

Ask Me Anything! What is the Green Project Reserve (GPR)? 3.5.2025

Quick recap

Ashley led a discussion about the Green Project Reserve (GPR). She also discussed the complexities and differences in state interpretations of the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the four categories of Green Project Reserve projects in the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). She reminded participants that this training is provided for free, supported by a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Environmental Finance Center network.

Summary

State Revolving Loan Funds Overview

Ashley introduced the State Revolving Loan Funds (SRFs) as low-interest, revolving loan programs with subsidies targeting specific communities or types of projects. The funds are matched by state governments at 20%, with a portion allocated for administrative overhead and special projects. SRFs have been operational for 40 years for Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund and 30 years for Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund, resulting in a sizable amount of revolved money coming back into the programs. Some states also leverage the bond market for additional funding, which is repaid using loan repayments. Ashley discussed the complexities and differences in state interpretations of the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act, emphasizing that each state has its unique approach. She focused on the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) Green Project Reserve, which was established because of the 2009 ARRA.

GPR Projects in Clean Water SRF

Ashley explains the Green Project Reserve (GPR) in the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). She outlines the four categories of GPR projects: green infrastructure, water efficiency, energy efficiency, and environmentally innovative projects. Ashley clarifies that while states must allocate 10% of their federal capitalization grant to GPR projects, there's no requirement to prioritize or subsidize these projects. She notes that the GPR requirement is relatively easy to meet, as many standard wastewater treatment facility upgrades can qualify as energy efficient. Ashley also mentions that the DWSRF no longer has a mandatory GPR component, unlike the CWSRF.

Stormwater Mitigation and Green Infrastructure

Ashley discussed stormwater mitigation and green infrastructure, explaining it as natural infrastructure used to address stormwater runoff, contrasting with hard or grey infrastructure like collection pipes. She noted that while communities may not get a loan to eliminate one downspout, for example, they can get a loan for a stormwater management plan that includes various activities. Ashley also mentioned that ancillary projects associated with these eligible entities and facilities that have a direct benefit to them, such as solar panels at a treatment facility, are eligible. Energy efficiency projects were the largest bucket, and environmentally innovative projects were the smallest. Ashley concluded by mentioning resources available on EPA's website and upcoming training.

Future Trainings

Ashley mentioned that she would be repeating the "What is an IUP" training at the end of October and that a 2-hour deep dive session on the same topic, focused on Oregon's DWSRF and CWSRF programs would take place on April 10th. She encouraged those who missed the January "What is an IUP" session to attend the April session, as the information would be applicable to other states.