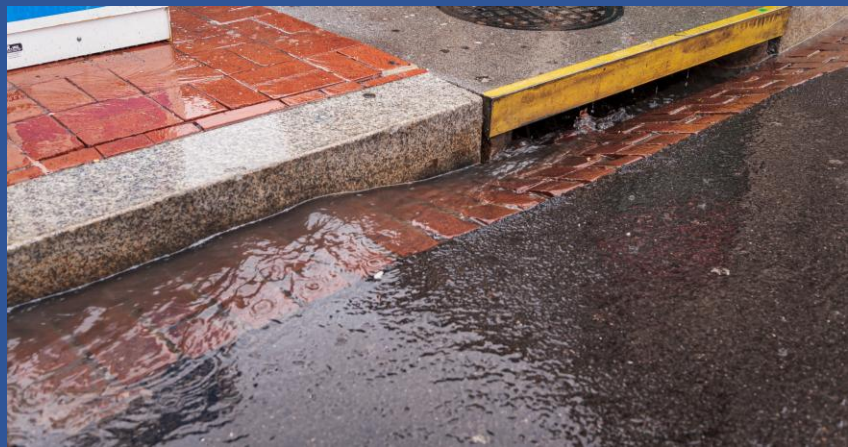
U.S. EPA Real Water Technical Assistance (RealWaterTA): Accomplishments and Success Stories

May 2026

United States Environmental Protection Agency



Agenda

- What is RealWaterTA?
- RealWaterTA Program/Initiative Successes
- How to request assistance

RealWaterTA Priorities

- Support Returning to and Maintaining Compliance
- Focus on Traditional and Innovative Water Infrastructure
- Defined Scope of Technical Assistance
- Strengthen Technical, Managerial, and Financial (TMF) Management
- Empowering the Water Workforce
- Improve Financial Readiness and Access to Financial Assistance
- Reduce Inefficient Costs
- Drive Real-world Results

RealWaterTA Impacts

- EPA's technical assistance (RealWaterTA) efforts help water systems and communities address their compliance, public health, and infrastructure challenges
- RealWaterTA is made available through multiple avenues but can be requested from one place: RealWaterTA Request Form
- Today, we want to highlight some of the successes, demonstrating how EPA-supported TA has made real impacts helping improve regulatory compliance, public health, and environmental outcomes.

Water Engineering Support

- **120** Water utilities supported by Engineering Support including 36 completed projects
- **36** Final deliverables submitted to support water utilities with water infrastructure decision making.
- **32** Applications submitted for water infrastructure funding.

Example: Small and Rural Community in Nebraska

- **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*.
- **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.

"We came away from this grand endeavor educated and hopeful for the future. This team is the best example of government at work. Thank you." – Village Board Members

Small, rural community, NE, Wastewater Treatment Plant

Tackling Emerging Contaminants

From June 2025 – February 2026, this new technical assistance initiative is supporting **22 active systems** across **9 states** to assess and address PFAS and emerging contaminants:

Water sampling and analysis

Technical planning

Implementation and funding support

Operational training

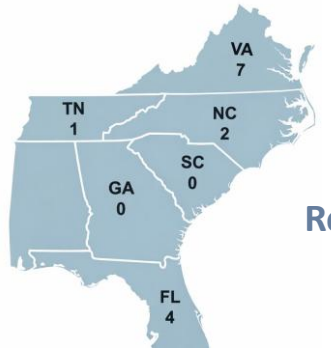
Community engagement

Project examples:

Water System	Residents	Project Tasks	Main Impact
Small drinking water system, DE	72	2 PFAS sampling events, preliminary engineering report, assistance with funding applications, communications materials	Help water system comply with the **PFAS rule**
Disadvantaged drinking water system, UT	23,500	Water sampling for heavy metals, cost analysis, assistance with funding applications	Address **public health concerns** and discoloration due to elevated **manganese**

Emergency Relief TA

Since October 2025, helping communities **restore** essential **water/wastewater services, secure funding**, and **strengthen systems** affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton



14 Emergency Relief TA Requests

Systems Analysis

Preliminary Engineering

Asset Management Planning

Funding Support

Emergency Response Planning

Vulnerability Assessments

Project Examples:

Community	Project	Impact
Virginia Community	Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and funding support to permanently secure critical watermain exposed during Hurricane Helene	Ensures reliable water for 150 residents
North Carolina Community	Assess condition of culverts in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and prioritize needed repairs and upgrades	Supports flood mitigation, protects infrastructure, ensures public safety

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap

- Began as a pilot in 2022 to support 11 communities with failing or outdated septic systems, cesspools, or no wastewater infrastructure

- CAWAG is now supporting up to 150 communities under an expanded initiative.

