



ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Fiscal Year 2027
Cost-Share
Program Guidance

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FISCAL YEAR 2027 COST-SHARE PROGRAM GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

The Governor and Legislature recognize the importance of developing alternative water supplies for the growing economy and health of Florida's natural systems. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the state's five water management districts (Districts) share a responsibility to identify and implement water conservation (WC), reuse, and other alternative water supply (AWS) and water resource development (WRD) projects.

This guidance is provided for applicants to the Fiscal Year 2027 Cost-Share Program. In accordance with Chapter 373, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Governing Board (Board) may participate and cooperate with county governments, municipalities, water supply authorities, and other interested public and private entities in water management programs and projects of mutual benefit, provided such programs and projects are consistent with the St. Johns River Water Management District's (District) statutory authority and will ensure proper development, utilization, and conservation of water resources and ecology within the jurisdictional boundaries of the District.

In anticipation of Fiscal Year 2026-2027 legislative appropriations, the District is accepting applications for alternative water supply and water conservation projects/programs.

Funding may be provided to assist with the construction costs of projects that support any of the following:

- Alternative water supply or water resource development
- Water conservation (including the installation of water conserving devices and other implementation costs)

Funding Eligibility

To qualify for the cost-share program, municipalities and counties must have adopted a landscape irrigation ordinance that is consistent with the District's model irrigation ordinance:

<https://aws.sjrwmd.com/SJRWMD/waterconservation/Model-Water-Conservation-Ordinance.pdf>

Utilities must have an established water conserving rate structure or a condition of service to address irrigation conservation.

For phased projects, the overall master plan identifying each phase should be included in each application submittal along with a summary of the status of the previous phase(s), whether complete or not. The summary should contain, at a minimum, whether the previous phase(s) received District cost-share funding, percent complete of the phase(s), and an updated schedule for completion as well as reasons for any schedule delays. **Each phase must have demonstrable (stand-alone) benefits associated with that phase only.** Benefits and cost-effectiveness must be calculated based on the individual project phase. Projects that are permitted and ready to begin construction will receive a higher score during the application review process.

Note: This is a State of Florida reimbursement program, with the entire project scope expected to be completed within the funding period, regardless of amount awarded. There is no guarantee the applicant will be awarded the amount requested. The applicant should indicate in section C-1 of the application whether funds are available to accomplish the project if an amount less than that requested is recommended.

Projects/Work Funded

For project costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the related construction activity must occur during the term of the Agreement.

The following types of project costs will generally be considered for funding: construction, construction engineering and inspection services, materials directly related to construction of the project, pumping stations and storage facilities, transmission and distribution systems, plumbing retrofits (conservation-related), and improved landscape irrigation efficiencies. Feasibility and land acquisition projects may be eligible for funding if they relate to one of the project types listed above and are necessary to implement a regional project. For funding consideration of project types not listed, applicants are encouraged to contact District staff.

The following costs are examples of those that will generally **not** be considered eligible for cost-share funding: software for planning and data collection purposes that does not lead to a calculated and direct conservation benefit, preparation of bids, geotechnical investigations, augmentation wells, emergency generators, meter replacement including AMI / AMR meters, easement acquisition, contamination assessments or remediation, monitoring costs once construction is complete, debt service, legal and lobbying fees, capital charges, impact fees (see below), operation and maintenance activities, construction of new potable water mains, biosolids, or projects required for mitigation purposes.

While these are general examples, there are exceptions. Please contact District staff for clarification as it pertains to a specific project. Additional information on ineligible costs is included

in each of the project specific sections below. Costs that are excluded from funding will not be credited toward recipient's portion of the cost-share.

Note: Impact fees are not reimbursable and are defined as a one-time cost imposed on all new residential and commercial construction (or existing residents where septic is being converted to sewer) by local governments to defray the cost of growth's "impact" on vital services such as water and sewer, or other infrastructure needs. They are the responsibility of the applicant.

Applications

The online application system is available at:
<https://www.sjrwmd.com/localgovernments/funding/districtwide/>

Applications must be submitted prior to 5 p.m. on January 29, 2026.

If your project is selected by the DEP for funding, you will be contacted to create a statement of work using information from your application.

PROJECT TYPES

1. Alternative Water Supply

The Florida Legislature has annually approved funding for development of water supply and water resource development projects. Eligible projects for consideration are construction-ready and provide an alternative water supply benefit within the District. These projects must be submitted as part of the District's annual cost-share program. All projects must be vetted by the District and approved by the District's Governing Board prior to being submitted to the DEP for funding consideration. The funding priority is for regional projects in the areas of greatest need and those that provide the greatest benefit to the protection of Florida's natural systems.

