

# How California Decision-Makers in Small, Rural, and Tribal Communities Can Finance Wastewater Projects & Build Community Trust

April 22, 10am PT / 1pm ET



# How California Decision-Makers in Small, Rural, and Tribal Communities Can Finance Wastewater Projects & Build Community Trust

Q&A

**You ask:** 13:05  
How do I use these awesome tools?

**Joshua Jones answered:** 13:06  
You are already using one of the most awesome tools. We'll discuss the rest right away.

Please input your question

Send Anonymously Send

April 22, 10am PT / 1pm ET



# Certificate of Completion

This session has **NOT** been submitted for pre-approval of Continuing Education Credits, but eligible attendees will receive a certificate of attendance for their personal record.

## **To receive a certificate:**

- You must attend the entire session
- You must register and attend using your real name and unique email address - group viewing credit will not be acceptable
- You must participate in polls
- Certificates will be sent via email within 30 days

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact [smallsystems@syr.edu](mailto:smallsystems@syr.edu).

# About EFCN

The **Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN)** is a university- and non-profit-based organization creating innovative solutions to the difficult how-to-pay issues of environmental protection and water infrastructure.

The EFCN works collectively and as individual centers to address these issues across the entire U.S, including the 5 territories and the Navajo Nation. The EFCN aims to assist public and private sectors through training, direct professional assistance, production of durable resources, and innovative policy ideas.





WaterNow works to advance transformation in the urban water sector to accelerate the widespread adoption of resilient and environmentally sustainable strategies.

We do this as a national network for local water leaders and decision makers, empowering them with the technical assistance, resources, and tools they need to implement innovative One Water drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater solutions in their communities.





# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SUSTAINABLE?

Providing safe, healthy, and affordable water services for people while preserving the integrity of water resources and the environment for future generations



# AGENDA

- Meet Today's Speakers
- Financing Water Infrastructure 101
- How Local Decision Makers Shape Water Management
- Exercise: Spectrum of Public Participation
- Working with the State Water Board
- Building Blocks of Trust



# Today's Speakers



Salem Alyafeai,  
*Water Resource Control Engineer,*  
State Water Resources Control  
Board



Dallas Shattuck,  
*Senior Program Manager,*  
U.S. EPA



Melky Calderon,  
*Water Resource Control Engineer,*  
State Water Resources Control  
Board



Eli Beckman,  
*Councilmember,*  
Town of Corte Madera

# Today's Speakers



Adriana Renteria,  
*Director & Tribal Liaison,*  
State Water Resources  
Control Board



Stephanie Torres,  
*Engineering Geologist,*  
State Water Resources  
Control Board



Caroline Koch,  
*Water Policy Director,*  
WaterNow Alliance



Andrew Teegarden,  
*Water Policy Associate,*  
WaterNow Alliance

# Today's Speakers



Annalisa Kihara,  
*Assistant Deputy Director,*  
State Water Resources  
Control Board



Erica Kalve,  
*Groundwater Protection*  
*Section Manager,*  
State Water Resources  
Control Board

# Time for a poll!

Participate with Mentimeter

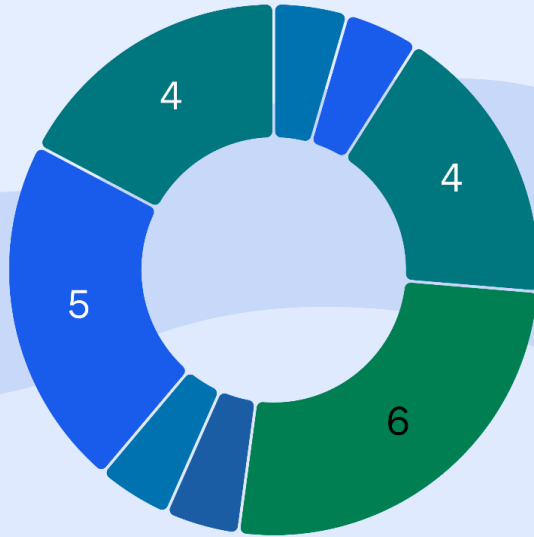
Go to: [menti.com](https://menti.com)

Enter Code: 7707 3245

Or scan the QR code

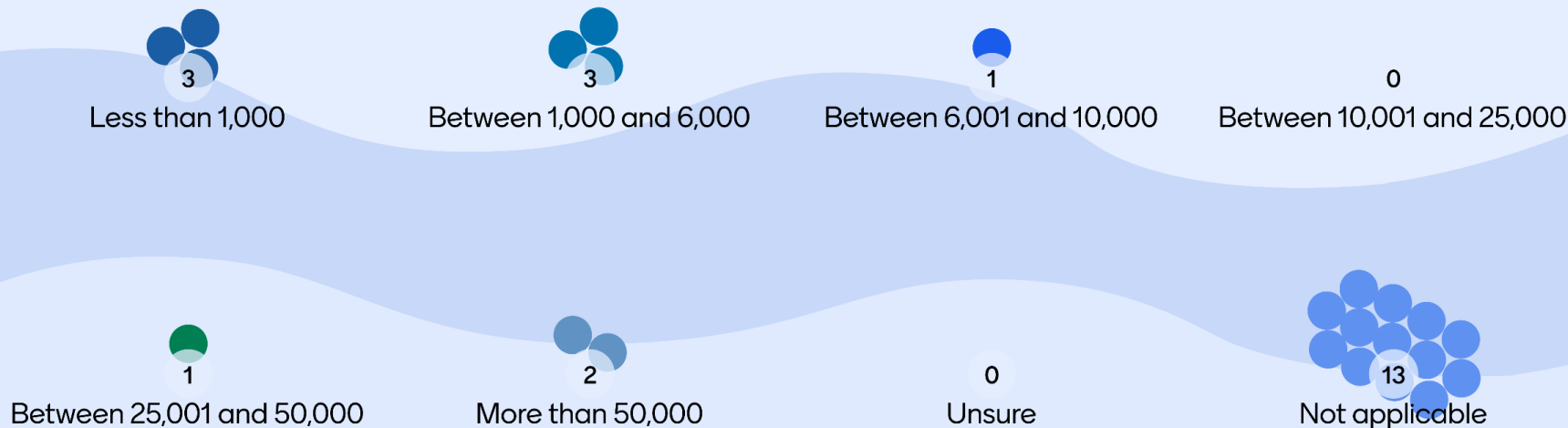


# Who's in the "room"?

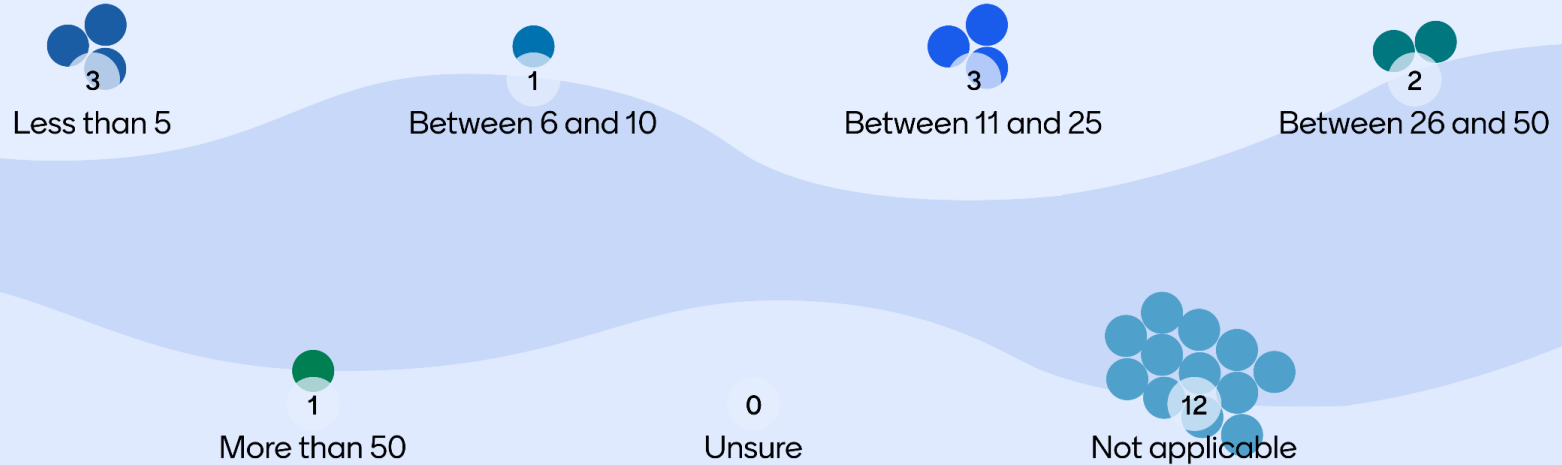


- 0 City council member
- 1 Tribal government official
- 1 Special district board member
- 4 Utility staff
- 6 State agency staff
- 1 Federal agency staff
- 1 NGO staff
- 5 Academic
- 4 Private Sector

