

Water Sector Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will this presentation be available online?
It has been posted to the OCD – LGA’s YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KuufUI8VMg&t=156s>
2. If an engineer is already under contract and being paid by local funds, can this project be considered for construction only? The engineering contract does not meet federal procurement.
Yes, a construction only project is eligible. If local funds are being used, federal procurement procedures would not have to be followed.
3. Can local governments use their ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds to fund the 25% match?
Yes
4. Are private water and sewer systems eligible for the program?
Yes, a water system is eligible if the water system provides potable water through pipes or other constructed conveyances, if such system has at least 15 connections or regularly serves an average of 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year (LAC 5I:XII). A sewer system is eligible if the system serves multiple connections and consists of a collection and/or pumping/transport system and treatment facility (LAC 5I:XIII).
5. Can a town submit more than one project, one for water and one for sewer?
Yes, an entity that owns and operates both a sewer and water system can submit both a sewer and water application.
6. Can a user be a Submitter and a Creator?
Yes. But every system must have at least one user with submit access.
7. Can I use the Username and password that I have for LWI?
No. After submitting a Request for User Access form to traci.watts@la.gov, an email with an assigned user ID will be sent to you.
8. How does receipt of application affect determination of award? Does submitting the application earlier than the deadline give a greater chance of award?
No. Applications submitted in the open application period prior to the deadline will all be reviewed, scored and given the same consideration.
9. If we have technical issues with the online submission portal, who do we contact?
Email Traci Watts at traci.watts@la.gov.
10. Will OCD provide technical assistance to communities to meet federal guidelines with respect to securing an engineer or architect as they do in the LCDBG program?
Yes, OCD – LGA will provide technical assistance for procurement if the applicant intends to use the WSP funds for payment of these services.

11. Do engineers need to submit a separate user access form to assist the municipality in their application?
Yes
12. Are there deadlines for applications and/or specified timelines for usage of funds?
The portal will be open for application submission from August 1, 2021 to September 24, 2021. Funds must be expended by December 31, 2026
13. Can DEQ SRF funds be utilized as matching funds for the Water Sector Program?
SRF funds may be used as match, however, that will cause all SRF requirements, such as Davis-Bacon, NEPA, and American Iron and Steel, to apply to the entire project and sources of funding.
14. How do we get a user ID form?
User ID forms can be found on the OCD-LGA website at <https://www.doa.la.gov/doa/ocd-lga/american-rescue-plan-act/>
15. If an entity wants to borrow the local match from DWRLF or CWSRF, then those requirements would be triggered?
Yes
16. Where do I find the DEQ Agency Interest Number? I have my PWS ID.
It's included on all correspondence and permit documents from DEQ. You can also search EDMS: edms.deq.louisiana.gov
17. If a project has already been put out for bids, can the city still apply to use ARP funds for the project?
No, See FAQ #45.
18. Can we make a second request strictly for the water system, after we received the NEU funds?
An entity can receive funds under the ARP NEU program and still apply for the Water Sector Program.
19. Can funding sources from other agencies be utilized as matching funds (i.e. Corps 219 money, DEQ SRF, etc.)?
Other fund types can be used, but the requirements of the other program will be triggered for the entire project.
20. Does the fund cap apply to each type of application? \$5 million for water and \$5 million for sewer?
Yes
21. Regarding those projects in HB 2 that will be imported into the portal by OFPC, will the entities be notified? Is this list of projects available anywhere? Will all funds including P5 be included in the request?
Entities with projects with projects in HB2 will be notified, but a list of these projects hasn't been published at this time. Yes, the entire appropriation including P5, will be included.