The District will consider the following factors in the selection of AWS projects:

- Projects that provide regional benefits
- Projects that benefit water bodies with adopted Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs), particularly those that are in recovery or prevention.
- Projects with dual benefits, such as AWS projects that also provide flood protection, water quality, or recreational benefits.
- Cost-effectiveness
- The return on investment, i.e., the amount of funding the state grant will be leveraged by District and/or local cooperators, while recognizing the funding limitations of REDI or other economically disadvantaged communities

Eligible projects are alternative water supply projects that are submitted by a water management district, approved by a water management district governing board, and are one of the following project types:

- Reclaimed Water
- Stormwater
- Surface Water
- Brackish Groundwater
- Desalination
- Other Non-Traditional Source(s)
- Other Water Quantity

AWS projects will typically achieve many of the following objectives:

- Assist waterbodies, whose status is in Prevention or Recovery, in meeting established MFLs
- Help meet projected water demand in a sustainable manner
- Maintain the perpetual use of source water through replacement of original systems with newer technologies or methods that are more efficient or allow sustainable use of source water
- Develop alternative supplies in a cost-effective manner
- Achieve an economy of scale and diversify water sources for reliability and sustainability (multi-jurisdictional water supply system projects)

Projects that are listed in an MFL Prevention or Recovery Strategy or are listed in a Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) will score in the High category for Benefit. Projects that are listed in an Outstanding Florida Spring (OFS) MFL Prevention or Recovery Strategy approved by the Board after June 30, 2016 will receive the highest point value in the High category. Projects that benefit other MFL waterbodies or are listed in a proposed MFL Prevention or Recovery Strategy or Water Supply Plan will score in the Medium category.

Applicants must provide a description of the AWS project and the water source that it is replacing, evidence that the proposed alternative source has the quantity available for the proposed project, an estimate of when the project benefits will be realized and explain the basis for the estimate and provide supporting documentation for the project's benefit calculations. For reclaimed water projects, applicants are required to use the Water Made Available (WMA) tool provided in Section C-2 of the application portal. The details about the tool and the documentation supporting it are provided in section C-2 of this guidance document.

2. Water Conservation

Water conservation is the prevention and reduction of water use to improve efficiency of use and to avoid using water when not needed for the intended purpose. The District seeks to leverage available funds to encourage projects that result in measurable water savings. Eligible projects include the following examples (this is not an exhaustive list, and applicants are encouraged to contact District staff for other project types that may qualify):

- Residential water conservation projects, such as the replacement of older less efficient plumbing fixtures and devices with newer higher efficiency models, or improved landscape irrigation system efficiency.
- Recreational/aesthetic water use projects that focus on improving the efficiency of irrigation systems or replacing systems with more efficient types.

- Commercial / Industrial / Institutional projects vary from manufacturing and cooling processes to typical indoor and outdoor conservation (plumbing and irrigation).

Water conservation projects result in measurable water savings and must not include the use of an alternative source. Projects that include only staff time or labor hours will not be funded. Projects must include the purchase of materials or approved devices. The applicant must describe how the project will result in water savings and provide supporting documentation to prove a benefit. Water conservation projects that support an MFL Prevention or Recovery Strategy or that show documented savings of 20% or more will score in the highest category for Benefit. Projects that are listed in a RWSP will score in the Medium category.

GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR COMPLETING THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 APPLICATION

The Fiscal Year 2027 cost-share program application and the evaluation criteria that will be used to score applications are available at:

<https://www.sjrwmd.com/localgovernments/funding/districtwide/>

District staff will review the application based on the information provided. The following guidance is intended to assist the applicant with submitting a complete application.

A. Basic Information

A-1: Enter the applicant's name and project name.

A-2: Enter the project manager or contact person's information for this project. Correspondence concerning this application will only be sent to the person listed in A-2.

A-3: Enter the contact information of the person who has authority to enter into a contractual agreement. If it is the same as A-2 above, A-3 can be left blank.

A-4: Check the box corresponding to the county where the project is located.

A-5: Check the box corresponding to the Water Supply Planning Region in which the project is located. Refer to map at www.sjrwmd.com/water-supply/planning/.

A-6: TMDLs, BMAPs, RAPs, WBIDs, MFLs, and Springs: Indicate whether the project benefits a spring, whether the project is located within a Springs PFA and if the project is listed in a Prevention Strategy for the implementation of minimum flows and levels (MFLs).