# How many customers does your utility serve?



# How many FTEs does your utility employ?



# California Wastewater Funding and Lessons Learned



# Accessing the Clean Water State Revolving Fund

Melky Calderon &  
Salem Alyafeai



# PRESENTATION OUTLINE



**Part I: Wastewater Funding Programs**

**Part II: Small Community Funding & Technical Assistance**

**Part III: Funding Resources**

**Part IV: Additional Funding Resources**

# PART I: WASTEWATER FUNDING PROGRAMS

- Clean Water State Revolving Fund
- Water Recycling Funding Program
- Storm Water Grant Program



## DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS

- **Small community:** community with a population of less than 20,000
- **Disadvantaged community (DAC):** a community that has a median household income (MHI) less than 80% (\$73,524) of the statewide MHI (\$91,905)
- **Severely disadvantaged community (SDAC):** a community that has a MHI less than 60% (\$55,143) of the statewide MHI
- **Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs)**
- **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)**

# CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND (CWSRF)

**Purpose:** Provide financing for eligible projects to restore and maintain water quality in the state.

## **Eligible Applicants:**

- Public agencies (Any city, town, district)
- Tribal organizations
- 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations

## **Eligible Project Types:**

- Wastewater treatment plants, local sewers, sewer interceptors, and water reclamation facilities
- NPS projects identified in CA's NPS Plan, estuary projects, stormwater reduction, and treatment facilities.

## **Our Source of Funding:**

- Federal Funding – Authority through Congress, US EPA provides a capitalization grant to each states CWSRF program or through additional subsidy in form of grants from federal law
- State Funding – California bonds approved by voters
- Revolving Nature - Money is repaid from previous loans and then can be used to finance new projects

# CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND (CWSRF)

**Policy:** Implements the federal Clean Water Act's Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program in California. The document will address all project types eligible for CWSRF assistance and sets forth the requirements to obtain CWSRF financing.

- Scoring System and Selection Process: Used to prioritize funding commitments

**Intended Use Plan:** Used to apply for and receive the Capitalization Grants from US EPA. Serves as a guide for staff for implementing the CWSRF, Small Community Wastewater, Water Recycling Funding Program, and Emerging Contaminants funding

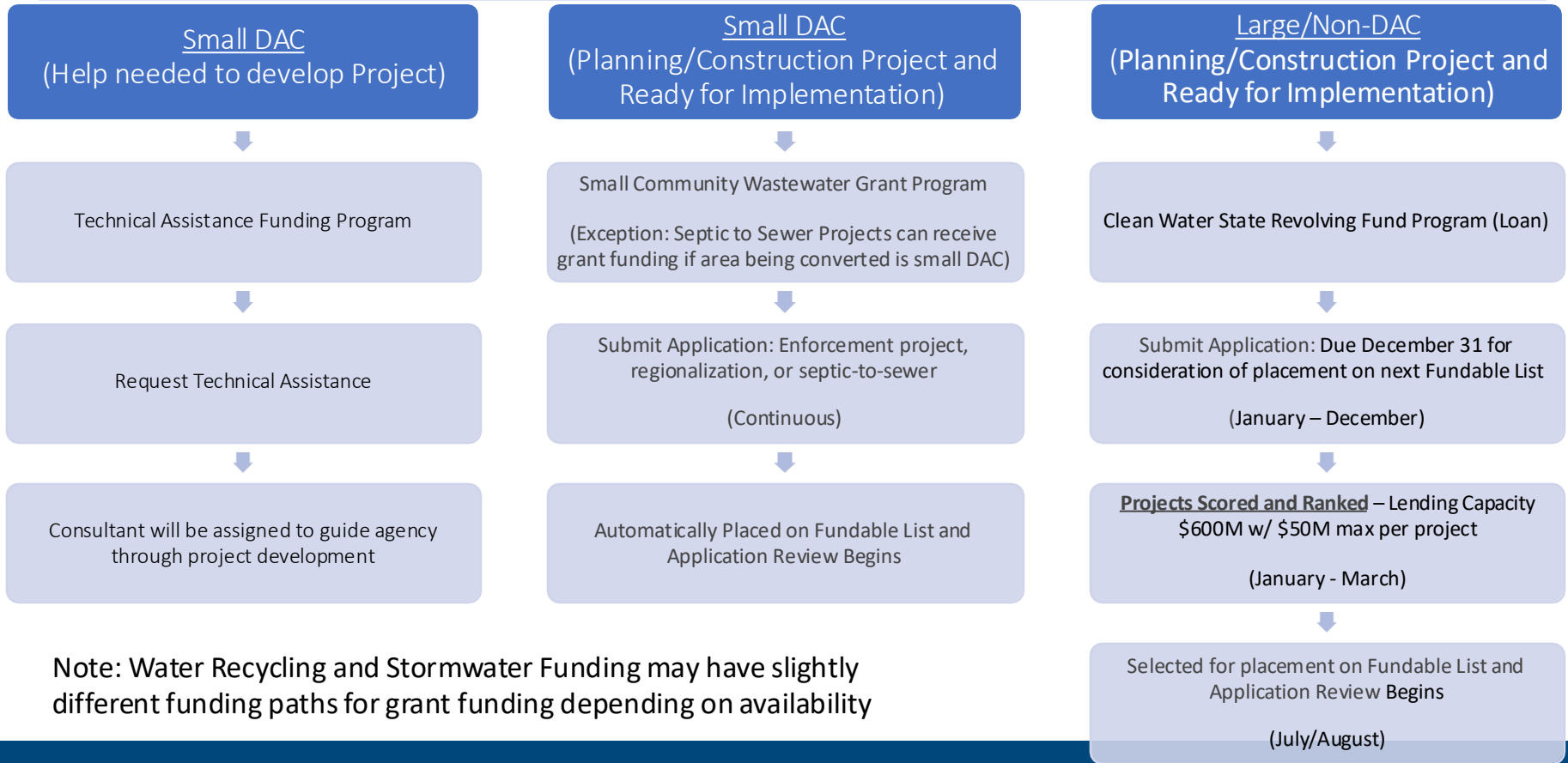
**Financing Terms:** 2.1% Interest Rate (30 Years)

- *Short-term financing incentive: 0.25 reduction for 20-year financing term or lower*

**How to Apply:** Applications accepted continuously via Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool  
<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/>

**Web Address:** <https://bit.ly/3wEDKkH>

# FUNDING PATHS



# PRIORITY SCORING SYSTEM

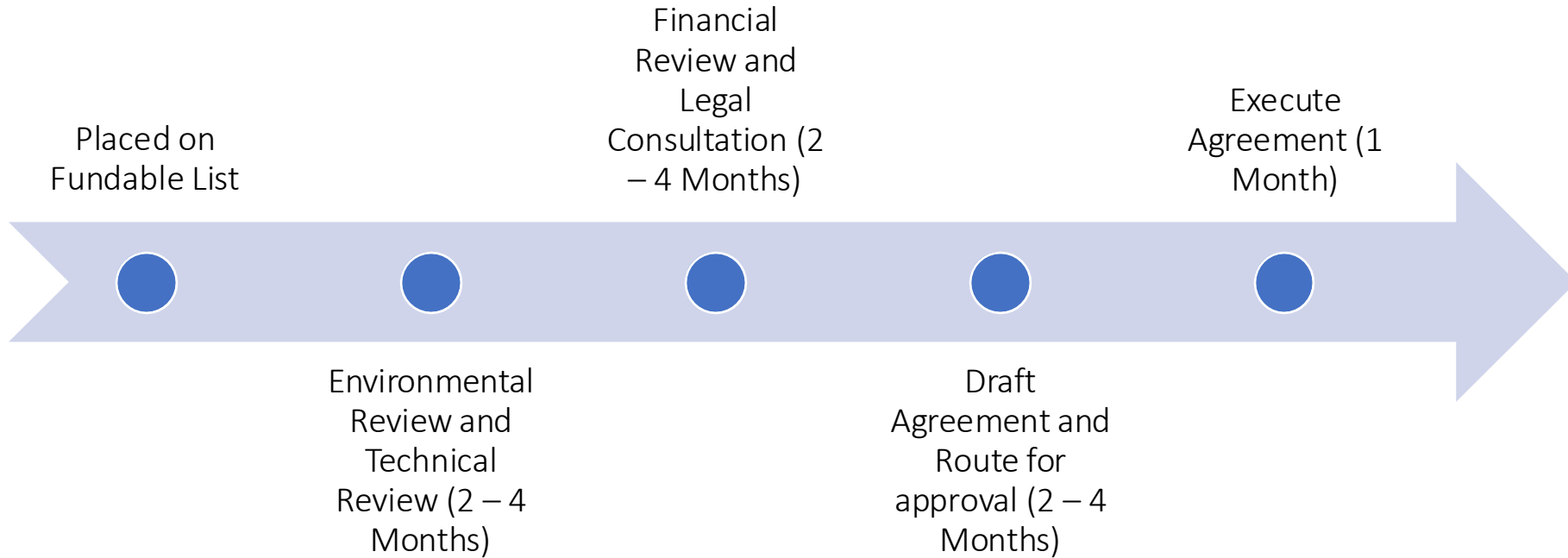
**Score is the sum of three components:** Primary Score, Secondary Score, and Readiness Score