22. Is there a preferred source of demographic information in the application? 2010 Census data. American fact finder, etc.?
You can find the median income and population growth information at www.census.gov. You can find the unemployment data at the www.bls.gov.
23. Our parish has two water districts with two LDH numbers that are managed by the parish administration, are two applications required?
Yes
24. Is American Iron and Steel applicable?
No
25. If ARP funds are used for the 25% local match, do procurement guidelines related to engineering/architect contracts apply for those funds?
Yes. Federal procurement requirements regarding procurement have not been waived for ARP funds. Federal procurement regulations can be located in 2 CFR 200.318-326
26. Is use of ARP funds as the local match prioritized as appears to be the case in the Act 410?
No
27. What is the timeline for the decision being made?
Working panel ratings will be provided to the Water Sector Commission by November 8, 2021. The Water Sector Commission will review ratings and provide funding recommendations to the Joint Legislative Committee on Budget. A timeline can be found in the guidelines at <https://www.doa.la.gov/media/hrmjrzrw/wsp-approved-guidelines.pdf>
28. Are separate applications required to be submitted for each project, or is one application submitted by each PWS inclusive of all projects where funding is requested?
Each entity may submit one application for water and/or one application for sewer. If a water system has a need for multiple projects, then the system should submit one application that includes all needed improvements.
29. If a project has some preliminary investigation performed, does that count towards total project cost and local match?
Yes, subject to documentation.
30. Can a project be applied for that affects multiple PWSIDs? If so, what PWISD should be listed in the application?
There should be an applications completed per PWSID unless it is a consolidation project.
31. Does the consultant sign the document that sets up the user account and put their SSN in the document in the middle part or the bottom part?
If a consultant is submitting a user access form, then the consultant would complete the form with the system information, the consultant's information for the user, and the system CEO must sign the form to give approval for the consultant to have access to the system application. A form must be completed for each system that a firm is chosen to work with on a WSP application. The last 4 SSN is used for security purposes for the

issuance of the user id. This information will be necessary for the user to set up a password.

32. For the increased local cost share, are those points prorated based on the amount of the increase local share? If a system agrees to 26%, will they receive 3 additional points the same as paying 30%?

Yes

33. If a municipality has multiple water or sewer systems, does the grant funding cap apply to the municipality or to the individual water and sewer systems?

The grant funding cap applies per system.

34. If a system has multiple projects, does the \$5 million cap apply to the total construction cost of the projects or the grant request of the projects?

The \$5 million cap applies to the total of the grant request for the projects.

35. Are funds the municipality expends on consultants preparing applications with local funds acceptable to use a local match?

Yes

36. Is this program only for utilities that sell water/waste water?

Yes

37. The form does not list drainage under system category. How do you specify drainage projects?

Applications for drainage projects will be considered in the second round.

38. If our community has a water/Sewer district, then should the district be the applicant or does Parish Gov't have to be the application?

If the water/sewer district is independently governed and can take on debt as a separate entity, then the water/sewer district should be the applicant.

39. If submitting a grant request for both water and sewer, will the grant cap be for \$5 million total per applicant or \$5 million per project?

If an entity owns and operates both a water and a sewer system, then the entity is eligible to apply for up to \$5 million for a water project and up to \$5 million for a sewer project.

40. If an engineering firm writes the application, can they bid on the project if awarded?

The source of funding to pay for the engineering services determines which procurement guidelines must be followed. If the entity is using local funds to pay for these services, then the entity must follow their procurement policy. If the entity is using ARP funds to pay for these services, then the entity must follow federal procurement guidelines that can be found at 2 CFR 200.318-326.

41. Does a system need both a PWS ID# and a DUNS# to submit the application?

Yes, if an entity owns and operates both systems, then both numbers are required.

42. How will rate study impact the program decision?

Rate studies will be completed after awards are made. Recommendations from the rate study would have to be followed in order for funds to be released.

43. Are the HB2 projects included in the system's \$5 million cap?

Yes

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44. Based on the webinar and the materials posted, it looks like this will be a relatively simple program. Is there a need for an administrative consultant for this program? If so, what is the pay scale? Also, if the grantee pays for the fees out of local funds, does it count toward their match percentage?

