



Water Supply Revolving Loan Account Program Success Story 2016 Year in Review

The Ohio legislature created the Drinking Water Assistance Fund and Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) program in 1989. The WSRLA helps communities eliminate public health threats by providing the financing needed to ensure that drinking water infrastructure is maintained and expanded to meet growing needs.

Since its inception, the WSRLA program has grown and expanded its services to include direct technical assistance to communities and additional financial assistance to disadvantaged communities throughout Ohio. By the end of 2016, the program had financed more than \$1.25 billion for completion of more than 550 related projects.

Challenge

In 2013, U.S. EPA released the results of a nationwide survey showing that approximately \$384.2 billion in infrastructure investments would be needed over the next 20 years to protect and ensure the public health, security and economic well-being of the nation's cities, towns and communities.

Nearly two-thirds of this need is targeted to drinking water transmission and distribution systems. The rest includes treatment plants, storage systems and source protection. While these are national figures, they illustrate the scale of the problem. The same report estimates that Ohio's portion of the total need identified is about \$12.2 billion, with two-thirds of this directly related to transmission and distribution system needs, just like the national figures.

Solution

To help Ohio's communities address the challenges of aging drinking water infrastructure systems, Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance and Division of Drinking and Ground Waters provide a combination of low interest rate loans and principal forgiveness funding. In 2016, Ohio EPA provided more than \$100 million in financing for one planning, five design and 30 construction project loans. The construction projects included \$4.6 million of principal forgiveness dedicated to disadvantaged communities to address drinking water compliance and public health needs. The program also offered \$100 million of zero percent interest rate loans to communities to specifically address treatment plant projects that target the reduction or elimination of contaminants and toxins caused by harmful algal blooms. In all, these initiatives have saved Ohio communities more than \$15 million.

To address concerns related to lead contamination in Ohio's drinking water systems, Ohio EPA created special incentives in 2016, offering zero percent interest rate loans to conduct corrosion control studies, map lead service lines and replace those lines.

Resources

The WSRLA is committed to a flexible and responsive approach to program management to continue helping Ohio communities meet their emerging drinking water infrastructure challenges and priorities. For more information about Ohio EPA's WSRLA Program, visit epa.ohio.gov/defa/ofa.aspx.

