



## APPENDIX B – EXAMPLE COMMUNITY WATER ACADEMY CONCEPT OUTLINE

This is an example of an outline of a Community Water Academy that can be used as part of the planning process as you identify key areas on which to focus.

### WORKING TITLE: [CITY/TOWN NAME] COMMUNITY WATER ACADEMY

#### Location, Date & Time

- a) The academy will take place over two days one week apart
- b) Each program will be about 1.5 hours
- c) Potential Dates

#### Overview & Objectives

- a) Provide community / water system customers baseline information on water systems and utility, particularly the unique aspects of small water systems
- b) Equip the community with knowledge of characteristics of a well-run, well-governed water system
- c) Open the lines of communication between the community and water managers

#### Audience

- a) [Utility Name] customers and community members
- b) [Community organization(s)] members
- c) [Utility Name] decision makers

#### Potential Speakers (consider a variety of speakers from the community, utility, local universities, consultants, etc.)

- a) [Insert list of potential speakers]

#### Helpful Pre-workshop Reading Materials

- a) Day 1 – [Rural and Small Systems Guidebook to Sustainable Utility Management](#) and [Building Blocks of Trust](#)
- b) Day 2 – [Understanding the Basics of Drinking Water Sources, Treatment, and Quality \(video\)](#) and [Drinking Water Guide](#)

## WORKSHOP SESSIONS / AGENDA

### DAY 1: BUILDING THE BASICS – FUNDAMENTALS OF HEALTH WATER SYSTEMS

#### Introduction and overview (10 min)

#### Mini World Café: (20 min)

- a) Acknowledgement of planning team
- b) Overview of World Café process and context for the discussion (5 min)
- c) World Café (10 min)
  - Round: How might a healthy water system look differently to different people and parties? E.g., what does “healthy” mean to you, a municipality, a utility?
- d) Report back / sharing (5 min)
- e) In-room handouts: Note taking sheets for each table
- f) Learning Objectives: Foster a conversation about topline community concerns and priorities related to water

#### What Does it Take to Have Safe Water and Healthy Water Systems? (30 min)

- a) Speakers:
- b) Topics:
  - Hydrologic Cycle
  - Water use and water supplies; national trends
  - Water systems overview: drinking water, wastewater, stormwater
    - How do utilities determine when water is safe and “healthy”?
    - Effective Utility Management attributes: Product Quality, Infrastructure Stability, Water Adequacy
    - Customer/Community engagement
  - [City/town name] water systems: what are they and what do they do?
    - Where does [city/town name] water come from?
    - How does a utility ensure water capacity for various uses, e.g., residential use, fire protection, etc.?
  - [Others identified by your planning team]
- c) Format: Overview presentations from the speakers
  - What is the work that water does in daily life?
  - Journey of the Water Utility and Daily Life
- d) Learning Objectives: Have foundational understanding of the types of water systems, how utilities manage them, and how to achieve and maintain “healthy” water

## What Does it Take Q&A (10 min)

### BREAK – 15 min

## Collaborating to Build “Healthy” Water Systems (25 min)

### a) Speakers:

### b) Topics:

→ Attributes: Customer Satisfaction, Stakeholder Understanding & Support, Community Sustainability & Economic Development

→ Trust Building: **Building Blocks of Trust**

→ Roles:

- What is the utility’s responsibility?
  - Building and maintaining transparency, trust, communication, and action
- What additional services can a utility provide?
  - Maintaining updated information, e.g., updating CDBG income surveys allows community to access more funding
- Role for residents/customers, including—
  - Building participation and engagement
  - Accessing funding / grants

c) **Take home brainstorm:** Rank the importance of utility management areas and trust building goals to be reported back on Day 2

d) **In-room handouts:** Take home brainstorm sheets

e) **Learning Objectives:** Develop a working knowledge of what it takes to have an equitable, well-run water and wastewater utility, know what questions to ask when facing a local water challenge, and understanding how collaboration can lead to a better run water system

## Wrap up & Day 2 preview (10 min)

## DAY 2: PERSPECTIVES – EQUITY, AFFORDABILITY, & WATER RULES

### Welcome back & reorienting (10 min)

## Report back on take home ranking of utility management areas and trust building goals (15 min)

- a) What aspects had similar rankings and why?
- b) What aspects had different rankings and why?
- c) Discuss the importance of equity and trust building in achieving common goals

## Perspectives on Water Equity & Affordability (30 min)

### a) Speakers:

### b) Topics:

- What is water equity?
- Best practices for centering equity in water system management
- Municipal finance basics
  - Financial Viability
  - Costs breakdown, i.e., fixed vs. variable costs
  - Rate setting and structures
    - How to prevent rates from becoming overly burdensome on community?
    - Why might different towns pay different rates when in the same water system?
  - Operating and capital budgets
    - Why can't existing money be spent on water infrastructure?
    - What is the rating of various assets within the system?
- How is affordability measured? What's affordable?
  - Are there assistance programs for households struggling to pay?
- Strategies for keeping water and wastewater services affordable

### c) **Format:** Speaker presentations (to be informed by the planning team and Day 1 mini world café discussion)

### d) **In-room handouts:** Water equity and municipal finance basics handout

### e) **Interactive Anonymous Poll:** (1) What opportunities are there for water equity efforts? E.g., water quality, affordability programs, workforce development/community revitalization, etc.; (2) What support/partnerships would be needed to implement water equity effort strategies? E.g., Support with planning/assessment/prioritization, collaborating on accessing funding, etc.

### f) **Learning Objectives:** Build a foundation of understanding about how utility finances work and strategies for ensuring equitable and affordable access to water and wastewater services

## Perspectives on Equity and Affordability Q&A (10 min)

## BREAK – 15 min

## Water Rules – A snapshot (25 min)

### a) Speakers:

### b) Topics:

- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Clean Water Act
- State Rules, Departments, and/or Commissions Governing Water
- How to research your water systems rules and reporting
  - How often does a utility need to perform water testing and what metrics are used?
  - What is the industry standard for water quality testing?
  - What is the industry standard for pipe repair and replacement?
- Format: Snapshot presentations on federal and state laws; Tutorial on how to access relevant rules, departments, and reports with live step-by-step guide
- In-room handouts: 2-page summary of relevant state and federal agencies and their roles
- Learning Objectives: Develop skills to conduct independent research on relevant water rules and governing agencies

## Water Rules Q&A (10 min)

## Wrap up (10 min)