



OREGON
HEALTH
AUTHORITY

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Regulator's Resource Toolkit for Small Systems

Sue Yellowtail, REHS
Small Systems Specialist
OHA-Drinking Water Services

Background-Why it was developed

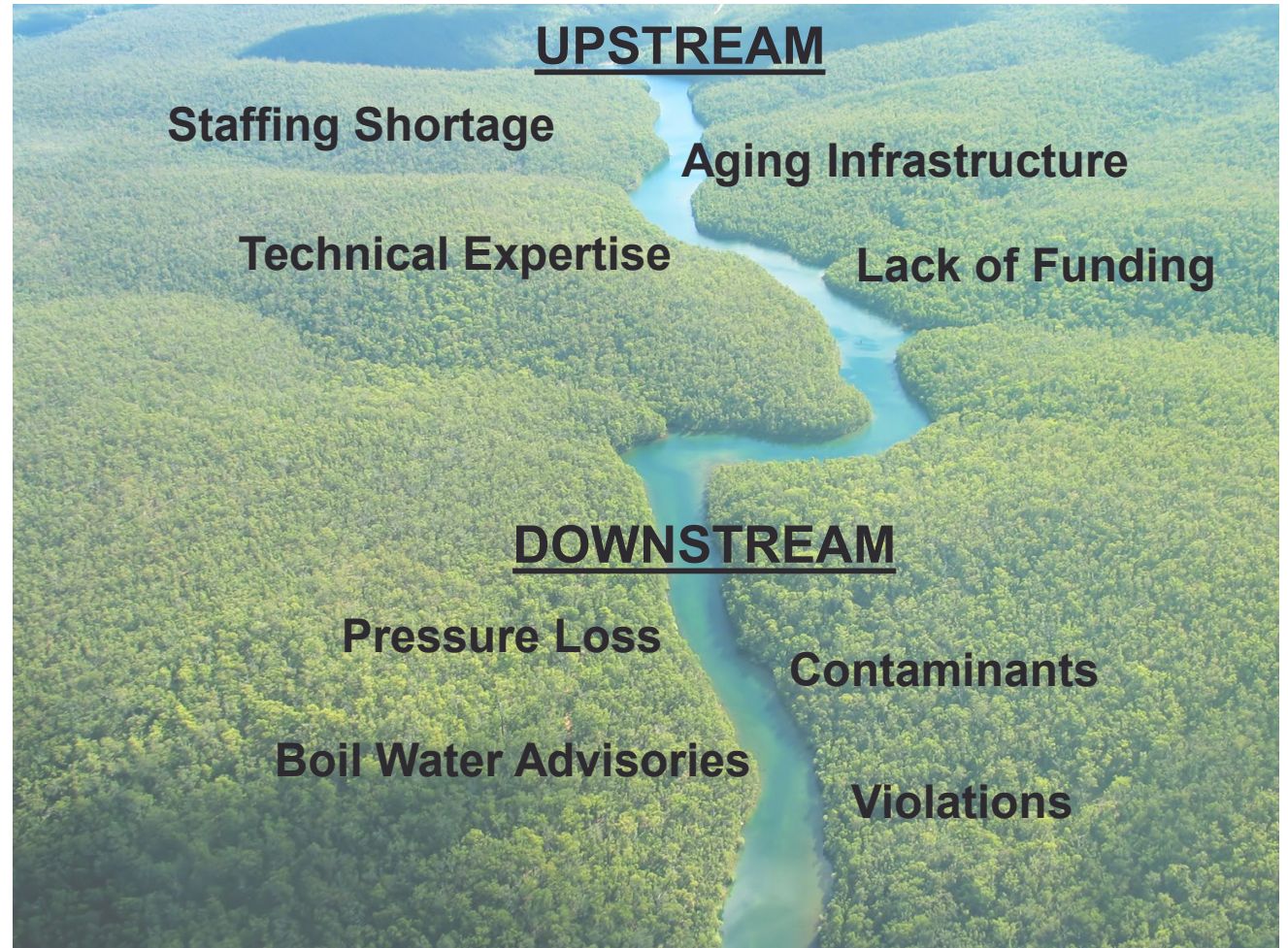


- DWS workgroup was formed to compile technical and financial assistance resources to help struggling small water systems (<3,300 in population).
- Create a directory of assistance for regulators to pass on to operators.
- Technical assistance to promote equity.
- Small Systems Specialist- identify needs, investigate different avenues of assistance and develop resources.

