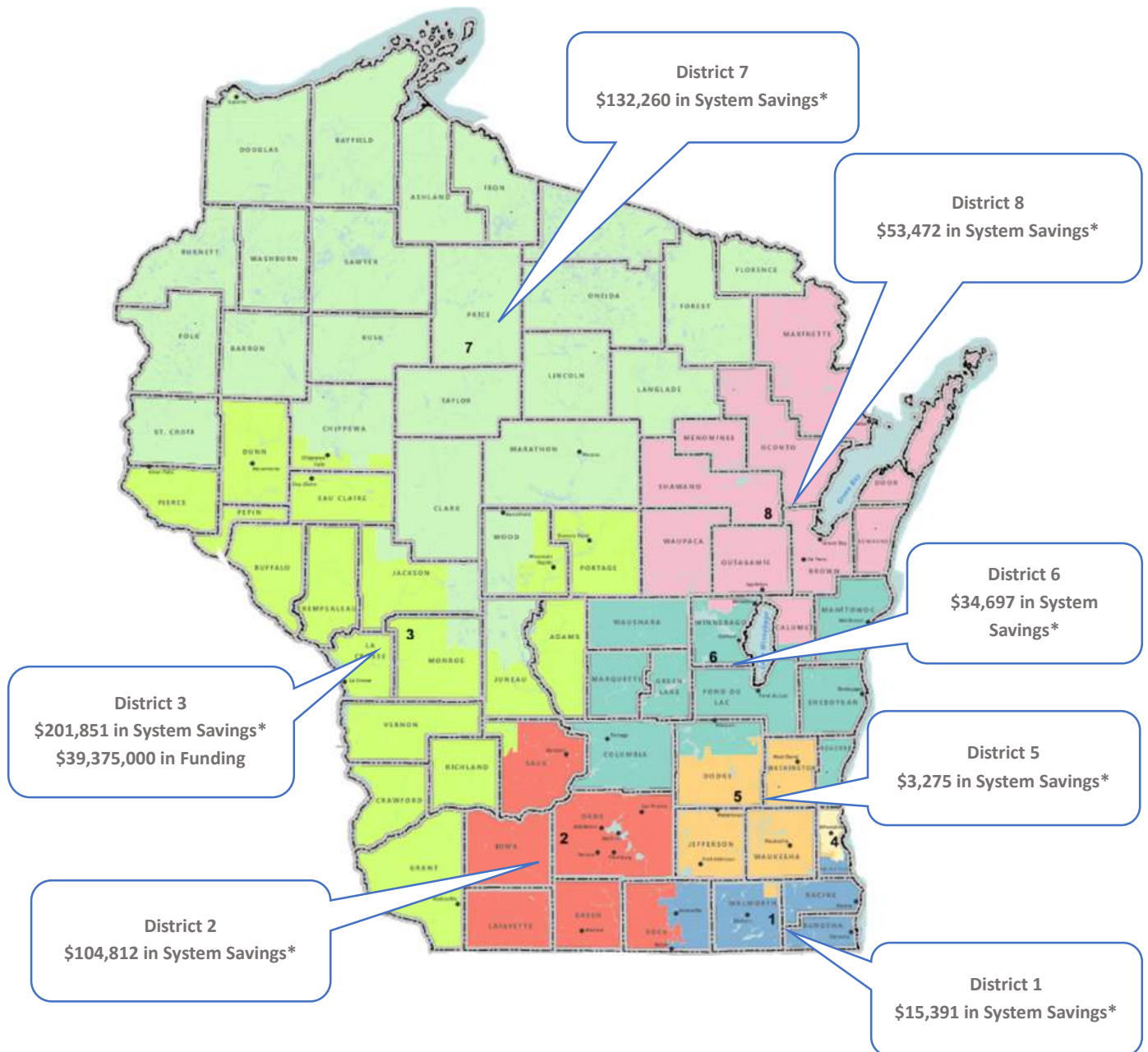




WISCONSIN RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

2025 IMPACT ON WISCONSIN



** Includes significant visits only. Does not reflect all WRWA assistance provided throughout the year.*





Provides Training...

WRWA continues to be the leading provider of training in the state of Wisconsin to those in the water and wastewater industries. In fact, WRWA is one of the leading trainers of water and wastewater system personnel in the nation. In 2025, WRWA conducted a total of **147** training sessions and events. These were attended by **5,350** operators, managers, administrative personnel, plumbers, and business representatives.

Technical Assistance...

Providing technical assistance to operators of small rural water and wastewater systems throughout Wisconsin is the backbone of our services. WRWA conducted **3,207** on-site technical assistance visits in 2025 in addition to over **5,670** phone calls to and from systems. WRWA currently has a field staff of 11 providing on-site technical assistance to water and wastewater systems in the state.

WRWA technical assistance is provided in several areas, including regulatory compliance, utility management, solving distribution system problems, treatment, emergency response, source water protection, system operations assistance, energy efficiency, and providing loaner equipment.

And Resources for Project Funding!

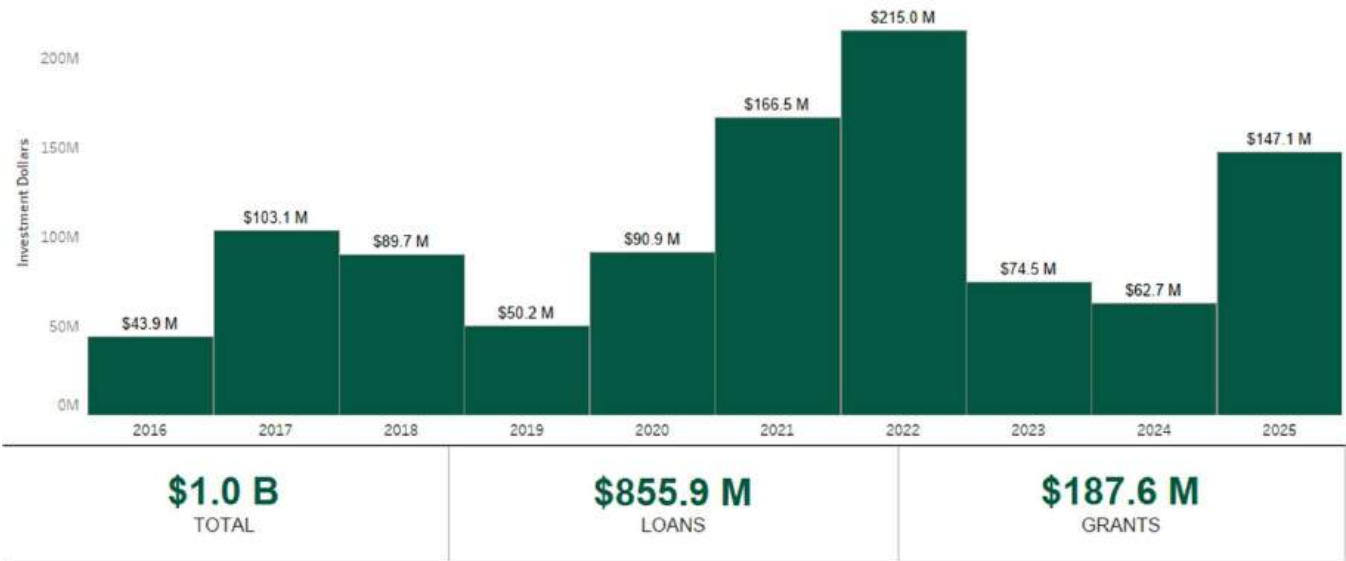
WRWA works closely with USDA Rural Development to help rural communities secure loans, grants, and loan guarantee programs necessary for replacing worn out equipment and expanding operations. During 2025, Rural Development assisted the town of Campbell with a low-interest loan for \$30,835,000 and a grant of \$8,540,000 to install a municipal water system necessary to reduce their high levels of PFAS. The 4,500 residents of Campbell have been on state-funded bottled water for five years due to the high PFAS levels.



