

### Regulator's Resource Toolkit for Small Systems

This guide was created for State and County/ODA regulators to serve as a resource for addressing challenges faced by small public water systems with populations under 3,300. Its aim is to provide the regulator with a directory of information to proactively assist these systems before issues escalate into more serious water quality concerns.

#### Technical Assistance Providers:

1. [DWS Circuit Rider](#) can assist with short-term technical, managerial, and financial issues. Assistance is usually in person but can also occur over the phone, 10 hours. There is no charge to water systems. OVS systems are eligible for this service through utilizing State general funding. Contact: Marlin Gochmour, Civil West Engineering Services; Phone: 541-266-8601; Email: [mgochnour@civilwest.net](mailto:mgochnour@civilwest.net).
2. [Rural Community Assistance Corporation \(RCAC\)](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that operates in 13 western states, (including Oregon) and Pacific islands. RCAC serves Indigenous and rural communities through training, technical and financial assistance and advocacy. Contact: Dessa Wells, phone: 360-558-2150; [dessa.wells@rcac.org](mailto:dessa.wells@rcac.org)
3. [Oregon Association of Water Utilities \(OAWU\)](#) provides training and technical assistance to all eligible water and wastewater systems, and programs generally focus on assisting small and rural communities that serve less than 10,000 people. Circuit Rider assistance includes areas such as cross connection, distribution systems, disinfection, water treatment facilities, and operator certification. Through a contract with DWS, OAWU also offers [Small Water Operator Training classes](#). Designed for drinking water system operators, this free one-day course covers the basics of water system operation and maintenance, water testing and other regulations, waterborne disease, water treatment for small systems and record keeping.
4. [EPA Technical Assistance-WaterTA](#). EPA offers technical assistance (TA) to help communities identify water challenges and solutions, build capacity, and help apply for water infrastructure funding. Communities can submit a webform request and be matched with a technical assistance provider. Generally, these programs target communities that are small, rural, disadvantaged, and/or Tribal communities.

**Coordination meeting:** When a system is experiencing difficult challenges, gathering all the parties involved early on can improve communications and streamline corrective actions. DWS can assist with setting up a meeting\*.

**Consolidation:** Consider whether there are any nearby (within a mile) water systems for physical consolidation, or consolidating management and operations. DWS can assist\*.

**Financial Capacity:** OHA has developed [handouts](#) for small water systems to increase financial capacity and covers budgeting basics, asset management, rate structure and capital improvement.

**Funding Resources:** The table below is a snapshot of available funding opportunities for small public water systems with populations of less than 3,300 separated into two categories, planning/predevelopment and construction/equipment. [RCAC's Environmental Finance Center](#) also maintains a list of potential funding resources for small rural communities.

<b>Funding Assistance Planning/Predevelopment</b>	<b>Population</b>			<b>Funding Description</b>
	<b>≤3,300</b>	<b>25-330</b>	<b>10-24 (OVS)</b>	
<a href="#">Sustainable Infrastructure Projects (SIPP)</a>	X	X		Grants for Feasibility studies to evaluate project options and studies to evaluate potential for system consolidation.
<a href="#">Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act (IIJA)</a> -Formerly known as Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	X	X		Provides funding for planning and design of drinking water facility improvements. EC funds address emerging contaminants in drinking water with a focus on perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).
<a href="#">State Revolving Fund</a>	X	X		Funding for planning and design of drinking water facility improvements.
<a href="#">National Rural Water Association (NRWA) Revolving Loan Fund</a>	X	X	X	Provides low-cost loans for pre-development costs associated with larger projects.
<b>Funding Assistance Construction/Equipment</b>	<b>Population</b>			<b>Funding Description</b>
	<b>≤3,300</b>	<b>25-300</b>	<b>10-24 (OVS)</b>	
<a href="#">USDA-Water and Environmental grants and programs</a>	X	X	X	Provides funding for the construction of water facilities in rural communities and is the only Federal program exclusively focused on rural water and waste infrastructure needs of rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less.
<a href="#">National Rural Water Association (NRWA) Revolving Loan Fund</a>	X	X	X	Provides low-cost loans for short-term repair costs, and small capital projects. The RWLF was established through a grant from the USDA/RUS, and repaid funds are used to replenish the fund and make new loans.
<a href="#">State Revolving Fund (SRF)</a>	X	X		Provides low-cost loans to community and nonprofit non-community water systems for planning, design and construction of drinking water facility improvements.
<a href="#">Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act (IIJA)</a>	X	X		Provides low-cost loans to community and nonprofit non-community water systems for construction of drinking water facility improvements. Funded through 2027.
<a href="#">DWSRF Funding Program Small System Equipment Assistance Funding (SSEA)</a>	X	X		Funds small scale additions or replacement of equipment and instrumentation needed by small water systems to ensure continued operation and protection of public health.
<a href="#">Drinking Water Source Protection Funding</a>	X	X		Designed for the protection of drinking water sources. Drinking water sources include watersheds above a public water supply surface water intake and/or the delineated portion of the aquifer supplying water to public water supply wells or springs.

\*For additional assistance, contact the DWS Small Systems Specialist Sue Yellowtail, at [Suzanne.yellowtail2@oha.oregon.gov](mailto:Suzanne.yellowtail2@oha.oregon.gov) or 541-321-5265.