- a. Indicate if the project is located within an area with an established TMDL, RAP or BMAP. If yes, provide the name of the TMDL waterbody, BMAP, and Waterbody Identification number (WBID). If no, just provide the WBID(s).

To determine if the project is within a TMDL, RAP or BMAP area, use the Interactive map on the DEP website at:

<https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/impaired-waters-tmdls-and-basin-management-action-plans>

Note: If the proposed project is listed within a BMAP, provide the BMAP project number (e.g., VC-3 or LM-4). Be sure that your project name corresponds to the BMAP project name. If your project is part of a BMAP project but is not identical, please provide the BMAP project name and project number that most closely corresponds to your project and explain the relationship between the two in section B-2.

- b. Indicate if the project benefits a waterbody that has established MFLs and a Prevention / Recovery Strategy. If yes, provide the name of the MFL waterbody and prevention recovery

strategy. Information on MFL water bodies is located on the District's website at www.sjrwmd.com/minimumflowsandlevels.

- c. Indicate if the project benefits a spring. If yes, provide the spring name, if the project is in the PFA, or listed in a prevention strategy for implementation of MFLs.

A-7: Indicate if the applicant is eligible under the REDI provisions for waiver or reduction of the matching funds requirement, as defined by F.S. 288.0656.

A-8: For County or Municipal applicants, indicate if a landscape irrigation ordinance has been implemented in general accordance with the District's Model Water Conservation Ordinance for Landscape Irrigation. Refer to the following link for a list of entities that currently meet the requirement and for the model ordinance language:

www.sjrwmd.com/wateringrestrictions/

If such an ordinance is in development, choose In Progress and attach a description of the status in Section D.

Additionally, utilities must have a water conservation rate structure or condition of service to address irrigation conservation. If these are in development, choose In Progress and attach a description of the status in Section D.

A-9. Has the project been submitted under a previous cost-share program? Provide the date(s) and project name(s) of previous submittal(s).

A-10 In accordance with 161.55, F.S., if the project is located within the Coastal Building Zone (as defined in Subsection 161.54(1), F.S.), a Sea Level Impact Project (SLIP) study is required. A copy of the SLIP study should be attached in Section D of the application.

B. Project Information

B-1: Check the primary project type (alternative water supply, water conservation).

B-2: The Project Description section is a specific scoring criterion and as such, the project should be described in a clear, concise, and sufficiently detailed manner that will allow District staff to adequately understand the project elements. The quality, clarity, and thoroughness of information requested in the entire application is important to the District's understanding of the project you are proposing for funding assistance. The score for this category includes the overall application quality.

Additional information may be provided to supplement the understanding of the project, such as maps, plans, and drawings. However, the primary source of information used to evaluate the project description must be contained in Section B-2. Any additional information must be clear and concise and plainly support the information provided in Section B-2.

- a. Write a succinct, clear, description of your project.
- b. Is this project multi-phased or part of a larger overall effort? If yes, describe the phases(s) proposed for funding in this application and how the phase relates to larger projects you have underway or planned in the future. Include the overall master plan and identify the

phase(s) in this funding request. Each phase must have a clearly defined start and finish. Each phase must be a stand-alone project with demonstrable benefits. Specify the water resource benefit(s) expected from that phase only. Identify if your project helps to implement an RWSP, adopted BMAP, RAP, SWIM Plan, or other adopted regional resource management plan.

Note: Poorly described or incomplete project details will negatively impact a project's scoring and final rank. The determination of the quality and completeness of the project description is exclusively up to the judgement of the District and includes the quality of the entire application.

- c. Describe the project location and attach two maps: a regional location map and a more detailed project area map. The detailed map should identify any potentially affected MFLs, TMDLs, BMAPs, RAPs, impaired WBIDs, or affected wetlands or springs (additional maps may be provided as needed to more clearly show the project location or attributes).
- d. Provide the latitude and longitude coordinates (to six places in decimal degrees) for the location of your project. Example: 40.446010° N 79.982255° W. Use a centroid if your project covers a large area.

B-3: Describe the benefits: Alternative Water Supply or Water Conservation.

Benefits are expected to be realized within 5 years of completion of construction. Include information to support the timing that the benefits will be realized. A project with a secondary benefit may receive up to 10 additional points depending on the validity of the stated secondary benefits and whether those benefits have been quantified.

The project must demonstrate an increased benefit over the existing condition, not the total possible benefit of the construction project. For example, for a reclaimed water extension project, the benefit is the amount of new reclaimed water being provided to a specific number of connections in a community, not the total capacity of the pipe.