Rural Development Community Facilities & Water/Environmental Project Funding History – All Districts

District: All

Program Area: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental

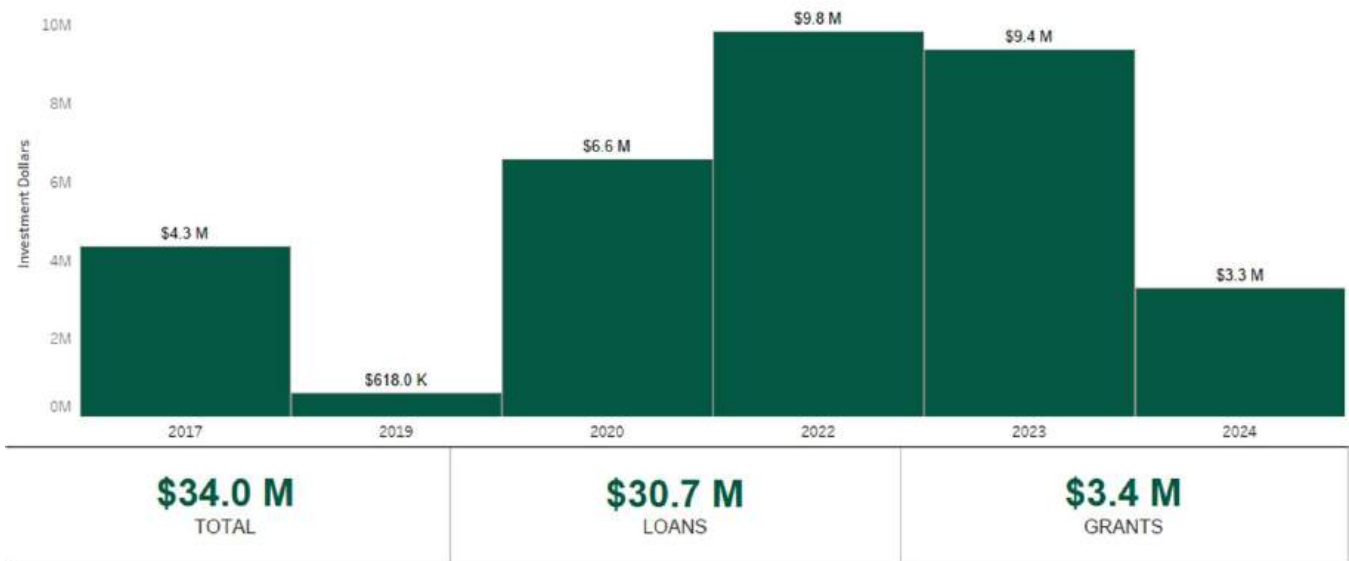


The view shows Wisconsin. Congressional districts shown: All. Program areas shown: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental. Investment types shown: All. All fiscal years will always be shown.

Rural Development Community Facilities & Water/Environmental Project Funding History By District

District: 1

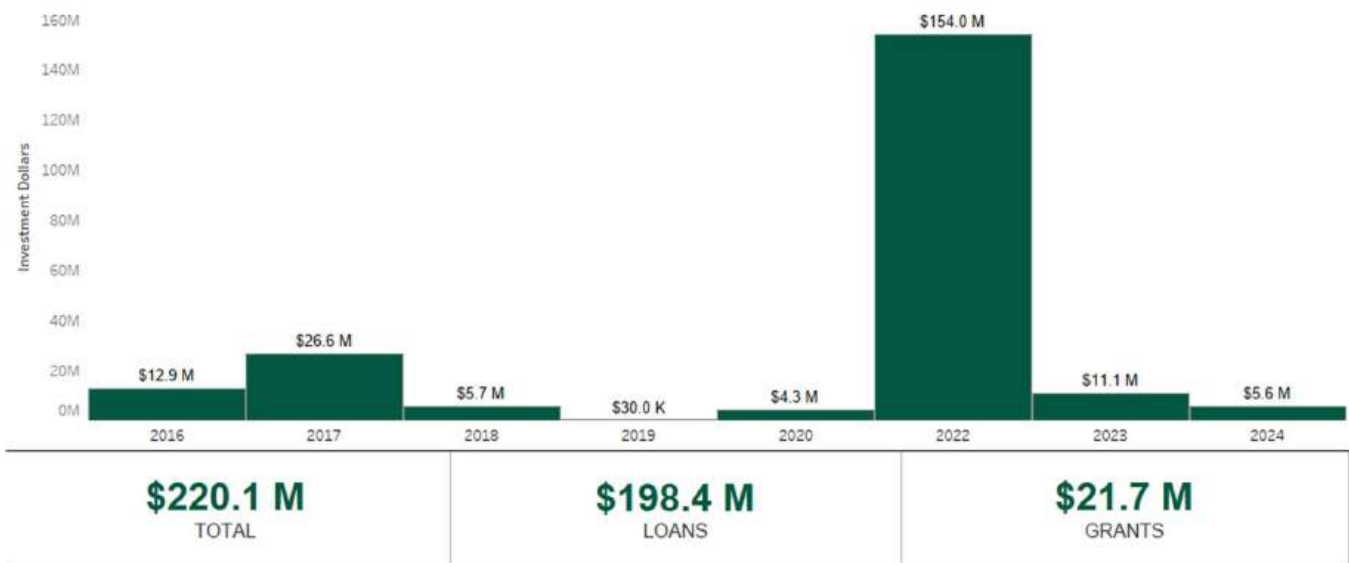
Program Area: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental



The view shows Wisconsin. Congressional districts shown: 1. Program areas shown: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental. Investment types shown: All. All fiscal years will always be shown.