- **Primary:** Purpose of the project (Project Type)

Resource or Impact	Purpose		
	Corrective	Preventive	Improvement
Drinking Water Source	9	8	7
Delta Water Quality	8	7	7
Water Recycling			7
Impaired Water Body	8	6	4
Water Quality Control Plan or Permit	8	6	4

- **Secondary:** Applicant's proof of action against climate change, proof of multiple environmental benefits of project, or agrees to provide match financing
- **Readiness:** Gauge of projects readiness to move onto construction by reviewing application completeness and progress of Plans and Specifications
- Note: Policy is currently scheduled for amendment May 6, 2025 and the scoring criteria will be modified. Only **complete applications** will be scored. Also, we are adding an **affordability score** where small or DAC communities will be given points

# APPLICATION PROCESS



**Note: Application process is estimated to take between 9 – 18 months**

## WATER RECYCLING FUNDING PROGRAM (WRFP)

**Purpose:** Fund planning and construction projects that promote the beneficial use of treated municipal wastewater to augment or offset state/local fresh water supplies.

### **Eligible Project Types:**

- Recycled water treatment, Recycled water storage, distribution, and pumping, Groundwater recharge, Indirect potable reuse, Surface water augmentation

**Web Address:** <https://bit.ly/3wrLkjB>

## STORM WATER GRANT PROGRAM

**Purpose:** The purpose of the SWGP is to fund storm water and dry weather runoff projects that best advance the Water Board's policy goals of improving water quality and realizing multiple benefits from the use of storm water and dry weather runoff as a resource.

**Web Address:** [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/grants\\_loans/swgp/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/swgp/)

# PART II: SMALL COMMUNITY FUNDING

1. Small Community Wastewater Grant
2. Technical Assistance



## SMALL COMMUNITY WASTEWATER GRANT/PRINCIPAL FORGIVENESS (PF) PLANNING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

	Grant Amount	
Community Type/Affordability Criteria	Percent of Total Project Cost	Maximum grant/PF Per Project
Small DAC	100%	N/A

- The maximum grant/PF a community can receive is based on all planning, technical assistance (TA), and construction CWSRF funding that the community receives in a five-year period

# SMALL COMMUNITY WASTEWATER GRANT/PRINCIPAL FORGIVENESS (PF) CONSTRUCTION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Affordability Criteria			Grant/PF Amount	
Community	Wastewater Rates as a % of MHI	% of Total Eligible Project Cost	Maximum Grant/PF Amount	Max Grant/PF Per Residential Connection
Small Community with MHI between 80%-150% Statewide MHI	≥4%	50%	\$15 million or \$30 million (Septic to Sewer only)	\$45,000 Or \$125,000 (Septic to Sewer)
Small DAC	N/A	100%		

The Deputy Director of DFA may approve:

- Financing for construction projects with a total eligible project cost up to \$8 million regardless of the amount per residential connection
- Up to \$45,000 per connection for treatment system and/or collection system improvements for good cause
- Projects that address violations of waste discharge requirements or NPDES permits, and projects that connect previously unsewered areas or join communities to regionalize wastewater treatment works are considered priority for grant/PF funding

## 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)

**Purpose:** To provide technical assistance to develop, fund, and implement drinking water and wastewater needs, including assistance with the following task types.

- Funding applications
- Project planning & administration
- Engineering services
- Environmental services
- Legal assistance
- Rate studies
- Income survey
- Capacity-building

**Eligibility:** Small DACs      **Priority:** Septic to Sewer & Regionalization

**How to Apply:** Requests for TA are accepted continuously on the TA page listed below.

**Web Address:**

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/grants\\_loans/tech\\_asst\\_funding.html](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/tech_asst_funding.html)

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) PROVIDERS (WASTEWATER)

## RCAC (Agreement No. D2118007)

- Service Area: Statewide

## Self-Help Enterprises (Agreement No. D2118006)

- Service Area: San Joaquin Valley (Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare County)

## Moonshot Missions (Agreement No. D2318001)

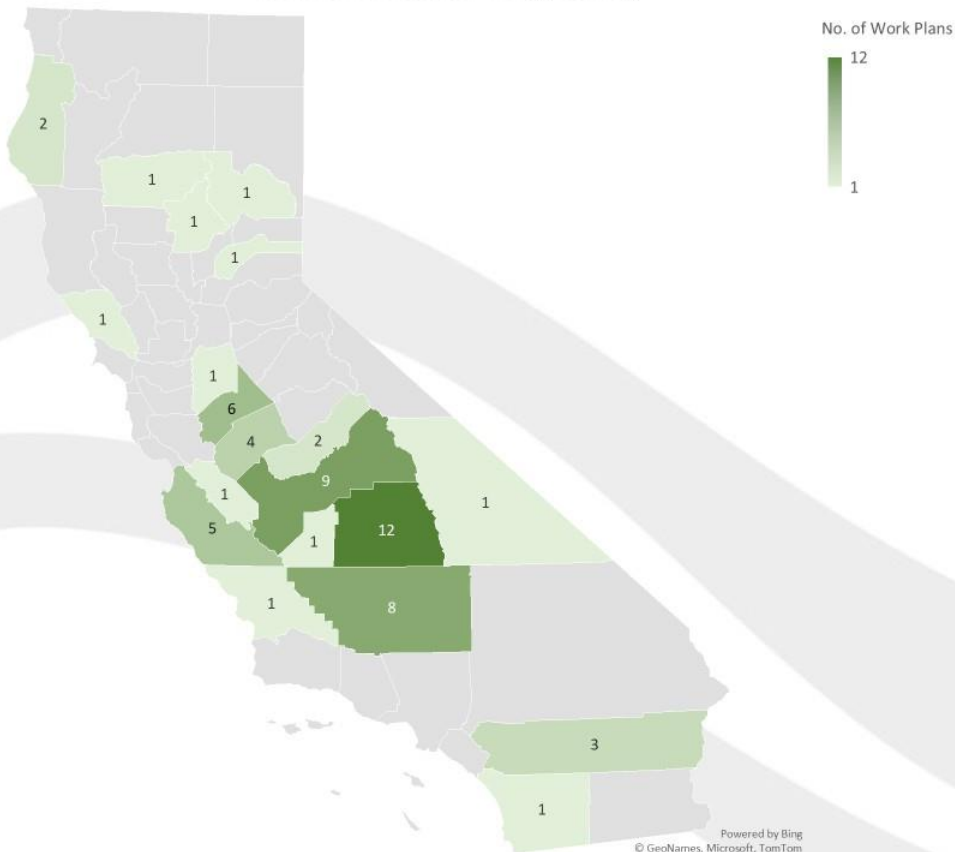
- Service Area: Statewide

## Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability (Agreement No. D2318106)

- Service Area: San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Coachella Valley

# TA FUNDED WASTEWATER PROJECTS BY COUNTY

Active Wastewater TA by County



County Name	No. of Executed Work Plans	Total Work Plan Budget
Butte	1	\$29,926
Fresno	9	\$1,852,129
Humboldt	2	\$933,759
Inyo	1	\$485,661
Kern	8	\$1,394,030
Kings	1	\$582,189
Madera	2	\$77,569
Merced	4	\$650,252
Monterey	5	\$647,249
Nevada	1	\$23,333
Plumas	1	\$374,339
Riverside	3	\$51,950
San Benito	1	\$9,871
San Diego	1	\$232,153
San Joaquin	1	\$413,965
San Luis Obispo	1	\$157,526
Sonoma	1	\$512,324
Stanislaus	6	\$1,692,187
Tehama	1	\$255,660
Tulare	12	\$1,387,656
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>\$11,763,728</b>

# PART III – FUNDING RESOURCES

Division of Financial Assistance Webpage

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/grants\\_loans/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/)

All funding announcements are made via e-mail.

- E-mail Subscription Mailing Lists

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/)

# PART IV – ADDITIONAL FUNDING RESOURCES

California Financing Coordinating Committee (CFCC)

- Federal and State Funding for Infrastructure Projects

<https://www.cfcc.ca.gov/>

CA Grants Portal

- Grants and loans offered on a competitive or first-come basis by California state agencies.

<https://www.grants.ca.gov/>

THANK YOU!

For general inquiries, please call DFA at:

**916-327-9978**





# WIFIA PROGRAM OVERVIEW

APRIL 2025



# Mission Statement

- The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program accelerates investment in our nation's water and wastewater infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost, supplemental credit assistance under customized terms to creditworthy water and wastewater projects of national and regional significance.



