

City of Evans, CO

Direct Fixture Install for Water Conservation



Project at-a-Glance

Community Overview

- Location: Evans, CO
- Population served: 21,615
- Service area: 10.35 square miles

Project Partners

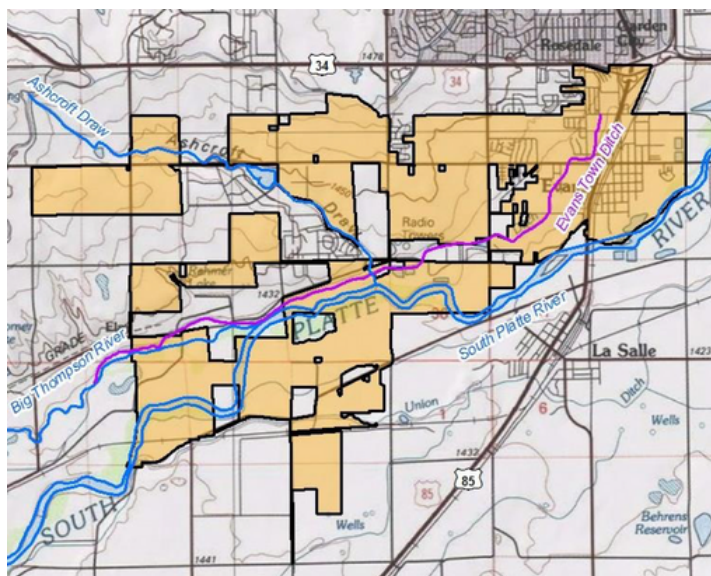


LARIMER COUNTY
**CONSERVATION
CORPS**

Colorado Low-income Energy
Assistance Program



COLORADO
Department of Human Services



**WESTERN
RESOURCE
ADVOCATES**



Project Benefits

- Uses a whole home approach to provide qualifying low-income households with water and energy efficient fixtures.
- Connects with the immigrant and non-English speaking community by partnering with community organizations that have already established trust with those communities.
- Will allow the City to more efficiently use existing water supplies.
- Anticipated to save more than 70,000 gallons of water per year.

Project Challenges



Climate change



Equity and affordability



Aging and damaged
infrastructure



Drought

Strategies for Success

Ensure Evans' low-income community members, including non-English speaking customers, participate in the City's water use efficiency and conservation programs by: (1) partnering with local schools, homeowners associations, the local immigration center, and other community groups to perform outreach and build trust between the City and the community it serves; (2) providing information in residents' primary language; (3) training City staff and home visit technicians to engage with residents in ways that bridge cultural divides.

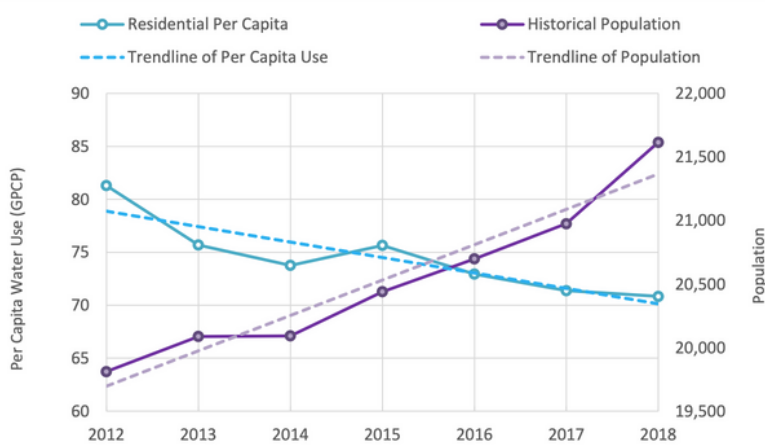


Project Spotlight

The City of Evans is located in Colorado's Northern Front Range and receives its drinking water from the South Platte River Basin. The City faces the dual challenges of growing population and drought. Evans is home to more than 21,000 people and has seen a population growth rate of about 2% every year since 2010, which has put a strain on the City's water supply and threatens to limit economic development opportunities. Compounding this challenge, the 2010 Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI), which was implemented by the Colorado Water Conservation Board, identified a 58% gap between water needs and water supplies due to drought and population in the South Platte River Basin by 2050.