District: 2

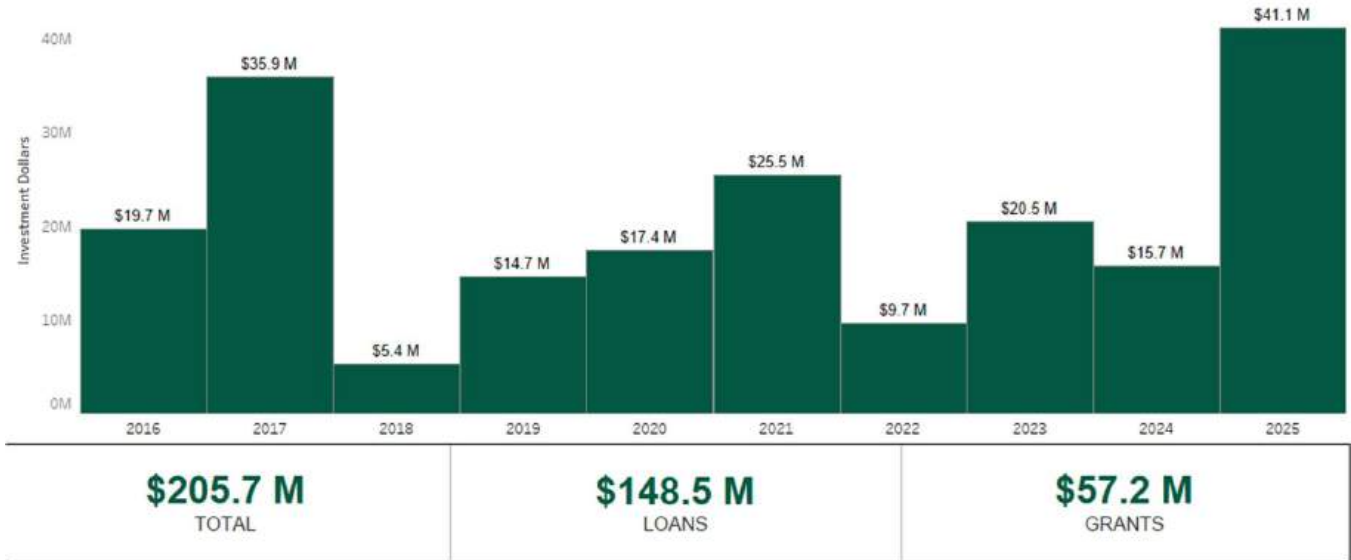
Program Area: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental



The view shows Wisconsin. Congressional districts shown: 2. Program areas shown: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental. Investment types shown: All. All fiscal years will always be shown.

District: 3

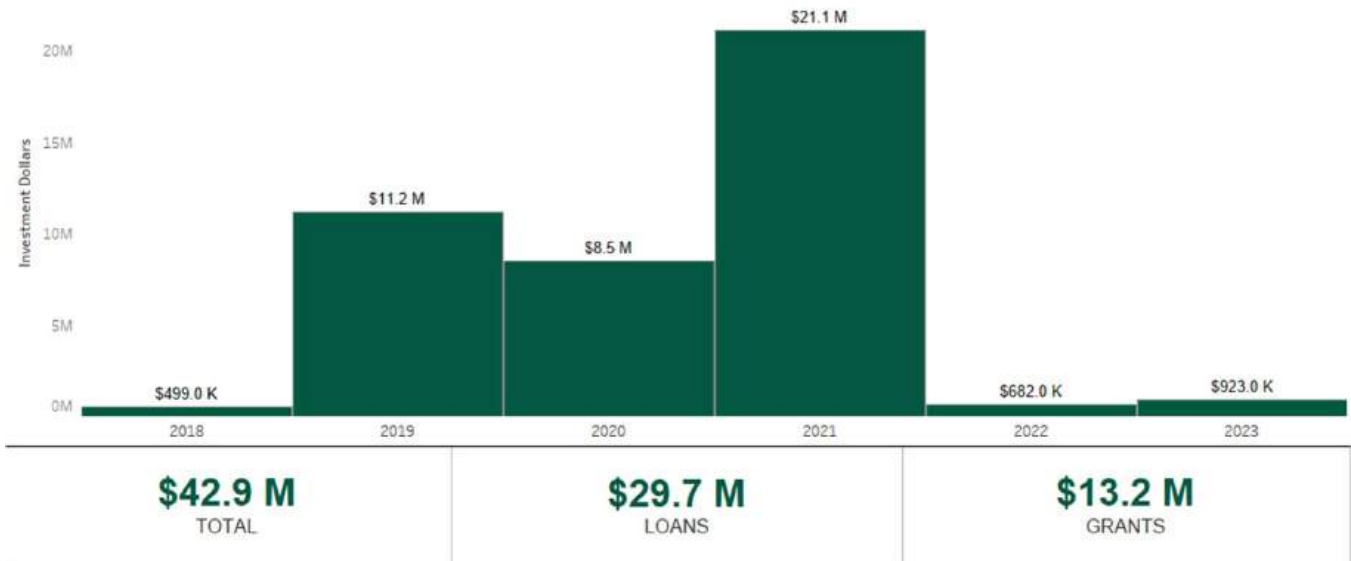
Program Area: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental



The view shows Wisconsin. Congressional districts shown: 3. Program areas shown: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental. Investment types shown: All. All fiscal years will always be shown.