# Supporting Communities Nationwide to Implement Water Infrastructure Projects

- **140** closed loans
- **\$22 billion** in WIFIA financing to support **\$48 billion** in water infrastructure projects
- **160,000** jobs created
- Over **\$7 billion** in borrower savings
- **66 million** people served



# Program Features

**\$20**  
MIL

Minimum project size for large communities

**\$5**  
MIL

Minimum project size for small communities (population of 25,000 or less)

**49%**

Maximum portion of eligible project costs that WIFIA can fund

**35**  
YEARS

Maximum final maturity date from substantial completion

**5**  
YEARS

Maximum time that repayment may be deferred after substantial completion of the project



Interest rate will be equal to or greater than the U.S. Treasury rate of a similar maturity



Broad eligibility allows for wide variety of borrowers and projects, plus special program for SRF borrowers (SWIFIA)



NEPA, Davis-Bacon, American Iron and Steel, Build America, Buy America, and all federal cross-cutter provisions apply



# Eligibility



- Broad eligibility and can provide financing to a variety of credit-worthy borrowers, including **local and tribal governments, state infrastructure financing authorities, corporations, and partnerships**, among others



- Can fund water infrastructure projects that **support clean and safe water access** and help communities address a variety of challenges, including regulatory compliance, water quality issues, drought or flooding, and aging infrastructure needs



- Eligible activities include **project planning, design, development, and construction, land or equipment acquisition, a variety of carrying costs during construction, and financing-related costs**



# Loan features and benefits

<b>FAVORABLE RATES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fixed interest rate locked in at closing</li><li>• Interest does not accrue until loan is drawn</li><li>• Borrower credit does not impact interest rate</li><li>• Opportunity for a one-time interest rate reset</li></ul>
<b>GENEROUS TERMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No penalty for prepayment</li><li>• Sculpted repayment schedule to grow payments over time</li><li>• WIFIA can take a subordinate lien position</li></ul>
<b>FLEXIBLE FINANCING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loan closing in as little as 4 months, or faster for repeat borrowers</li><li>• Bespoke loan agreements that can fit into each borrower's existing indenture structure or be stand-alone issuances</li><li>• Pairs well with other forms of funding and financing</li></ul>
<b>BUNDLING FEATURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financing available for a combination of projects under one loan</li><li>• Upfront commitment available for multiple projects taking place over time via a Master Agreement</li></ul>
<b>LOAN MANAGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to request monthly disbursements</li><li>• Disbursements processed within 15 days of request</li><li>• Dedicated loan management team responsive to borrower needs</li></ul>

# Project Selection

## WIFIA Letters of Interest (LOI) may be submitted at any time!

- Rolling selection provides:
  - ✓ Year-round access to WIFIA funding
  - ✓ Accelerated selection decisions allows for real-time financial decision-making by prospective borrowers
  - ✓ WIFIA LOI submission can be timed with cycles of other funding sources
  - ✓ WIFIA can provide technical assistance to prospective borrowers that need feedback on LOI package

## Submission of an LOI is easy via EPA's SharePoint site!

- To request access, simply contact [WIFIA@EPA.GOV](mailto:WIFIA@EPA.GOV)



# WIFIA Project Examples

## Morro Bay, CA Population – 10,600

- 2 loans, totaling **\$62M** for water reclamation facility project
- Replaces existing wastewater treatment plant
- Reduces reliance on imported water
- Moves facility inland to mitigate risks from flooding
- Co-funded with CA SRF and Bureau of Reclamation
- Saves Morro Bay \$29M over the life of the loan



## Upper Thompson, CO Population – 15,500

- **\$96M loan** for water reclamation facility project
- Constructing a new water reclamation facility and two lift stations to replace infrastructure that is reaching its 50-year lifespan
- Treatment technology upgrades will enhance quality of wastewater discharged into Big Thompson River watershed
- Small community that received 80% WIFIA loan (co-funded with CO SRF)
- Saves Upper Thompson \$79M over the life of the loan



# Opportunities to Learn More

- Meet with us
  - EPA is happy to meet with all prospective borrowers interested in discussing the program prior to submission of a letter of interest
  - Send requests to [wifia@epa.gov](mailto:wifia@epa.gov)
- Join the monthly WIFIA Office Hours to ask questions
  - Second Wednesday of the month
    - April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13
  - Sign up for future webinars and office hours on the [WIFIA program website](#)



- Dallas Shattuck: [shattuck.dallas@epa.gov](mailto:shattuck.dallas@epa.gov)
- Website: [www.epa.gov/wifa](http://www.epa.gov/wifa)
- Have questions? Want to meet with WIFIA staff?
- Contact us at [wifa@epa.gov](mailto:wifa@epa.gov)

Sign up for our  
newsletter:





# Q&A



# **Decision Makers' Role in Local Water Management & Advancing Community- Driven Projects**

# Who Are Water Leaders?



Mayors



City Councilmembers



Special District Board Members



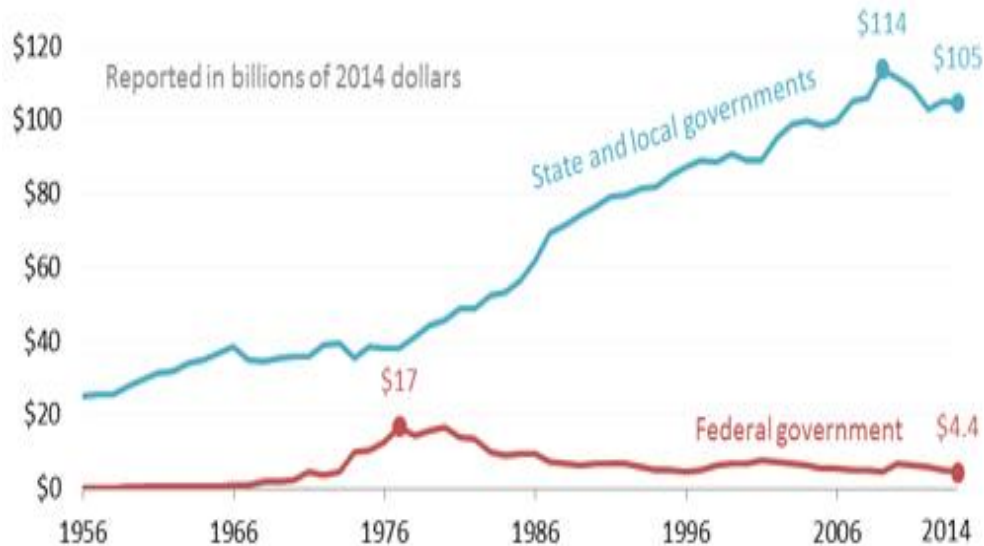
County Supervisors



Public Utility Commissions

The decision makers who vote all things water from policy to programs to rates and who are ultimately accountable to the public

# Why Local Decision Makers?



95% of water infrastructure investments made by local ratepayers

85+% U.S. water infrastructure is publicly owned

## Conversation with Eli Beckman, *Councilmember*, Town of Corte Madera



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First elected to the Town Council in June 2018

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Served as Mayor from 2020-2021 and 2023-2024

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Board Member for Sanitary District No. 2

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Previously served on Flood Control Board

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Architectural designer, small business owner, writer, and photographer

---

Bachelor of Architecture from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo

---

LEED AP accredited professional in sustainable design

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Grew up in Corte Madera

The background of the slide is a dense, overlapping collage of rectangular sticky notes in various shades of blue, teal, and green. Each sticky note features a large, dark blue question mark. The notes are scattered across the frame, creating a textured and busy visual effect.

# Q&A

A group of people are shown from the waist down, standing in a circle with their hands stacked on top of each other in the center. The image is semi-transparent, overlaid with a dark blue diagonal shape in the top right corner. The text is centered over the image.

# **Group Exercise: Trust Building through Community Engagement**

# Spectrum of Public Participation

## IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

**IGNORE**

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 

	<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b>	<b>EMPOWER</b>
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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# Time for a poll!

Participate with Mentimeter

Go to: [menti.com](https://menti.com)

Enter Code: 7707 3245

Or scan the QR code



# Where do you typically fall on the Spectrum of Public Participation?

23 responses





## ***Share in the Chat***

Why did you choose your place on the Spectrum of Public Participation?

# California Wastewater Funding & Lessons Learned

**Adriana Renteria**

Office of Public Engagement,  
Equity, and Tribal Affairs



# Presentation Overview

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Introduction to the Water Boards

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Safe and Affordable Funding for  
Equity and Resilience  
Drinking Water Program

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New Wastewater Needs  
Assessment

---

Community of East Orosi

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Office of Governor  
**GAVIN NEWSOM**



Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control



**OEHHA**  
SCIENCE FOR A HEALTHY CALIFORNIA





## Water Boards' Mission

*Preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations.*

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# Passage of the Human Right to Water Act

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AB685 (Eng, 2012):

Declaring it the policy of the state that “every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.”