- B-4 If the project is an AWS or WRD project, identify the source of water for the project by checking all that apply. If using a surface water or "other" source, identify the source's location and name if applicable.
- B-5: If you have a consumptive use permit (CUP), Environmental Resource Permit (ERP), or permit determination for the project site, provide permit type, number, expiration date, and current compliance status.

B-6: Project Readiness - The likelihood of successfully completing the project is addressed here.

Project readiness is a critical factor in the overall scoring of project applications. Using the information described below, and required within the application, those projects showing a higher likelihood of beginning and remaining on schedule will receive additional points in the scoring process. Aspects of project execution will be scored using the information provided in the application. Factors such as the date of construction start, percent of design completed at the time of application, permitting status, surety of funding and land ownership and access will be

scored individually. Those projects with start dates beginning immediately after October 1st of the program fiscal year, those with completed design at the time of application, permits received, funding obtained, and land under ownership or with executed access documentation will receive a higher score.

- a. Complete the Project Status Table, checking all applicable project components and include estimated (month / day / year) start and completion dates for each component selected. Include the current percentage of completion at the time of application for any project components already underway or completed for planning, design, permitting and bidding actions by the application submittal date. If construction began prior to October 1, 2026, the project is not eligible, unless the project is phased and the application is for a new phase.

Failure to meet the stated construction start date may be grounds for cancellation of the Agreement. Cancellation of the agreement based upon schedule deviation is at the sole discretion of the District.

Failure to identify a committed funding source and meet the requirements for release of the funding match will result in a lower score for project readiness. This should include activities that could affect the overall schedule such as commission approval dates and field studies (e.g., geotechnical work, survey, rights-of-way or land acquisitions, and utility locations). Be aware that an indication that outside funding has been approved may not address when those funds will be available for use. The time needed to fully secure outside funds and have them available to spend on the project (e.g., certifications, inspections, reviews, and approvals and required contracts with the funding entity) must be accounted for in the proposed project construction schedule. If alternative funding sources are being sought but are not yet in place, then the Project Readiness score will be adjusted down from what is presented in the application.

- b. Describe the public support generated for the project. Have you held any public meetings or workshops to describe the project? Have you presented the project to the council or commission? Has the project been identified in a community newsletter or press release?

B-7: Check “Yes” to indicate that you have identified all required permits necessary for this project.

B-8: Indicate if property and/or easements needed for the project are under the applicant’s ownership or control. If portions of the needed property are under ownership but others are not, indicate the steps being taken to obtain ownership and the likelihood that all property will be under the applicant’s control prior to the beginning of construction.

C. Project Cost Information

C-1: Project cost breakdown, cost share request, and other funding sources

- a. Breakdown of project cost. Attach a table or spreadsheet with detailed project costs for each project component or task. The table should detail all project costs.
- b. The funding table includes details of the funding request.

1. Enter the overall total construction cost and enter the total construction cost in the two boxes broken down by FY. Year 1 (FY 2027) is 10/1/2026 – 9/30/2027. Year 2 (FY 2028) is 10/1/2027 – 9/30/2028. The total of these two costs should equal the total estimated construction cost of the project.
 2. Enter the total amount of all other project costs including land acquisition, planning, design, permitting, and bidding.
 3. Enter the total estimated project cost. The total project cost should equal the sum of the construction cost (1.) and other project costs (2.) Do not include annual O&M costs.
 4. Enter the total cost share amount that is being requested (up to fifty percent (50%)). REDI communities can request up to 100% reimbursement of construction costs.
 5. Enter the estimated annual O&M cost.
 6. Enter the estimated service life of the components of the project in years.
- c. Identify the applicant's funding contribution and all other outside sources of funding, including any State or Federal appropriations, grant monies, or municipal bonds. Include the status of the identified funding sources. Funding for the recipient's match should be in place or committed at the time of application submittal. Failure to identify a secured funding source will result in a lower score for project readiness.

Other types of match (in-kind contributions, legislative appropriations, federal funding, costs of design, permitting, and engineering, companion projects, prior phases not previously funded, prior land acquisition) should also be identified. Prior DEP funding cannot be considered as other match.

This is a State of Florida reimbursement program, with the entire project scope expected to be completed within the funding period, regardless of amount awarded. There is no guarantee the applicant will be awarded the amount requested. The applicant should indicate in section C-1 whether funds are available to accomplish the project if an amount less than that requested is recommended.