The WSP does appear much simpler than CDBG. Whether or not the system would want an administrative consultant is a local decision. Since the WSP is funded with ARPA monies, many federal guidelines, such as federal procurement and cost principles, apply to the use of the funds. These guidelines should be considered when hiring an administrative consultant to be paid for with ARPA funds. Any costs included in the total cost of the project, and identified on the detailed cost estimate that are not paid for with WSP or state grant funds, would be considered match funds and be included in the match percentage.

45. If a system is completing a project in phases and has already encumbered costs associated with Phase One but wants to apply for funds, for the remaining parts of the project, can Phase One costs be used as the system's match? When can a system start counting its match if planning activities were completed previously?

Costs for projects that may be in various stages of planning or implementation cannot be included in an application for the WSP if the following is true:

- The activities were paid for with state grant funds.
- The project has been put out for bid, has a contract awarded, or is under construction.

If a project is being completed in phases, then phases that have not been put out for bid, had a contract awarded, or is under construction can be included in a WSP application. If a system uses funds that are not state grant funds to pay for plan and design, studies, or previous phases of a project, then the costs for those activities can be counted toward the match requirement.

46. Does property acquisition have to comply with the Uniform Act?

Yes.

47. Can a wastewater project be leveraged against a water project and vice versa with previous state funds?

No, these are two separate systems.

48. Is a preliminary engineering report necessary if a project design is complete with final plans and specifications (i.e. shovel ready)?

No.

49. If a municipality submits both a sewer and a water application, are they likely to receive funding for one project and not the other? If multiple applications are submitted, do they need to be prioritized by the municipality for preference of receipt of funding?

Each application will be reviewed on its own merit. A system should include any information that it feels should be considered by the working panel and the Water Sector Commission.

50. Can DEQ or LDH state revolving funds be leveraged as matching funds for the WSP?

If a system has already closed on a SRF loan and has an executed loan agreement in place. It is important to note that using SRF money for a match will require the entire project to meet SRF requirements such as Davis Bacon, American Iron and Steel, NEPA, etc.

51. Are customer work orders and/or overflow reports sufficient for identification of need for a project? Are there other items that LDH or DEQ would prefer to see for identification of need?

Systems should include any pertinent documentation to support the need for the project.

52. For the resiliency criteria, what sewer document would be equivalent to the resilience assessment for water projects? Or is this even required for wastewater projects? Is not required, will points still be distributed at the maximum or the minimum of the resiliency section?

A wastewater system should develop a resiliency plan that includes local standards or guidelines to increase the resilience of the system. The plans should include extreme weather events and the effect of water and wind damage to critical infrastructure as well as what must be done during and after the extreme weather event to maintain operating capabilities of critical infrastructure. Items identified in the risk assessment/resiliency plan must be included in the cost estimate to increase resilience.

53. If a municipality receives a direct allocation from US Treasury as a metropolitan city from the ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, are they eligible to apply for the WSP?

Yes.

54. Will applications be accepted without a cost estimate signed and stamped by an engineer licensed in the State of Louisiana?

No.

55. Does HB2 funds allocated or expended for the project count toward the match requirement?

No.

56. When consolidating projects for the same system into one application, do the projects have to have a shared connection (i.e. wastewater projects along the same route) or can the projects be a variety of stand-alone projects in separate areas of the parish?

Each system may submit only one application. All improvements for the system should be included in the application.

57. The Parish is interested in purchasing generators that will service our wastewater lift stations and we will install the generators using in-house labor. Can the budget include only the cost of the generator, or will we have to include labor costs as well? Does this cost need to be included in the budget prepared by the engineer?

The cost estimate should identify all project costs. Any projects costs being paid for with local funds may be counted toward the match requirement.

58. If the Parish has already participated in a rate study, is a new one conducted by the third party contractor still required? Who is paying the cost of the rate study?

Yes, all grantees will be required to participate in the rate study being conducted by the third party contractor in order to get funds released and approval to bid the approved project. The cost of the rate study will be paid by the DOA with ARPA funds.