## SB 200 Monning

Signed in 2019, established the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund to help local water systems provide safe drinking water

Created the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Drinking Water Program



# Why is the SAFER drinking water program necessary?

~300 failing water systems—mostly small, low income, communities of color

~300 out of ~3,000 public water systems

16 out of 128 federally regulated tribal water systems

## Additional communities not served by water systems:

- ~350,000 domestic wells
- ~1,350 state small water systems



# SAFER DRINKING WATER

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE FUNDING FOR EQUITY AND RESILIENCE

## SAFER Drinking Water Program Tools



Comprehensive water system support



Regulatory authorities



Technical assistance



Funding sources



Annual drinking water needs assessment

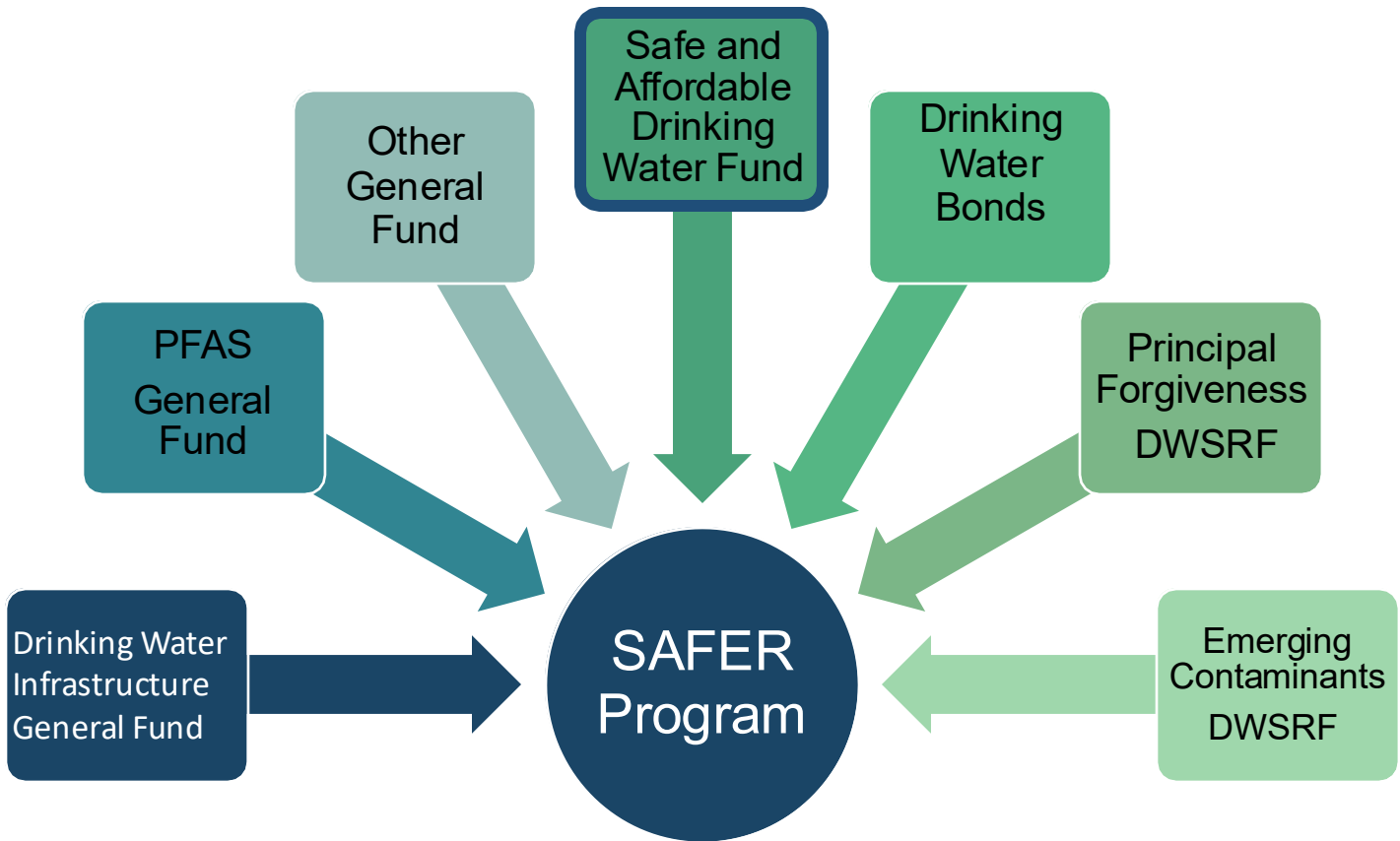


Community outreach and engagement



SAFER Advisory Group

# SAFER Program Funding Sources

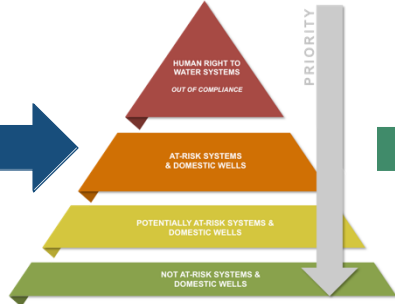


# Process for Achieving Safe Drinking Water

Affordability

Risk

Cost



**NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

**ANNUAL FUND EXPENDITURE PLAN**

**ENGAGE WATER SYSTEM AND COMMUNITY**

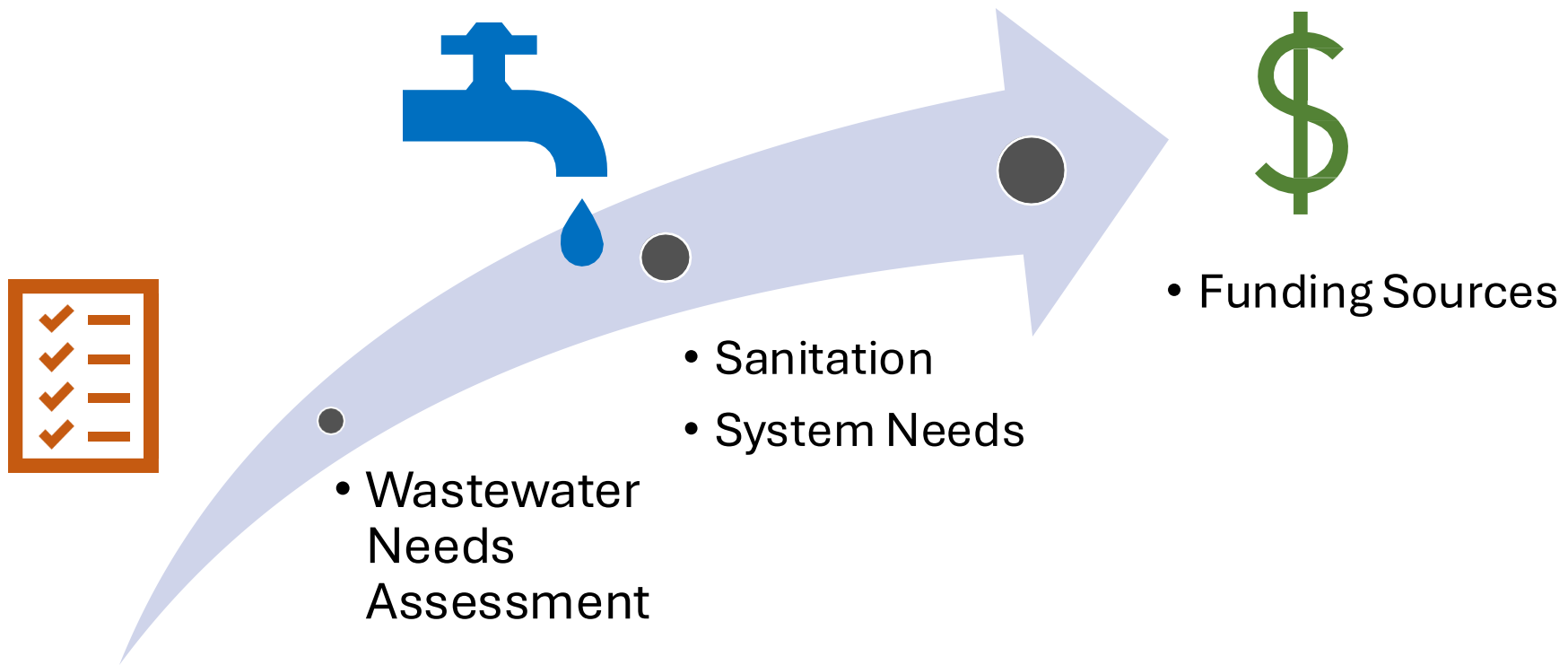
**WATER SYSTEM IMPLEMENTS SOLUTION**

# California Wastewater Needs Assessment & Sewer System Administrators

Stephanie Torres



# California Wastewater Funding Needs



# California Wastewater Needs & Administrators



## Wastewater Needs Assessment

Statewide assessment for funding needs

Identify inadequacy & failures to demonstrate need

Influence new or existing funding sources

## Sewer System Administrators

State Water Pollution Cleanup and Abatement

Authority to grant funds until December 31, 2029

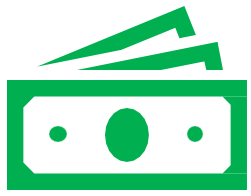
Technical Assistance, as funds available

