliency of clean water infrastructure, and particularly projects that benefit disadvantaged communities. RIDEM is also interested in wastewater infrastructure projects that systematically replace the oldest sections that are most vulnerable to failures.

#### ***Benefits for Disadvantaged Communities, Emerging Contaminant Projects, and the Green Project Reserve***

Varying amounts of principal forgiveness subsidy are required to be distributed under BIL and will be directed (as available) towards eligible disadvantaged communities that meet the state's affordability criteria\*, as well as eligible priority clean water projects that address emerging contaminants, and Green Project Reserve types of public projects such as green stormwater infrastructure, and POTW energy efficiency or climate change adaptation.

\*A description of the affordability criteria for determining status as a disadvantaged community is available in the [FY'25 CWSRF Intended Use Plan](#) (IUP) on page 21.

### ***What is the Clean Water SRF Project Priority List?***

The PPL is utilized in the decision-making process for financial assistance from the Rhode Island CWSRF, as jointly administered by the RIDEM and the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB). Eligible projects are scored and ranked according to certain specific priority ranking criteria. A project must be included on the PPL to seek financial assistance through the RI CWSRF for that fiscal year, including the additional funding being directed into the RI CWSRF via BIL. Projects that are being actively planned and ready to proceed within the next 18 months will be used in developing the RI CWSRF Program's State Fiscal Year 2027 Intended Use Plan (IUP), to be submitted to EPA later this spring. The Intended Use Plan demonstrates to EPA how the RI CWSRF program intends to use the funds. (The draft SFY '27 IUP will be posted for public comment by RIIB after the PPL is developed.)

### ***What types of projects are priorities for RI and eligible for RI CWSRF financing?***

The RI CWSRF program can finance a wide array of water pollution abatement and water quality improvement projects at their planning, design, and/or construction stages. Water quality planning projects are eligible provided there is a reasonable expectation that the planning will result in an eligible capital project. Types of eligible priority projects include:

#### **For publicly owned wastewater treatment works:**

- Wastewater infrastructure, including projects for upgraded treatment and projects to replace, rehabilitate, or improve aging sewers, pump stations, and treatment facilities
- Combined sewer overflow and sanitary sewer overflow abatement
- Projects that reduce demand of publicly owned treatment works capacity via water conservation and efficiency, or through addressing inflow/infiltration
- Projects that reduce the energy consumption needs of the wastewater facility via renewable energy and energy efficiency projects
- Projects that make wastewater infrastructure more resilient to the effects of climate change, including long-range planning and cost-benefit analysis for adapting or relocating wastewater facilities
- Sewer extensions to identified areas of failing on-site systems
- Capital projects that increase the security or cybersecurity of the wastewater facilities
- Development of RIDEM required Wastewater Facilities Plans and updates
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and mitigation plan with submission to a registry

#### **For polluted stormwater runoff:**

- Implementation of RIDEM Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plans (aka Water Quality Restoration Plans for specific waterbodies and pollutants/stressors).
- Projects to reduce and treat stormwater runoff that address a documented water quality or aquatic habitat concern. Projects that retrofit developed areas utilizing 'green' stormwater infrastructure are particularly encouraged and incentivized for municipalities. Green infrastructure treats stormwater close to where it falls using soils and/or plants to capture pollutants and mimic or restore natural hydrology (groundwater recharge, evapotranspiration)
- Capital equipment necessary to facilitate the removal of pollutants from stormwater conveyance (street sweepers, vector trucks, etc.)
- Development of a municipality-wide stormwater management plan that identifies the most effective placement of stormwater technologies and management approaches to reduce water quality impairments from stormwater.

**Other- For CSSLP, nonpoint source pollution, aquatic habitat stressors, and national estuary program:**

Capital projects that implement the RI Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan (Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319 plan) and related 319 program watershed-based plans, or the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) (aka CWA Section 320 plan)

- Community Septic System Loan Program\* (CSSLP)-local fund for residential repairs
- Sewer Tie-in Loan Fund (STILF) Program\*- local fund for residential connections
- \*CSSLP and STILF renewal loans must be on the PPL- For balance and rate of use, contact RI Housing
- Landfill closures and landfill leachate collection and treatment
- Treatment upgrade, repair, or replacement of existing failing small community decentralized wastewater systems
- Riverine, wetland, and estuarine restoration projects including riparian buffers, streambanks, wetlands and their buffers, floodplains, and salt marshes
- Stream morphology restoration
- Stream and wetland connectivity restoration (dam removal, fish/ aquatic habitat passage improvement projects)
- Fee simple purchase of land or easements to conserve land that has a direct benefit to water quality, such as riparian buffers, wetlands, or drinking water source protection.
- Equipment to remove or prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species
- Projects to restore aquifers (recharge, pump and treat, decrease withdrawals)