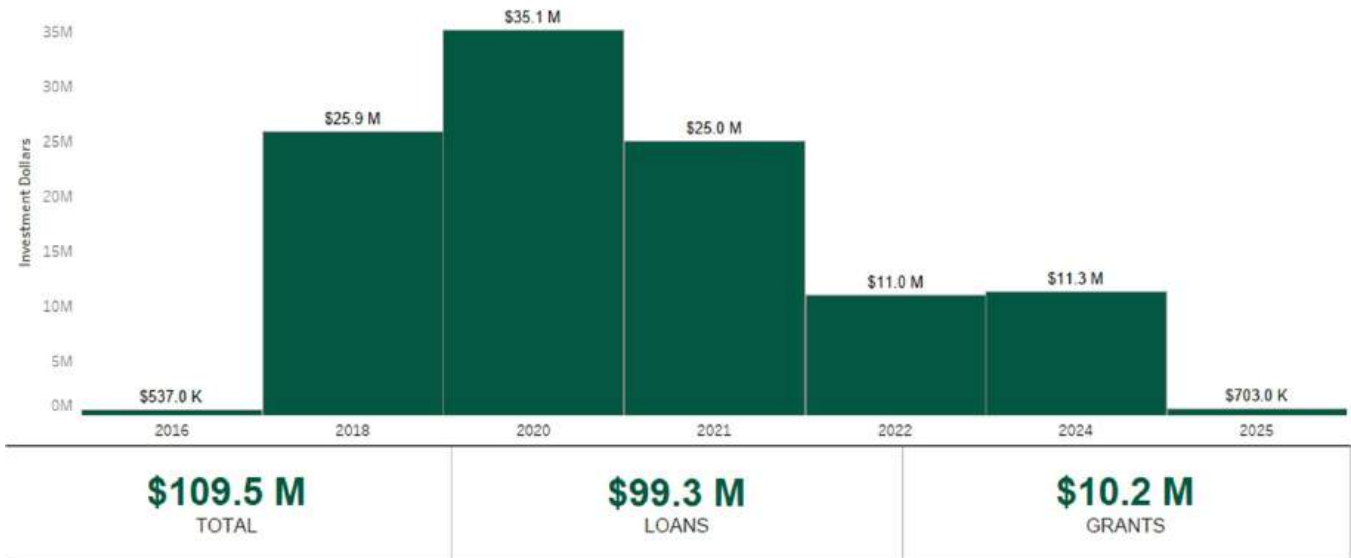
District: 5

Program Area: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental



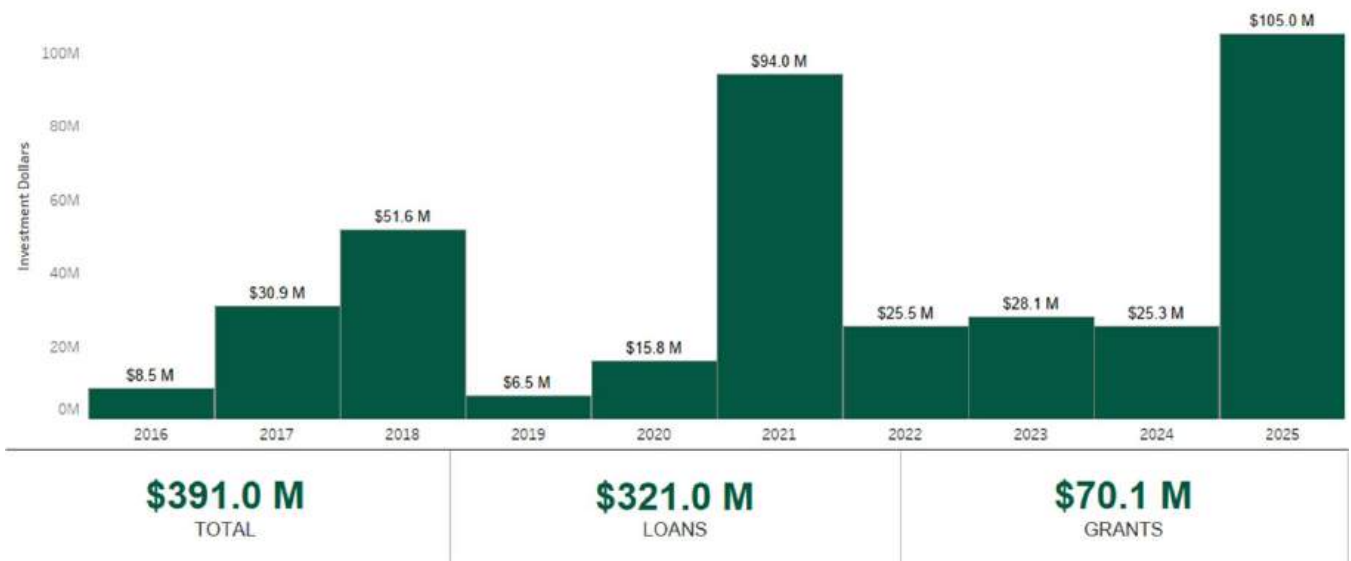
The view shows Wisconsin. Congressional districts shown: 5. Program areas shown: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental. Investment types shown: All. All fiscal years will always be shown.

District: 6
Program Area: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental



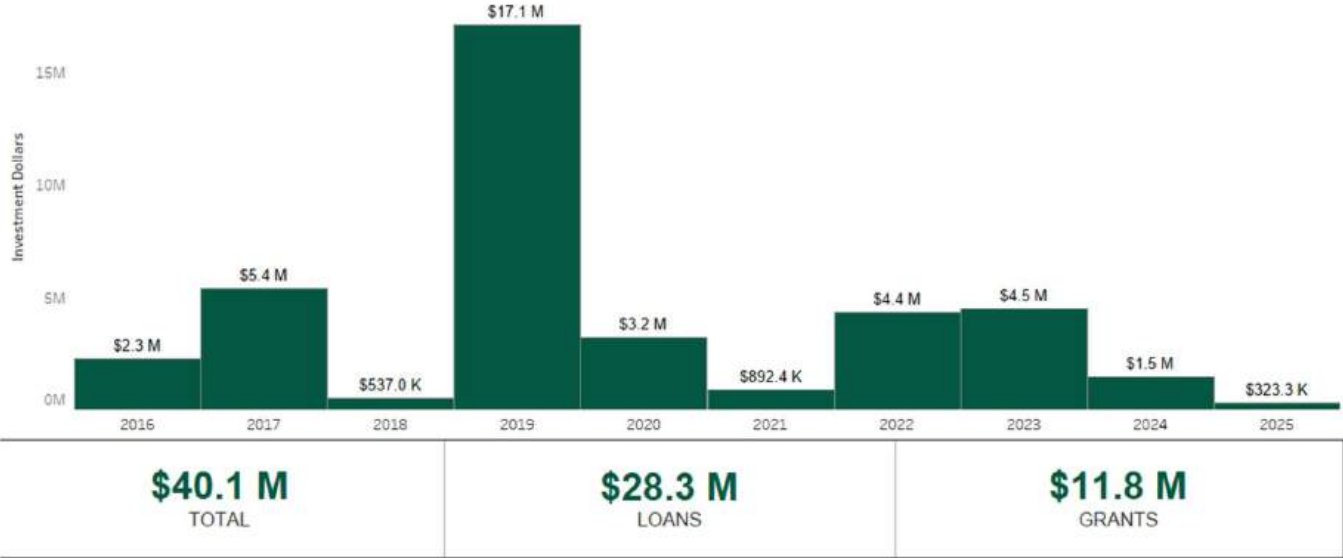
The view shows Wisconsin. Congressional districts shown: 6. Program areas shown: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental. Investment types shown: All. All fiscal years will always be shown.

District: 7
Program Area: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental



The view shows Wisconsin. Congressional districts shown: 7. Program areas shown: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental. Investment types shown: All. All fiscal years will always be shown.

District: 8
Program Area: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental



The view shows Wisconsin. Congressional districts shown: 8. Program areas shown: Community Facilities & Water and Environmental. Investment types shown: All. All fiscal years will always be shown.



National Rural Water Association

Rural Water FY2027 Appropriations Priorities

February
2026

Dear Congress: Please prioritize what is working.

Small and rural communities have the very important public responsibility of complying with all applicable federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act regulations and for supplying the public with safe drinking water and sanitation every second of every day. Over 91% of the approximately 50,000 community water systems serve fewer than 10,000 persons and 81% serve fewer than 3,300 persons. Small and rural communities often have difficulty complying with complicated federal mandates and providing safe/affordable drinking water and sanitation due to limited economies of scale and lack of technical expertise. This difficulty is eased due to ongoing and continuing support offered through rural water training and technical assistance programs as highlighted below.

