

## TWDB SEEKING INPUT ON TEXAS WATER FUND

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) is seeking input from stakeholders to assist the implementation of the Texas Water Fund on informing funding priorities and the administration of the programs. [Senate Bill 28](#) and [Senate Joint Resolution 75](#) created the Texas Water Fund, a special fund for water infrastructure and water supply projects. In addition, Texans approved Proposition 6 in November 2023 which authorizes \$1 billion in funding for water projects.

TWDB is asking interested stakeholders to complete the following surveys by **April 30**:

- [Texas Water Fund Survey: Financial Assistance for Water Infrastructure Projects](#)
- [Texas Water Fund Survey: New Water Supply Fund for Texas](#)
- [Texas Water Fund Survey: Statewide Water Public Awareness Program](#)

Written feedback may be submitted to [TexasWaterFund@twd.texas.gov](mailto:TexasWaterFund@twd.texas.gov).

Additionally, TWDB will allow for input at the following opportunities:

- **TWDB board meetings:** TWDB will allow public comment in [meetings](#) through March;
- **Texas Water Fund Stakeholder Meetings:** The [first meeting](#) will be held on March 20 in Austin. Another stakeholder meeting is planned for April in Lubbock. The League will update the membership when details become available; and
- **TWDB's Financial Assistance and Texas Water Fund Workshops:** The [in-person workshops](#) will be held throughout the state through the summer. Interested city officials should [register](#) as soon as possible as venues are subject to capacity limitations.

More information can be found in TWDB's [Proposition 6 and Texas Water Fund FAQ and Implementation Timeline](#).



# Texas Water Fund Survey 1: Financial Assistance for Water Infrastructure Projects

The TWDB may transfer money from the Texas Water Fund to several existing financial assistance programs, including: the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs; the Rural Water Assistance Fund; the Texas Water Development Fund II water financial assistance account; the Texas Water Development Fund II state participation account; and the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) program. **Transfers are not allowed to the Flood Infrastructure Fund or the Economically Distressed Areas Program.**

Of the initial amount appropriated to the Texas Water Fund, the TWDB must allocate no less than 25 percent (\$250 million) to the New Water Supply for Texas Fund (see Survey 2). The TWDB must also ensure that a portion of the money transferred from the fund is used for the following:

- water infrastructure projects, prioritized by risk or need, for rural political subdivisions and municipalities with a population of less than 150,000
- projects for which all required state or federal permitting has been substantially completed
- water conservation strategies
- water loss mitigation projects

The TWDB seeks to provide a reasonable balance between loans and grants. In general, financial assistance programs can provide a greater amount of total funding over time if a larger portion of financial assistance is in the form of low interest loans, since loans are repaid by borrowers, unlike grants, which provide no repayment stream once they are awarded.

1. Organization or entity that you represent, if applicable:

Enter your answer

2. The TWDB has typically solicited projects seeking financial assistance by requesting initial information through project information forms or abridged applications by individual program. To implement the Texas Water Fund, the TWDB is considering a combined solicitation for project information for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, assistance for rural communities, water conservation strategies and water loss mitigation, and other project types.

Projects would then be sorted by relevant program, ranked, then invited to apply for funding in priority order according to the respective program's criteria. This type of solicitation would allow the applicant to seek financial assistance from any of the included funding programs, meaning that the applicant would not have to submit separate project information forms or abridged applications for each program. Additionally, if the project qualifies for multiple programs, the applicant could choose the best fit for its needs, including any grant or subsidy.

Are in favor of this type of solicitation?

- Yes
- No
- Other

3. The TWDB may be able to fund many of the Texas Water Fund priority projects through the State Revolving Fund programs. Eligible projects would be designated as non-equivalency and super cross-cutter requirements related to American Iron and Steel, Davis-Bacon Wage Requirements, and Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action would apply. Do you have any concerns regarding these requirements?

Enter your answer

4. Once money is transferred from the Texas Water Fund to a particular financial assistance program, upon approval of an application, all statutory and rule requirements applicable to that receiving program will apply to that project. Programs that have authorization for grants (or principal forgiveness) include the Rural Water Assistance Fund, the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, and the newly created New Water Supply for Texas Fund (see Survey 2). Some programs, such as the Texas Water Development Fund and SWIFT, do not offer grants due to statutory or constitutional limitations. However, they may offer subsidies through reduced interest rates.