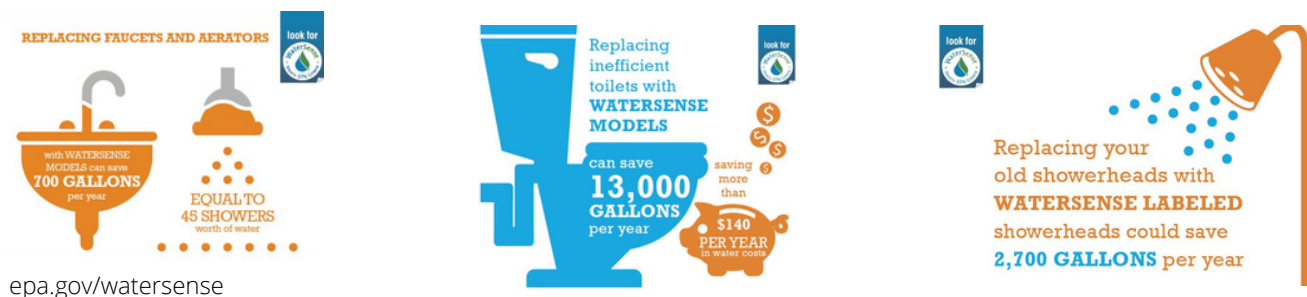
To support its growing population and help close the gap between water needs and water supplies, Evans updated its Municipal Water Efficiency Plan (MWEP), which identified water efficiency activities as ways to optimize Evans' water resources. As part of this update, the City added the "Water Efficient Direct Installation and Indoor Water Audit Program." The main goals of this program are to both reduce water demand as the population of Evans grows and to help low-income households upgrade to more efficient water and energy fixtures that may help them save money on their utility bills.

Figure 10: Treated Water Use and Population Trends



Evans, CO Municipal Water Efficiency Plan

WaterNow Alliance and Western Resource Advocates supported the City's design of the program that provided income-qualifying homeowners with indoor water efficiency audits and direct installation of water-efficient fixtures. Toilets, faucet aerators, and showerheads, along with energy-efficient lightbulbs, smoke, and carbon monoxide detectors were installed. The Larimer County Conservation Corps, a local AmeriCorps service organization, supported program implementation by performing audits of eligible low-income customers' indoor water use and identifying and replacing any high-water-consuming fixtures. The program was funded by a \$45,000 Weld County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that provided about 50 qualifying low-income households with up to \$800 of fixtures for the first year of the program. The Northern Water Conservancy District also supported the program through the donation of water-efficient fixtures.



At the start of the program, eligible participants needed to be homeowners and current enrollees in the state of Colorado's Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP). The LEAP requirement allowed Evans to leverage the partnership to perform targeted outreach to the LEAP database of current enrollees who were pre-qualified for the water use efficiency direct installation program. This approach reduced administrative burdens and application processing time for the resource-limited City staff, and eligible participants were not required to complete an additional application. Due to lower than desired participation from low-income homes, the also City opened the program to all Evans residents. The City cross-promoted LEAP to the broader population of Evans to foster increased enrollment.

In recognition that Evans experiences low community engagement and a perceived lack of trust between community members and government-related institutions, the City is working to build its network of outreach partners by collaborating with trusted organizations. For example, Evans is collaborating with its local immigrant and refugee organization to learn the best practices for engaging with these communities, given that LEAP-eligible residents in the City include non-English speakers and a sizable immigrant community. These practices include using word-of-mouth strategies to share information and training for auditors on the communities' customs to avoid inadvertently offending the residents. Additionally, the City is collaborating with local schools and homeowners associations to concurrently promote LEAP and the water efficiency program.



Project Impacts

In its inaugural year, the City, with support from LCCC, Northern Water Conservancy District, and Weld County's Community Development Block Grant Program, has conducted 48 indoor water audits, replaced 33 toilets, installed 62 faucet aerators, replaced 39 shower heads, and installed 212 LED light bulbs and 15 smoke / carbon monoxide detectors in their pilot year of the program. In the future, Evans would like to expand its indoor audits and high efficiency toilet installation program to other Evans community members, including multi-family households, renters, and commercial, industrial, and institutional entities. The City expects that going forward the program will replace more than 60 high water use appliances and fixtures per year with efficient ones, and provide community members with 150 home water audit kits per year – steps that will save around 90,000 gallons of water annually. The City also expects that participating residents' water bills will be lower because of the new water efficient fixtures.



Lessons Learned



Evans' program provides several lessons for communities that wish to implement a similar program:

- Require preliminary audits to address any challenges that may occur during the installation;
- Have multiple toilet models and equipment in various sizes to fit different specifications;
- Partner with a community program that works closely with the immigrant and non-English speaking populations of the community;
- Provide customer service in commonly spoken languages in the community; and,
- If using grant funding such as the CDBG, there may be parameters for use of grant funds which limit the pool of eligible applicants. For example, CDBG funds cannot be used for any homes proximal to environmental hazards.