

# Montana State Library Funding Guide

## *ARPA Water & Sewer Grants*

### Overview

Local Governments, including city, county, or other political subdivisions are eligible to apply for APRA funding for water, wastewater and storm sewer projects. Libraries themselves are generally not eligible to apply, but if they have lead drinking water service lines that need replacing or have their own water or sewer systems (not connected to a municipal or other water and/or sewer district), they may be eligible. If you have questions about whether or not you are eligible, visit [www.arpa.mt.gov](http://www.arpa.mt.gov) and click on “Contact Us” to connect request technical assistance. The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation reviews applications and makes recommendations to the Infrastructure Advisory Commission for funding. There are two types of grant programs.

- **Minimum Allocation** – A minimum funding amount has been allocated for each county, city or incorporated town. The [Minimum Allocation Dashboard](#) indicates how much funds have been allocated to each governmental unit. To use the funds, localities must submit an application for each proposed project that is eligible for funding. DNRC will review applications monthly to determine if the application meets project criteria.
- **Competitive Grants** –Competitive grants applications are ranked according to public health and safety criteria, readiness to proceed, affordability, and match amount. Typically, drinking water or wastewater system improvements that address existing or potential threats to public health or the environment will rank higher and are more likely to be funded. Such infrastructure upgrades for a municipal or public system, may include upgrades to service lines or other infrastructure that would result in improved service to library facilities or may include the replacement of lead service lines within a library facility. Projects that rank low and do not receive a competitive grant, may be proposed as a minimum allocation project.

### Description

#### **Eligibility:**

Projects must be eligible under the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund ([Drinking Water SRF](#)) or Clean Water State Revolving Fund ([Clean Water SRF](#)). Libraries do not directly apply for these grants except possibly in the rare instance where a library is its own water and/or sewer system (not connected to a municipal or other public water/sewer system). The local government with jurisdiction over the library is typically the applicant.

**Timeline:**

Minimum Allocations - DNRC will review applications monthly. The next deadline for applications is November 1. Applications will be accepted monthly until January 1, 2023.

Competitive Grants - The first rounds of competitive grants were awarded in October 2021. The second round of grant applications are due on January 14, 2022.

**Project Types:**

Types of eligible projects that might be applicable for libraries include:

- Stormwater – Drainage or parking lot improvements that reduce stormwater run-off.
- Water Conservation - Landscaping improvements that result in water conservation and conserve energy through lower treatment costs. Examples include, replace inefficient spray irrigation with drip irrigation systems, use native plants, rain gardens, or xeriscaping designs that require less watering.
- Habitat Protection and Restoration (Silviculture) – If the library is adjacent to a stream, landscaping improvements that protect and improve natural areas may result in habitat protection and reduce sedimentation in streams.
- Surface Water Protection - Improvements that provide natural filtration of stormwater through drainage swales or landscaping can protect surface waters through reduced storm water run-off and reduce sedimentation.
- Centralized Wastewater Treatment – Decommission septic and connect to municipal wastewater, replace aging service lines, disconnect storm sewer connections to sewer lines, ....
- Decentralized Wastewater Treatment – Replace aging septic system
- Water Transmission & Distribution – Decommission drinking wells and connect to municipal water supplies, replace aging service lines, replace lead service lines
- Planning/Assessment – Prepare landscape plan or parking lot designs. Engineering designs and/or quotes for replacing septic, connecting to municipal water/sewer systems or other projects.

## Process

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**STEP 1:** Review existing planning documents (CIP, Facility Plans, Strategic Plans, Preliminary Engineering Reports, ...) to identify library projects that may be eligible for water and sewer grant funds.

**STEP 2:** Contact local government to request they submit an application for a minimum allocation grant on behalf of the library.

**STEP 3:** If the proposed project requires additional planning or engineering, potential funding for such work may be available from ARPA, Big Sky Trust Fund or CDBG Planning Grant.

**STEP 4:** Compile basic information for a grant application including, project description, problem and solution, level of readiness, project schedule and project budget.

**STEP 5:** Identify matching funds. These may be from other grant programs or local funds. For example, county conservation districts may have grants for local water conservation projects.

## Other Tips

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- **Planning** – Existing planning documents and engineering studies can provide information for the grant application.
- **Technical Assistance** – The Department of Commerce CTAP program is providing technical assistance for grants. Check MCDC e-bulletins for other links to webinars and training materials.
- **Community Support** – Local governments are more likely to sponsor library projects that have strong community support. This can be demonstrated through community surveys, letters of support, testimony at community meetings, partnerships or through planning documents
- **Public health and safety** – Projects will rank higher if they demonstrate how projects address public health and safety needs.
- **Matching Funds** – Projects will be more competitive if they a higher percentage of matching funds.
- **Partnerships** – Partners might be able to provide a match, in-kind services and can help generate community support.

## Web Resources

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ARPA Water & Sewer Grants - <https://arpa-mtdnrc.hub.arcgis.com/>

Montana Department of Commerce - Provides technical assistance for applicants and has limited engineering services to aid communities in applying for ARPA Water & Sewer Grants.

<https://arpa-mtdnrc.hub.arcgis.com/pages/commerce>.

Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) Planning Funds (Preliminary Architectural Reports, Preliminary Architectural Reports, .... )

<https://comdev.mt.gov/Programs-and-Boards/Community-Development-Block-Grant-Program/Planning-Activities>

Montana Department of Natural Resource and Conservation - <http://dnrc.mt.gov/grants-and-loans>

Montana Association of Counties - [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) \(mtcounties.org\)](https://mtcounties.org)

Montana League of Cities and Towns - [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) | Montana League of Cities and Towns \(mtleague.org\)](https://mtleague.org)

## Prepared by:

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