

PA Coalition for Oral Health (PCOH)
Community Water Fluoridation Funding Opportunities
Request for Proposal (RFP) Fall 2026
Guidelines and Application

BACKGROUND

Fluoridation has been identified as the most feasible and cost-effective method of delivering fluoride to all members of a community, regardless of age, education, or income. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that for every \$1 invested in community water fluoridation, up to \$32 in annual dental care costs can be saved. The CDC has also identified water fluoridation as one of the “Ten Great Public Health Achievements of the 20th Century.”

Scientists in the United States and other countries have studied the safety and benefits of fluoridated water for more than 75 years and found no convincing evidence to link water fluoridation to any potential unwanted health effect. As of 2020, 56% of Pennsylvanians served by community water systems receive fluoridated water (which means that 49% of *all* Pennsylvanians receive fluoridated water). Increasing that percentage will improve the quality of life and reduce overall healthcare costs for more Pennsylvania citizens.

PURPOSE

This RFP seeks the following outcomes:

- To issue funds to those public water systems wishing to initiate, update, or expand the practice of community water fluoridation. Any system with a PWSID is eligible to apply.
- To increase dental preventive measures and improve overall health and well-being of Pennsylvanians served by community water systems.

FUNDING

This program is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Health through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under Grant NU58DP007897: Promoting Strategies to Advance Oral Health in Pennsylvania and administered by PCOH.

Maximum Request The maximum request per water system wishing to initiate fluoridation and for systems currently fluoridating may not exceed \$25,000. Depending on the number of applications, there may be one larger award or numerous smaller awards. If funds remain after the first application deadline, a second funding round will be announced.

Applicant Match Applicant match is not required. However, awardees are responsible for any additional costs exceeding the **maximum award amount of \$25,000**.

Eligible Expenses Community water fluoridation (CWF) award funds can be used for:

- Planning and engineering services associated with initiation of a fluoridation program
- Equipment to initiate a fluoridation program
- New equipment to replace or expand a current fluoridation program
- Engineering services needed to modify current fluoridation system
- Modifications to existing water system equipment
- Equipment for daily testing of fluoride level
- Personal safety equipment for fluoride handling

Funds **CANNOT** be used for:

- Office equipment
- Matching funds for other federal grants
- New building construction
- Personnel salaries

Cost Reimbursement Costs incurred for this project will be covered through reimbursement only. All costs are paid by the awardee and a reimbursement request is submitted to PCOH for payment upon receipt of required documentation. All associated expenses must be incurred and billed to PCOH before **May 7th, 2027 for the first deadline on funding**. Reimbursements will be dispersed by check approximately 6–8 weeks after all required documentation is submitted to PCOH.

ELIGIBILITY

This funding round gives first priority to community water systems that are initiating a fluoridation program. Systems may be at any stage in the initiation process. For example, a water system that is in the early stages of exploring the wishes of the community it serves re: CWF is eligible, as is a water system that has received a permit to add fluoridation as a treatment. **Systems which currently are fluoridating may also apply** for equipment updates and replacements, though they will only be considered if funds remain after first priority applications are reviewed. **Systems which have previously received equipment funds from PCOH may apply** for equipment updates and replacements, though first-time applicants will receive priority consideration.

To qualify, systems must:

- Be a community water system with a PWSID
- Be able to enter into a formal agreement with PCOH
- Provide a letter of support from the local water authority or municipal authority
- Provide a copy of DEP permit to fluoridate, if applicable
- Submit 12 months of fluoride data to PCOH
- Agree to continue fluoridating for a minimum of 5 years after installation of new equipment
- Agree to have at least 50% of their water operators who handle fluoride additives complete the online Fluoridation Learning Online (FLO) course from CDC on the PCOH course portal:
<https://paoralhealth.org/courses/flo-fluoridation-learning-online-for-pennsylvania/>

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis. To qualify for funding, water systems must submit an application based on established guidelines.

Application Content and Evaluation

Please provide the following information in the order listed:

1. **Justification** Provide a description of the need for the new or additional equipment and supplies. Do you plan to move forward with the project even if you are not awarded these funds? (15 points)
2. **Plan for Installation, Implementation, and Sustainability** Describe your plan for updating or expanding your fluoridation program, including a project timeline and sustainability plan. (25 points)
3. **Training** Describe any training planned for water operator personnel for existing fluoridation systems and for equipment included in this proposal. Include SOP if you have one. (15 points)
4. **Population Served** How many people does your water system serve? How many people receive or will receive optimally fluoridated water? Priority will be given to the highest population served. (15 points)
5. **Budget** Include an itemized budget including equipment, supplies (including fluoride additives), installation, engineering, and other required cost estimates to update or expand fluoridation. (15 points)
6. **Ready to Go** Include letter of support from local water authority and DEP operating permit, if applicable, indicating readiness to move forward if funds are awarded. (15 points)

Closing Date Applications responding to all six elements must be received by PCOH by **September 30th, 2026 at 5pm**. Applications received after this date will not be considered in the first funding round.

Applications can be submitted either electronically to Natalie Walker (info@paoralhealth.org) or by U.S. mail to the below address. If sending by mail, please send an email to Natalie Walker (info@paoralhealth.org) so that we know to expect the application.

PA Coalition for Oral Health
Attn: Community Water Fluoridation Funding Opportunities
PO Box 242
Delmont, PA 15626

Important Dates

September 30th, 2026 at 5pm

Application deadline

October 20th, 2026

Awardees notified

May 7th, 2027

Expenses incurred and submitted to PCOH

May 25th, 2027

Final reports due