- **Success Story: Bolivar County, MS**
  - Project assisted a community of 34 homes in unincorporated area with failing and noncompliant septic systems, including raw sewage in yards
  - The closest town agreed to expand their sewer line to assist these residents
  - Preliminary engineering completed with estimated capital costs at $2.6M; the MS CWSRF awarded the town $2.6M with $2.1M in principal forgiveness
  - Construction to expand sewer line will begin this year

Image: Septic tank without lid, raw sewage on ground during Bolivar County, MS site visit.

Strengthening Water Infrastructure for Tomorrow

Launched in Sept 2025: Provide utilities with the tools, information, and assistance to increase resilience to natural hazards and disasters.

Pilot phase: Directly assist 10 utilities and conduct two workshops for water utilities pursuing funds for disaster recovery in EPA Region 4

	Pilot	Current Cohort	Rest of FY26	FY 27	FY 28
Completed / Ongoing	10	11	0	0	0
Goal	10	15	35	75	100

Assistance is tailored to focus on one or more of the following areas, based on utility needs:

- Understand Hazard Data
- Strengthen Resilient Strategies
- Perform Risk Assessments
- Support Funding Options

Get the Lead Out

Since 2023, GLO has helped 96 PWSs in 19 states to comply with LCRR and prepare for the LCRI. Results include:

- Thousands of service lines and areas evaluated
- **38,200** service lines identified
- **59** LCRR service line **i**nventories completed
- **17** LSLR Plans developed
- **16** DWSRF applications submitted

- **Success Story**
  - **Project:** A PWS in Ohio had not submitted their service line inventory and was out of compliance. 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 their LSL replacement plan if LSLs are identified.
  - **Impact**: 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.

Rural, Small, Tribal Training and Technical Assistance Grants

Statutory program created under the 2018 American Water Infrastructure Act. Three rounds of competitions to date; 27 grants awarded totaling > $102 million. TA providers have supported over 3,000 communities.

Case Study: Iowa

In 2024, NRWA worked with a small community in Iowa to manage their midge fly infestation.

Midge flies that eat a lagoon's "good bacteria" can lead to a lagoon falling into disrepair, creating potential health risks for the community and the possibility of failing to meet regulatory standards.

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 absent of larvae, allowing the lagoon to return to normal operations.

Training and Technical Assistance for Small Systems

- Under this grant during Q4 FY25, TA providers assisted nearly 500 small drinking water systems with compliance challenges, cyber security, leak detection, rate studies, operator certification, water loss audits, and emergency response plans.
- Conducted over 150 well assessments for private well homeowners. Topics included well screens, well maintenance checks, water quality, water treatment, etc. Ensured that private residents, especially those from rural communities, have access to safe drinking water regardless of if they are connected to a PWS.
- FY24 Grantees: NRWA ($9M, drinking water systems), RCAP ($9.9M drinking water systems, $1.25M wastewater, $3.45M private drinking water well owners), UNM EFC ($7M drinking water systems)

Community	Project	Impact
Small water system in Oklahoma	Provided hands on guidance on how to conduct NPDWR compliance sampling.	Allows system to be aware of water quality issues and associated public health threats and ensures sampling compliance with NPDWR.
Small water system in Arkansas	Helped system improve TMF capacity by conducting a rate study and providing recommendations.	Compliance with Arkansas state regulations and the necessary funding to ensure safe drinking water for residents.