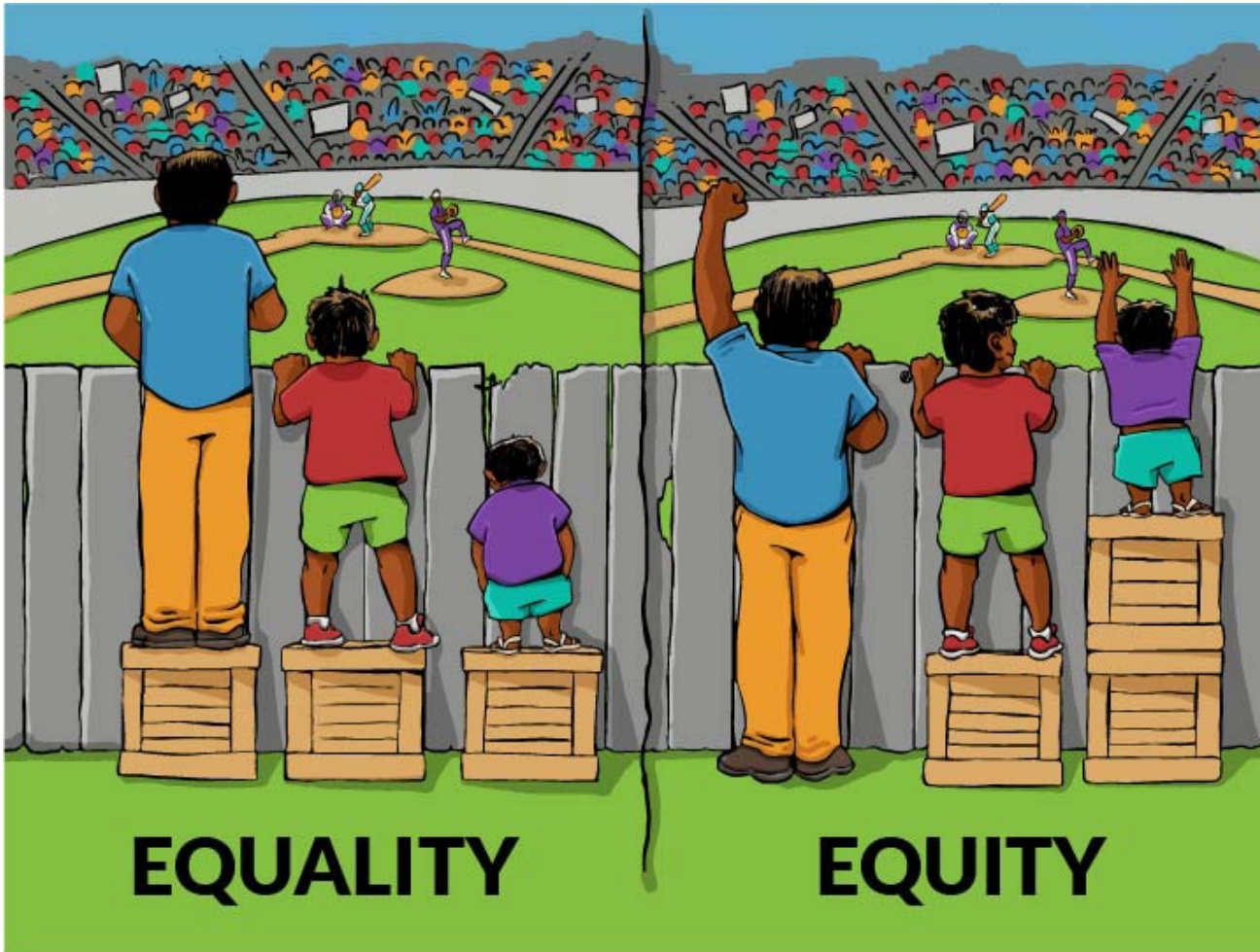


Identifying Needs

- “Upstream Approach”
- Identify which systems are struggling and provide proactive assistance
- Addressing root causes and inequities



Addressing Inequity



Small systems have big challenges

- Many have disproportionately more low-income households and senior residents, like MHP's.

Important to understand individual needs so they can have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Provide easier access to assistance.

Regulator's Resource Toolkit Content



Directory of technical and funding assistance opportunities.



