

Readiness-to-proceed Evaluation for the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) in program year 2023

Beginning in PY 2019, Ohio EPA formalized a process to evaluate readiness-to-proceed for principal forgiveness eligible projects. The chart below illustrates the phased approach to implementing readiness-to-proceed evaluations. The criteria for WPCLF program year 2023 are identified and further described below.

Only projects submitted by entities eligible for principal forgiveness¹ will be reviewed for readiness-to-proceed. This is a secondary evaluation to the project score using the Integrated Priority System². The readiness-to-proceed score is based on project information readily available at the time of evaluation and provided with the project nomination.

As a tie breaker for projects with the same project score and readiness-to-proceed score, a project that will address, in part or whole, Agency priorities (e.g., unsewered areas, regionalization, combined sewer overflows, etc.).

Program Year 2023 Readiness-to-Proceed:

- Established user charge system
- Approvable facility plan submitted with project nomination
- Design underway
- PTI application submitted/approved
- Public participation

Established user charge systems for water and wastewater utilities should adequately account for debt service, system operations and maintenance, and capital improvements. For new utility systems, provide documentation of the proposed user charge system and collection schedule for a pre-construction sewer charge or planning fee. The minimum expectation is that collection of a pre-construction sewer charge or planning fee is sufficient to repay any current or proposed pre-construction debt service (i.e., planning or design loans) and will continue to be collected until the user charge system is fully implemented. For existing systems, include a copy of approved user charge legislation with current rates.

An approvable facility plan (project planning information, preliminary engineering report, etc.) is required for all design and construction projects. Information submitted with the project nomination must be adequate for a complete planning review. A reference guide for project planning information is available at

<https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/29/documents/ofa/WPCLF-Project-Planning-Guidance.pdf?ver=2019-11-06-101934-933>

¹ A listing of entities eligible for principal forgiveness in PY2023 is available at <https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/financial-assistance/wpclf>

² Refer to Appendix K of the PY2022 Program Management Plan: <https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/29/documents/ofa/WPCLF-2022-Final-PMP.pdf>

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For projects in design, submit a written project update with the nomination. For design projects not financed through the WPCLF, also provide a copy of the executed agreement for services.

Most WPCLF projects require either a Permit to Install (PTI) and/or a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit in advance of construction. A PTI application submittal is a considerable project milestone and indicates that the project has progressed significantly towards construction financing. For projects that do not require a PTI, describe the status of design or provide completed plan sheets. To meet the readiness-to-proceed criteria, complete PTI applications must be submitted by the end of the nomination period (typically the end of August).

Public participation requirements vary depending on the anticipated project. Provide a description of outreach to the affected public and any responses received along with supporting documentation with the project nomination. As appropriate, outreach may include information available online, press releases or news articles, and mailings or direct contact with current or potential customers.