

## Dental Public Health Activity Descriptive Summary

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### Financial Support for Community Water Fluoridation

Since 1999, the Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Oral Health has provided grants to assist local municipalities in the start-up of water fluoridation by purchasing fluoridation equipment and paying for its installation. To date, grants have ranged from \$40,000 to \$63,000. Three communities, totaling more than 150,000 residents, received assistance for the purchase of their start-up fluoridation equipment. In one community, although water fluoridation was already approved, the funding for the start-up could not be secured and the grant enabled the community to implement its fluoridation. In the other two communities, where community water fluoridation had not yet been approved, information on the availability of funding from the state health department was provided to the town/city councils to assist in assessing the financial ability of the communities to implement fluoridation. This resulted in the councils approving water fluoridation for the communities.

Communities considering water fluoridation or having already approved its implementation for the near future are notified of the availability of funding. Upon council/voter approval to implement water fluoridation, a contract from the state health department and the community is drafted. Communities must provide some of their own funding or have solicited financial support from other entities to augment the grant provided by the Office of Oral Health for start-up water fluoridation costs. After the water fluoridation equipment is installed and fully operational for 30 days and a water report is provided to the Office of Oral Health documenting optimal fluoridation levels, the funding amount of the contract or an amount equaling the actual costs of equipment purchase and installation is remitted. Approximately \$40,000 annually has been available to communities for water fluoridation.

Communities must provide some of their own funding or have solicited financial support from other entities to augment the grant provided by the Office of Oral Health for start-up water fluoridation costs. Internal management of this program is quite simple; essentially, it is merely a business function of establishing a contract for the transfer of available funds. The Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Oral Health has provided water fluoridation grants since 1999. From a state perspective, the model relies upon ongoing subsidies that have been primarily sustained from CDC funding and by the state health department's political will to prioritize funding for this purpose.

### Lessons Learned:

- Prior approval of water fluoridation by a community facilitates the distribution of funds in a timelier manner.
- A close working relationship with the water utilities manager is critical for coordinating assistance and disseminating accurate information during any political challenge.

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