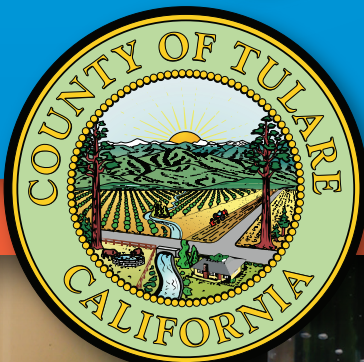


Rural Community Water Systems

Tulare County has a large number of public water systems unable to provide safe drinking water. The vast majority of these systems are in disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities which lack the resources to fund preliminary design and/or engineering in order to develop sustainable solutions.



Clogged Water Line



Request:

Tulare County is requesting modification to existing USDA grant guidelines to allow for full project funding, from preliminary engineering through construction, for disadvantaged communities. Specifically, the County recommends the following modifications to the program, or a set-aside program that would provide these communities access to federal grants.

1. Increase grant allocation to \$30,000 per community and \$50,000 for consolidation projects.
2. Maintain eligibility to communities with less than 80% Statewide Non-Metropolitan median Household Income (SNMMHI).
3. Increase eligible uses of funds to pay costs associated with developing a complete application for a proposed water or wastewater project, including preparation of preliminary engineering reports; environmental compliance documentation, including NEPA; entity formation (CSD, PUD); and pre-design costs.
4. Prioritize funding:
 - a. To communities with median household income (MHI) of less than 60% of SNMMHI.
 - b. To communities with unemployment rates over 150% of the national average.
 - c. To communities with less than 2,500 population.
 - d. To communities that either produce water that exceeds a primary drinking water Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) or wastewater system (or lack of system) is considered an existing or potential health or pollution problem.
5. Provide 100% grants to qualified communities that meet the following criteria: (1) MHI less than 60% SNMMHI; (2) population less than 2,500 and; (3) water system exceeds a primary MCL or wastewater system (or lack of system) is considered an existing or potential health or pollution problem.

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