



Fact Sheet

Using DWSRF Set-Aside Funds for Source Water Protection

WHAT IS THE DWSRF?

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program was established by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Amendments of 1996. The program authorizes grants to States to capitalize revolving loan funds. States use funds to provide loan assistance to eligible public water systems for infrastructure improvements needed to continue to ensure safe drinking water. The program also emphasizes preventing drinking water contamination by allowing States to reserve a portion of their grants to fund activities that encourage enhanced water system management and source water protection.

WHAT IS SOURCE WATER PROTECTION?

Source water protection is a common sense approach to guarding public health by protecting drinking water supplies. In the past, water suppliers used much of their resources to treat water from rivers, lakes, and underground sources before supplying it to the public as drinking water. Taking positive steps to manage potential sources of contaminants and preventing pollutants from reaching sources of drinking water can often be more efficient and cost-effective than treating drinking water later.

SDWA §1453 requires each State to develop comprehensive Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) which will result in assessments of every public water system in the State. These assessments, which must be made available to the public, will include a delineation of the areas needed to protect the drinking water source, an inventory of potential contaminant sources, and a determination of the water system's susceptibility to contamination. SDWA §1454 gives States the opportunity to establish source water petition programs that can investigate the origins of pollution in order to reduce levels of contamination, establish partnerships for source water protection, and develop recommendations for long-term source water protection strategies.

Under SDWA §1452(g)(2), States may use up to 10 percent of their DWSRF allotment to administer or provide technical assistance through source water protection programs, excluding enforcement actions.

Under SDWA §1452(k), States may use up to 15 percent of their capitalization grants to fund several types of source water protection activities. States may provide loans for acquiring land or conservation easements and to fund voluntary, incentive-based source water quality protection measures. States may also make expenditures under this set-aside for establishing and implementing wellhead protection programs. States were allowed to reserve funds from fiscal year 1997 grants to conduct activities related to the SDWA §1453 requirements to delineate and assess sources of drinking water. Although a maximum of 15 percent of the capitalization grant can be set aside for source water protection activities under §1452(k), no more than 10 percent of the grant can be used for a single type of source water protection activity.



WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SET-ASIDE FUNDING?

Up to 10 percent of a State's allotment can be used for State program management [§1452(g)(2)]. Funds can be used to support source water protection programs, which may include:

- Hiring staff to administer and provide technical assistance through source water protection programs
- Completing contamination source inventories and susceptibility analyses

Up to 15 percent of a State's capitalization grant can be used for local assistance and other State programs [§1452(k)].

Up to 10 percent of these funds may be used to:

- Make loans to public water systems for purchasing land or conservation easements for the purposes of source water protection.
- Make loans to community water systems for implementing source water quality protection partnership petition programs or voluntary, incentive-based source water protection measures.
- Establish and implement wellhead protection programs
- Conduct delineations and assessments of source water protection areas for public water systems in accordance with §1453 (using fiscal year 1997 grant funds only)

HOW ARE STATES USING THESE SET-ASIDES?

- **Pennsylvania** is using §1452(g)(2) funds to hire an environmental planner to develop and administer local source water protection grants and to deliver training to water systems and field staff. A hydrogeologist will be hired to develop and maintain a geographical information system to hold data collected from the source water assessment and protection program. The State is also awarding grants to local outreach groups to develop and implement community education programs to promote source water protection.
- Most States set aside the maximum 10 percent of their fiscal year 1997 grant allowed under §1452(k) to fund source water assessment programs. States are using the funds to: conduct outreach, including organizing technical advisory committees and public advisory groups; research and establish alternative approaches and protocols for completing source water assessments; document assessment work that has already been completed; characterize ground water systems; delineate source water assessment areas; conduct inventories of potential contaminant sources; make susceptibility determinations for all public water systems in the State; and establish data management systems.
- **Maine** has loaned §1452(k) funds to water systems to purchase land needed to protect sources of drinking water as an alternative to expensive treatment. **Maryland** and **Virginia** are establishing loan programs to implement voluntary incentive-based source water protection measures. Both States have developed priority systems to determine which water systems will receive funds. The types of projects these States have included as eligible for funding include creation of a local fund to retrofit existing stormwater management facilities, development of local source water protection ordinances, and implementation of programs to reduce use of fertilizers and encourage local tree planting.
- Recognizing that ground water is an important source of drinking water for residents of **North Carolina**, the State is reserving §1452(k) funds to initiate a highly visible campaign to educate local and State officials, business and industry leaders, water supply operators, and the general public about wellhead protection. The State is also contracting with third parties to assist communities in developing and implementing wellhead protection plans and conducting well inspections and sanitary surveys of public water systems that use ground water as a source of drinking water.

HOW CAN I OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION?

Information about the DWSRF program is available on the EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW) homepage [www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf.html]. Information about the Source Water Assessment and Protection Program is also available on-line [www.epa.gov/safewater/protect.html]. For questions concerning a specific State, a list of State or EPA Regional DWSRF and source water protection coordinators can be found on OGWDW's webpage. You can also call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