DWS can assist with coordination meetings early on when a system is experiencing difficult challenges.



Consider physical consolidation or consolidating management and operations.



OHA has developed handouts for small water systems to increase financial capacity.

Public Health Division

Center for Health Protection, Drinking Water Services



Regulator's Resource Guide 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.
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; desa.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.

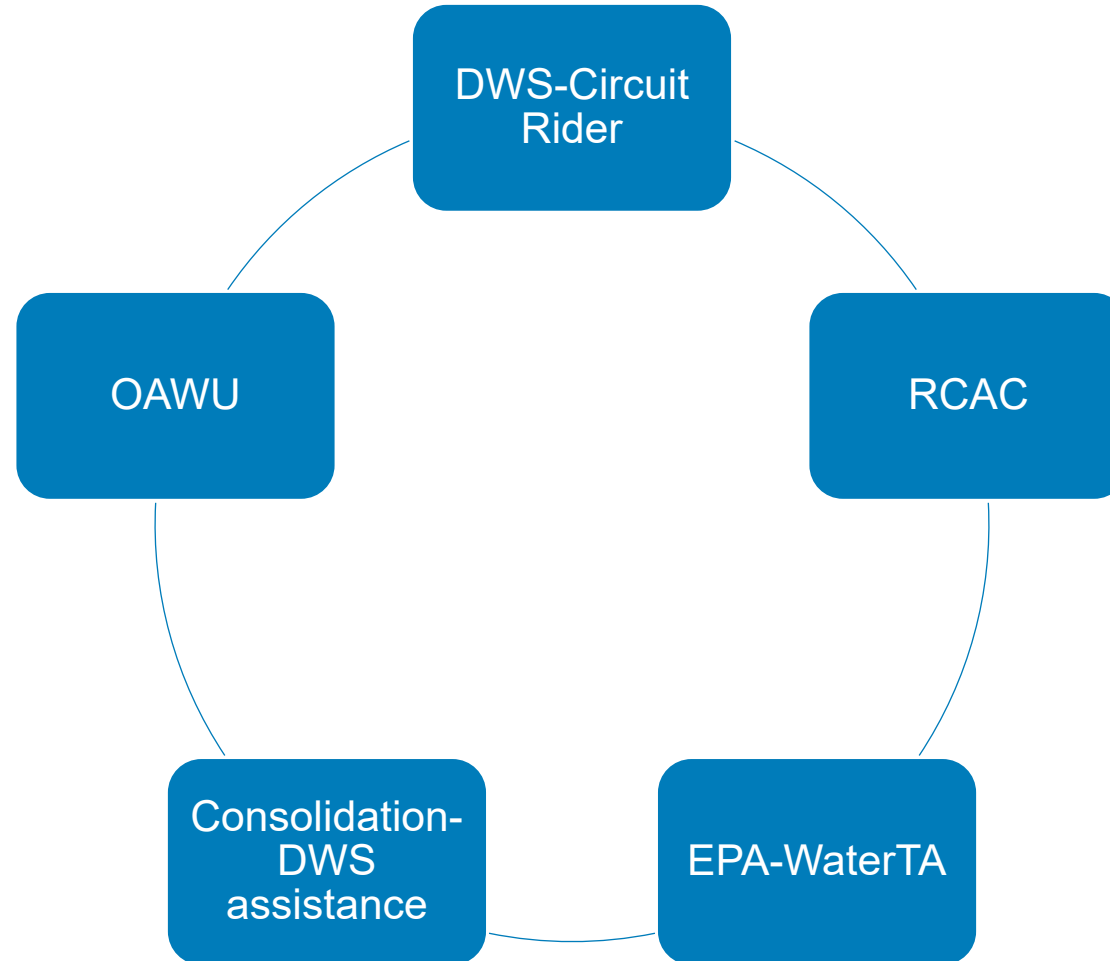
Financial Capacity: OHA has developed [handouts](#) for small water systems to increase financial capacity and covers budgeting basics, asset management, rate structure and capital improvement.

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.

