

LGLW May 21 2026 Meeting

Theme: Strengthening Local Solutions: Communicating Successes and Tailored Technical Assistance

[Meeting webpage](#)

Minutes

I. Welcome, Introductions, & Announcements

- a. Materials: [Administrative Slides](#)
- b. Overview:
 - i. Theme: Strengthening Local Solutions: Communicating Successes and Tailored Technical Assistance
 - ii. The purpose of the meeting is to
 1. Recognize successful stories of technical assistance to local governments
 2. Further identify the needs and challenges of local governments accessing technical assistance
 3. View the results of the Technical Assistance Inventory and Gap Analysis and develop ideas and strategies for sharing with LGLW networks
 - iii. Maura, Caitlin, and Rick provided updates on recent LGLW activities
 1. MS/ WP
 - a. We are in close communication with the Engaged Communities Goal Team leadership to ensure we meet any deadlines regarding management strategies and workplan updates as the governance and structure is finalized.
 - b. More to come soon on the development of those items, but always worth refreshing on outcomes & targets
 2. Information on the Delmarva Peer2Peer Tour:
 - i. Attendance: 32 Local leaders from DE, MD, and VA joined us on Delmarva. Representing 21 different local governments
 - ii. Spent 2 days exploring the challenges, strategies, and potential for land use on the shore.
 - iii. The keynote for the event was *Steve Kline Executive Director of the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy and Vice Chair of the Delmarva Land and Litter Collaborative Board*
 - iv. Tour information:

1. Stop 1:
 - a. high-level overview of the big-picture trends and shared challenges shaping the Delmarva Peninsula
2. Stop 2: The Ramble waterfront redevelopment plan and Tidewater Park in Laurel
 - a. how nature-based playgrounds, affordable housing, and green infrastructure can revitalize downtown spaces, honor local heritage, and support community resilience
3. Stop 3: Layton's Chance Vineyard & Winery
 - a. Showcased the transition of a traditional grain farm into a successful agritourism destination.
4. Stop 4: "BMP buffet" in Greensboro
 - a. examined diverse shoreline and stormwater projects
 - b. Demonstrated how small towns can enhance natural spaces to mitigate flooding and erosion while improving public accessibility and aesthetic appeal.
5. Stop 5: Fair Hill Farm
 - a. How multigenerational farms can use *conservation easements* as a springboard for modernization and environmental stewardship
6. Stop 6: Chestertown water treatment facility
 - a. Examined the intersection of municipal utility management and renewable energy
3. Update on the Collaborative effort with Local Concepts and Healthy Landscapes GT
 - a. primary objective was to find better ways for our various workgroups *to engage with local governments*
 - b. Conducted a study of the USFS tree canopy factsheets

- c. Identified that there was a critical need for a consistent feedback loop to ensure local governments *aren't just recipients* of tools, but active voices in their creation
- d. We plan to highlight these findings from this study during our August meeting, which focuses on land use and tree canopy

c. Actions and Decisions and Next steps

i. Upcoming Tours:

- 1. MD: Hosted at MML's Summer Conference
 - a. When: June 14
 - b. Where: Berlin, MD
 - c. Topic: Stormwater projects
- 2. PA: Hosted at PML Municipal Leadership Summit
 - a. When: October 7
 - b. Where: Susquehanna and Derry Townships
 - c. Topic: Sustainability and intermunicipal collaboration

ii. Upcoming Events

- 1. Aligning Land Conservation with Source Water Protection: *Tools to promote co-benefits for forest, agriculture & habitat*
 - a. [ICPRB](#) virtual webinar on practical approaches and tools for prioritizing land conservation that protects drinking water sources while supporting forests, agriculture, habitat, and high-value watersheds.
 - b. Date & Time: Friday, May 29, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM | [Register Here](#)
- 2. Local Government Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting - June
 - a. Date & Time: Thursday, June 4th (9 am to 12 pm) to Friday, June 5th (9 am to 12 pm) - Fully Virtual
 - b. [Meeting Webpage](#) | Please email lgac@allianceforthebay.org to register. Only registered attendees will be permitted to join the virtual meeting.
- 3. Local Government Leadership Workgroup Quarterly Meeting - August
 - a. Date & Time: Tuesday, August 25, 2026 | 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