59. If a system has a project that is moved from HB2 into the Water Sector Program, does this preclude the system from submitting an additional application? What if a system has multiple projects in HB2?

Additional information will be required from the system for HB2 projects imported into the WSP online portal. The system can amend the project scope and cost estimate at that time. If a system has multiple projects in HB2, all of the system projects will be combined into one request in the portal.

60. Can WSP funds pay off long-term debt, such as USDA loans?

No, US Treasury guidance prohibits ARPA funds being used to pay for previously incurred debt.

61. Is the project total \$5 million max (including the system match) or is the grant max \$5 million plus the system match for an overall project total exceeding \$5 million?

The grant cap is \$5 million. The total project costs may exceed the \$5 million. The source of funds to be used to pay for the costs that exceed the grant cap should be identified on the cost estimate.

62. If a water system does not have a PWS ID, can the system apply to the WSP?

No. All existing water systems in the state have PWS IDs. No new systems are eligible.

63. What documentation is required for the match funds?

Written documentation of the match is required in the application. This documentation should note the amount, source, and use of the match funds. Please note that further documentation from the system's governing authority will be required, if funded, prior to OCD-LGA releasing the WSP funds.

64. If a system is consolidating with another system and there is a purchase cost for the system being absorbed, is that purchase cost eligible?

Acquisition is an eligible cost in the program. All acquisition must be in compliance with the Uniform Act.

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65. Does the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) apply to infrastructure projects funded by WSP?

The source of funds for the WSP is the SLFRF from the US Treasury. Per US Treasury guidance, NEPA does not apply to the US Treasury's administration of these funds. Projects submitted with payments from WSP may still be subject to a NEPA review if there are other federal funds included in the project.

66. Will grant funding be limited or changed from the application?

The working panel provides funding recommendations to the Water Sector Commission (WSC). All final funding determinations will be made by the WSC and the JLBC.

67. Is a project considered a consolidation if two systems owned by the same entity fully merge, eliminating a PWS ID or Agency Interest number?

Yes.

68. Are sewer system evaluation surveys (SSES) eligible for funding under the WSP (e.g. if the SSES is directly tied to rehabilitation/improvements to a sewer system)?

Yes.

69. Would the completion of a SSES be considered a form of preliminary investigation?

Yes.

70. We have a pending acquisition case with the LPSC and will not own the system until the end of this year or the beginning of next year. Can we submit an application for a system that we do not own as of yet?

No. The system owner must apply for the funds.

71. Regarding the Risk and Resilience Assessment required by Section 2013 of America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, this document is restricted from being released due to the sensitive nature. Can we submit a letter from the owner acknowledging a copy is available in the records?

Posting a receipt from EPA indicating the plan was received is acceptable. You should also include a narrative summarizing the needs and what has been addressed or is being addressed in the proposed project.

72. If my system is not required by the AWIA to complete a Risk and Resilience Assessment and Emergency Response Plan, will this be an issue?

No. However, the system should conduct a risk assessment and identify any items that need to be addressed as well as if these things are being addressed in the proposed project.

73. The City owns 100% of Wastewater Plant A and 50% of Wastewater Plant B. The remaining 50% of Plant B is owned by the Parish District. Both the City & the Parish District collection systems are connected to both wastewater plants. The City is planning to submit a \$5M application for Plant A. The Parish District is planning to submit a \$5M application for Plant B. Since the City owns 50% of Plant B, can the City also submit a \$5M application for Plant B?

No.

74. When is Match required: Will the City be required to have all match funds in an account before the grant is awarded? Do they have a time frame to collect the funds such as completing an SRF program or getting bonds?

Match funds must be available to be spent in order for OCD-LGA to approve a release of funds, if the application is selected for funding. Written documentation will be required. See FAQ #50 regarding use of SRF program.

