

Planning requirements for public drinking water systems

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Revised

This fact sheet will help you determine the appropriate level of planning for your water system. It also clarifies when you must submit additional information to meet financial viability requirements for a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) application.

We strongly encourage you to have a preplan meeting with our regional engineering and planning staff before developing a planning document for our approval.

Requirements for a new or updated Water System Plan (WSP)

Group A community water systems must submit a WSP for our review and approval if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Have 1,000 or more service connections.
- Are a new proposed Group A water system.
- Seek to expand in any of the following ways
 1. Expanding the area currently served if the system does not have a previously approved planning or engineering document.
 2. Expanding the service area identified in a current, approved WSP.
 3. Making infrastructure changes to increase the approved number of connections.Systems seeking to expand without making any of the above changes may submit a project report instead of a WSP. This includes systems seeking to increase the approved connections by using water use efficiency savings or other existing excess capacity, or systems installing redundant or replacement infrastructure without requesting to increase the approved connections as part of the project.
- Seek to be eligible for the “document submittal exception” process, which allows them to proceed with certain projects without submitting construction documents to us for review.
- Are directed to develop a WSP because of demonstrated operational, managerial, or financial problems.
- Are municipally owned and located in a critical water supply service area. If your water system falls into this category, but it is not expanding, contact your regional planner about the appropriate planning document.
- Seeks a DWSRF loan or grant for a project not identified in a current, approved WSP.

Water systems with a current, approved WSP that does not adequately address the proposed project will need to submit a project-specific amendment.

Water systems that have an approved “construction document submittal exception” will need to provide construction documents for DWSRF-funded projects.

Requirements for a Small Water System Management Program

All community and noncommunity water systems not required to submit a WSP must develop and implement a Small Water System Management Program (SWSMP).

- We don’t require water systems to submit their SWSMP for approval except in certain circumstances.
- Sanitary surveyors will discuss SWSMP development as part of the sanitary survey process.

When must a system submit a SWSMP for our approval?

We may require a water system to submit its SWSMP when:

1. A new nontransient noncommunity water system is created.
2. A system that is not required to submit a WSP is seeking a DWSRF loan or grant.
3. A water system has operational, managerial, or financial problems and we determine that submitting their SWSMP for our review may help to correct those problems.

Contact your regional planner for a preplan meeting to discuss the scope and level of detail for your SWSMP.

Financial viability requirements for DWSRF loan applicants

- Most systems that apply for a DWSRF loan will need to meet planning-related financial viability requirements.
- Privately owned systems will need to submit a supplemental financial application with their DWSRF application. The supplement must include business references, tax returns, balance sheet statements, and long-term debt. We will also require applicants to fill out a financial viability spreadsheet. We use this information, along with an on-site visit, to evaluate the system’s ability to repay the DWSRF loan and readiness to proceed with the project.

More information

Office of Drinking Water

Our publications are online at <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/publications/publications.cfm>

For more information, call the nearest regional office.

Eastern Region: Spokane Valley 509-329-2100

Northwest Region: Kent 253-395-6750

Southwest Region: Tumwater 360-236-3030



For financial viability requirements, call 360-236-3100