Funding Assistance Planning/Predevelopment	Population			Funding Description
	≤3,300	25-330	10-24 (OVS)	
Sustainable Infrastructure Projects (SIPP)	X	X		Feasibility studies to evaluate project options.
Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act (IIJA) -Formerly known as Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	X	X		Addresses emerging contaminants in drinking water with a focus on perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Provides funding for planning and design of drinking water facility improvements.
State Revolving Fund	X	X		Funding for planning and design of drinking water facility improvements.
National Rural Water Association (NRWA) Revolving Loan Fund	X	X	X	RWLF provides low-cost loans for pre-development costs associated with larger projects.
Funding Assistance Construction/Equipment	Population			Funding Description
	≤3,300	25-300	10-24 (OVS)	
USDA-Water and Environmental grants and programs	X	X	X	Provides funding for the construction of water facilities in rural communities and is proud to be the only Federal program exclusively focused on rural water and waste infrastructure needs of rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less.
National Rural Water Association (NRWA) Revolving Loan Fund	X	X	X	RWLF 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.
State Revolving Fund (SRF)	X	X		Provides low-cost loans to community and nonprofit non-community water systems for planning, design and construction of drinking water facility improvements.
Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act (IIJA)	X	X		Provides low-cost loans to community and nonprofit non-community water systems for planning, design and construction of drinking water facility improvements. Funded through 2027.
DWSRF Funding Program Small System Equipment Assistance Funding (SSEA)	X	X		The purpose is to fund small scale additions or replacement of equipment and instrumentation needed by small water systems to ensure continued operation and protection of public health.
Drinking Water Source Protection Funding	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 the DWS Small Systems Specialist Sue Yellowtail, at Suzanne.yellowtail2@oha.oregon.gov or 541-321-5265

Technical Assistance



Technical Assistance Providers

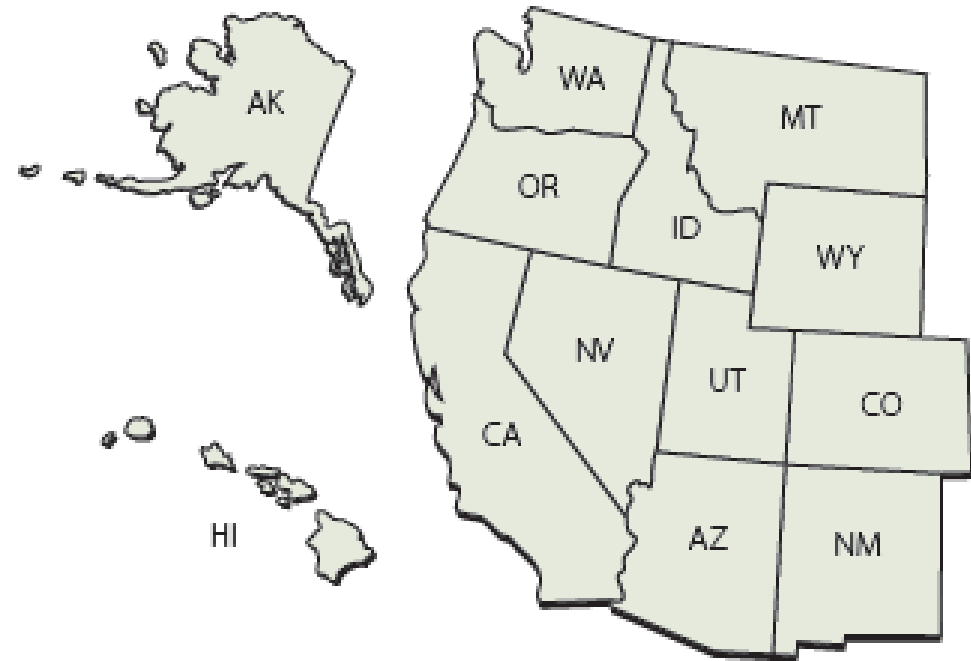
[DWS-Circuit Rider, Civil West Engineering](#)

- Assist with short-term technical, managerial, and financial issues.
- Assistance is usually in person but can also occur over the phone, up to 10 hours.
- No charge to water systems.
- **OVS systems are eligible** (except for federally owned systems) through general funding from the State.
- Contact info: Marlin Gochmour, Civil West Engineering Services;
Phone: 541-266-8601; email: mgochnour@civilwest.net.

Technical Assistance Providers

- [Rural Community Assistance Corporation \(RCAC\)](#)
- 501(c)(3) nonprofit RCAC serves Indigenous and rural communities through training, technical and financial assistance and advocacy.
- OVS system are eligible, and all communities must be at or below the state Median Household Income (MHI). DWS can assist with determination.
- Contact: Dessa Wells, phone: 360-558-2150; email: desa.wells@rcac.org.