75. How will the grant be dispersed to the communities? Lump payments, or during construction as pay requests are submitted?

OCD-LGA will accept, review, and process pay requests from grantees with invoices attached for work completed. No lump sum or advance payments will be approved.

76. Can a grant award amount be adjusted from the amount requested whether above or below the \$5 million cap?

The Water Sector Commission is responsible for making funding recommendations to the JLBC and are able to award funds as they deem appropriate. This may result in a grantee being approved for a grant but not the exact amount of the request.

77. Are improvements to an office building an eligible cost for the Water Sector Program?

No. The proposed improvements must be to the system infrastructure.

78. I have an existing loan with the SRF. I want to apply to WSP and include the projects currently in my existing loan as part of the WSP application and to meet my match requirement. However, FAQ #45 says that projects put out for bid cannot be included in a WSP application. Since the SRF requires a project to be bid before the closing of the loan, how could I use the SRF as match?

Any projects that have been previously bid are not eligible to the WSP. However, a SRF may contain multiple projects to be completed in multiple phases. It is very likely that not all projects or phases have been bid in an existing SRF. In that case, the projects or phases that have not been bid would be eligible to the WSP.

79. When will applicants be given access to the HB2 projects that are imported into the portal? For applicants that previously gained access to the WSP portal, will the HB2 projects show up for their current access or do new authorization forms need to be completed?

All HB2 applicants that were included in the WSP portal were issued a memorandum dated September 10, 2021. As the memorandum notes, applicants should email a completed user access form to Traci.Watts@la.gov with the same system name for your organization that was used by the Office of Facility Planning and Control (OFPC) analyst to access the application that OFPC created. The system name will be the name of your parish, municipality or other nonstate entity as shown in the 2021 Capital Outlay Act preceded by "Z-CO:" and your agency number. For example, the town of Marais would be shown as "50/MZZ MARAIS" in the act, so the system name would be "Z-CO: 50-MZZ Marais".

80. For entities that have already begun the new application process but will have capital outlay projects transferred into the portal, will those applicants just need to be deleted and amend the capital outlay projects? If an entity is only allowed one application per water and sewer, if applicable, what is the process?

Each system is only eligible to submit one application. Once an applicant has been given access to the WSP portal, the applicant must amend the application and provide supplemental information as needed to complete the application process. The applicant can also amend the project to include all needed improvements for the system that should be addressed. If the applicant previously obtained access to the WSP portal and created an application, the applicant should delete the application and use the HB2 application going forward. Any additional improvements should be included in the HB2 application.

81. Which HB2 projects were imported into the portal?

Z-CO: 09-320 Office Of Aging And Adult Services
Z-CO: 19-604 LSU Health Science CTR - New Orleans
Z-CO: 50-J05 Avoyelles Parish
Z-CO: 50-J10 Calcasieu Parish
Z-CO: 50-J23 Iberia Parish
Z-CO: 50-J26 Jefferson Parish
Z-CO: 50-J37 Ouachita Parish

