



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR WIFIA CREDIT ASSISTANCE 2019 SELECTION ROUND (DEADLINE: JULY 5 AT 11:59 PM EDT)

EPA prepared these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers to assist prospective borrowers with preparing their WIFIA credit assistance letters of interest. Please review the [Notice of Funding Availability](#) (NOFA) and [WIFIA Program Handbook](#) when preparing your letter of interest. If the information the FAQs differs from the information in the statute, regulations, or NOFA, then the statute, regulations, or NOFA will take precedence. This document will be updated periodically as we receive and answer questions from prospective borrowers during this selection round.

[Sign-up](#) to receive updates about the WIFIA program.

### LETTER OF INTEREST SUBMISSION

#### **What is the deadline for letter of interest submission?**

Prospective borrowers must the letter of interest form and all attachments to EPA by 11:59 pm EDT on July 5, 2019.

#### **How do I submit my letter of interest?**

Prospective borrowers should submit their letter of interest form and all attachments electronically to [wifia@epa.gov](mailto:wifia@epa.gov) or via EPA's SharePoint site.

- **Email:** EPA is only able to accept e-mails of 25 MB or smaller with unzipped attachments. If necessary due to size restrictions, prospective borrowers may submit attachments separately, if they are received by the deadline.
- **SharePoint:** To be granted access to the SharePoint site, prospective borrowers should contact [wifia@epa.gov](mailto:wifia@epa.gov) and request a link to the SharePoint site, where they can securely upload their LOIs. Requests to upload documents should be made no later than 5:00 pm (noon) EDT on July 1, 2019. SharePoint filenames should be no longer than 75 characters.

#### **How do I know if my letter of interest was received by the deadline?**

The WIFIA program will confirm receipt of your letter of interest via email to the primary and secondary contact listed on the letter of interest form.

## **How can I receive help in understanding and responding to the WIFIA program letter of interest?**

The [WIFIA Program Handbook](#) contains additional information about the WIFIA program and the selection process. In particular, Appendix C provides information about the selection criteria used by EPA to review projects and how prospective borrowers should address them. Appendix G includes tips to consider when preparing and submitting a letter of interest.

EPA's WIFIA program will host two webinars for prospective borrowers that will explain the process for submitting and evaluating WIFIA letters of interest. To join a webinar, [register in advance](#). Following the webinars, EPA will post a copy of the presentation and a recording of the webinar will be available on the [WIFIA website](#). These webinars will be held on:

- Wednesday, April 17, 2:00-3:30 EDT pm: WIFIA Letter of Interest Submission and Selection Process for All Eligible Prospective Borrowers
- Tuesday, April 30, 2:00-3:30 EDT pm: WIFIA Letter of Interest Submission and Selection Process for All Eligible Prospective Borrowers

In addition, EPA's WIFIA program will host three in-person information sessions that will provide an overview of the WIFIA program, its benefits, and the application process. To attend an information session, [register in advance](#). These information sessions will be held on:

- Wednesday, May 8, 2019 in Atlanta, Georgia
- Monday, May 13, 2019 in Washington, DC
- Thursday, May 23, 2019 in Phoenix, Arizona

Prospective borrower may contact the WIFIA program staff to ask questions. Questions should be directed to [wifia@epa.gov](mailto:wifia@epa.gov) or 202-564-1868. In addition to answering the prospective borrower directly, the WIFIA program will compile the questions and their responses and include them in this FAQ.

## **Is EPA holding meetings with prospective borrowers to discuss projects before letter of interest submissions?**

Yes. EPA will meet (in-person or by phone) prospective borrowers prior to submission of their letter of interest. Contact the WIFIA program at [wifia@epa.gov](mailto:wifia@epa.gov) to set up a meeting.

## **Is there a fee for submitting a letter of interest?**

No. EPA will not collect any fees until the application phase. EPA has structured the WIFIA fee schedule in this way so that an initial project review is conducted at no cost to the prospective borrower. Once a prospective borrower is invited to apply, it must submit the application fee with the application materials. The fee schedule is available Appendix D of the [WIFIA Program Handbook](#).

## **Is there a limit to the number of attachments?**

No. Prospective borrowers may send in as many attachments necessary to support its letter of interest. In responding to the letter of interest questions, prospective borrowers should direct reviewers to the relevant attachment, specifying the page numbers or sections as appropriate.