Image Source: CALFIRE California counties; Available at:  
<https://egis.fire.ca.gov/arcgis/rest/services/FRAP/Counties/MapServer/0>; accessed April 21, 2025



# WASTEWATER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

FOR THE HUMAN RIGHT TO SANITATION



\$4 Million  
by State Water  
Board  
Resolution



Luskin Center  
for Innovation



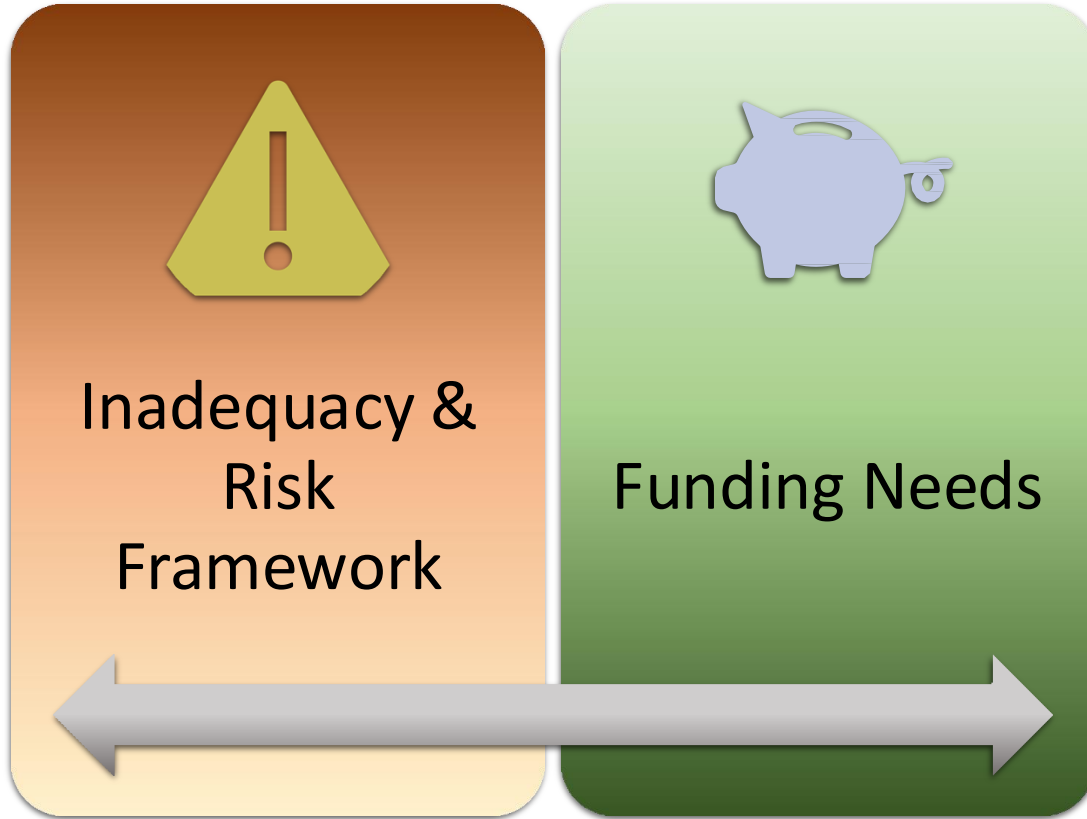
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

California Institute for Water Resources



University of  
Massachusetts  
Amherst

# Wastewater Needs Assessment Goals



## Influence

- State Water Board Priorities & Decisions
  - Projects
  - Programs
- Key Decision Makers
- Legislation

# Funding Use



Baseline Survey



Reports  
& Updates



Engagement  
& Next Steps

Images courtesy of the WWNA team, Water Boards partners – University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources and Sacramento State Office of Water Programs; March 2025

# Sewer System Administrators

## Assembly Bill 805



Disadvantaged community  
Inadequate sewer system  
Demonstrated failures\*



Division of Financial Assistance  
Division of Water Quality

- Appoint an Administrator



State Water Pollution Cleanup  
and Abatement Fund

- Until December 31, 2029

\*History of regulatory violations or failure to meet standards; technical, managerial, or financial capacity failure

### Funding Use

- Sewer system administrator to help provide adequate sewer service
- Technical assistance, as available (CWSRF grant)



### Community Engagement

- Feasibility plans and technical scoping
- Community Engagement Plans
- Post-Administrator Plans
- Ongoing public engagement

# Community of East Orosi

- September 2024 – CA Governor Newsom signs AB 805 into effect
  - Improve sewer services in disadvantaged communities by addressing failing systems
- January 2025 – State Water Board adopts criteria for designating failing systems in need of an administrator
- February 2025 – East Orosi Community Services District receives State Water Board notice



Image Source: Office of Governor Gavin Newsom. *Governor Newsom Signs Bills to Fix Failing Sewer Systems, Help Connect More People to Clean Drinking Water*. Sep.24, 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2024/09/24/governor-newsom-signs-bills-to-fix-failing-sewer-systems-help-connect-more-people-to-clean-drinking-water/> ; accessed April 8, 2025.

# Sewer System Administrator Process

April 2025 – State Water Board Public Meeting & Comments



Public Meeting

Administrator Appointment

Plans, Feasibility & Conflicts

Ongoing Community Engagement

Adequate Sewer Service

Administrator Completion & Transition

Image courtesy of Water Boards staff.

# Contacts

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## Sewer System Administrator Lead

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### Additional information available:

[https://waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/waste\\_discharge\\_requirements/wastewater\\_needs\\_assessment.html](https://waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/waste_discharge_requirements/wastewater_needs_assessment.html)

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/sewer\\_system\\_administrators/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/sewer_system_administrators/)

[www.waterboards.ca.gov](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov)

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# Q&A

# LET'S TAKE A BREAK



# Time for a poll!

Participate with Mentimeter

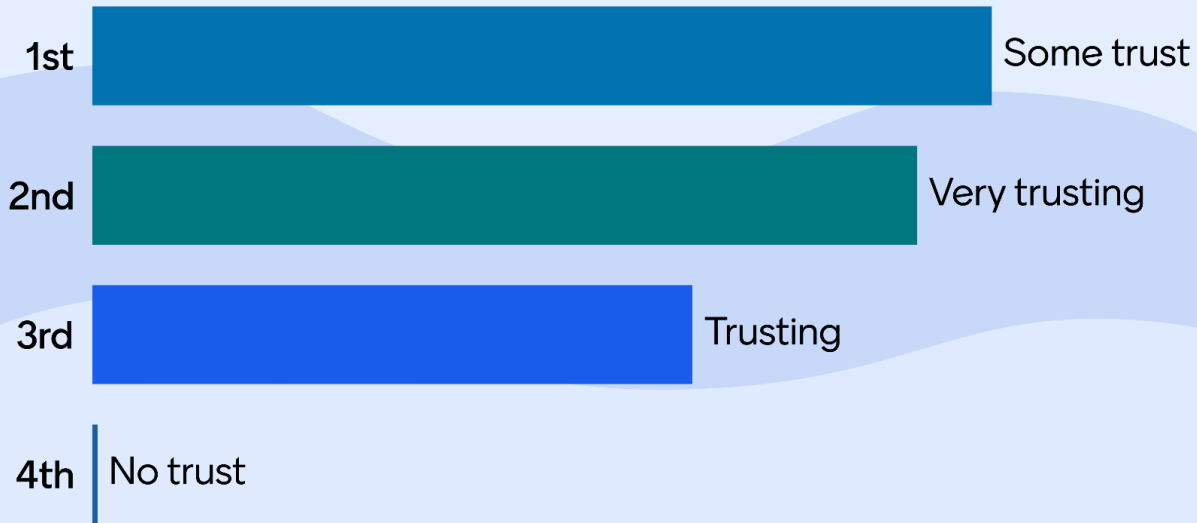
Go to: [menti.com](https://menti.com)