Z-CO: 50-J48 St. John The Baptist
Z-CO: 50-J49 St. Landry Parish
Z-CO: 50-J63 West Feliciana Parish
Z-CO: 50-J63 West Feliciana Parish
Z-CO: 50-M01 Abbeville
Z-CO: 50-M02 Abita Springs
Z-CO: 50-M06 Amite
Z-CO: 50-M10 Arnaudville
Z-CO: 50-M15 Baldwin
Z-CO: 50-M24 Berwick
Z-CO: 50-M24 Berwick
Z-CO: 50-M24 Berwick
Z-CO: 50-M26 Blanchard
Z-CO: 50-M27 Bogalusa
Z-CO: 50-M31 Breaux Bridge
Z-CO: 50-M39 Carencro
Z-CO: 50-M42 Chatham
Z-CO: 50-M54 Cotton Valley
Z-CO: 50-M55 Cottonport
Z-CO: 50-M57 Covington
Z-CO: 50-M58 Crowley
Z-CO: 50-M64 Dequincy
Z-CO: 50-M65 Deridder
Z-CO: 50-M70 Doyline
Z-CO: 50-M78 Elton
Z-CO: 50-M82 Estherwood
Z-CO: 50-M87 Ferriday
Z-CO: 50-M91 Fordoche
Z-CO: 50-MA7 Gramercy
Z-CO: 50-MB7 Gueydan
Z-CO: 50-MC1 Harahan
Z-CO: 50-MC3 Haughton
Z-CO: 50-MD1 Hornbeck
Z-CO: 50-MD4 Ida
Z-CO: 50-MD5 Independence
Z-CO: 50-ME2 Jeanerette
Z-CO: 50-ME4 Jennings
Z-CO: 50-ME5 Jonesboro
Z-CO: 50-MF5 Kinder
Z-CO: 50-MF8 Lake Arthur
Z-CO: 50-MG1 Lake Providence
Z-CO: 50-MG3 Leesville
Z-CO: 50-MG8 Livonia
Z-CO: 50-MH6 Madisonville
Z-CO: 50-MI3 Many
Z-CO: 50-MJ4 Merryville
Z-CO: 50-MJ5 Minden
Z-CO: 50-MJ6 Monroe
Z-CO: 50-MK2 Morgan City
Z-CO: 50-MK4 Morse
Z-CO: 50-MK8 Natchez
Z-CO: 50-ML3 New Orleans
Z-CO: 50-ML9 Oak Grove

Z-CO: 50-MM4 Oil City
Z-CO: 50-MM6 Opelousas
Z-CO: 50-MM8 Parks
Z-CO: 50-MM9 Patterson
Z-CO: 50-MN3 Pineville
Z-CO: 50-MN5 Plain Dealing
Z-CO: 50-MO3 Port Barre
Z-CO: 50-MO9 Rayville
Z-CO: 50-MO9 Rayville
Z-CO: 50-MQ1 Rosepine
Z-CO: 50-MQ8 Scott
Z-CO: 50-MR6 Simpson
Z-CO: 50-MS4 Springfield
Z-CO: 50-MS9 Sulphur
Z-CO: 50-MT3 Tallulah
Z-CO: 50-MT6 Tickfaw
Z-CO: 50-MT8 Turkey Creek
Z-CO: 50-MU2 Vidalia
Z-CO: 50-MU5 Vinton
Z-CO: 50-MU6 Vivian
Z-CO: 50-MU6 Vivian
Z-CO: 50-MV1 Welsh
Z-CO: 50-MV2 West Monroe
Z-CO: 50-MV3 Westlake
Z-CO: 50-MV3 Westlake
Z-CO: 50-MV4 Westwego
Z-CO: 50-N44 United Water System, Inc.
Z-CO: 50-NBV Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Comm.
Z-CO: 50-NCJ Calcasieu Parish Water Works District 14
Z-CO: 50-NCN South Toledo Bend Waterworks District
Z-CO: 50-ND5 Lafourche Parish Water District
Z-CO: 50-NI9 Ascension - St. James Airport Authority
Z-CO: 50-NL6 East Richland Water Works District
Z-CO: 50-NMB Calcasieu Parish Water District No. 1
Z-CO: 50-NPO Prairie Road Water District, Inc.
Z-CO: 50-NQO Ebenezer Community Water System, Inc.
Z-CO: 50-NQV Beauregard Parish Waterworks District No. 6
Z-CO: 50-NQW Calcasieu Water Works District 10
Z-CO: 50-NRZ West Allen Waterworks District
Z-CO: 50-NTK The Union Lincoln Regional Water Supply Initiative
Z-CO: 50-NV1 Pollock Area Water System, Inc.
Z-CO: 50-NXI Hebert Water System, Inc.
Z-CO: 50-NYU Mire-Branch Water Corporation
Z-CO: 50-NZG Cameron Parish Water and Wastewater District No.