RCAC serves rural and Indigenous communities in the western United States and Pacific islands





Oregon



Free Technical Assistance & Training

Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that operates in 13 western states and Pacific islands. We serve Indigenous and rural communities through training, technical and financial assistance and advocacy.

We help rural communities plan, finance, construct, manage and operate drinking water and wastewater systems.

More than
735
Oregonians
trained

Leveraged
more than
\$4 Mil
in funds for Oregon

Contact us



Scan the QR code or visit the link below to request assistance:

<https://bit.ly/3r4USkY>

What we do

Technical assistance

- Grant and loan application assistance
- Lead service line inventory
- GIS mapping
- Rate studies
- Site sampling plans
- Asset management plans
- Income surveys
- Risk and resilience assessment and emergency response planning
- USDA RD reporting

Training

- Free operator Continuing Education Units
- Board member roles and responsibilities
- Financial management
- Emergency response planning
- Record keeping and reporting
- Utility operations management
- Water quality monitoring requirements



Rural Community Assistance Corporation • 3120 Freeboard Drive, Ste. 201, West Sacramento, CA 95691
(916) 447-2854 • www.rcac.org • RCAC is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender

Technical Assistance Providers

- [Oregon Association of Water Utilities \(OAWU\)](#)- state affiliate of the National Rural Water Association.
- Membership is not required to receive help and OVS systems are eligible (for-profit and non-profit) for assistance.
- Circuit Rider assistance includes areas such as cross connection, distribution systems, disinfection, water treatment facilities, and operator certification.
- Contact: Main Office, Phone (503) 837-1212; email: office@oawu.net.



Oregon Association of Water Utilities

HOME ABOUT OAWU TRAINING & EVENTS MEMBERSHIP NEWS + RESOURCES CONTACT US

About OAWU

WHAT IS OAWU?

Oregon Association of Water Utilities is a nonprofit, independent association of water and wastewater utilities. OAWU was formed in 1977 to represent water utilities' interests in the state legislature and provide onsite technical assistance. OAWU is a state affiliate of the National Rural Water Association. NRWA is one of America's largest and strongest voices for rural and small systems, representing over 27,000 water and wastewater members.

OAWU currently has 455 regular members, 97 associate members, and 153 individual members. The membership consists of public and private water and wastewater systems such as municipalities, associations, districts, mobile home parks, schools, industry, etc. OAWU is governed by a board of 13 directors elected from the membership serving three year terms.

OAWU offers on-site assistance in many areas, including Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act regulations, water treatment technology, distribution system operation and maintenance, and wastewater treatment and collection. The association also provides assistance with management issues, such as, rate structures and reviews, funding programs, budgeting and public relations. In addition, members receive the quarterly magazine H2Oregon, legislative updates, and discounts on training seminars and annual meeting registration.

Next Training/Events

MAY 13 Tue 2025	8:00 am Math for Operators and/or Pumps & Pumping @ City of Redmond, PW Conference Room
MAY 14 Wed 2025	8:00 am Trident Products User Group and Technology Workshop @ Molalla Civic Center
JUN 10 Tue 2025	8:00 am Math for Operators and/or Pumps & Pumping
JUL 22 Tue 2025	8:00 am Water Treatment/Distribution Certification Review @ City of Redmond, PW Conference Room
AUG 5 Tue 2025	8:00 am Wastewater Treatment/Collections Certification Review @ Chemeketa Brooks Regional Training Center, Room 105

[View Calendar](#)

Quick Links

- About OAWU
- All About Membership
- Training Courses

Technical Assistance Providers

EPA-WaterTA

- The EPA works closely with their network of technical assistance (TA) providers (contractors) to respond to community requests for assistance.
- Requests can be submitted through the EPA WaterTA Request Form.
- Communities can also reach out directly to an individual TA provider directly.

Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA)



All communities deserve access to clean, reliable water. Yet, too many communities across America face challenges in providing safe drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services to their residents. EPA Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) connects communities to experts who help assess and implement solutions for their drinking water, sewage, and stormwater needs.

What is WaterTA?

The EPA's free Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) services may include:

- Identifying lead pipes for removal
- Enhancing resilience against cybersecurity threats
- Identifying climate adaptation strategies
- Providing resources for workforce development
- Addressing stormwater challenges
- Complying with the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Acts

WaterTA can also assist interested entities in applying for federal funding to make these solutions a reality. The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) presents an unprecedented opportunity to address water infrastructure needs by providing \$50 billion in new funding – the largest federal investment in water in the history of our nation. WaterTA can assist communities with applying for this funding to address their most pressing needs.

