

*Helping communities and businesses access compliance, technical  
and financial assistance for their environmental needs*

### Ohio EPA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response, Questions, and Guidance

As a precautionary response to COVID-19, Ohio EPA is currently operating with most staff working remotely. If you are working with our staff on a current project and you know the name of the employee you are working with, email them at [firstname.lastname@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:firstname.lastname@epa.ohio.gov) or call them directly. The Agency website has contact information for every district, division, and office. In order to reach us, please contact Ohio EPA's main phone line at (614) 644-3020 or the **main line for the division or office you are trying to reach**.

After March 23, our district offices and Central Office temporarily closed and have limited ability to receive deliveries, plans, etc. All entities are encouraged to submit plans, permit applications, etc., electronically where there are existing avenues to do so, such as the **eBusiness Center** (eBiz). Please refer to the list of available services on the **main eBiz** webpage. We encourage you to make use of all that apply, even if you have not used eBiz in the past. Plans under 25 MB can be emailed. For large plans over 25 MB, entities should work with the reviewer/division to upload via LiquidFiles. Directions for submitting docs via LiquidFiles are **available on YouTube**. We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you in advance for your understanding.

To report a spill or environmental emergency, contact the spill hotline (800) 282-9378 or (614) 224-0946.

#### Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response, Questions, and Guidance

With the onset of the coronavirus (COVID 19) and the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency in Ohio, Ohio EPA is aware that regulated entities may be impacted from a reduced workforce necessary to maintain normal operations at some facilities. All regulated entities remain obligated to take all available actions necessary to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and permit requirements to protect the health and safety of Ohioans and the environment. However, in the instance where regulated entities will have an unavoidable noncompliance situation, directly due to impact from the coronavirus, a form has been created by Ohio EPA to accept requests for the Director of Ohio EPA to consider providing regulatory flexibility, where possible, to assist entities in alternative approaches to maintaining compliance, such as extending reporting deadlines, consideration of waiving late fees, and exercising enforcement discretion.

Regulated entities should **complete the request form** with specific information related to enforcement discretion. Form submittals will be monitored daily and Ohio EPA will work diligently to expeditiously review and respond to incoming requests from regulated entities. The following information is needed to complete the form:

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For more information go to  
[epa.ohio.gov/defa](http://epa.ohio.gov/defa)

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- The specific regulatory or permit requirement which cannot be complied with,
- A concise statement describing the circumstances preventing compliance,
- The anticipated duration of time that the noncompliance will persist,
- The mitigative measures that will be taken to protect public health and the environment during the need for enforcement discretion,
- A central point of contact for the regulated entity, including an email address and phone number.

Where alternative compliance options are authorized by Ohio EPA, regulated entities must maintain records adequate to document activities related to the noncompliance and details of the regulated entity's best efforts to comply.

**Ohio EPA Quick Links** – The following links will take you to questions, information, and resources from Ohio EPA divisions for the COVID-19 response.

- [\*March 31, 2020 Public Water System Emergency Order\*](#)
- [\*Division of Drinking and Ground Waters\*](#)
- [\*Division of Materials and Waste Management\*](#)
- [\*Division of Surface Water\*](#)

**State Quick Links** – The following links are to statewide information and sites.

- Ohio Department of Health Website Coronavirus (COVID-19) or direct link to copy and paste is: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home>
- Questions about COVID-19? The Ohio Department of Health call center is ready to answer your questions about COVID-19. Call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH. The Call Center is staffed from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day, including weekends.

The following links are to federal information and sites:

- [\*U.S. EPA COVID-19\*](#)
- [\*COVID-19 Implications for U.S. EPA's Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Program.\*](#)

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## Continued Success for Ohio EPA's Ohio Materials Marketplace

Ohio EPA continues to lead Ohio's developing circular economy with the Ohio Materials Marketplace, a free online market platform. The Ohio Materials Marketplace aims to create a closed-loop, collaborative network of businesses, organizations and entrepreneurs where one organization's hard-to-recycle wastes and by-products becomes another organization's raw material. In addition to diverting waste from landfills, these recovery activities generate significant cost savings, energy savings, and create new jobs and business opportunities.

