

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Grant (EC-SDC)

Virginia Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water

1. What is the purpose of the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) grant program?

This grant focuses on projects in which the primary purpose is to address the challenges of PFAS in drinking water. The EC-SDC grant program will provide states and territories with grants to community organizations and public water systems in small or disadvantaged communities to address emerging contaminants, including PFAS.

2. Who is eligible to apply for the EC-SDC grants?

The EC-SDC grants are available to various entities, including local governments, tribal organizations, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, academic institutions, and other eligible entities, including waterworks owners. The program specifically targets small or disadvantaged communities that face unique environmental and socioeconomic challenges.

Interested parties should submit an application for EC-SDC funding to the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water, who will consolidate multiple workplans into one application for Virginia's EC-SDC grant.

3. What is a "Disadvantaged or small" community?

The target beneficiaries are the eligible recipients for this grant, communities as described in section 1459A of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA):

A **"Disadvantaged Community"** is one determined by the state to be disadvantaged under the affordability criteria established by the state under

section 1452(d)(3) of the Safe Drinking Water Act or may become a disadvantaged community as a result of carrying out a project or activity under the grant program.

Virginia has determined that a water bill of up to one percent (1%) of the Mean Household Income (MHI) is affordable. Therefore, community or census tract with a water bill of greater than or equal to 1% of the MHI is a **“Disadvantaged Community.”**

A **“Small Community”** is one that has a population of less than 10,000 individuals that the Administrator determines does not have the capacity to incur debt sufficient to finance a project or activity under the grant program. This is a statutory definition.

4. What types of projects are funded through the EC-SDC grant program?

Eligible activities include:

- Efforts to address emerging contaminants in drinking water that would benefit a small or disadvantaged community on a per household basis;
- Technical assistance to evaluate emerging contaminant problems;
- Programs to provide household water-quality testing, including testing for unregulated contaminants;
- Local contractor training;
- Activities necessary and appropriate for a state to respond to an emerging contaminant.

5. How much funding is available through the EC-SDC grants?

The funding available through the EC-SDC grants varies depending on the specific funding cycle and availability of resources. The program provides financial support to selected projects, but the exact funding amounts may differ from year to year.

6. How can communities apply for the EC-SDC grants?

Communities interested in applying for EC-SDC grants can find background information on the official program website. [EC-SDC Grant at EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov/ec-sdc)

Information specific to the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water grant including application materials, templates, and instructions is on the VDH ODW website.

The application process is:

1. Plan your project
2. Reach out to VDH ODW EC-SDC contact and schedule a preliminary discussion/meeting
3. Develop a Work Plan, including budget, timeline and expected outcomes
4. Submit the Work Plan to ODW EC-SDC team

Applicants should submit through the emergingcontaminants@vdh.virginia.gov email inbox.

7. Can multiple organizations collaborate on a single grant application?

Yes, the EC-SDC grant program encourages collaboration among multiple organizations. Applicants are encouraged to form partnerships and consortia involving community organizations, academic institutions, government agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure comprehensive and effective project implementation.

8. What is the duration of the EC-SDC grant funding?

The current workplan is for the 18 month period January 1, 2024 through June 30 2025. The next grant period begins July 1, 2025. A general overview of the application process is outlined below. All awarded projects are expected to have a project period of four years.



The duration of EC-SDC grant funding may vary depending on the specific project and funding cycle. The program supports projects of varying lengths, including short-term initiatives and long-term endeavors, based on the nature of the proposed activities and their expected outcomes.

9. Are there any reporting requirements for grant recipients?

Grant recipients are typically required to submit semiannual and annual performance progress reports detailing the progress of their projects, including updates on milestones achieved, challenges encountered, and outcomes attained. These reporting requirements help track the effectiveness and impact of funded projects.

10. How does the EC-SDC program support community engagement and education?

The EC-SDC program places significant emphasis on community engagement and education. Grant recipients are encouraged to develop community outreach programs, workshops, and educational materials to raise awareness about emerging contaminants, their potential risks, and strategies for prevention and remediation. The program supports initiatives that empower community members to actively participate in environmental decision-making processes.

11. How does the EC-SDC program address the specific needs of small or disadvantaged communities in relation to emerging contaminants?

The EC-SDC program recognizes the unique challenges faced by small or disadvantaged communities in dealing with emerging contaminants. It prioritizes projects that address the specific needs of these communities, such as limited resources, infrastructure deficiencies, and socioeconomic disparities. The program aims to provide targeted funding and support to empower these communities to overcome the adverse effects of emerging contaminants and promote environmental justice.