- b. Theme: Growing Green: Local Use Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

II. EPA Real Water Technical Assistance (RealWaterTA): Accomplishments and Success Stories

- a. Materials: [Presentation](#) & [Guided Discussion Responses](#)
- b. Contact: Laura Doody | Doody.Laura@epa.gov
- c. Overview:
 - i. More about Laura: Laura is an environmental engineer at the EPA's Office of Water, where she leads the RealWaterTA and Water Engineering Support initiatives for wastewater and stormwater projects. Formerly a technical lead for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, she now specializes in providing engineering planning and technical assistance to rural, small, and tribal communities.
 - ii. Overall goal: RealWaterTA seeks to help water systems and communities address their compliance, public health, and infrastructure challenges
 - iii. Priorities
 - 1. Support Returning to and Maintaining Compliance
 - 2. Focus on Traditional and Innovative Water Infrastructure
 - 3. Defined Scope of Technical Assistance
 - 4. Strengthen Technical, Managerial, and Financial (TMF) Management
 - 5. Empowering the Water Workforce
 - 6. Improve Financial Readiness and Access to Financial Assistance
 - 7. Reduce Inefficient Costs
 - 8. Drive Real-world Results
 - iv. Examples of successes on how EPA-supported TA has made real impacts:
 - 1. Water Engineering Support
 - a. Managed by both the Office of Wastewater Management and the Safe Drinking Water side
 - b. Main goal is to support wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water state revolving fund (SRF) eligible capital improvement projects
 - c. Metrics:
 - i. 120 Water utilities supported by Engineering Support including 36 completed projects
 - ii. 36 Final deliverables submitted to support water utilities with water infrastructure decision-making.

- iii. 32 Applications submitted for water infrastructure funding.
 - d. Case study: Small and Rural Community in Nebraska
 - i. Project: Evaluate alternatives and develop required engineering documents for infrastructure improvements to address decreasing water levels in drinking water wells and wastewater treatment plant violations for CBOD, TSS, ammonia, and e. coli.
 - ii. Impact: System understands next steps and recommended options for fixing their issues and has the required documents to support a funding proposal to address their water reliability and compliance challenges.
2. Tackling Emerging Contaminants
- a. The main goal of this initiative is to help communities address emerging contaminants such as PFAS in their drinking water. They're able to perform water sampling and analysis, technical planning, funding support, operational training, and community engagement all surrounding these emerging contaminants issues
 - b. Metrics:
 - i. supporting 22 active systems across 9 states to assess and address PFAS and emerging contaminants
 - c. Case Study:
 - i. Small drinking water system in DE
 - 1. 72 residents
 - 2. project task was to 2 PFAS sampling events, preliminary engineering report, assistance with funding applications, communications materials
 - 3. main impact was to help the water system comply with the PFAS rule
 - ii. Disadvantaged drinking water system, UT
 - 1. 23,500 residents
 - 2. Project task was Water sampling for heavy metals, cost analysis, assistance with funding applications

3. Main impact was to address public health concerns and discoloration due to elevated manganese
3. Emergency Relief TA
 - a. Not relevant to all meeting attendees; however, may be helpful to share within existing networks
 - b. Available to communities that have been affected by emergency events
 - c. Case study
 - i. VA
 1. Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and funding support to permanently secure critical water main exposed during Hurricane Helene
 2. Impact was reliable water for 150 residents
 - ii. NC
 1. Assess condition of culverts in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and prioritize needed repairs and upgrades
 2. Supports flood mitigation, protects infrastructure, ensures public safety
4. Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap (CAWG)
 - a. Began as a pilot in 2022 to support 11 communities with failing or outdated septic systems, cesspools, or no wastewater infrastructure
 - b. Metrics
 - i. CAWAG is now supporting up to 150 communities under an expanded initiative.
 - c. Case study:
 - i. Bolivar County, MS
 1. Project assisted a community of 34 homes in unincorporated area with failing and noncompliant septic systems, including raw sewage in yards
 2. Impact
 - a. The closest town agreed to expand its sewer line to assist these residents
 - b. Preliminary engineering completed with estimated capital costs at \$2.6M; the MS CWSRF awarded the