Ohio EPA launched the Ohio Materials Marketplace in April of 2017. Interest and participation have grown continuously since the beginning. 1070 individual members are now in the Ohio marketplace representing over 850 Ohio businesses. Since the launch of the marketplace in 2017, nearly 3.8 million pounds of material have been diverted from the landfill with over \$222,000 in savings realized by marketplace members. Members primarily realize savings through avoided disposal costs and through replacing more expensive virgin materials with used or by-product materials.

Visit <https://ohio.materialsmarketplace.org/> to learn more, join, and to help grow Ohio's circular economy.



## Ohio EPA Training Opportunities

- May 21 — *Sustainability In Your Community*, DEFA, webinar.

## Priority Placed on Lead Service Line Replacement Projects



Lead is a common, natural, toxic, and often useful metal that was used for years in products around the home and in the construction industry. It can be found throughout the natural environment as well as in manufactured products such as lead-based paint, pottery, plumbing lines and fixtures.

Lead can enter drinking water through the corrosion of plumbing materials and/or water lines. Many homes across the country get water through lead pipes, called lead service lines, which connect the main drinking water line in the street to homes.

Since 2018, as a response to concerns of lead in drinking water, Ohio EPA's Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) has awarded targeted funding for lead service line replacements. Over the next two years, lead service line replacement projects will be a special area of emphasis for principal forgiveness funding (the principal portion of a loan that does not require repayment). The WSRLA typically offers about \$13 million each program year in principal forgiveness for a variety of projects. In addition to this year's allocation, other sources of extra principal forgiveness are anticipated during the WSRLA program year.

To take advantage of these funding opportunities, Ohio EPA strongly encouraged applicants to submit lead service line replacement project nominations for consideration through the WSRLA program. Nominations received for Program Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) will be used to determine the total amount of principal forgiveness allocated. Both public and private service lines are eligible for replacement and, where both lines are present, both lines must be replaced.

Please visit <https://www.epa.ohio.gov/defalofa> for more information or contact our office at 614-644-2798

## Highlights of Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) 2019 Annual Report

2019 marked another successful year of enhanced services to Ohio's businesses and communities through Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA). Through our team's efforts, we surpassed prior years of assistance and service to our customers. DEFA serves as a one-stop shop for customers seeking technical and financial resources to help them achieve compliance.

Below are some of the resources and services available:

- State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan programs to help communities construct and maintain wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.
- Funding to help communities address water quality issues from combined sewer overflows, failing home sewage treatment systems, nutrients, and lead.
- Technical assistance to help small community wastewater treatment plants improve operations and efficiency.
- Compliance assistance program to help small businesses with environmental regulations through on-site visits, help completing applications and forms, training, and plain-English publications.
- Funding to support recycling, litter cleanup, scrap tire management, and market development for recyclables such as glass, plastics, rubber, and construction and demolition debris.
- The Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) program, which recognizes the outstanding efforts of businesses, communities, schools and other entities making a commitment to environmental stewardship.
- The Ohio Materials Marketplace (OMM), an online tool to facilitate the reuse of materials through a collaborative network of businesses, organizations, and entrepreneurs.



In 2019, we reached out to hundreds of businesses and communities throughout Ohio to increase the awareness of services and resources available through DEFA, and we look forward to even greater technical and financial assistance in the coming year.

**Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF)** - In 2019, Ohio EPA awarded WPCLF loans totaling more than \$542 million to Ohio communities. Principal forgiveness (grant-like) funding totaling approximately \$10 million was made available to help communities address failing household sewage treatment systems (HSTS). In addition, close to \$22 million in principal forgiveness was made available to provide collection capacity in unsewered areas and address other infrastructure priorities, particularly in economically disadvantaged and small communities.

**Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) Program** – In 2019, Ohio EPA awarded WSRLA loans totaling close to \$109 million to help communities address drinking water infrastructure needs. In addition, about \$21 million in principal forgiveness funding was made available to help small, disadvantaged communities.

**Addressing Statewide Priorities through Ohio's SRF Programs** – Ohio EPA leverages financial resources through our SRF and grant programs to address some of the state's most significant water quality challenges, including harmful algal blooms (HABs), failing household septic systems, lead, and combined sewer overflows. Working in partnership with other public funding partners, providing incentives for innovative approaches, and offering flexible financing terms have been effective strategies to help our communities in addressing these challenges.

