



Project Accelerator Application Criteria: Spring 2025

Criteria	Description	Scoring
<p>Project advances innovative distributed infrastructure practice or solutions</p>	<p>The project aims to advance innovative distributed infrastructure practices or solutions that could serve as examples or provide guidance for other communities that want to implement similar programs or policies</p> <p>Scalable or replicable projects might include (but are not limited to) developing, implementing, or strengthening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water conservation programs or policies ● Water efficiency programs or policies ● Water reuse programs or policies ● Green stormwater infrastructure programs or policies ● Lead line replacement or other distributed water quality solutions ● Watershed restoration programs or policies ● Customer affordability or assistance programs 	<p>50 points</p> <p>Strong: 50 points Medium: 25 points Low: 10 points</p>
<p>Application includes clear description of project outputs and outcomes</p>	<p>The project application includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Measurable outputs (such as drafted ordinance language or policy recommendations, facilitation of community focus groups, meetings, or other engagement activities, development of a program implementation plan, etc.). ● Clear outcomes (such as an adopted ordinance, X number of applications for a specific program, ordinance code changes, X gallons of water saved, engagement with X number of customers, etc.). 	<p>15 points</p> <p>Strong: 15 points Medium: 7 points Low: 0 points</p>

	<p>Applications can be further strengthened by demonstrating a commitment to achieving project outputs and outcomes. This could take the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding commitment for the project – for instance, a line item in the budget or funding set aside from a budget line item. • Commitment from a Council, Board, or management – for instance, a resolution from the Council or Board, or an agenda item at a board meeting that garnered support. • Established timelines – for instance, this project might be a precursor to another the utility is committed to implementing. 	
<p>Project has a feasible goal and timeline</p>	<p>The project can be reasonably expected to be successful given 250 hours of pro bono capacity support from WaterNow and any additional partners. Highly suitable projects may be ready to move ahead with their scope as described, while moderately suitable projects may require some adjustments before proceeding.</p>	<p>15 points</p> <p>Strong: 15 points Medium: 7 points Low: 0 points</p>
<p>Project fosters trust between the utility and community</p>	<p>The project aims to support trusting, authentic and constructive relationships between community organizations and water utilities. Projects can include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing transparency and accountability • Restoring community confidence • Deepening community understanding of utility roles and responsibilities • Highlighting shared goals to leverage mutual benefits • Including the community as part of utility decision-making • Adopting a community-facing orientation • Cultivating long-term community relationships with intention • Building from personal to more formalized relationships <p>Applications can be further strengthened by water systems applying in partnership with a local community organization on proposed trust-building projects.</p>	<p>10 points</p> <p>Strong: 10 points Medium: 5 points Low: 0 points</p>

<p>Projects that provide practical leadership and professional development opportunities for utility staff</p>	<p>The project supports emerging leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly, through the course of the project’s implementations, and/or; • Through the project’s goals (e.g., creation of internal mentorship program). <p>Projects can provide practical skills development that include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitching project plans • Pitching to management • Communicating with political leadership • Communicating with community members • Building partnerships with community members and groups • Establishing performance metrics • Building teams • Growing collaborations with outside entities • Strengthening capacity for strategy and visioning • Additional goals identified by project applicants 	<p>10 points</p> <p>Strong: 10 points Medium: 5 points Low: 0 points</p>
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