- d. Identify if this is a single entity project or multi-jurisdictional with two or more partners. Identify the partners and include a copy of any partnership agreements, memos of understanding (MOU) and status. For example, indicate when negotiations on an agreement or MOU will be complete, or if one is in place, provide the expiration date and when it will be renewed, if at all. Also, indicate the percentage of funding provided by each partner.
- C-2: Quantification of Benefits – The quantified benefits should reflect the net increased benefit over the existing condition and not the total gross benefit of the construction project. In addition, the benefit shown must be realized within five years of completion of construction of the funded project. Where the funding is for a phase of a larger project, the benefits must reflect those expected from the specific phase associated with this funding.

For alternative water supply and water conservation projects, provide the estimated quantity conserved or alternative water made available in million gallons per day (mgd).

For reclaimed water projects, use the provided Water Made Available (WMA) tool developed by DEP based on their [Spring's Funding Guidance](#). Refer to "Guidance to Develop the Quantity of Water Made Available" on pages 23-27, specifically for reclaimed water projects on page 24. Provide supporting information for the 'Projected Reuse Flow (mgd)' used as input in the WMA tool. Upload the filled-out tool (spreadsheet) along with the supporting documentation confirming 'Projected Reuse Flow (mgd)'. This information is a required checklist item to complete your application.

C-3: Cost-Effectiveness – Cost-effectiveness will be either automatically calculated or be calculated by staff, based on the information provided in the application.

PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS

The applicant is encouraged to meet with District staff prior to submittal of their application. Pre-application meetings will consist of reviewing the application requirements and answering questions. Staff will not provide a complete evaluation of the application at the meeting. Applicant must provide all the information in the guidance document on the application regardless of whether it was discussed at the meeting.

If you have any questions, contact:

1. Lou Donnangelo (904) 448-7930, ldonnangelo@sjrwmd.com
2. Nitesh Tripathi (386) 312-2359, ntripathi@sjrwmd.com
3. Shane Howell (321) 473-1350; SHowell@sjrwmd.com

FY 2027 Cost-Share Application Checklist

Provide the required attachments: project map, project cost estimates, and benefit calculation spreadsheets; plus, additional information required for your specific project type in accordance with the FY 2027 Cost-Share Program Guidance.

- ☐ All sections of the application are filled in completely
- ☐ Construction phasing information (if applicable)
- ☐ Detailed project cost breakdown
- ☐ Cost-effectiveness calculator (spreadsheet)
- ☐ Quantity of Water Made Available (WMA) Tool (spreadsheet)
- ☐ Calculations for quantification of project benefits
- ☐ Applicant has identified all required permits necessary for project construction
- ☐ Application is signed and dated

I certify that all information on this form and the attached document(s), if applicable, is true and correct.

Name (print): _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Signature of the person with authority to enter into a contractual agreement.

Date: _____



St. Johns River Water Management District
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FY 2027 COST-SHARE EVALUATION FORM



Fiscal Year 2027 Evaluation Form

Project Name:	
Reviewer:	
Date:	
1. Project Description (Application Section B-2) (10 points possible)	
Project description and supporting material are well written and succinct - Excellent (10 points)	
Project description and supporting material are good (7 points)	
Project description and supporting material are adequate (4 points)	
Project description and supporting material are not clear or succinct; poorly defined project (0 points)	
Total: 0	
Justification for score:	
2. Benefit (Application Section B-3) (30 points possible)	
Water Supply (Alternative Water Supply Project or Water Conservation Project)	
High water supply benefit expected (24, 27, or 30 points)	
Medium water supply benefit expected (14, 17, or 20 points)	
Low water supply benefit expected (4, 7, or 10 points)	
Total: 0	
Justification for score:	
Secondary Benefit (5 or 10 points total, even if more than one additional benefit)	
a. Water Supply	
b. Water Quality	
c. Natural Systems	
Total: 0	
Justification for score:	
3. Project Readiness (Application Section B-6) (20 points possible)	
Project will start by 1/31/2027 (13 points)	
Project will start by 4/30/2027 (7 points)	
Project will start by 6/30/2027 (1 points)	
Project will start after 6/30/2027 (0 points)	
Scoring additions for design, permitting, land access and funding	
Total: 0	
Justification for score:	
4. Cost Effectiveness (Application Section C-3) (30 points possible)	
Cost Effectiveness Scoring will be calculated for each project type separately as identified in section C of the application. Only the primary Core Mission project type will be used to score a project. A maximum of 30 points for cost effectiveness can be obtained for a project. See Evaluation Guidance Manual for scoring criteria.	
High (30 points)	
Medium (20 points)	
Low (10 points)	
Total: 0	
Justification for score:	
Total Score:	

NOTES: