

Build a Solution for Storm Water Pollution



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Clean Water Fund Program

The Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP) provides low-cost financing to municipalities for publicly owned wastewater and storm water infrastructure projects. The program funds are for reasonable and necessary costs directly related to the **planning, design, and construction** of eligible projects. It also includes projects for compliance with a municipality's Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit. Learn about funding for storm water projects at dnr.wi.gov/Aid/documents/EIF/Guide/Stormwater.html

What is storm water runoff? Storm water carries excessive nutrients, sediments, and other pollutants from streets and parking lots to nearby streams, rivers, and lakes. A municipality can eliminate or reduce storm water runoff pollution in its community by building or improving its storm water infrastructure. The DNR Bureau of Watershed Management provides information on the concerns of contaminated storm water runoff in Wisconsin's waters (e.g., loss of aquatic life & habitats) at dnr.wi.gov/topic/Stormwater/learn_more/problems.html

Eligible Projects

In order to be eligible for funding from the CWFP, storm water projects **must** lead to or provide treatment to control discharged water quality. Under [subch. III of ch. NR 162, Wis. Adm. Code](#), municipalities may receive financial assistance from the CWFP for publicly owned projects that are necessary to control storm water runoff pollution in order to achieve water quality standards, including publicly owned storm water management projects on public or private land as required by any of the following: a WPDES storm water permit issued under subch. I of ch. NR 216; a performance standard delineated under ch. NR 151; and/or a storm water management plan or other applicable plan approved by the DNR for purposes of managing runoff. Go to dnr.wi.gov and search "[Storm Water Post-Construction Technical Standards](#)"

Examples of eligible projects — Eligible projects must be primarily water quality related

Gray infrastructure is used to move storm water away from where we live to treatment facilities or straight to local water bodies. Gray infrastructure solutions include, but are not limited to:

- Pipe, storage, and treatment system projects (**must** include treatment—if not as a part of the project, the pipes still need to lead to treatment)
- Real-time control systems for combined sewer overflow (CSO) management
- Sediment controls (e.g., filter fences, storm drain inlet protection, street sweepers, and vacuum trucks)



[Green infrastructure](#) is used to collect, filter, and absorb storm water where it falls. Green infrastructure solutions can be funded as stand-alone projects or as components of eligible wastewater and storm water projects.

Example projects include:

- Replacement of gray infrastructure with green infrastructure
- Bioretention areas/bioswales ([rain gardens](#))
- Green roofs, green streets, and green walls
- Infiltration basins
- Permeable pavement
- Rainwater harvesting collection, storage, management, and distribution systems
- Real-time control systems for harvested rainwater
- Storm water filtration devices (filters)
- Vegetated swales
- Wet detention ponds

Ineligible Projects



Dams, pipes, conveyance systems and BMPs (best management practices), including storm sewer rerouting and land acquisition, when intended **solely** for flood control or future development. See s. NR 162.23(2) for list of ineligible costs, items and activities.

Protect Our Waters from Storm Water Runoff

Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP)

How to Apply

See guidance on the CWFP Storm Water Projects webpage:
dnr.wi.gov/Aid/documents/EIF/Guide/Stormwater.html

Deadlines

Oct. 31 – Submit a notice of Intent to Apply (ITA) with Priority Evaluation and Ranking Formula (PERF) information and required documentation via the [online ITA system](#) by Oct. 31, 2025, to be eligible for funding in SFY 2027.

Sept. 30 – Submit a Financial Assistance Application with all required documents via the [online application system](#) by Sept. 30, 2026, if requesting Principal Forgiveness for the SFY 2027 funding cycle. Note: Applications may be submitted anytime during the SFY if not seeking PF.



Photo credits: Pete Wood, DNR

Types of Funding

Under the Clean Water Fund Program, municipalities may receive financial assistance in the form of subsidized loans, additional subsidy to reduce the size of a loan, or a combination of assistance to keep project costs low. The program can finance construction as it takes place as well as refinance interim debt and reimburse internal funds a municipality temporarily used to pay for project costs before receiving its CWFP loan.

- **Subsidized loans** - Program subsidy buys down the market rate on loans. The standard interest rate is 55% of the market rate. View current rates at dnr.wi.gov/Aid/documents/EIF/Guide/Interest.html
 - Subsidized interest rates apply to the water quality-related portions of a project that serve development in existence at the time of application submittal.
 - Market rates apply to portions of each project determined to be **solely** for flood control or for development not in existence at the time of the application.
- **Principal Forgiveness** - PF is comparable to a grant because it reduces the size of the CWFP loan, thus reducing annual principal and interest payments. See dnr.wi.gov/aid/documents/eif/guide/pf.html

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding

In State Fiscal Years 2023-2027, the Wisconsin CWFP and Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP) will benefit from significant additional funding provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). BIL funding increases the amount of PF available in both programs; creates additional funding for lead service line replacements, both public and private; and provides funding specifically for projects to address emerging contaminants such as PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances). Learn more at dnr.wi.gov/Aid/BILfunding

DNR Contact Information

Direct technical questions about storm water (SW) projects to:

- Matt Kaelin, Municipal SW Infrastructure Specialist, at 414-639-4272 or Matthew.Kaelin@wisconsin.gov
- Regional DNR [Storm Water Runoff Staff](#) serving the county in which your facility/site/municipality is located.

Direct funding questions about storm water projects to:

- Sarah Bolitho, CWFP Storm Water Specialist, at 608-960-2927 or Sarah.Bolitho@wisconsin.gov
- Lisa Bushby, CWFP Coordinator, at 608-358-3330 or Lisa.Bushby@wisconsin.gov