Water Environmental Finance Centers

Helping under-served communities access federal funds to finance wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater infrastructure

- 4 National Water EFCs, 13 Regional Water EFCs
- Providing support to 900+ water systems
- 300+ funding applications submitted for over $700 million

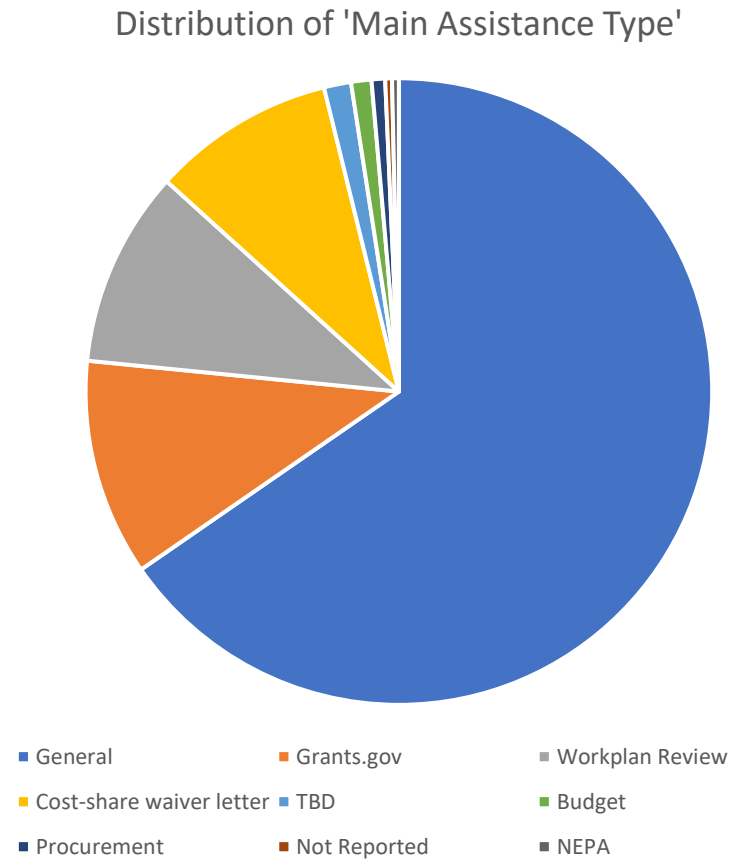
Water System	Project	Impact
Small system in Utah Population ~60 EFC: NRWA	Assist water system with addressing systemic problems with 50+ year old failing submersible pumps. NRWA supported 2 SRF loan applications.	2nd SRF loan approved for $99,500 loan at 0% interest, with $29,500 of loan forgiveness.
Small system in Colorado Population ~1,300 EFC: Moonshot Missions	Elevated levels of PFAS in the primary water supply well. EFC provided technical assistance to complete and submit for an EC-SDC Tier 1 grant. This work **may help small drinking water systems nationwide address PFAS treatment approaches.**	The system successfully received $300,000 grant, with Moonshot assisting in leading the pilot project under this grant.

Multi-Environmental Media EFCs

- The **Multi-Environmental Media (MM) EFC** program has been supporting communities for 30+ years
  - MM EFCs can address issues in several areas, such as water quality, wastewater, solid waste, air quality, hazardous waste, brownfields, and pollution prevention

Success Story: Community Directed Spending (CDS) Grant Recipients

- MM EFCs have supported **417** communities in the current grant cycle
- **127** of these are Community Directed Spending (CDS) grant recipients, resulting in ~**$81M** in CDS awards for **55+** grant recipients



Lagoon Action Plan (LAP)

The LAP organizes actions to help small communities using lagoon wastewater treatment systems. Actions involve state and Tribal agencies, TA Providers, and other stakeholders. The plan leverages IIJA funds to improve public health and address challenges to lagoons, including ammonia.