What factors should be considered when offering grants from the Texas Water Fund?

Please select at most 3 options.

- Household cost factor (including water/sewer rates, population decline, and unemployment rate)
- Average median household income (AMHI)
- Population decline
- Unemployment rate
- Rural designation
- Municipalities under 150,000 population
- Green project (i.e., projects that reduce energy usage or water loss; that incorporate innovative, nature-based solutions; or that seek to preserve the natural environment)
- Specific project type
- Other

5. What factors should be weighted the most heavily?

Please select at most 2 options.

- Household cost factor (including water/sewer rates, population decline, and unemployment rate)
- Average median household income (AMHI)
- Population decline
- Unemployment rate
- Rural designation
- Municipalities under 150,000 population
- Green project (i.e., projects that reduce energy usage or water loss; that incorporate innovative, nature-based solutions; or that seek to preserve the natural environment)
- Specific project type
- Other

6. Given the desire to balance grants and loans, should the TWDB use the Texas Water Fund to expand grant or principal forgiveness capacity in existing programs and/or to increase subsidies in existing programs? How can this be done in a manner that is both fair to communities and in the best interest of the state?

Enter your answer

7. How should the amount of additional loan subsidy provided by the Texas Water Fund be determined?

Enter your answer

8. The TWDB must ensure that a portion of the money transferred from the Texas Water Fund is used for water infrastructure projects, prioritized by risk or need, and for rural political subdivisions and municipalities with a population less than 150,000.

What are the greatest non-flood water infrastructure-related risks or needs for rural (generally 10,000 in population or less) communities?

Please select at most 2 options.

- Regulatory compliance for water systems
- Regulatory compliance for wastewater systems
- Water conservation/water loss mitigation
- Support for economic development
- Risk of loss of service for water systems
- Risk of loss of service for wastewater systems
- Other

9. What are the greatest non-flood water infrastructure-related risk or needs for municipalities with a population less than 150,000?

Please select at most 2 options.

- Regulatory compliance for water systems
- Regulatory compliance for wastewater systems
- Water conservation/water loss mitigation
- Support for economic development
- Risk of loss of service for water systems

Risk of loss of service for wastewater systems

Other

10. Within these categories, how should the greatest risk/highest needs be defined?

Enter your answer

11. What kind of technical assistance do you believe to be most beneficial to smaller communities?

Asset management evaluation

Preparation of a rate study

Review of existing organizational operations procedures

Review of existing financial statement/budgeting procedures

Completion of project information forms/financial assistance applications

Development of water conservation plans

Water loss audits

Financial, managerial, and technical assistance related to regulatory compliance

Other

12. What are the greatest challenges/barriers that rural and small communities face in implementing water infrastructure projects?

- Affordability
- Local support for rate increase
- Community trust/"buy in"
- Availability of local professionals
- Organizational capacity to manage the project through all phases of development
- Other

13. The TWDB must ensure that a portion of the money transferred from the Texas Water Fund is used for water conservation strategies and water loss mitigation projects.

What factors should be given the highest priority in funding these types of projects?

Please select at most 2 options.

- Total volume of water estimated to be saved
- Volume of water saved per connection per day
- Volume of water saved per capita per day
- Systems with developed water loss mitigation plans based on water loss audit data
- Previous infrastructure failures that resulted in significant water losses
- Other

14. What types of incentives are needed to implement these types of projects?

- Financial assistance, including onsite contractors and leak detection surveys



- Technical assistance
- Public awareness initiatives
- Other

15. How would you define "having substantially completed state or federal permitting" within the scope of a water infrastructure project?

- All necessary permits obtained
- Major permits obtained, minor pending
- All permit applications submitted and awaiting approval within an expected timeframe
- Other

16. Any other input that you would like to provide related to Texas Water Fund financial assistance:

Enter your answer

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# Texas Water Fund Survey 2: New Water Supply for Texas Fund

The Texas Water Fund will support the newly created New Water Supply for Texas Fund, which is designed to implement innovative water supply strategies such as marine and brackish water desalination; oil and gas produced water treatment projects; and aquifer storage and recovery projects. Political subdivisions of the state will be eligible for financial assistance from the fund.