town \$2.6M with \$2.1M in principal forgiveness

- c. Construction to expand sewer line will begin this year

5. Strengthening Water Infrastructure for Tomorrow (SWIFT)

- a. Launched Sep 2025
- b. Main goal is to provide utilities with tools, information, and assistance to increase resilience to natural hazards and disasters
- c. Focus areas:
 - i. Understand Hazard data
 - ii. Perform Risk assessment
 - iii. Strengthen resilient strategies
 - iv. Support funding options
- d. Metrics:
 - i. During the pilot phase 10 utilities assisted and hosted 2 workshops for water utilities pursuing funds for disaster recovery in EPA R4

6. “Get the Lead Out” Initiative (GLO)

- a. Metrics:
 - i. Since 2023, GLO has helped 96 PWSs in 19 states to comply with Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) and prepare for the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI). Results include:
 - 1. Thousands of service lines and areas evaluated
 - 2. 38,200 service lines identified
 - 3. 59 LCRR service line inventories completed
 - 4. 17 LSLR Plans developed
 - 5. 16 DWSRF applications submitted
- b. Case study:
 - i. A Public Water System in Ohio had not submitted its service line inventory and was out of compliance.
 - ii. GLO provided expedited TA and helped the PWS submit their inventory. GLO is also providing TA to identify unknown service lines and is prepared to assist the system with its LSL replacement plan if LSLs are identified

- iii. Impact was EPA returned PWS to compliance upon submitting its inventory, Feb. 2025; ID'ing service lines improves public health by informing the public & PWS where lead exists & where LSLR must occur.
- 7. Rural, Small, Tribal Training and TA Grants
 - a. Statutory program created under the 2018 American Water Infrastructure Act
 - b. Metrics
 - i. Three rounds of competitions to date
 - ii. 27 grants awarded totaling over \$102 million
 - iii. TA providers have supported over 3,000 communities
 - c. Case study:
 - i. In 2024, National Rural Water Association(NRWA) worked with a small community in Iowa to manage its midge fly infestation.
 - ii. NRWA's Water Quality Specialist in Iowa visited the community and identified a more financially feasible solution for the community than the typical option, which involves using expensive chemicals. Instead, he advised the operator to install a storm pump, which helped add oxygen back to the lagoon and disrupt the still water to drown the midge fly larvae. After 4 days of running the pump, the lagoon was fully recovered and free of larvae, allowing the lagoon to return to normal operations.
- 8. Training and TA for Small Systems
 - a. providers assist communities with compliance challenges, cybersecurity, leak detection, rate studies, operator certification, water loss audits, and emergency response plans
 - b. Case study:
 - i. Oklahoma
 - 1. The project provided hands-on guidance on how to conduct National Primary Drinking Water Regulations(NPDWR) compliance sampling.
 - 2. Impact allows the system to be aware of water quality issues and associated public

health threats and ensures sampling compliance with NPDWR.

ii. Arkansas

1. The project helped the system improve TMF capacity by conducting a rate study and providing recommendations.
2. Impact compliance with Arkansas state regulations and the necessary funding to ensure safe drinking water for residents.