**Helping Small Wastewater Systems** – During 2019, the wastewater Compliance Assistance Unit (CAU) added staff who now work directly from locations in two of Ohio EPA's district offices, Bowling Green and Logan, helping increase our assistance to customers throughout Ohio. Also in 2019, CAU kicked-off another round of wastewater treatment system training opportunities with a regional significant non-compliance (SNC) workshop in Northwest Ohio (Bellevue).

**Helping Businesses with Environmental Regulations and Permitting** – DEFA's Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention (OCAPP) provides free and confidential assistance to help businesses comply with

environmental requirements. OCAPP responded to more than 12,500 environmental assistance requests from Ohio businesses, communities, and other organizations during 2019. This includes 166 site visits and assistance in completing 952 forms, including permit applications and other Ohio EPA paperwork. OCAPP staff participated in 63 presentations and training events, reaching more than 2,900 people with information on a variety of environmental compliance topics. DEFA hosted 20 webinars covering a variety of topics, including environmental compliance, funding, and reporting. More than 4,000 people participated in DEFA's webinars or viewed our archived library of training materials during 2019. Popular webinar topics included:

- Air Services Overview
- Waste Generator Improvement Rules
- Recycling and Litter Prevention Grant Application Process
- Ohio's Materials Marketplace

**Ohio EPA's Second Sustainability Conference** – Ohio EPA held its second Sustainability Conference in Columbus in April 2019, with more than 200 attendees. A mix of Ohio EPA staff and business representatives presented conference sessions. Ohio EPA Director Laurie Stevenson provided the keynote address and recognized Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Silver, Gold, and Platinum Level recipients.

**Ohio's Materials Marketplace: Year Two Accomplishments** – In April 2017, Ohio EPA launched the Ohio Materials Marketplace (OMM), a free online platform connecting businesses to recycling and reuse solutions for their waste and by-product challenges. Ohio businesses, not-for-profits, and government organizations can now list available products and materials that would otherwise be destined for disposal in landfills. Ohio EPA manages and markets OMM with help from the United States Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Ohio By-Product Synergy Network, and Ohio's solid waste management districts. To date, more than 1,000 members have joined OMM and 3.77 million pounds of materials have been exchanged for reuse and diverted from landfills, saving members more than \$222,000. Five OCAPP staff became zero waste certified advisors to support these and other sustainable materials management efforts.

**Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Program** – Ohio EPA's E3 Program recognizes businesses, organizations and government entities for achievements in environmental stewardship. During 2019, Ohio EPA acknowledged five Gold Level, two Silver Level, and three Achievement Level E3 recipients. This was the third year Ohio EPA recognized organizations at the Platinum Level for their efforts to expand their environmental sustainability programs beyond their own facility to make a positive impact on their surrounding community with one organization recognized at the E3 Platinum Level. Ohio EPA introduced the Encouraging Environmental Excellence in Education (E4) program at Newark schools as part of an Earth Day celebration with Governor Mike DeWine. The E4 program recognizes any K-12 public or private school for its achievements in environmental stewardship and efforts to educate students on environmental topics.

**Funding Support for Recycling and Litter Prevention** – Each year, Ohio EPA's Recycling and Litter Prevention (R&LP) Program awards grant funding to support recycling-related activities across Ohio. In 2019, the program awarded more than \$ 4 million in grants to support 66 projects throughout the state.

**Reaching Our Customers Electronically** – DEFA's outreach efforts include monthly eBlasts, a quarterly newsletter, and blog posts. Our eBlasts contain information on upcoming regulatory changes, funding opportunities, training, and other resources. DEFA's quarterly newsletters contain more detailed updates and a range of articles related to environmental compliance, water, and wastewater infrastructure development, and sustainability efforts. Our 2019 eBlasts and newsletters reached an audience of more than 18,000 subscribers.

**Looking Forward** – In 2020, DEFA continues to focus on proactive outreach efforts to ensure that our customers, Ohio's businesses and communities, are aware of the many resources available to help meet their environmental and financial assistance-related goals.