Enter Code: 7707 3245

Or scan the QR code



# How would rate the level of trust with your community / utility?



# Building Blocks of Trust: Best Practices for Authentic Partnerships & Community Engagement

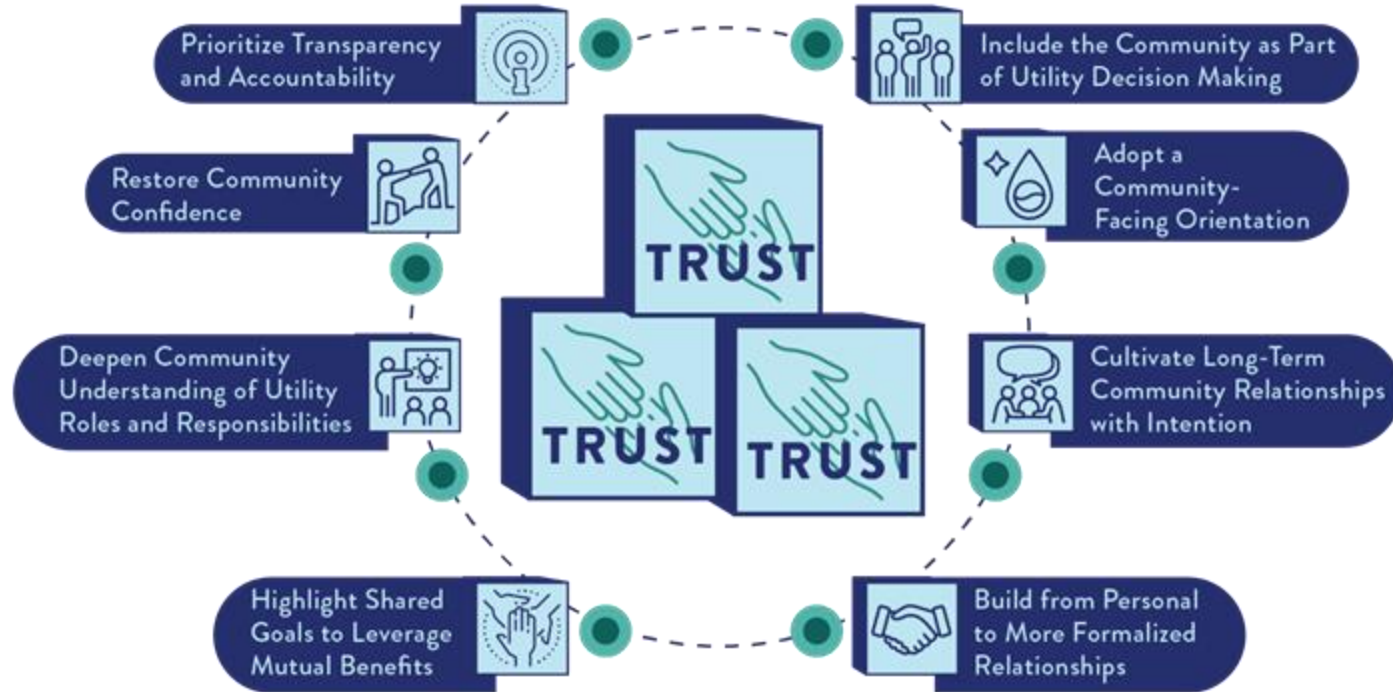


## BUILDING BLOCKS OF TRUST

CREATING AUTHENTIC AND EQUITABLE RELATIONSHIPS  
BETWEEN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND WATER UTILITIES



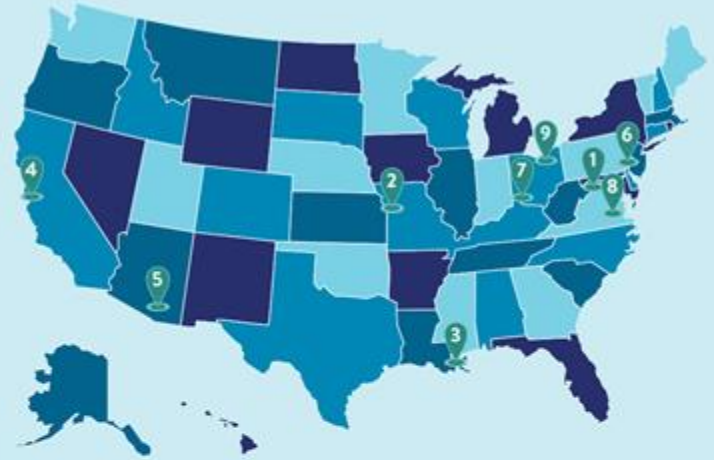
# Overview: Building Blocks of Trust



# Developing the Building Blocks



## WATER TRUST WORKGROUP COMMUNITIES



Below are the Water Trust Workgroup communities who shaped this report.  
More about each partnership can be found throughout this report.

- 1 Harpers Ferry, WV – West Virginia Rivers Coalition and Harpers Ferry Water Commission
- 2 Kansas City, MO – Heartland Conservation Alliance and Kansas City Water
- 3 New Orleans, LA – Healthy Community Services and Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans
- 4 Santa Cruz, CA – Santa Cruz Water Supply Advisory Committee and Santa Cruz Water Department
- 5 Tucson, AZ – Sonora Environmental Research Institute and Tucson Water
- 6 Philadelphia, PA – Schuylkill Action Network and Philadelphia Water Department
- 7 Northern Kentucky – Groundwork Ohio River Valley and Sanitation District Number 1 of Northern Kentucky
- 8 Richmond, VA – Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities
- 9 Cleveland, OH – CHN Housing Partners and Northeast Ohio Regional Sewage District

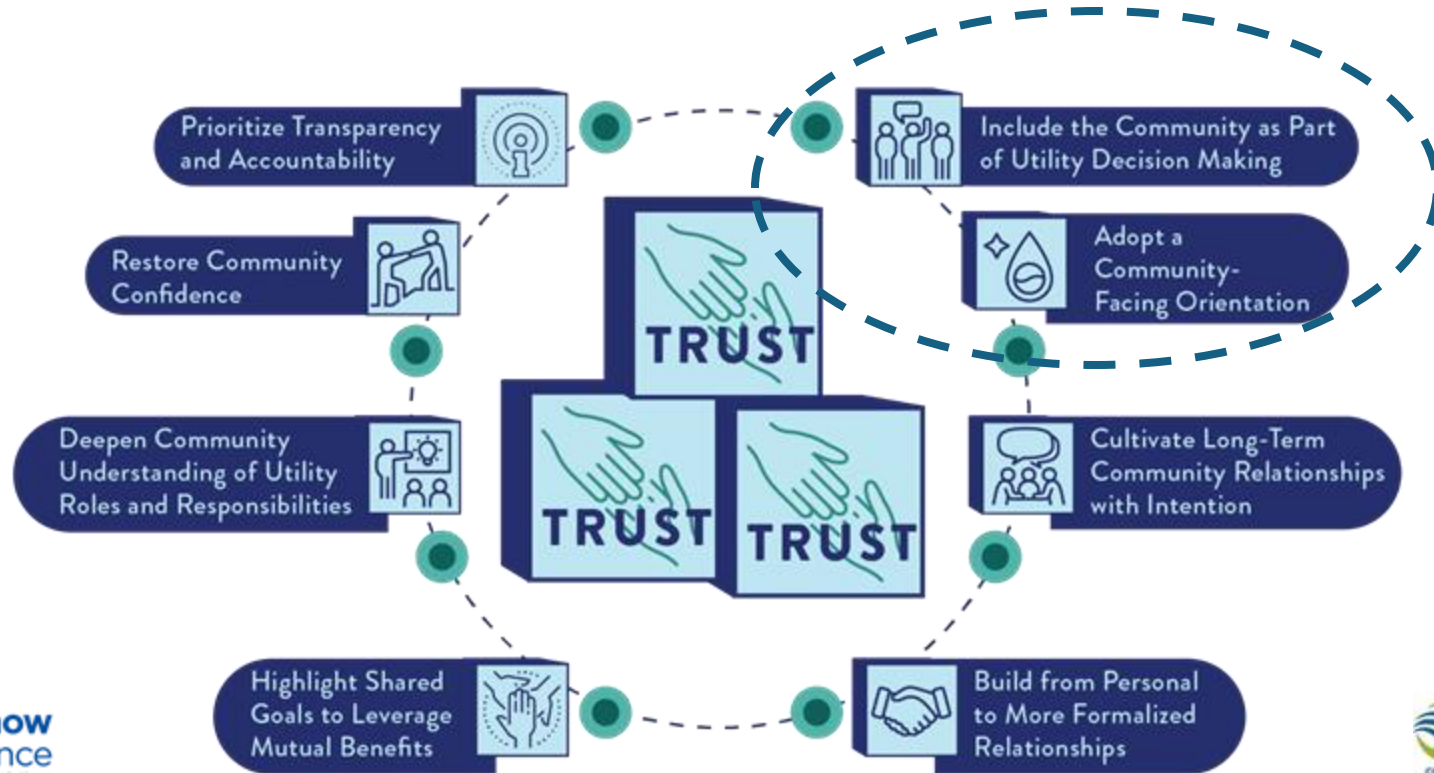
# Why Is Building & Maintaining Trust Important?