	Initiative	FY2023 Enacted	FY2024 Enacted	FY2026 Enacted	FY2027 Request
USDA	Circuit Rider Technical Assistance	\$21,180,000	\$21,817,000	\$23,900,000	\$24,617,000
	Wastewater Disposal Technical Assistance	\$37,500,000	\$35,000,000	\$35,000,000	\$35,000,000
	Grassroots Source Water Protection Program	\$7,500,000	\$7,000,000	\$7,500,000	\$7,500,000
	Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program	\$596,404,000	\$595,972,000	\$445,864,564 ^A	\$500,000,000
	Water & Waste Disposal Revolving Loan Funds	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
EPA	Safe Drinking Water Act Technical Assistance	\$30,700,000	\$30,700,000	\$30,700,000	\$35,000,000
	Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance	\$27,000,000	\$25,500,000	\$25,500,000	\$26,000,000
	Clean Water State Revolving Fund	\$1,638,861,000	\$1,638,861,000	\$1,638,861,000 ^B	\$1,638,861,000
	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	\$1,126,101,000	\$1,126,101,000	\$1,126,101,000 ^C	\$1,126,101,000
DOL	National Water and Wastewater Operator Apprenticeship Program	Language included	Language included	TBD	\$20,000,000

A: WEP Earmarks \$110,488,564 B: CWSRF Earmarks: \$892,762,272 C: DWSRF Earmarks: \$715,364,627

How Can Representatives/Senators Support Rural Water?

1. Write the Appropriations Subcommittee Chairs and Ranking Members in support of Rural Water's **five** funding priorities (or include in Members' formal appropriations requests);
2. Personally contact the Subcommittee Chairs and Ranking Members in support of Rural Water's **five** funding priorities; and
3. Ask the key staff person in each office to contact the Subcommittees in support of Rural Water's **five** funding priorities.

Subcommittee	House	Senate
USDA	Chair Andy Harris (MD) Ranking Member Sanford Bishop (GA)	Chair John Hoeven (ND) Ranking Member Jeanne Shaheen (NH)
Interior (EPA)	Chair Mike Simpson (ID) Ranking Member Chellie Pingree (ME)	Chair Lisa Murkowski (AK) Ranking Member Jeff Merkley (OR)
Labor	Chair Robert Aderholt (AL) Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (CT)	Chair Shelley Moore Capito (WV) Ranking Member Tammy Baldwin (WI)

The National Rural Water Association represents over 31,000 small and rural community members dedicated to drinking water quality, environmental protection and public health protection.

Description of Rural Water Priorities

1. USDA Circuit Riders

Since 1980, Circuit Riders have provided the primary assistance to small communities for the operation of safe and clean drinking water supplies and compliance with water regulations. This assistance protects the sizable investment the federal government has made in rural water infrastructure. Circuit Riders are in the field every day helping systems with compliance, operations, maintenance, management, disaster response and training. The Circuit Rider Program has long been one of USDA's most successful public-private partnerships, efficiently and effectively using appropriated funds to provide technical assistance and training to rural communities through state based nonprofit associations.

2. USDA Farm Service Agency Grassroots Source Water Protection

This is the only statewide local community-based initiative ensuring environmentally progressive local land-use decisions without the controversy and bureaucracy of regulatory programs. It provides each state with at least one full-time person to organize and assist rural communities, farmers, and other land-use interests in the implementation of source water protection plans including non-point source (runoff) protection practices in agriculture regions. This initiative allows the people who benefit from environmental protection to take responsibility for achieving it—ensuring its success and eliminating local controversy.

3. EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Technical Assistance and Training

Since 1977, small and rural communities have relied on local/on-site technical assistance and training for compliance with the myriad of federal EPA regulations, avoiding EPA fines, and operating drinking water and wastewater supplies. According to small and rural communities, EPA-funded local initiatives are the most effective environmental protection efforts for drinking water & wastewater, ground water, source water, and compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Small communities want to ensure quality water and stay in compliance—rural water provides them the shared technical resources to do it.

4. EPA Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance

Small and rural communities have more difficulty affording public wastewater service due to lack of population density and lack of economies of scale. This challenge is compounded by the fact that rural communities have lower average median household incomes and often have higher rates of poverty. PL 155-270, enacted in October 2018, authorized a new technical assistance program for small and rural communities to improve water quality, operate and maintain public wastewater treatment utilities and comply with federal Clean Water Act standards.

5. National Rural Water Apprenticeship Program

Since 2016, NRWA has collaborated with State Rural Water Associations, USDA, DOL, EPA, and local rural water utilities to build the first nationally recognized DOL Registered Apprenticeship Program for water and wastewater system operators. Employment data indicates up to 50% of the rural water workforce will leave the water industry over the next 10 years. Rural water and wastewater utilities need a pipeline of skilled workers to help ensure clean and safe water for the public and to maintain the water infrastructure necessary to keep rural service areas economically viable. To date, thirty-five State Rural Water Associations have federally approved Registered Apprenticeship Programs and are currently offering a job creation program specifically designed by industry leaders to attract, train and retain the next generation rural water workforce with over 1200 apprentices enrolled or graduated so far.



NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
FY2027 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY

Name of program: **Circuit Rider Program**

Appropriations bill: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Senate subcommittee Chairman: John Hoeven (ND)

Senate subcommittee Ranking Member: Jeanne Shaheen (NH)

House subcommittee Chairman: Andy Harris (MD)

House subcommittee Ranking Member: Sanford Bishop (GA)

Department: United States Department of Agriculture

Agency: Rural Utilities Service (within Rural Development)

Appropriations account: Rural Water and Waste Disposal Program Account

Authorization: 7 USC 1926(a)(22)

FY2027 President's budget request: TBD

Funding History	
FY2021	\$20,157,000
FY2022	\$20,762,000
FY2023	\$21,180,000
FY2024	\$21,817,000
FY2026	\$23,900,000

FY2027 request: \$24,617,000

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) requests an appropriation of \$24,617,000 for the Circuit Rider Program for FY2027.

The Circuit Rider Program is a five-year competitive contract that was awarded to NRWA on November 1, 2020. The final year of that contract began on November 1, 2024, and expired on November 1, 2025. On October 31, 2025, USDA granted a 6-month extension to the existing contract. The FY2026 enacted level of \$23,900,000 fully funded the fifth-year contract costs and included additional funding to add a full-time position within the State of Rhode Island. This increased the total number of Circuit Riders from 132 to 133.

The Rural Development contracting officer requires NRWA to include a cost escalator for annual inflationary purposes necessary to maintain 132 Circuit Riders and to provide the same level of services. Also required is the establishment of a management reserve account to address unforeseen circumstances.

USDA Circuit Rider Justification: Increase the FY2026 enacted level of \$23,900,000 by 3%, or \$717,000, to \$24,617,000 for FY2027.