We appreciate the support from all our stakeholders and look forward to another busy and productive year in 2020. If you have any questions or need more information about our services, contact us at (614) 644-3469 or visit our website at [epa.ohio.gov/defal](http://epa.ohio.gov/defal). You can access our DEFA 2019 Annual Report at: <https://www.epa.ohio.gov/Portals/29/documents/2019AnnualReport.pdf>.

## Learn the Lingo

**Community** - A social unit (a group of living things) with commonality such as norms, religion, values, customs, or identity. Communities may share a sense of place situated in a given geographical area (e.g. a country, village, town, or neighborhood) or in virtual space through communication platforms. (From Wikipedia).

## Deadlines

- **WRRSP** Nominations accepted July 15 – Aug. 15

## E3 Case Study Platinum Award Winner

### The Cleveland Clinic

On December 17, 2019, Laurie Stevenson, Director of Ohio EPA presented the Cleveland Clinic's main campus the Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Platinum Level award. The Clinic is recognized for its outstanding environmental stewardship efforts on the campus and for creating long-term societal and environmental benefits for the surrounding community. The Cleveland Clinic had previously been recognized at the E3 Gold Level in 2017.

The Cleveland Clinic is a nonprofit, multispecialty academic medical center that integrates clinical, hospital healthcare, research and education and is the largest employer in Northeast Ohio. Its Office for a Healthy Environment (OHE) drives the sustainability strategy for the entire medical center working with 15 enterprise-level committees and localized Green Teams and Committees.

The Cleveland Clinic is involved with many local and regional projects improving the environmental sustainability of the region. Some of its community engagement activities are:

- Being an Energy Star partner.
- Membership in Practice Greenhealth.
- Membership in the U.S. Green Building Council.
- Membership in the region's Sustainable Cleveland program. It sponsors a farmer's market each season, providing healthy natural foods for the local urban community, and meets with suppliers, periodically reviewing environmental and social responsibility opportunities.
- Partnering with New Avenues for Independence and its own Center for Autism to build a new recycling center to recycle clinical plastics to create 12 jobs for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Planting trees for Arbor Day, with multiple partners and providing education on the social and health benefits of trees and green spaces.
- Working with schools, engaging more than 9,000 K-12 students from 179 schools in four states through programs designed to promote health and wellness, academic achievement, and career preparedness further demonstrating the Clinic's commitment to the larger regional community.



**IN 2018, the total savings from environmental sustainability were \$6.7 million in 2018 for the Main Campus categorizing its program into the three R's: reduce, reuse, recycling the results were:**

**It REDUCED – saving \$4.965 million in 2018 savings from energy efficiency, printing reductions and anesthetic gas-use reductions.**

**It REUSED – saving \$1.746 million in 2018 savings from reusing and repurposing clinical equipment and furniture.**

**It RECYCLED – Saving \$0.2 million in 2018 from diverting waste and recovering materials.**

The Cleveland Clinic main campus has a strong environmental stewardship program. It's goals for 2020 are: reducing energy demand by 20 percent, purchasing 30 percent of its food from local and sustainable sources, reducing water use

by 10 percent (per square foot), achieving a 50 percent landfill diversion rate through recycling, and building all new buildings to the LEED Gold standard. The Clinic is also committed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2027. The Clinic also has a Green Fund for sustainability projects and offers carpool, bike rider, electric vehicle, and mass transit incentives.

The Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Platinum Level recognizes organizations that demonstrate environmental stewardship efforts that improve the social well-being of the local community or region creating long-term societal benefits. The Platinum Level is open to any business, industry, trade association, professional organization or college/university of Ohio. If your organization is a leader in sustainability and environmental stewardship in your community and region and if you are interested in more information please check out Ohio EPA's E3 Web page at <https://epa.ohio.gov/ocapp/ohioe3>.

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## In Your Community – A New Webinar Series for Environmental Issues at the Local Level

Local officials wear a lot of hats and may not be familiar with the many environmental issues that affect their communities. The Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance is launching a new series of webinars focused on those environmental issues that have an impact at the local level. These webinars will occur throughout the year and cover a wide range of topics from how Ohio EPA regulates sources of air pollution, waste management, wastewater and storm water discharges to different ways your community can promote environmental stewardship and improve the environment in your local area.