**For PFAS and other Emerging Contaminants category: (use 'Other' form)**

"Emerging Contaminants" refer to substances and microorganisms, including manufactured or naturally occurring physical, chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials, which are known or anticipated in the environment, that may pose newly identified or re-emerging risks to human health, aquatic life, or the environment. They can include many different types of natural or manufactured chemicals and substances – such as those in some compounds of personal care products, pharmaceuticals, industrial chemicals, pesticides, and microplastics.

- Projects with the primary purpose to treat emerging contaminants in wastewater, stormwater, and nonpoint source pollution that do not already have water quality criteria established by EPA, with the exception of PFAS.
- Capital equipment to remove or measure emerging contaminants in areas of concern
- The main categories of emerging contaminants include:
  - Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other persistent organic pollutants (POPs)
  - Biological contaminants and microorganisms, such as antimicrobial resistant bacteria, biological materials, and pathogens
  - Some compounds of pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs), including a wide suite of human prescribed drugs (e.g., antidepressants, blood pressure medications, hormones), over-the-counter medications (e.g., ibuprofen), bactericides, fragrances, UV filters (sunscreen agents), detergents, preservatives, and repellents;
  - Nanomaterials, microplastics, and nanoplastics

## **Not Eligible**

Federal eligibility limits certain activities from being funded. Examples of water-related projects that are not eligible via the CWSRF are projects that are not capital projects directly benefiting water quality/aquatic habitat. Such activities include:

- Drainage projects
- Culvert replacements (where purpose is not for aquatic habitat connectivity/water quality)
- Dam repairs
- Privately owned wastewater facilities projects (must be publicly owned)
- Operation or maintenance activities, or training for such (not capital projects)
- Municipal / utility staff salaries
- Research or routine water quality monitoring

Projects that are not clearly documented for the primary purpose of benefiting water quality or aquatic habitat will not make it onto the PPL. RIDEM and RIIB can assist in identifying other appropriate funding sources that may be available.

RIDEM also recognizes that certain clean water projects may be a component of a larger project (e.g., retrofitting green infrastructure as part of a redevelopment or recreation project). In such cases, it is important to clearly distinguish the eligible project from the other site development that may be taking place. The CWSRF can only fund the portion of a larger project that provides the meaningful water quality benefit.

## ***The CWSRF Financing and Approval Process***

A project is required to be on the PPL in order for that project to be financed via the RI CWSRF. Please note that submission of a project to be on the PPL does not obligate the applicant to go forward with the project, nor does it guarantee RI CWSRF financing.

RIDEM will rate and rank all submitted projects and formulate the PPL according to criteria contained in the Rules and Regulations for the Priority Determination System for Federal and State Assistance for Construction of Water Pollution Abatement Projects (250-RICR-150-20-2, available at the RI CWSRF website link, below). The PPL is used in developing the Indented Use Plan, which is required to be approved by EPA to award the funds to the state.

## **Public Comment Periods- Project Priority List and Intended Use Plan**

30-day public notices regarding the *draft* PPL and the *draft IUP* will be posted on the Department's website with the opportunity for public comment. Revisions may be made based upon comments received. The final PPL and the final IUP will also be posted on the RIDEM CWSRF website:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/water/finance/state-revolving-fund.php>

Once projects are on the final PPL, potential borrowers may contact RIIB and DEM to start the project loan application process. If your project is ready now, please contact RIIB now. There are two parts to the application process—a loan application with RIIB, and a project Certificate of Approval application with RIDEM for *each phase* of the project you wish to be financed (planning, design, construction). A Certificate of Approval must be issued prior to closing on the loan or prior to going out to bid for a construction project. The CWSRF cannot reimburse for costs expended on construction prior to the date of the Certificate of Approval.