USDA Rural Development Circuit Rider: Since 1980, the Circuit Rider Program has been one of USDA's most successful public-private partnerships, efficiently and effectively using appropriated funds to provide technical expertise, training, regulatory compliance, management and disaster assistance to rural communities through state based nonprofit organizations.

There are currently 132 full-time permanent Circuit Riders deployed in rural America in all 50 states and Territories. As previously mentioned, this funding request is based on the federal contract requirements and regardless of the appropriations level, the terms and conditions of the contract require NRWA to continue to provide the same level of service, even with interrupted, delayed or reduced federal funding.

State Rural Water Associations provide non-federal matching money to cover their actual cost. In the last reporting cycle, State Rural Water Associations provided \$1,933,947 in non-federal funds to cover the full cost of delivering this program.

In addition to the core services Circuit Riders have provided for decades, demand for these critical services has increased and evolved. Included in these expanded efforts are additional emergency response and recovery efforts and requests, cyber security assistance, and increased regulatory demands to include compliance with the Lead and Copper and PFAS rules. Circuit Riders have also increased their assistance to address operator vacancies attributed to an aging workforce and addressing the increased challenges related to operating and maintaining aging infrastructure.

Experience and Benefits: Personnel turnover within this program is very rare. Circuit Riders have approximately 3,000 years of combined experience in the water and wastewater industry. This experience and dedication to the overall mission reaps rewards in additional cost savings provided to the communities served. With this seasoned experienced staff, salary and benefit costs are higher.

Circuit Riders Protect Federal Investments and Public Health: Circuit Rider assistance has become even more critical with the loss of over 1,000 USDA Rural Development staff in the field. Circuit Riders' on-site, hands-on assistance, combined with trusted peer-to-peer relationships, enhances all operations including fiscal management, disaster assistance, governance, regulatory compliance, all essential for the sustainability of water and wastewater utilities. This assistance enhances the water system's ability to repay their government debt, protects the low cost of this program while maintaining and enhancing the public health in rural communities. In addition, the Circuit Riders are considered essential employees to perform Mission Critical Services for the U.S. Government during a lapse of appropriations and public health emergencies.

NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
FY2027 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY

Name of program: **Grassroots Source Water Protection Program**

Appropriations bill: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Senate subcommittee Chairman: John Hoeven (ND)

Senate subcommittee Ranking Member: Jeanne Shaheen (NH)

House subcommittee Chairman: Andy Harris (MD)

House subcommittee Ranking Member: Sanford Bishop (GA)

Department: United States Department of Agriculture

Agency: Farm Service Agency

Appropriations account: Grassroots Source Water Protection Program

Authorization: 16 U.S.C. 3839bb–2

FY2027 President's budget request: TBD

Funding History	
FY2021	\$6,500,000
FY2022	\$6,500,000
FY2023	\$7,500,000
FY2024	\$7,000,000
FY2026	\$7,500,000

FY2027 request: \$7,500,000

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) requests an appropriation of \$7,500,000, consistent with the FY2026 enacted bill, for the FSA Grassroots Source Water Protection Program. NRWA requested, and Congress appropriated \$6.5 million to carry out this initiative from FY2016 to FY2022. For FY2023, Congress increased this account by \$1,000,000 to allow additional activities to include, but are not limited to, enhanced assistance to address nutrient run-off from highly erodible cropland; decline in water quantity and quality related to drought; chemical security mapping; and coordination implementing source water protection practices in high priority areas, as determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

NRWA currently maintains 55 full-time Grassroots Source Water Protection Program Specialists in the field. Every state has one full-time Source Water Specialist with two Specialists currently provided in Colorado, California, Kansas, Minnesota, and Montana.

FSA Source Water Justification: Enact the FY2026 funding level to maintain current field staff, services, and activities in FY2027.

Grassroots Source Water Protection Initiative: Protecting public health is the top priority in every water and wastewater system in America. Since 1990, the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) and State Rural Water Associations have assisted water utilities and rural communities in identifying, controlling, and eliminating pollutants from the nation's water resources. The NRWA Source Water Protection Program is built around small water utilities, local businesses, agriculture, government, and other groups working together to develop and implement strategies to protect their drinking water sources. It is a voluntary, grassroots planning effort that builds local responsibility and creates more sustainable communities.

Source Water Protection: The FY2027 source water protection program appropriation of \$7,500,000 will allow NRWA to maintain 55 full-time field employees to continue to provide this essential service with enhanced activities.

Prevention vs. Remediation: This cooperative program has made significant progress in reducing point source pollution from industrial, agricultural, municipal, and even household sources. The program has also made progress in the challenging area of nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution results from activities over large areas, such as runoff from agriculture, industry, and transportation that flows into water sources. In addition to protecting the health and welfare of U.S. communities, source water protection efforts save consumers money. The USDA estimates damages from soil erosion costs between \$2 billion to \$8 billion per year. The EPA estimates that public water systems spend an additional \$200 million per year just to remove excess nitrate to meet federal drinking water standards. A small community's nominal investment in implementing and adhering to a source water protection plan can avoid substantial remediation costs.

This is the only statewide local community-based initiative ensuring environmentally progressive local land-use decisions without the controversy and bureaucracy of regulatory programs. Currently there are 55 full-time specialists employed to organize and assist rural communities, farmers, and other land-use interests in the implementation of source water protection plans including nonpoint source (runoff) protection practices in agriculture regions. State Associations provided \$342,151 of non-federal matching funds to carry out this initiative from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025. This initiative allows the people who benefit from environmental protection to take responsibility for achieving it- ensuring its success and eliminating local controversy. Through comprehensive planning efforts that identify potential threats to the water supply, communities proactively maintain local sources of safe and clean water. Additionally, by developing and implementing a source water protection plan, communities can help minimize the future need for expensive upgrades to treatment facilities.

NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
FY2027 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY

Name of program: **EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Technical Assistance**

Appropriations bill: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Senate subcommittee Chairman: Lisa Murkowski (AK)

Senate subcommittee Ranking Member: Jeff Merkley (OR)

House subcommittee Chairman: Mike Simpson (ID)

House subcommittee Ranking Member: Chellie Pingree (ME)

Agency: Environmental Protection Agency

Appropriations account: Environmental Programs and Management

Authorization: Safe Drinking Water Act (42 USC 300j-1(e))

FY2027 President's budget request: TBD

Funding History

FY2021	\$21,700,000
FY2022	\$25,700,000
FY2023	\$30,700,000
FY2024	\$30,700,000
FY2026	\$30,700,000

FY2027 request: \$35,000,000

The National Rural Water Association requests report language, consistent with the House FY2026 reported bill (see below) appropriating \$35,000,000 under this account to provide \$26,000,000 dedicated to the technical assistance activities as prescribed under the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Act. Small and rural communities rely on local/on-site technical assistance and training for compliance with federal EPA regulations, avoiding EPA fines, and operating drinking and wastewater supplies.

