

STIMULUS FUNDING AVAILABLE

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provides billions of dollars to put Americans back to work and put the economy back on the road to recovery. The stimulus package made available \$6 billion for the Clean Water SRF and Drinking Water SRF and \$28 billion for the USDA Rural Development programs.

Drinking Water SRF

The Oklahoma DWSRF Program will receive \$31,500,000 from the ARRA to fund construction projects for drinking water systems in Oklahoma. The program will offer a grant/loan combination with 30 percent of project cost in the form of a grant up to a maximum of \$2 million and 70 percent in the form of a low interest loan with a 20 to 30 year payback period. Loans and grants will be available for projects that are “shovel-ready”. To be “shovel-ready” the following must be completed: 1) project is placed and prioritized on the Projects Priority List, 2) engineering report approved by DEQ, 3) plans and specifications approved and permitted by DEQ, 4) environmental review is complete, and 5) application to the OWRB is approved. Projects must have contracts awarded or be under construction within 12 months (February 17th, 2010).

How to apply for funds:

1. Submit letter to the DEQ requesting to be placed on the Project Priority List. A sample letter is available from DEQ or ORWA. The letter should include the following information:
 - a. Project description
 - b. Amount of funds needed
 - c. Date to start construction
 - d. Name of consulting engineer, if system has one under contract
2. Submit final engineering report, (3 copies to the DEQ for review). The engineering report must follow the FACT Guidelines.
3. Submit plans and specifications (3 copies) for DEQ review.
4. Contact the DWSRF Environmental Coordinator (405) 702-8100 to determine the type of environmental review that will be needed and instructions for the described project.
5. Contact the Oklahoma Water Resources Board at (405) 530-8800 to get an application for DWSRF funding.

For more information contact Vickie Reed, DWSRF Program Coordinator, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, PO Box 1677, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101-1677, (405) 702-8100.

Clean Water SRF

The Oklahoma CWSRF Program will receive \$31,500,000 to fund construction projects for wastewater systems in Oklahoma. The program will offer a grant/loan combination with a minimum of 20 percent of the project cost in the form of a grant, up to a maximum of \$2 million, and 80 percent in the form of a low interest loan with a 20 year payback period. The interest rate on loans will be 40 percent below market rates. Projects must be shovel ready, and need to be on the project priority list. There is no deadline for applications, but you will need to act quickly. Projects must have contracts awarded or be under construction within 12 months (February 16th, 2010).

To apply for CWSRF funding the following will need to be completed:

1. Project is placed and prioritized on the Projects Priority List
2. Approved Engineering Report
3. Approved and permitted Plans and Specifications
4. Completed Environmental Review
5. Approved OWRB Application

For more information contact Jennifer Wasinger at the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, (405) 530-8800.

Rural Development Loans and Grants

Although the exact amount of stimulus funding for USDA Rural Development (RD) loans and grants in Oklahoma is uncertain at this time, there could be as much as \$70 million available for water and wastewater projects in the state. During the first phase of stimulus funding applications which have been approved for funding at the state level will be placed on a national priority list for funding selection in April. After this time, uncommitted stimulus funds will be distributed to the states. At least 50% of the stimulus funds are anticipated to be approved for ready projects by June 15, 2009 with the remaining funds, while they last, being available through September 30, 2010. Time is of the essence, so you need to contact your area Rural Development office as soon as possible to get your application process started.

To apply for Rural Development funding the following will need to be completed:

1. Engineering Report prepared in accordance with FACT guidelines and approved by ODEQ
2. Environmental Information Document prepared
3. RD Application package prepared

There will be no change in the Rural Development loan and grant application form or application process. You are not required to submit plans and specifications with the application.

To find out the Rural Development Area Office for your area, or to obtain additional information contact Christy Harper at the Rural Development State Office, (405) 742-1063.