In evaluating applications for financial assistance for the New Water Supply Fund for Texas, the TWDB is directed to consider the "relationship" of the project to the water supply needs of the state overall and the relationship of the project to the state water plan. This requirement differs from the SWIFT program, where projects must be specifically included in the state water plan (Texas Water Code § 15.432), and other financial assistance programs that require projects to be "consistent" with the regional water plans and state water plan (Texas Water Code § 16.053(j)).

1. Organization or entity that you represent, if applicable:

Enter your answer

2. In addition to the specific types of strategies included in statute (listed above), should there be other specific types of strategies that should be eligible for the program as "new water supplies" in the TWDB's draft administrative rules?

Enter your answer

3. What factors should the TWDB consider in defining "creating new water sources for the state?" How would you define "new water"?

Enter your answer

4. What types of projects should be given priority?

Please select at most 2 options.

- Projects providing a certain volume of water supply
- Projects that serve the most people
- Projects that serve smaller communities
- First-time projects (as opposed to expansions of existing facilities)
- Certain types of projects, such as desalination or aquifer storage and recovery
- Other

5. Please provide any narrative you would like related to the previous question.

Enter your answer

6. What technological, economical, or regulatory constraints do you see related to these types of technologies?

Enter your answer

7. How should the TWDB rules define the "relationship" of water supply projects funded by this program to the state water plan?

Enter your answer

8. Should projects included in the state water plan receive higher priority or more points in a ranking system?

- Yes
- No
- Other

9. Or should the TWDB require projects to be consistent with, or be recommended in, the state water plan?

- New water supply projects should be recommended projects or strategies in the state water plan
- New water supply projects should be reasonably consistent and not in conflict with projects or strategies recommended in the state water plan
- Other

10. Please provide any narrative you would like related to the previous two questions.

Enter your answer

11. Should subsidized interest rates be available in this program?

- Yes
- No
- In some circumstances

12. Should grant funding be available in this program?

- Yes
- No
- In some circumstances

13. What factors should be considered when offering grants from the fund?

Please select at most 3 options.

- Household cost factor (including water/sewer rates, population decline, and unemployment rate)
- Annual median household income
- Population decline
- Unemployment rate
- Rural designation
- Municipalities under 150,000 population

- "Green" projects (i.e., projects that reduce energy usage or water loss; that incorporate innovative, nature-based solutions; or that seek to preserve the natural environment)
- Other

14. Should there be a single type/level of subsidy or should subsidies vary depending on the specific new water project type (e.g., seawater desalination vs. brackish groundwater desalination)?

- There should be only one level of subsidy
- Subsidy levels should vary depending on the project type
- Other

15. What should be the maximum allowable share of the one-time, upfront capital costs (planning, acquisition, construction cost) of a project to be subsidized via grant/loan forgiveness?

- 5%
- 10%
- 20%
- 33%
- 50%
- Other

16. Should subsidies for planning, design, acquisition, and construction costs all be the same?

- Yes

- No
- Other

17. What should be the maximum allowable interest rate subsidy (reduction in borrowing rate)?

- 1/4 of the interest rate
- 1/2 of the interest rate
- 3/4 of the interest rate
- All of the interest? (that is, zero percent interest rate or interest free loan)
- Other

18. Should interest rate subsidies for planning, design, acquisition, and construction costs all be the same?

- Yes
- No
- Other

19. Please provide any other feedback you would like related to the New Water Supply for Texas Fund.

Enter your answer



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# Texas Water Fund Survey #3: Statewide Water Public Awareness Program

The TWDB must ensure that a portion of the Texas Water Fund is directed toward a statewide water public awareness program to educate Texas residents about water. The program must take into account the differences in water needs of various geographic regions of the state and shall be designed to complement and support existing local and regional water education or awareness programs.

1. Organization or entity that you represent, if applicable:

Enter your answer

2. The TWDB is proposing to implement this program by providing funds via contract, after a formal solicitation process, to support an existing or proposed statewide public awareness program or campaign. We would also like to explore TWDB-led initiatives that could further water public awareness. Given limited resources, what initiatives should receive the highest priority?

K-12 educational resources and programming

Data visualization tools

Selling merchandise, such as clothing, cups, stickers, etc., with water messaging and/or branding

Other

3. How could TWDB otherwise complement and support existing local and regional water education or awareness programs?

Enter your answer

4. Any other input that you would like to provide related to the statewide water public awareness program:

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