Report Language: *Environmental Protection: National Priorities.*- The bill provides \$35,000,000. The Committee directs that funds be used for a competitive grant program for qualified non-profit organizations to provide technical assistance for improved water quality or safe drinking water, adequate wastewater to small systems, or individual private well owners. The Agency shall provide \$26,000,000 for Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act, for activities specified under Section 1442(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j-1(e)(8)). The Agency is directed to provide funding to the most qualified and experienced non-profit organizations in providing technical assistance to small water systems and to issue the grant awards from this program on an annual basis.

EPA Technical Assistance Justification: Enact the House's FY2026 reported level of \$35,000,000 and follow the Congressional intent of Public Law 114-98 for FY2027.

EPA Technical Assistance Authorization: The President signed the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act into law (Public Law 114-98) on December 11, 2015. The House of Representatives unanimously passed the bill on November 30, 2015 and the Senate on June 9, 2015 (also unanimously). The authorization was modified in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (H.R.3684, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) to ensure the funding is used in the most beneficial manner for rural and small communities.

The purpose of the Act is to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) follow Congressional intent in administering directed appropriations to assist small and rural communities to comply with federal environmental mandates. The Act authorizes the EPA to provide technical assistance to small and rural communities to assist them with: (1) compliance with the myriad of federal regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act; (2) operation and maintenance of their water utilities; and (3) public health protection through the supply of safe public drinking water.

Technical Assistance Demand: Small and rural communities often have a difficult time, due to their limited customer base and technical capacities, providing safe water and complying with federal standards. This is compounded by the fact that small and rural communities often have lower median household incomes and higher water rates compared to larger communities. As a result, the cost of compliance is often dramatically higher per household.

The vast majority of U.S. drinking water supplies are small; 91% of community water systems serve a population of fewer than 10,000 people. Some communities are so small they rely on volunteers to operate their drinking water supply. Small communities in violation of the federal rules are subject to \$25,000 per-day civil penalties. We are urging Congress to fully fund the Grassroots Rural and Small Community Water Systems Assistance Act portion at \$26,000,000 and ensure funding is limited to qualified, experienced technical assistance providers to effectively serve the needs of rural utilities

Experience: Since 1977, NRWA has assisted small and rural communities in providing safe drinking water and ensured access to the expertise of an experienced, trustworthy technician. This technical assistance provides for efficient system operation and maintenance and affordable compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act mandates. Small and rural communities are struggling under new federal regulations, complex funding program applications, and continuing mandatory operator training requirements. Recent EPA awards for this initiative do not adequately address the needs of small and rural communities that need help as soon as possible.

NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
FY2027 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY

Name of program: **EPA Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance**

Appropriations bill: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Senate subcommittee Chairman: Lisa Murkowski (AK)

Senate subcommittee Ranking Member: Jeff Merkley (OR)

House subcommittee Chairman: Mike Simpson (ID)

House subcommittee Ranking Member: Chellie Pingree (ME)

Agency: Environmental Protection Agency

Appropriations account: State and Tribal Assistance Grants Account

Authorization: America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (section 4103), "*Technical Assistance for Treatment Works*"

FY2027 President's budget request: TBD

Funding History

FY2021	\$18,000,000
FY2022	\$20,000,000
FY2023	\$27,000,000
FY2024	\$25,500,000
FY2026	\$25,500,000

FY2027 request: \$26,000,000

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) requests \$26,000,000, consistent with the FY2026 House reported level, to fund section 4103 America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018. This competitive grant program provides small and rural communities with the technical assistance necessary to improve water quality, operate and maintain public wastewater treatment utilities, assist with permitting, comply with federal Clean Water Act regulations and apply for federal funding under the Clean Water State Revolving Funds. Small and rural communities strive to ensure quality wastewater stays in compliance—this initiative provides them with the technical resources to do so.

Bill Language: \$26,000,000 shall be for grants under section 104(b)(8) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1254(b)(8)).

Report Language: The Agency is directed to issue awards on an annual basis to the most qualified and experienced non-profit organizations necessary to provide quality uninterrupted training and technical assistance. The Agency is directed to allocate funds to grantees within 180 days of enactment of this Act.

EPA Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance Justification: Enact the FY2026 House reported level of \$26,000,000 for section 4103 of America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 in FY2027

EPA Clean Water Act Compliance Technical Assistance: This technical assistance authorization, section 4103, "Technical Assistance for Treatment Works," was included in America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, and signed into law by the President on October 23, 2018.

Small and rural communities have more difficulty affording public wastewater service due to lack of population density and lack of economies of scale. This challenge is compounded by the fact that rural communities have lower average median household incomes and often have higher rates of poverty. Likewise, rural communities have a much more challenging time complying with federal Clean Water Act permits and operating complex wastewater treatment systems due to the lack of technical resources and expertise in small communities. While most rural communities have fewer resources, they are regulated in the exact same manner as a large community - and often operating similarly complex treatment systems that are smaller in scale but no less sophisticated to operate and troubleshoot. Many small communities may only have one (or one part-time) operator with multiple duties (not just wastewater treatment) - while a large community may have a team of technical experts including engineers, chemists, and highly trained operators - all as part of their full-time staff.

Many small and rural communities are currently struggling to comply with the EPA sewer permits (i.e. federal National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits), experiencing issues with inflow and infiltration of their collection systems, meeting Clean Water Act ammonia standards, biochemical oxygen demand standards, new nutrient standards, stormwater regulations and changing permits due to implementation of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) regulations.

This recent law provides direct on-site assistance to communities to support the efficient operation of their wastewater utilities and ensure compliance with all the federal regulations under the Clean Water Act. Funding and implementation will allow communities to comply with the federal Clean Water Act requirements, potentially save thousands of dollars, prevent the hiring of consultants to comply with the Clean Water Act and limit exposure to civil penalties. Instead of a "must" mandate from the federal government, this provision will provide small and rural communities with "how-to" guidance for cost-effective compliance with the federal government's Clean Water Act.

NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION
FY2027 APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST SUMMARY

Name of program: **National Water and Wastewater Operator Apprenticeship Program**

Appropriations bill: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies

Senate subcommittee Chairman: Shelley Moore Capito (WV)

Senate subcommittee Ranking Member: Tammy Baldwin (WI)

House subcommittee Chairman: Robert Aderholt (AL)

House subcommittee Ranking Member: Rosa DeLauro (CT)

Department: United States Department of Labor

Agency: Employment and Training Administration

Appropriations Account: Training and Employment Services

FY2027 President's budget request: TBD

**Apprenticeship Grant
Program Funding History**

FY2021	\$185,000,000
FY2022	\$235,000,000
FY2023	\$285,000,000
FY2024	\$285,000,000
FY2026	TBD

FY2027 request: \$20,000,000 set-aside within the Apprenticeship Grant Program

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) requests \$20,000,000 for a national water and wastewater operator apprenticeship program to be funded by the available resources within the Apprenticeship Grant Program account.

