



Water Table: Funding Subcommittee
March 14th, 2024 Meeting Summary

Subcommittee Purpose

The goal of the Funding Subcommittee is to elevate existing and/or new sources of funding, access to that funding, and ways that funding is administered, to improve the impact on water quality projects and communities in need in the Delaware Watershed. The subcommittee can achieve this through relationship building, information sharing, and exploring ways to improve funding outcomes. In particular, the intention is for this work to result in increased capacity to address water quality issues that plague under-resourced communities in the region, bolster local capacity to pursue this work, and make meaningful and lasting infrastructure improvements.

March 14th, 2024 Meeting Summary

As part of the feedback gleaned from the December 2023 survey, the first meeting of 2024 centered on establishing a focus and goals for the Funding Subcommittee to work on over the next calendar year. The funding subcommittee considered a list of short-, medium-, and long-term goals that were either discussed in the 2023 meetings or were collected in Phase I as ideas that the Funding Subcommittee could help advance. Through a dot exercise, attendees voted on priority actions for the Funding Subcommittee to pursue, and the following actions ranked the highest:

- **Short-term:** Create marketing materials about the sense of urgency to address water system improvements.
- **Medium-term:** Work with funders, such as PennVest to develop less complex funding structures, and to foster more projects by utilities.
- **Long-term:** Create a streamlined pre-application system for multiple state-administered funding programs (e.g. a funder-coordinated pre-application process that all applications are submitted through and are jointly evaluated by the funders for best fit). The “common pre-application” would require supplemental information as needed for final awards. The purpose is to avoid duplication of efforts and promote more impactful, targeted projects. For example, bring state agencies (PennVest, DEP, DCED, DCNR) that fund water system improvements together to review applications and decide which is the best program to award the project vs. having multiple applications to multiple agencies - see footnote page 25 in Funding Navigator report (<https://www.dvrpc.org/reports/23005.pdf>), citing Arkansas model.

Next Steps

The Funding Subcommittee seemed particularly excited to have the opportunity to speak more with PennVest and create easier access to funding. The action items listed above are in alignment and have the potential to build momentum as we push these initiatives forward.

Looking ahead to the next two subcommittee meetings, we hope to identify and invite a speaker from the Arkansas “common application” program and invite additional PA funding agencies to attend. Additionally, we have reached out to our project partners at EPIC who are currently working on a communications toolkit on debt financing water infrastructure that should be ready to share this Spring. Our next Subcommittee Meeting is scheduled for **June 13th, 2024 from 10 am -12 pm at DVRPC, followed by lunch**. Please keep an eye out for a doodle poll as we begin to consider a meeting date for September.

If you have additional thoughts or suggestions, please pass them along to Emily Goldstein or Patty Elkis at egoldstein@dvrpc.org and pelkis@dvrpc.org respectively.