“  
**Throw out all  
the rules and  
do what works**  
”

Strong and authentic relationships between community groups and water systems built on trust:

- Support access to safe, clean water
- Help foster affordability
- Enhance sustainability
- Add capacity
- Increase water infrastructure investments

# Constellation of Practices for Community Groups & Utilities



# Building Block: Include the Community as Part of Utility Decision Making

## • Approaches

- Engage community in a specific project, e.g., wastewater system upgrade
- Incorporate community as part of utility governance, e.g., advisory council

## • Benefits

- Vet ideas
- Build credibility and buy in
- Create transparency



## BUILDING BLOCKS FOR INCLUDING THE COMMUNITY AS PART OF UTILITY DECISION MAKING

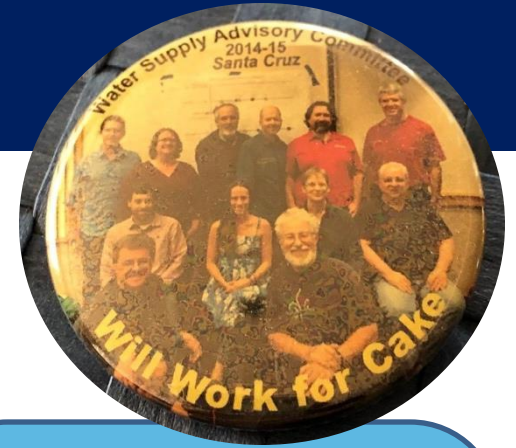


# Trust Building Case Study

## **Partnership: Santa Cruz Water Supply Advisory Committee & Santa Cruz Water Department**

Water Supply Advisory Committee formed to recommend new approaches to securing water supply

- Established formal process
- Significant education of WSAC members
- Regular meetings, open to public
- Enhance sustainability
- Developed consensus-based adaptive management plan



**“Trust is a non-renewable resource”**

Rosemary Menard, Water Director, City of Santa Cruz

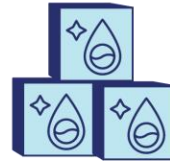
# Building Block: Adopt a Community Facing Orientation

## • Approaches

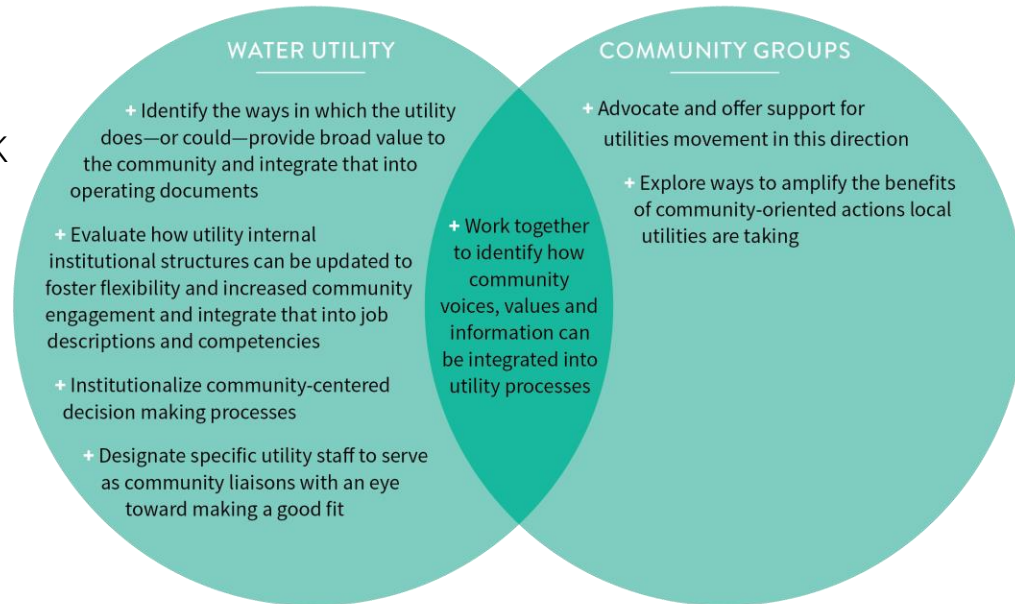
- View utility as an “anchor institution”
- Establish flexible staff roles to make space for community engagement in day-to-day work

## • Benefits

- Expand utility capacity
- Deeper community engagement

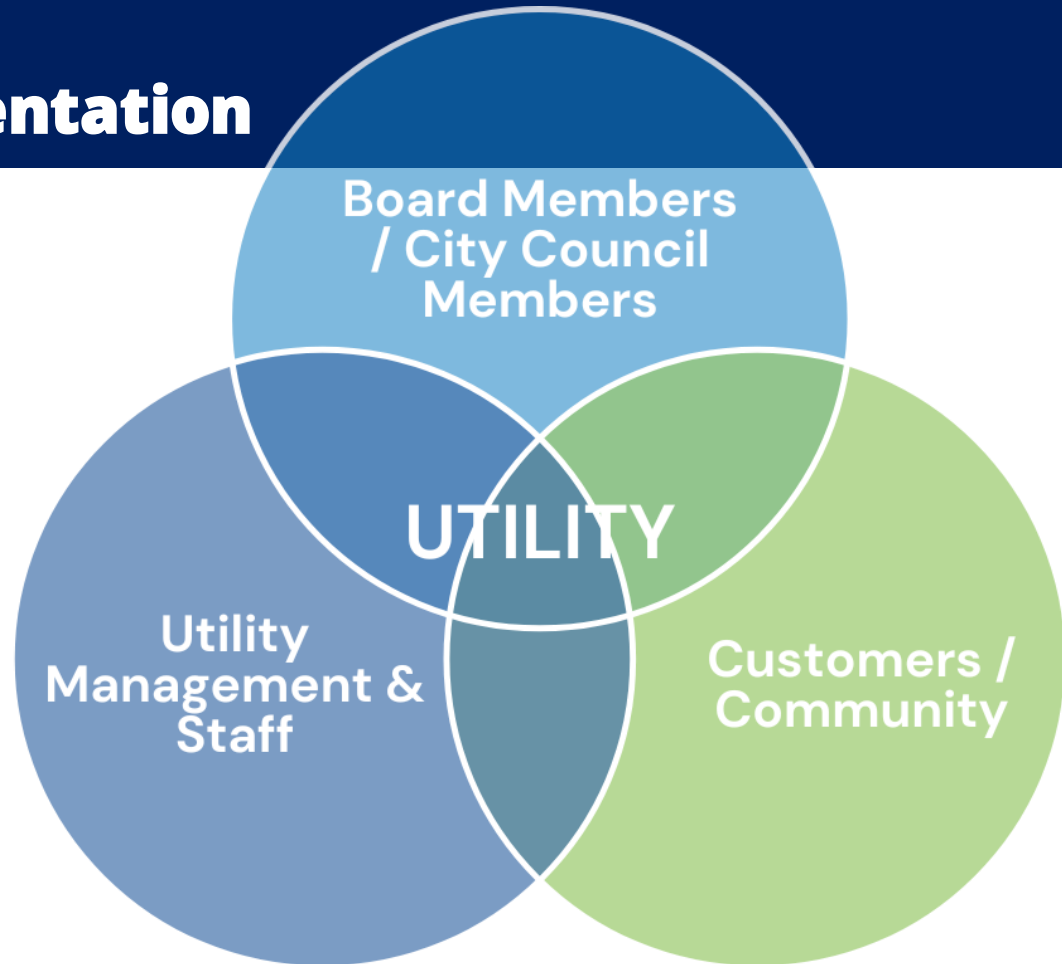


### BUILDING BLOCKS FOR ADOPTING A COMMUNITY-FACING ORIENTATION



# Building Block: Adopt a Community Facing Orientation

- Intersecting roles for community-oriented utilities
- Utility customers = decision maker's constituents



# Building Blocks of Trust Training Series

Based on the Building Blocks of Trust report, this online, self-paced training series covers the 8 "Foundations of Trust." Created to support community groups and water utilities in building strong relationships for clean and safe water, this training aims to uplift long-term partnerships with mutual benefits.

Sign Up Now



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# Q&A

# JOIN THE ALLIANCE

LEARN MORE AND SIGN UP



[www.waternow.org/join-the-leaders](http://www.waternow.org/join-the-leaders)



# Specialized Technical Assistance for Rural, Small, Tribal System

- Pro bono support for wastewater and stormwater systems serving  $\leq 10,000$
- National scope – utilities in all states and regions are eligible



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Get Help



## Get Help

### Tackle Your Technical, Managerial, and Financial Challenges: Services from the EFCN

We offer free, customized support services to water and wastewater systems, decentralized systems, local governments, and others seeking technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) solutions to environmental infrastructure challenges. Our team of experts work hand-in-hand with operators, elected officials, utility directors, and other utility staff to identify barriers and address challenges head-on.

Request Help Now

<https://efcnetwork.org/get-help/>

PLEASE COMPLETE  
OUR SURVEY!



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water leaders. resilient solutions.

# CONTACT THE PRESENTERS

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# THANK YOU!



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**Resources:**

<https://efcnetwork.org/>