9. Water Environmental Finance Centers

- a. Largest grant for TA providers
- b. Regionally or nationally
- c. Helping underserved communities access federal funds to finance wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater infrastructure
- d. 4 step process:
 - i. Work with water system to identify water infrastructure needs
 - ii. Develop solutions to address water system needs
 - iii. Complete deliverables / apply for funding
 - iv. Resolve water infrastructure challenges
- e. Metrics:
 - i. Providing support to 900+ water systems 4 National Water Environmental Finance Center 13 Regional Water EFCs
 - ii. 300+ funding applications submitted for over \$700 million
- f. Case study:
 - i. Small system in Utah
 1. Population around 60
 2. The project was to assist the water system with addressing systemic problems with 50+ year old failing submersible pumps. NRWA supported 2 SRF loan applications.
 3. Impact was 2 nd SRF loan approved for \$99,500 loan at 0% interest, with \$29,500 of loan forgiveness.
 - ii. Small system in Colorado
 1. Population around 1300

2. The project elevated levels of PFAS in the primary water supply well. EFC provided technical assistance to complete and submit an Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Tier 1 grant. This work may help small drinking water systems nationwide address PFAS treatment approaches. The system successfully received a \$300,000 grant.

3.

10. Multi-Environmental Media EFCs

- a. MM EFCs can address issues in several areas, such as water quality, wastewater, solid waste, air quality, hazardous waste, brownfields, and pollution prevention
- b. metrics
 - i. MM EFCs have supported 417 communities in the current grant cycle
 - ii. 127 of these are Community Directed Spending (CDS) grant recipients, resulting in ~\$81M in CDS awards for 55+ grant recipients

11. Lagoon Action Plan

- a. Organizes actions to help small communities using lagoon wastewater treatment systems by engaging state and Tribal agencies, TA Providers, and other stakeholders. The plan leverages IJJA funds to improve public health and address challenges to lagoons, including ammonia.
- b. Case study:
 - i. EPA conducted site visits to
 1. assess and address short-term issues related to the infrastructure's rehabilitation needs (including some identified prior by Region and Permitting Authority)
 2. focus on long-term plans to design system upgrades.
 - ii. Project was divided into phases
 1. Developed Technical Assistance Recommendation Report with technical support documents for the system; outlines actions to rehabilitate lagoon to improve treatment performance and compliance,

reduce costs due to system upsets, and increase operators' capacity

2. Engaging the community, Permit Authority, stakeholders, and NGO TA Providers to design long-term infrastructure upgrade. Will deliver a Preliminary Engineering Report and funding application assistance.

d. Discussion/ Comments/ Questions from the meeting chat & the Guided Discussion Slides

i. From the chat:

1. Kathy Stecker: Thanks for all the info. Can you say more about the TA being for "SRF-eligible" projects? Can you give examples of types of TA you can't help with?
 - a. Response from Jen Cotting: Great question, Kathy. Non-SRF work, we are able to do under our MultiMedia, Rural Small and Tribal, and Small Systems awards

ii. Key themes from Guided Slides:

1. Majority of respondents were unfamiliar with RealWaterTA
2. Majority of respondents indicated they were unaware of RealWaterTA being utilized in their area
 - a. One indicated it being used for financing water infrastructure
3. Challenges identified with utilizing RealWaterTA were:
 - a. Misconceptions on having to apply for full grant
 - b. Capacity to undertake program
 - c. Ability to compete with larger jurisdictions
 - d. Concern over starting process and assistance going away over time

e. Actions and Decisions and Next steps

- i. **Action:** If you have questions regarding RealWaterTA, email realwaterta@epa.gov and CC Doody.Laura@epa.gov. To request RealWaterTA for your community or a community you are working with, use the [Request Form](#).
- ii. **Next Steps:** LGLW members can provide feedback/insight for Laura Doody using the [Feedback Slides \(Slides 7-15\)](#)

III. Closing Gaps in Technical Assistance to Local Governments in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

- a. Materials: [Presentation](#) & [Guided Discussion Responses](#)
- b. Overview:

- i. Project leads: EPIC'S Kavita Kapur Macleod, Conservation Finance and Environmental Markets Fellow & Harry Huntley, Agriculture Policy Lead
- ii. Results will support the Watershed Agreement's Local Leadership Outcome to "Continually increase the knowledge and capacity of local officials on issues related to water resources and in the implementation of economic and policy incentives that will support local conservation actions". Results will also support other Watershed Agreement goals that are highly dependent on local government outcomes, such as those for water quality, habitats, and land conservation
- iii. Key Tasks:
 - 1. Identify and inventory existing free local government technical assistance programs that align with the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement outcomes.
 - 2. Compile standardized information about each technical assistance program.
 - 3. Define and analyze gaps in existing technical assistance programs.
 - 4. Recommend approaches to fill gaps in technical assistance to local governments to drive increased implementation towards meeting watershed agreement outcomes.
- iv. Four Phases: Background research and Steering Committee Development, Technical Deep Dive, TA program inventory and gap analysis, and producing final report. Work included-
 - 1. Identifying potential technical assistance programs for the inventory, by conducting scoping interviews and an extensive desk review.
 - 2. Dissemination of the data collection tool occurred in two phases: first, reaching a wide audience through trusted voices in each state, and second, targeting specific providers identified by EPIC through further research.
 - 3. EPIC interviewed a selection of providers across the watershed to gather more granular details on their respective programs.
 - a. TA providers included state, local, and federal governments, quasi-governmental, state and regional networks of LGs, universities, and Non profits
- v. The Technical Assistance definition is sourced from the [2018 Local Government Forum Report](#).
 - 1. TA Definition: "[T]echnical assistance is defined as a service provided to local government by an outside organization or agency, which may otherwise be performed by staff or secured through

normal procurement processes, e.g. municipal engineering services.”

2. TA was narrowed down to free TA to local governments relevant to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals

vi. Results

1. Organizations: *123 organizations in TA inventory*
 - a. The largest number of TA providers operate in more than one Bay state or Bay watershed-wide.
 - b. Across individual states, Maryland and Virginia have the most TA providers.
 - c. All federal TA reflected in the inventory is provided to more than one Bay state and in many cases to all Bay states.
 - d. Nonprofits are significantly active Bay-wide as well as in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.
2. Method for TA delivery: *TA providers use a broad range of methods to deliver TA, with most providers using more than one method*
 - a. Most TA providers offer both in-person and virtual TA.
 - b. In-person TA can take the form of meetings, training, and workshops.
 - c. Virtual TA can involve webinars, online communications and knowledge materials (e.g., factsheets and storymaps), and online discussion forums.
 - d. Online discussion forums and newsletters were less evident in the inventory than other methods.
3. Topics: *TA is more heavily concentrated within education and planning activities, with gaps for TA in late project cycle activities.*
 - a. late project cycle activities tend to be more fee-based and therefore would not be captured in the current assessment.
4. Time commitments: *Most TA providers allocate staff time and resources to other activities in addition to TA. This suggests TA providers have diverse operational mandates.*
 - a. Only 11 providers (34% of the providers that responded to this question) spend 75-100% of time and are mostly dedicated to TA
 - b. The largest number of TA providers (24) spends up to 25% of time on TA and 75% of time on other activities.

5. Meeting local TA demands: *More information is required to understand the degree to which TA providers are meeting **demand** for TA from local governments.*
 - a. Most providers (54 providers or 71% of total providers in the inventory) have reached over 20 local governments over the past 5 years
 - b. caveat that Several factors complicate what this finding explains about the reach of TA providers to local governments
 - i. total number of entities classified as local governments by the Bay Program varies across states
 - ii. The data also do not show how many local governments reported represent unique local governments
 - iii. The data do not provide insight into how much of the demand from local governments for TA is being met by the TA services provided
6. *Results suggest that toxic contaminants, fish passage, and public access are Bay Agreement goals that need additional TA resource allocation.*
 - a. Caveat: The revised 2025 Chesapeake Bay Agreement was not finalized at the time of development and distribution of the data collection tool; therefore the data collected reflects the draft version of the 2025 Agreement available at the time.
 - b. To get a more detailed and accurate understanding of the relevance of the revised goals and outcomes in the 2025 Agreement, further evaluation and engagement with local governments at the state level
7. Who is getting assistance: *TA providers are assisting a broad range of government and community types across the Bay watershed.*
 - a. Urban and rural communities have similar numbers of total TA providers (70 and 72 providers, respectively) and 65 providers indicated that they work with communities with limited local government capacity or resources
8. Coverage across the CBW: *Geographic coverage of TA providers shows differing intensities of potential TA across the Bay watershed, with more coverage closer to the Bay itself.*

