



# *CWSRF Wastewater Planning Guidance Document*

March 2024

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## **Wastewater Planning Principal Forgiveness**

The NHDES Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan program is offering up to \$100,000 in principal forgiveness for wastewater planning evaluations or assessments. Eligible planning efforts will have a vision of implementing a future project with a tangible water quality benefit or that improves operational reliability and resiliency of existing wastewater infrastructure.

CWSRF is a federal-state partnership that provides communities with low-cost financing (loans) for a wide range of [projects](#). Once all eligible project expenses are incurred, and subsequently disbursed, the loan is closed, and principal forgiveness is then applied to the principal balance.

Communities **must receive authority to borrow** for the entire loan amount through a town warrant article or city equivalent process, even if the full principal amount is forgiven. The CWSRF loan amount may be greater than \$100,000, depending upon the estimated cost for the project but only up to \$100,000 per project will be forgiven.

To maintain eligibility for CWSRF principal forgiveness, NHDES must approve the work scope prior to review of the full loan application. Applicants will submit work scope proposals related to planning evaluations or assessments for approval by a project manager from the NHDES Wastewater Engineering Bureau. The NHDES Grants Management Section will assist with loan processing and disbursements.

### **Eligible Projects**

There are many eligible activities that fall within the scope of planning. Planning activities that have a reasonable prospect of resulting in a capital project are eligible. Principal forgiveness is offered only to municipalities.

The following activities are eligible, pending NHDES approval:

- Cost and Effectiveness analyses.
- Capital Improvement Plans.
- Integrated planning.
- Long-term control plans.

- Energy audit implementation plans.
- Wastewater management plans.
- Wastewater rate studies and financial analyses.
- Wastewater facility plans.
- Basis of Design Report consistent with Env-Wq 707.
- Preliminary design (up to 30% design).
- Improving the data-driven decision support/business-case development ability of an existing asset management program (AMP) to incorporate additional data sets into the AMP such as, but not limited to:
  - Criticality/risk data from a facility plan or vulnerability assessment.
  - Asset level condition assessment.
  - Implementing recommendations in an AMP.
  - CMOM data and related work.
  - Energy data.
- Planning activities that assess a POTW's vulnerability to extreme weather and climate change:
  - Risk/vulnerability assessments.
  - Emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans, security plans/safety plans.
  - Water conservation/drought management plans.
  - Climate adaptation plans.
- Environmental management systems.
- Assessment of project effectiveness:
  - Equipment (e.g., sensors, meters, gauges, hardware, and software used to store and interpret data).
  - Activities (e.g., sampling, lab work, data analysis).

### **Minimum Requirements**

To maintain principal forgiveness eligibility the scope of work for all eligible planning projects must include the following elements:

- Breakdown of tasks with clearly defined roles.
- Notification to NHDES in advance of meetings for the project.
- At a minimum, quarterly project progress updates or meetings.
- Draft reports and documents to be provided to NHDES for review and comment, including an outlined project schedule.
- Final documents will be provided to NHDES in electronic form.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):  
All publications must be ADA compliant. All final work products must meet the

applicable Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Regulations to the extent practicable and shall be guided by best practices outlined in the Revised Section 508 Standards of the Rehabilitation Act and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). At a minimum, final work products shall include sans-serif fonts, underlined and descriptive text links, color best practices, captions for audio and video content, headers in tables, images with alt text, gender-neutral text, and consideration of the Plain Writing Act. Examples of final work products and outreach materials include, but are not limited to, project reports, press releases, newsletter articles, websites, videos and signage.

### ***Eligibility of Costs:***

Expenses directly related to planning are eligible for CWSRF funding, subject to prior approval by NHDES. Typical expenses that may be incurred include, but are not limited to:

- Equipment purchases/rental such as GPS and tablets.
- Software purchases.
- Laboratory fees.
- Consulting fees\*.

\*If you wish to hire a consultant/engineer they must be chosen using Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) procedures and use the [standard state engineering contract](#) available on the NHDES website.

### ***NHDES Review and Approval***

Work scopes and contracts need to be pre-approved by NHDES **prior to** entering into a CWSRF loan **AND prior to** initiating work.

### ***Deliverables and NHDES Oversight***

To maintain eligibility for CWSRF principal forgiveness, NHDES must be notified in advance of meetings and trainings relative to the project. NHDES also requires a report to be developed as a deliverable for a planning loan.

### **Questions/Contact Information**

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