



## NEWS RELEASE

### WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE AUTHORITY

*Arizona's water and wastewater funding source*

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## WIFA Awards Grants to Improve Water Quality and Protect Public Health

PHOENIX (October 25, 2013) – Nearly half of the 13 grant awards announced last week by the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) of Arizona will fund “green” approaches to managing our state’s drinking water, stormwater and wastewater. Green approaches help to conserve resources and make our communities more sustainable. WIFA awarded a total of \$332,692 to communities that need funding assistance to complete the planning or design phase of an infrastructure project.

While the majority of grant funding went to small and rural communities (eight total), the cities of Tucson and Mesa (both awarded \$35,000) will be leading the way on WIFA’s new green infrastructure initiative. Both are recipients of WIFA’s first-ever green stormwater infrastructure grants.

Green infrastructure practices like permeable pavement, green roofs, bioretention areas, and rainwater harvesting use vegetation and soil to manage stormwater runoff and prevent it from carrying pollutants to our streams and lakes. These projects are designed to manage rainwater where it falls and allow water to soak into the ground, filtering pollutants naturally. Green infrastructure helps our waterways stay clean and also provides environmental, social and economic benefits by improving the livability of our urban areas.

Tucson will be studying green infrastructure practices for its Airport Wash watershed, and Mesa will be partnering with the City of Glendale to develop a green infrastructure toolbox of practices. Both projects are designed to resolve water pollution and flooding problems. Other applicants awarded WIFA grants for green projects were Pima County, the City of Somerton and Ray Water Company.

The full list of funded projects follows below.

### Drinking water projects:

- Villa Grande Domestic Water Improvement District - awarded \$15,877 to develop a solution for high nitrate levels in its drinking water supply
- Ray Water Company - awarded \$35,000 to conduct a study to improve the water and energy efficiency of its drinking water system
- City of Globe - awarded \$35,000 to complete a preliminary engineering report to address problems with the City’s aging water distribution system
- Community Water Company of Green Valley - awarded \$30,000 to conduct a pilot study to test sulfate filtration methods that will be compatible with the system’s existing arsenic filtration systems
- Elfrida Water Improvement District - awarded \$24,600 to complete a preliminary engineering report and environmental report to begin improvements to the district’s water distribution system

- Avra Water Co-op - awarded \$23,654 to complete a waterline replacement assessment to determine short- and long-term needs for replacing aged waterlines

**Wastewater/Stormwater Projects:**

- City of Casa Grande - awarded \$18,850 to undertake a selenium reduction study at its water reclamation facility
- City of Mesa (highlighted above) – awarded \$35,000 for green stormwater infrastructure
- Pima County – awarded \$35,000 to conduct a comprehensive energy efficiency study of seven of its wastewater treatment facilities
- City of Flagstaff - awarded \$18,472 to conduct a hydrology study and design a new point of compliance well to properly evaluate the Wildcat Hill Wastewater Treatment Plant's compliance with nitrogen standards
- City of Somerton – awarded \$20,956 to study how they can reuse treated effluent for irrigation in order to conserve the City's drinking water supply
- City of Tucson (highlighted above) – awarded \$35,000 for green stormwater infrastructure
- Seligman Sanitary District - awarded \$4,680 to design a new wastewater treatment facility to replace a treatment lagoon that is located in a floodplain and reaching the end of its serviceable life

The agency funds roughly \$450,000 per year in infrastructure planning and design projects. Funding comes from Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Funds, which WIFA manages for the state of Arizona.

The purpose of WIFA's Planning and Design Grant Program is to help facilitate future construction of capital improvements related to drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. "Often we see that getting a project started is the biggest challenge for both small and large communities with limited budgets," said WIFA Executive Director, Sandy Sutton. "Receiving funding assistance to take a project through the planning or early design phase is often the key to making the project happen at all. We're happy that WIFA can play a role in making these important projects a reality for Arizona's communities."

Individual grants of up to \$35,000 are awarded twice a year, while WIFA's low-interest financing (loan program) is available year-round and in any amount. The grant program is designed to complement WIFA's low-interest loan program, which funds construction as well as planning and design.

WIFA is a state agency dedicated to protecting public health and promoting environmental quality through funding and technical assistance programs.

For more information, please visit WIFA's website at [www.azwifa.gov](http://www.azwifa.gov).

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