- a. more TA providers in states closer to the Chesapeake Bay itself.
- b. More TA providers cover Delaware than other states.
- c. Pennsylvania has several counties that appear to have fewer TA providers in the inventory than most counties in the Bay watershed
- d. The difference in the number of TA providers in the inventory across the eastern and western shores of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland is notable

vii. Recommendations:

1. Short-term

- a. Share results of the TA Inventory with local governments across the Bay Watershed through existing + new channels.
- b. Provide convening opportunities for TA providers across the Bay Watershed to share information, best practices, and lessons learned.
- c. Target currently available TA to the local governments that need it most.
- d. Target currently available TA to priority geographic regions.
- e. Explore ways to facilitate more resources for TA that support local governments in improving toxic contaminant reduction, public access, and fish passage projects.

2. Medium - term

- a. Support research on the effectiveness of existing TA models.
- b. Explore methods to solicit demand-side information from local governments on TA priorities and needs.
- c. Support identification of private sources of TA for local governments.
- d. Support states in the alignment of additional resources for TA to resource allocation for project implementation.

c. Discussion/ Comments/ Questions from the meeting Q&A & the Guided Discussion Slides

i. From the Q&A

- 1. Kathy: "Target currently available TA to LGs that need it most." I don't think we know who needs it most?
 - a. Rick: This project was limited to the supply side and more is needed to identify the demand and those LGs that need it most.

- b. Rick: We hope jurisdictions can use this as a starting point to further identify their existing TA and then move towards that demand side.
 - c. Laura: I would guess that this would be different in each state, so a state-by-state analysis might be needed
- 2. Jackie: Coral Howe (chowe@usgs.gov) completed an analysis about local government capacity across the Watershed. Might be a good starting point to investigate the demand side of things.
- 3. Jackie: Really interesting project! Thanks for sharing. Will the list of TA providers that were surveyed be listed anywhere in some sort of final report? It would be interesting to see how many of these providers are engaged in the CBP workgroups and aware of CBP resources, tools, and data
 - a. Rick: The full inventory of those that completed the data collection tool will be in the report. Those identified, but that did not complete the data collection tool, will also be included in the appendix.
- 4. Kathy: "Convening opportunities" sounds like Chesapeake Watershed Forum.

ii. Key themes from Guided Slides:

- 1. What surprised participants the most
 - a. Geographic 'hotspots' of TA were not where expected
 - b. that TA is more focused in education & planning
- 2. Who needs to hear the provided information
 - a. Nonprofit partners to point folks in need to additional resources (that they might not be able to provide)
 - b. Tribes/Tribal governments
 - c. EPA so they can identify sustainable funding for TA
- 3. Next Steps
 - a. Determine best outreach methods and then publicize
 - b. Combine results with LG survey, Ecologix report, etc.

d. Actions and Decisions and Next steps

- i. **Action:** LGLW Coordinator will share the TA Inventory & Gap Analysis Report when it becomes available.
- ii. **Next Steps:** LGLW members can provide feedback on potential next steps/strategies for sharing information from the presentation and

supporting the Local Government Leadership Outcome using the Feedback Slides (*Slides 16-22*)

Recorded Actions & Decisions

- LGLW Staffer will share resources, links, and meeting minutes as soon as they become available.
- LGLW Staffer will share upcoming events, webinars, and trainings in any meeting follow-up emails
- LGLW Members, send questions regarding RealWaterTA by emailing realwaterta@epa.gov and CC'ing Doody.Laura@epa.gov. To request RealWaterTA for your community or a community you are working with, use the [Request Form](#).
- LGLW members can provide feedback/insight for Laura Doody and potential next steps/strategies for sharing information from the TA Inventory and Gap Analysis presentation using the [Feedback Slides](#).