Connect with EPA

- Join the EPA's [Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center email list](#) [🔗](#) for WaterTA updates
- Email questions to WaterTA@epa.gov

Key WaterTA Resources

[Click Here to Request Water Technical Assistance for Your Community](#)

- [Community Fact Sheet - English Version](#) (May 2023)
- [Community Fact Sheet - Spanish Version](#) (August 2024)

Funding Assistance

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.

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*For additional assistance the DWS Small Systems Specialist Sue Yellowtail, at Suzanne.yellowtail2@oha.oregon.gov or 541-321-5265

Key Takeaways- Funding Assistance

- USDA funding requirements to keep in mind:
 - Communities need to be at or lower than state MHI.
 - Water system needs to have a water board and non-profit status.
- OVS systems are eligible for some USDA funding.
- Technical assistance providers can help with funding applications.

Where to find this toolkit

[About OHA](#) ▾[Programs and Services](#) ▾[Oregon Health Plan](#) ▾[Health System Reform](#) ▾[Licenses and Certificates](#) ▾[Public Health](#) ▾[Jobs](#) ▾[Public Health Division](#) ▸ [Environmental Public Health](#) ▸ [Drinking Water](#)

Oregon Drinking Water Services

Working to keep drinking water safe for Oregonians

Access to safe drinking water is essential to human health. Oregon Drinking Water Services helps to keep drinking water safe for Oregonians.

Oregon Drinking Water Services (DWS) administers and enforces drinking water quality standards for public water systems in the state of Oregon.

DWS focuses resources in the areas of highest public health benefit and promotes voluntary compliance with state and federal drinking water standards.

DWS also emphasizes prevention of contamination through source water protection, provides technical assistance to water systems and provides water system operator training.

[Contact Us](#)[Sign up for DWS News](#)[Water Advisories Map](#)[Data Online](#)

Services

- [Cross Connection & Backflow Prevention](#)
- [Emergency Planning and Response](#)
- [Drinking Water Source Protection](#)
- [Monitoring & Reporting](#)
- [Operator Certification](#)

Resources

- [County & Department of Agriculture Resources](#)
- [Data Online](#)
- [Domestic Well Safety Program](#)
- [Drinking Water Advisory Committee \(DWAC\)](#)
- [For Consumers](#)

✱ News and Hot Topics

Link

[2025 Source Protection Grant Application](#)[New! Drinking Water Source Protection Award](#)[Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances \(PFAS\) Rule](#)[Disadvantaged Community Definition - Virtual Open House](#)

For Environmental Health Specialists

Drinking Water Services

County & Dept. of Agriculture Resources

Water System Surveys

Conferences and Training

Document Library

Inventory Updates

EPA Staff Resources

Coliform Resources

Monitoring Resources

Compliance Resources

Contact Us

The information on this page is designed for and intended for use by Drinking Water Services County and Department of Agriculture partners who have specialized training and are registered as environmental health specialists. If you have questions regarding this material please contact Drinking Water Services at (971) 673-0405.

Notice to Partners

You no longer need the username and password to access the DWS partner's website!

- You can access the partner's site from the main DWS website, or by going to www.healthoregon.org/dwpartners
- Some of the documents require a password to access. It is the same password you used to access the partners site.

Quick Reference

- [Enter Contact Reports and Boil Water Notices](#)
- [Revised Program Element #50: Safe Drinking Water Program](#)
- All other requests or correspondence submit to [Compliance Drinking Water](#)

Key Resources

- [Data Online](#)
- [For Consumers](#)
- [Site Map](#)

Data Management, Compliance and Enforcement (DMCE) Unit

The DMCE Unit has created a specific email address to receive electronic communications related to **compliance or database updates**.

Wrap up- Looking Upstream



**“THERE COMES A POINT WHERE
WE NEED TO STOP JUST
PULLING PEOPLE OUT OF THE
RIVER.**

**WE NEED TO GO UPSTREAM
AND FIND OUT WHY THEY’RE
FALLING IN.”**

— DESMOND TUTU

**Sue Yellowtail
Small Systems Specialist
541-321-5265**

Suzanne.yellowtail2@oha.oregon.gov