



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Pacific Southwest / Region 9

# Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Program

Water Division  
Tribal Water Section • October 2018

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## Background

The purpose of the Clean Water Act Indian Set-Aside (CWISA) Program is to provide funding for wastewater infrastructure to federally recognized tribal governments and Alaska Native Villages. Funds may be used for planning, design and construction of wastewater collection and treatment systems. The CWISA Program is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in cooperation with the Indian Health Service (IHS). The program was established by the 1987 Amendments to the Clean Water Act, in Section 518(c).



*The CWISA Program addresses wastewater deficiencies such as this failed septic system.*

## How to Apply

To apply for funding from the CWISA Program, tribes must first contact their IHS Area Office ([www.ihs.gov/dsfc/staff](http://www.ihs.gov/dsfc/staff)) to determine if their wastewater needs are eligible to be entered into the IHS Sanitation Deficiency System (SDS) list. EPA provides funding for wastewater projects that are ranked and listed on the SDS list.

## How the Program Works

The SDS identifies current sanitation deficiencies for existing tribal homes; projects for future needs will not be considered. EPA uses the SDS list to identify priority wastewater projects for funding. CWISA Program Coordinators in each EPA Region and IHS Area work together to determine the projects to be funded based on the ranking of projects in the SDS and available CWISA funding. Projects are ranked in the SDS based on eight factors: health impact, existing deficiency level, previous service, capital cost, operation and maintenance capability, contributions, local tribal priority, and local conditions. For example, projects that would resolve public health concerns would rank higher than projects designed to rectify water quality problems.

## Annual Funding Levels

EPA Region 9 receives approximately \$10 million and funds more than 30 wastewater projects each year.

- The average award amount for individual projects is \$300,000. In recent years, award amounts have ranged from less than \$20,000 to over \$1 million. Award amounts will vary depending on the type of project.
- No matching funds are required.

## Tentative Schedule

<b>Year 1:</b>	January – May	Tribes identify sanitation needs to IHS Area Offices
	June	Deadline for submission of tribal needs to IHS Area Offices
	June – July	IHS Area Offices review and rank projects submitted to the Sanitary Deficiency System (SDS)
	August – October November	IHS Headquarters reviews IHS Area Offices SDS project submissions Final SDS lists made available to EPA CWISA Program Coordinators
<b>Year 2:</b>	December – March	EPA Regional CWISA Program Coordinators select projects from SDS
	April – September	EPA Regional CWISA Program Coordinators notify tribes that have been selected for funding and award CWISA Program funds

## Eligible Projects

All projects funded by the CWISA Program must support wastewater-related activities or projects. CWISA Program funds cannot be used to pay for the cost of operation and maintenance of the wastewater facility nor can they be used to pay for repairs to the treatment system in emergency situations. Project components eligible for funding include:

- Project planning, design, and Preliminary Engineering Report (PER)
- Infrastructure construction and major sewer rehabilitation
- Wastewater treatment facilities (conventional or alternative)
- Correction of combined sewer overflows
- Collector sewer pipelines
- On-site wastewater treatment systems (e.g., septic systems)
- Follow-up and as-built drawings of funded wastewater projects
- Operator training on new infrastructure equipment for first year



*Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the sewer main replacement project*



## Project: Sewer Main Replacement – San Carlos Apache Tribe

EPA's CWISA Program collaborated with IHS and the tribe to fund and construct the Sewer Main Replacement Project to replace failing 6-inch-diameter clay sewer mains in one area of the reservation in San Carlos, Arizona. The IHS contributed \$700,000 for the project and provided technical assistance to the tribe with engineering and project technical support services. EPA contributed \$590,000 of CWISA Program funds. In total, the project installed approximately 7,000 linear feet of 12-inch and 8-inch-diameter sewer mains, approximately 60 service connections, and 22 precast concrete manholes. Approximately 1,000 tribal members will benefit from construction of these new sanitation facilities, which were primarily constructed by the San Carlos Apache Tribe. The project management team succeeded in planning and organizing large, complex, multifunction efforts, including managing existing utility conflicts and coordinating with existing homeowners in residential areas. The project culminated with a ribbon cutting ceremony on December 21, 2017.

*Sewer main replacement project for the San Carlos Apache Tribe*

### EPA Contacts

[www.epa.gov/tribal/r9tribalcwa](http://www.epa.gov/tribal/r9tribalcwa)

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### IHS Area Office Contacts

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