### ***What is the Green Project Reserve (GPR)?***

Since 2012, the RI CWSRF has made efforts to reserve a portion of its funds to facilitate certain project types other than traditional wastewater infrastructure. The intent of the GPR is to direct investment in the water sector toward projects that utilize green or soft-path practices that cost-effectively reduce the environmental footprint of water and wastewater treatment, collection, and distribution. These are projects that help utilities adapt to climate change, or enhance water and energy conservation, as well as projects that help communities to adopt more sustainable solutions to wet weather flows, and promote innovative approaches to water management problems. All GPR projects must otherwise be eligible for CWSRF funding and must further the goals of the Clean Water Act. Projects must serve a public purpose and have a direct benefit to water quality. The Green Project Reserve is for green projects in the following categories:

- green infrastructure- a wide array of practices that manage wet weather where it falls and that maintain and restore natural hydrology by infiltrating, evapotranspiring, and harvesting and using stormwater rather than allowing it to be wasted as urban runoff
- water efficiency-the use of improved technologies and practices to deliver equal or better services with less net water use as compared to traditional or standard technologies and practices. This implements water saving elements, as well as water loss reduction, and reduced water consumption technologies and practices. The purpose is to reduce the amount of water taken out of rivers, streams, and groundwater aquifers in order to enhance the natural hydrologic functioning and protect water resources for the future, as well as to reduce energy use at a POTW.
- energy efficiency- the use of improved technologies and practices to reduce the energy consumption of water quality projects, use energy in a more efficient way, and/or produce/utilize renewable energy. Projects must be cost-effective and achieve at least a 20% reduction in energy consumption for the POTW facilities/unit process.
- environmentally innovative activities- these projects demonstrate new and/or innovative approaches to delivering services or managing water resources in a more sustainable way. Includes planning activities by a POTW to prepare for adaptation to the long-term effects of climate change and/or extreme weather, utility sustainability plans consistent with EPA SRF's sustainability policy, and greenhouse gas mitigation plans/implementation (submitted to a GHG registry). Treatment projects must address water quality via a technology or approach not widely utilized in Rhode Island, which is expected to perform as well or better than conventional means.

#### **EPA Provides Free Technical Assistance (TA):**

EPA's free water technical assistance supports communities to identify water challenges, engage the community, develop plans, build technical, financial, and managerial capacity, and develop application materials to access water infrastructure funding.

For more information about EPA's Technical Assistance programs, visit <https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/water-technical-assistance-waterta>

## **CWSRF Requirements**

Please note that use of the CWSRF loan funds, which are capitalized with federal and state money, requires that recipients and projects must follow certain programmatic requirements. Among these requirements, all construction projects must have an SRF project sign, and all projects to be funded by the CWSRF must be identified in a publicly advertised bid/RFP/RFQ.

In order for costs of engineering consultants to be eligible, procurement of engineering services must follow the federal Brooks Act process, and the EPA's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program, as well as the State of RI Minority Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) regulations.

The RI Minority Business Enterprise regulations now require a minimum of 15% MBE/WBE participation on all contracts, split evenly for participation by 7.5% each for MBE and WBE.

Additionally, the Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions of the IIJA will apply to certain selected federally funded loan projects. There is a waiver process, as well as general applicability waivers which may apply. For more information on BABA, please [click here](#).

For more information about programmatic requirements, please see the RI CWSRF Program [Contract Documents](#) page.

### **PPL Request Forms: Forms are due by 5 p.m., Friday, March 27, 2026**

To be included on the PPL, each project must be submitted separately using the appropriate PPL Request Form for the project type (i.e., Wastewater, Stormwater, or Other) provided by RIDEM, available on the [RIDEM CWSRF webpage](#). There is limited space to provide your project information. Please be succinct or attach additional sheets if you need more space. You may also attach supporting documentation if you would like, though it is not necessary.

Please use the appropriate request form for the project type. There are three forms:

- Wastewater form- for publicly owned wastewater projects (centralized treatment and/or collection systems)
- Stormwater form- for stormwater pollution management projects
- Other form- for projects addressing Emerging Contaminants, Nonpoint Source Pollution (including CSSLP & Sewer Tie-in Loan Fund) or National Estuary NBEP CCMP implementation.

**Send your completed forms to:** [jenny.paquet@dem.ri.gov](mailto:jenny.paquet@dem.ri.gov)

or mail to: Jenny Paquet, CWSRF Program  
RIDEM OWR  
235 Promenade Street  
PROVIDENCE, RI 02908

Any questions, please call (401) 537-4260