DEFA will use these webinars to share details about Ohio EPA's roles, processes, and partners, in addressing environmental issues facing Ohio's communities. They will also share resources and tools for planning and responding to the environmental concerns that impact all Ohioans at the local level. Planned webinar topics include:

- Environmental regulation of businesses
- Managing contaminated sites
- Septic systems
- Odors and dust
- Nuisance waste sites

The first webinar in this series will occur on May 21 and focus on local approaches to sustainability and how your community can find the tools and resources to become more sustainable. Additional information is available on the [In Your Community](#) page.

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## Ohio EPA Advises Against Flushing Wipes

As some Ohioans search for alternatives to toilet paper, Ohio EPA is advising people not to flush any product other than toilet paper to avoid clogging sewers and septic systems. Flushing products other than toilet paper is generally a bad idea. Cleaning wipes, tissues, and paper towels will eventually clog public sewers and home septic systems. Flushing these items can cause sewage backups into homes and lead to expensive repairs. Even in normal times, only toilet paper should be flushed. Toilet paper dissolves more easily in water. Wipes are among the most commonly flushed items which shouldn't be flushed.

Among products and items that should never be flushed are:

- wipes, including baby wipes and disinfectant wipes – even if they are labeled as flushable;
- cat litter;
- diapers;
- hygiene products including cotton balls and swabs, menstrual products, and condoms;
- medications, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines; and
- fats and grease.

These items always should be bagged and thrown in the garbage.

More information is available online from the [Water Environment Federation](#) and [U.S. EPA](#), or by calling your local municipal sewer and/or septic system professionals.

The City of Spokane, Department of Wastewater Management teamed up with the Water Environment Federation (WEF) for a video titled “Will It Flush?” at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLTVqkXVvNk&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLTVqkXVvNk&feature=emb_title). Although products like facial tissues, dental floss, cotton swabs, and cat litter may flush down the toilet, they can cause clogged pipes for you and your neighbors. Watch “Will It Flush?” to find out more, and many thanks to City of Spokane Department of Wastewater Management for sharing its entertaining and educational video in partnership with WEF.

## New Publications

- *DEFA 2019 Annual Report*, Ohio EPA.
- *April 2020, Small Business Bulletin*, U.S. EPA
- *Sample Collection and Evaluation of Vapor Intrusion to Indoor Air guidance for Remedial Response*, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and Voluntary Action Programs, Guidance Document, Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization (DERR).
- *Recommendations Regarding Vapor Intrusion Response in Ohio*, Guidance Document, Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization (DERR).

## Census 2020

**What Is the 2020 Census?** The 2020 Census counts every person living in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. Invitations to respond to the 2020 Census were delivered between March 12-20. You can respond online, by phone, or by mail.

**Why Do We Conduct This Count?** The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts. It's also in the Constitution: Article 1, Section 2, mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every 10 years. The 2020 Census will mark the 24th time that the country has counted its population since 1790.

Participating in the census is required by law, even if you recently completed another survey from the Census Bureau. A complete and accurate count is critical for you and your community, because the results of the 2020 Census will affect community funding, congressional representation, and more.



**The census count is mandated by the Constitution and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, a nonpartisan government agency. The 2020 Census counts the population in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Each home receives an invitation to respond to a short questionnaire—online, by phone, or by mail.**

**How Does the Census Bureau Protect Your Data?** The U.S. Census Bureau is bound by law to protect your answers and keep them strictly confidential. In fact, every employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life. The Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the U.S. Code to keep your information confidential. Under Title 13, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about you, your home, or your business, even to law enforcement agencies. The law ensures that your private data is protected and that your answers cannot be used against you by any government agency or court. The answers you provide are used only to produce statistics. You are kept anonymous: The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in any way that could identify you or anyone else in your home.

**Data Protection and Privacy Program.** Being responsible stewards of your data is not only required by law, it is embedded in Census Bureau culture. Strict policies and statistical safeguards help protect the confidentiality of your information. Before releasing data products, the Census Bureau verifies that they meet its confidentiality standards.

**Is the Data Collection Secure?** From the beginning of the data collection process, the Census Bureau follows industry best practices and federal requirements to protect your data. The security of Census Bureau systems is a top priority, and their IT infrastructure is designed to defend against and contain cyberthreats.

Go to: <https://2020census.gov> for more information.

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