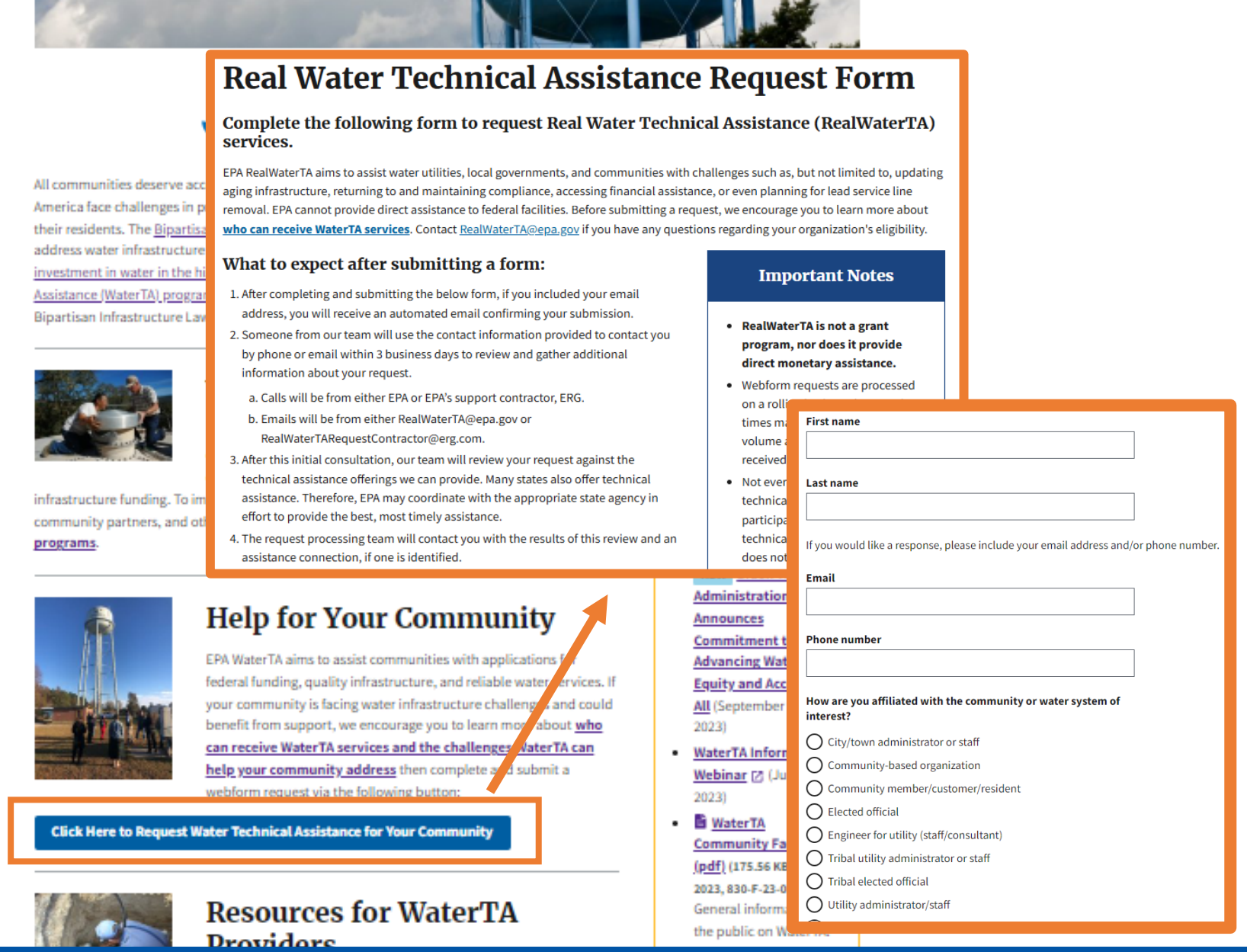
Case Study: The OW Lagoon Team and an EPA Region identified a community lagoon for TA based on current and historic needs.

- **Technical support:** Conducted site visit to (1) assess and address short-term issues related to the infrastructure's rehabilitation needs (including some identified prior by Region and Permitting Authority); and (2) focus on long-term plans to design system upgrades.
- **Phase 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.
- **Phase 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.

Image: A community wastewater lagoon receiving TA

How to Request RealWaterTA?

Submit a RealWaterTA Request Form at epa.gov/RealWaterTA



Learn more or request assistance at www.epa.gov/RealWaterTA

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