**May I request that information submitted to EPA remain confidential?**

Yes. A prospective borrower may assert a business confidentiality claim covering part or all of the information submitted to EPA as part of its letter of interest in a manner consistent with [40 C.F.R. 2.203](#), 41 Fed. Reg. 36902 (Sept. 1, 1976), by placing on (or attaching to) the information a cover sheet, stamped or typed legend, or other suitable form of notice employing language such as trade secret, proprietary, or company confidential. The prospective borrower should also state whether it desires confidential treatment until a certain date or until the occurrence of a certain event. Information covered by a business confidentiality claim will be disclosed by EPA only to the extent and only by means of the procedures set forth under [40 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart B](#). Information that is not accompanied by a business confidentiality claim when it is received by EPA may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to the applicant. More detailed information is available in Appendix F of the [WIFIA Program Handbook](#).

**Can prospective borrowers who are not selected request a de-brief on their letter of interest to be better positioned to re-apply?**

Yes. Prospective borrowers not selected in this round can request that EPA provide a de-brief on the submitted letter of interest.

**ELIGIBLE ENTITIES, PROJECTS, AND COSTS****Who is eligible to apply for WIFIA credit assistance?**

The entity applying for WIFIA credit assistance must be one of the following:

- A corporation.
- A partnership.
- A joint venture.
- A trust.
- A federal, state or local government entity, agency, or instrumentality.
- A tribal government or consortium of tribal governments.
- A state infrastructure financing authority, as defined by the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

**Can municipal governments come together and jointly apply?**

Yes. Municipal governments can submit a single letter of interest for a group of projects with a common security pledge.

**Are territories of the United States or entities within such territories eligible for WIFIA assistance?**

Yes. For purposes of WIFIA, territories of the United States and the District of Columbia are considered states. Therefore, any eligible entity located in a territory or the District of Columbia may receive WIFIA assistance.

**Are non-profit entities eligible for WIFIA assistance?**

Yes. Non-profit entities are typically organized as corporations or partnerships, both of which are defined as eligible entities.

**Are Joint Power Agencies eligible?**

Yes, Joint Power Agencies are eligible.

**Can WIFIA loans finance the costs of project design and feasibility studies?**

Costs such as project design, feasibility studies and consulting fees are eligible project costs.

**How do you define a small community water infrastructure project?**

For the purposes of WIFIA, a small community water infrastructure project is one that is eligible for the State Revolving Fund (SRF) program and serves a community of not more than 25,000 individuals (not connections). For this purpose, the population of the community is determined by the population of the entire system which the project serves.

**Are projects less than \$20 million eligible for the WIFIA program?**

For projects serving a community with more than 25,000 individuals, the project must cost at least \$20 million. However, projects that serve no more than 25,000 individuals and are SRF-eligible can cost less. For these small communities, the minimum project cost is \$5 million.

**Is there an upper limit on project cost or size?**

There is no defined upper limit. EPA is bound by its budget authority, which sets the upper limit on loan volume.

**Can WIFIA financing be combined with a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan?**

Yes. A project can be funded with both WIFIA and SRF Funds, however, if the source of the SRF funds is the EPA capitalization grant, total funding between the two programs will be limited to 80% of eligible project costs.

**LETTER OF INTEREST EVALUATION**

**What are the priorities for this selection round?**

EPA has identified four strategic objectives as priorities for this selection round:

1. **Provide for clean and safe drinking water:** EPA is working to strengthen its implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act to ensure we protect and build upon the enormous public health benefits achieved through the provision of safe drinking water throughout the country. The Agency's highest priorities include reducing exposure to lead and addressing emerging contaminants, including PFAS, in the nation's drinking water systems.
2. **Repair, rehabilitate, and replace aging infrastructure and conveyance systems:** Many communities face formidable challenges in providing adequate and reliable water and wastewater infrastructure services. Existing water and wastewater infrastructure in some of these communities is aging, and investment is not always keeping up with the needs. EPA estimates the national funding need for capital improvements for such facilities totals approximately \$740 billion over the next 20 years. In many cases, meeting these needs will require significant increases in capital investment.
3. **Readiness to proceed:** In order to ensure the efficient use of limited federal resources for infrastructure finance, a project's readiness to proceed toward development, including loan closing and the commencement of construction, is an Agency priority.
4. **Water reuse and recycling:** EPA is highlighting water reuse and recycling as a new or innovative approach. EPA recognizes that reuse and recycling of water can play a critical role in helping states, tribes, and communities meet their future drinking water needs with a diversified portfolio of water sources. The practice can alleviate the effects of drought and assure groundwater resource sustainability and a secure water supply.

#### **Are all selection criteria weighted the same?**

No. Section VII of the [Notice of Funding Availability \(NOFA\)](#) outlines how the selection criteria are weighted and evaluated for this selection round. Appendix C of the [WIFIA Program Handbook](#) provides additional information on how prospective borrowers should address the selection criteria.

#### **Are the selection criteria the same for the \$5 million loans to small communities?**

Yes. The WIFIA program will use the same selection criteria to evaluate all projects, including small community projects.