Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection Funding

NEW YORK STATE | Department of Environmental Conservation

Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program

June 2026

Apply for funding to protect your community's drinking water supply. Protecting your municipality's public water supply is a high priority. Municipalities, land trusts, and soil and water conservation districts can receive state money to purchase land that is near their public drinking water sources. Awardees will then protect that land and make sure it is only used for activities that will not harm their public water supply.

Program Overview

Credit: Kevin Kreischer

The Water Quality Improvement Project Program (WQIP) is a competitive, statewide, reimbursement grant program. One kind of grant offered through this program is **Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection**. This project type provides funding to protect sources of public drinking water by funding land acquisition. The grant provides money to purchase parcels and/or conservation easements for land this is near an active public drinking water supply.

- **Maximum grant amount: $5,000,000**
- **Eligible project costs:** Buying land or development rights; transactional costs such as surveys, appraisals, transfer taxes, and title reports; and riparian buffer plantings or wetland restoration costs
- **Advance payment:** Awardees may request advance payment of transactional and purchase costs
- **Riparian buffer:** Variable riparian buffer width depending on parcel location
- **Required local match:** 25% of requested grant amount

Applicants do not need to have their parcels identified at the time of application but must have a drinking water targeted for protection identified.

For full grant details view the WQIP Program Overview at:
http://on.ny.gov/wqip

Why should you apply?

- Prevent pollution from entering the public drinking water supply
- Reduce out of pocket costs with available grant funding
- Avoid paying preventable drinking water treatment costs
- Increase resiliency and community confidence in public drinking water
- Support other environmental interests such as preserving open space

Eligible Applicants:

- Municipalities
- Not-for-profit corporations (such as land trusts)
- Soil and water conservation districts

KEY POINTS

- **Application Deadline: July 31st, 2026 at 4:00 PM**
- **$5,000,000** maximum grant amount
- **25% Local Match**
- **Advance Payment Option**
- Eligible applicants: **Municipalities, not-for-profit organizations, and soil and water conservation districts**

How to Apply:

- WQIP is part of the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). To apply, visit http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/cfa. **Applications are due July 31st, 2026 at 4:00 PM.**

Road Map for Success

Step 1: Learn more about the program

- Visit DEC's WQIP webpage (https://dec.ny.gov/get-involved/grant-applications/wqip-program) to learn more about the grant program and when funding is available.
- Visit DEC's WQIP Land Acquisition Projects for Source Water Protection Toolkit (https://dec.ny.gov/get-involved/grant-applications/wqip-program/land-acquisition-projects-source-water-protection-toolkit) webpage to learn more about land acquisition and available resources for an awardee to complete a project.

Step 2: Gather information

- Review your previous source water assessment plan (SWAP), wellhead protection plan, drinking water source protection plan (DWSP2), or other source water protection plan to understand the area that drains to your surface water intake or groundwater well.
- Partner with your drinking water operator if your community does not have such a plan and you are looking to understand where your water comes from.

Step 3: Prioritize parcels

- Use the information gathered in Step 2 to identify and prioritize parcels or areas for outright purchase or conservation easement that will protect the public drinking water source.
- If you need assistance with identifying parcels, consider working with land acquisition and source water protection experts in your area that could aid with the Town's land acquisition for source water protection goals. For example, a consulting firm or land trust may be a great partner and aid with the transaction side (e.g., appraisals, surveys, environmental assessments, title, etc.) of the land acquisition program.

Step 4: Apply for funding

- Utilize the information gathered in steps 2 and 3 to fill out a WQIP Land Acquisition application when available through the Consolidated Funding Application (https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/).

Step 5: Acquire Parcels

- If you receive a WQIP Land Acquisition grant, acquire parcels for source water protection.
- Review DEC's WQIP Land Acquisition Projects for Source Water Protection Toolkit (https://dec.ny.gov/get-involved/grant-applications/wqip-program/land-acquisition-projects-source-water-protection-toolkit) webpage for program and document resources that will aid with the land acquisition process.

Step 6: Steward the land

- Steward the land you have acquired and make sure it is only used for activities that will not harm the public drinking water source.

CONTACT INFORMATION

On the web: **http://on.ny.gov/wqip**

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