



FOLLOW THE MONEY

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It's not uncommon to see a headline about a community needing to upgrade or repair their wastewater infrastructure. As those of you know, the price tag of these projects is often high. Municipal officials often look to the state and federal governments for help.

As with most clean water infrastructure issues, the place to start is an engineering study to identify the best options and costs. DEC and EFC co-sponsor the Engineering Planning Grant Program to help municipalities with this initial phase of a project. This grant program offers \$2 million annually, and is part of the Governor's Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), with more than \$6.8 million awarded to date.

Once a municipality has an engineering plan in hand, the next steps is to design and construct the solution. There are a number of grant and loan programs available. The NY Water Grants and the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund are the two biggest players in this arena in terms of dollars available. The NY Water Grants program is slated to have at least \$125 million available in each of the next two years. Both of these programs are overseen by EFC. DEC and EFC staff provide a great deal of assistance to help municipalities get the best mix of grants and low interest financing.

Another grant program for the construction of wastewater infrastructure is the Water Quality Improvement Project grant program. It is funded through the state's Environmental Protection Fund and is also part of the Governor's CFA program. Since 1996 more than \$470 million has been awarded through WQIP for municipal wastewater infrastructure improvements.

USDA Rural Development has a loan/grant program that is run annually for small community wastewater infrastructure improvements. The state also offers wastewater infrastructure funding through the NYS Department of Housing Community Renewal Community Development Block Grant and the Empire Development Corp. Both programs are offered annually through the CFA.

If you are trying to fund green infrastructure, you should look to the Green Innovation Grant Program, which like many of the other programs is in the CFA. It is run by EFC and this year will likely have about \$12 million available.

This is a quick overview designed to provide a sense of the variety and number of clean water infrastructure funding options. Each one of these programs has its own rules in terms of what can be funded, how much funding is available and whether it is a loan or a grant. And, since funding is tight you will need to do your homework to figure out what is the best solution for your community.

Fortunately, each of the programs I mentioned have very knowledgeable and helpful staff to assist. The involved agencies will coordinate with you to assess funding options through the State's "Co-funding" initiative. I urge you to look at the different programs on-line and to contact us for more information. 💧💧