Bill Language: \$20,000,000 shall be for national water and wastewater operator industry workforce training through apprenticeship programs registered with the Office of Apprenticeship of the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor or a State apprenticeship agency recognized by the Office of Apprenticeship pursuant to the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the "National Apprenticeship Act"; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.).

Report Language: The Committee directs the Secretary to make \$20,000,000 in grant funding available for a nonprofit organization working with community water systems to establish, implement, expand, and administer registered apprenticeship programs consistent with the National Guideline Standards of Apprenticeship for Water and Wastewater System Operations Specialists to address nationwide shortages of qualified drinking water and wastewater operators, especially in rural America.

DOL Rural Water Workforce Initiative Justification: Provide the FY2026 House reported level of \$20,000,000 for a national water and wastewater operator apprenticeship program.

NRWA, State Rural Water Associations, USDA, DOL, EPA, and local rural water utilities are collaborating successfully to establish the first nationally recognized Registered Apprenticeship Program for water and wastewater system operators, while creating jobs in rural America. In July 2024, NRWA achieved a significant milestone by securing \$7,631,873 in DOL competitive grant funding to support the development and expansion of these vital rural water apprenticeships. As of January 2026, 35 State Rural Water Associations have completed the rigorous process of obtaining federally approved Registered Apprenticeship Programs and are now attracting, training, and retaining the next generation water workforce with over 687 apprentices enrolled and over 519 have completed their apprenticeship as of December 31, 2025.

To bolster this effective initiative, Congress “urged” the Secretary of Labor to make funding available for the NRWA Registered Apprenticeship Program in the FY2024 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act and the FY2026 DOL House Appropriations report includes a set-aside directing the Secretary of Labor to invest \$20 million:

The Committee directs DOL to make \$20,000,000 in grant funding available to establish, implement, expand, and administer registered apprenticeship programs consistent with the National Guideline Standards of Apprenticeship for Water and Wastewater System Operations Specialists to address nationwide shortages of qualified drinking water and wastewater operators, especially in rural America (page 18)

To continue the growing, successful NRWA Apprenticeship Program, we also request a \$285 million funding level for the Apprenticeship Grant Program account, the same as the House and Senate’s FY2026 reported level with a \$20,000,000 set-aside for a national water and wastewater operator apprenticeship program to be funded by the available resources within that account.

Safe and effective water utility management is vital to rural America and the nation. There are currently over 50,000 community water supplies in the country, 91% serve populations of 10,000 or less. Employment data indicates up to 50% of this workforce will leave the water industry within the next 10 years. A vast majority of community water systems have been unable to attract, train and retain the next generation workforce due to the lack of an identifiable career path coupled with low salary levels and population density. Rural water utilities need a pipeline of skilled workers to ensure clean and safe water for the public and to maintain the water infrastructure necessary to keep service areas economically viable. These operators serve as public health officials and are often the only person responsible for complying with all the applicable federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act regulations and for supplying the small community with safe drinking water and sanitation every second of every day. Water and wastewater systems will be empowered to leverage workforce development activities including an identifiable career path and a modern, systematic apprenticeship model with this funding for the first time.

Wisconsin Rural Water Association

Impact on Wisconsin by Congressional Districts

DISTRICT 3

Legend:
Blue - Waterworks Assistance
Green - Energy Efficiency
Teal/Aqua – Source Water Assistance
Light Brown – Wastewater Assistance

Contact Date	System Name	System Contact	Position	System Connections/ Energy Savings	Total Contact Time	Savings to System
1/10/25	Augusta Waterworks	Scott Williamson	Wastewater Superintendent	438 W / 438 WW	2.25 hrs.	\$3,000
<p>Scott Williams contacted WRWA technician Chris Groh for assistance with their wastewater treatment plant. Their former operator had retired, and their activated sludge system began to fail. Mr. Groh met with the operating crew and found the mixed liquor solids were over 10,000 ppm and mostly lifeless. This is entirely too many solids, so Chris instructed and demonstrated a very critical means to reduce the solids in the process. After this, Chris went through the plant with the crew to explain and demonstrate how to run the plant properly. The temperature during the visit was about -14 degrees, so it was important to show proper cold weather operations. Chris returned 2 weeks later for a progressive report and found some improvement. Extreme cold temperatures do not allow quick changes. Next steps were discussed and the operators were given further instructions on sludge handling and digestion of sludges. WRWA's services saved the village \$3,000 in consultant fees for diagnosis and technical assistance.</p>						
2/11/25	Wheeler Waterworks	Don Knutson	Village Clerk	3,072 kWh		\$563 ann.
<p>WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler met with Don Knutson and performed an energy efficiency assessment for Wheeler's water operations. Matt suggested changing the electrical rate, reducing the runtime of the tower mixer and adding a VFD to the current well. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Wheeler would save \$563 annually on their water operations.</p>						
2/24/25	Durand Waterworks	Mitch Gilbertson	Asst. Public Works Director	804 W / 804 WW	3.25 hrs.	\$3,259
<p>WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by the City of Durand to provide technical assistance with locating a water leak. Dan traveled to Durand and met with Mitch Gilbertson. They reviewed the system maps concentrating on the areas with known issues. Dan, armed with his LD-12, isolated the section of the water system where the leak was located. He then used correlator equipment to pinpoint the leak. With the sensitive location of the leak, Mr. Gilbertson suggested an alternative test before digging. They conducted a pressure test, revealing a leak in this section of the water main. Unfortunately, a failure occurred during the pressure test, rendering a private 4-inch water service to the courthouse inoperable. Dan proposed a temporary service to the courthouse. During the setup of the temp service, Dan and Mr. Gilbertson discovered the courthouse water meter was turning backward. Further investigation revealed a second leak on the private side of the service. Dan's expertise was instrumental in identifying the system's water leak and providing Mr. Gilbertson with valuable knowledge. This service saved the City of Durand \$2,000 for leak detection and correlator expenses, \$1,038 revenue loss, \$221 pumping expenses and a loss of 1,062 kWh.</p>						
3/12/25	Rockland Waterworks	Keegan Erickson	Wastewater Ops. Specialist	172 W / 172 WW	2.5 hrs.	\$1,000
<p>WRWA Trainer/Technician Tony Roche was contacted by Keegan Erickson to help troubleshoot problems with high effluent solids and high effluent BOD in the wastewater facility. Tony and Mr. Erickson discussed issues and causes of the plant upset and decided the cause was coming from clarifier washout during high flow periods. Mr. Roche trained the Rockland staff how to properly waste sludge at a slow rate that would prevent coning and how to take sludge blanket depth readings in the clarifier. Tony and Mr. Erickson agreed that the sludge storage tank needed to be emptied to make room to waste more sludge out of the clarifier. Rockland staff contacted their biosolids hauler and scheduled hauling appointments to take sludge out of their sludge storage tank. WRWA services saved Rockland \$1,000 for consulting fees.</p>						
3/20/25	Adams Waterworks			3,687 kWh		\$1,102 ann.

WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler performed an energy efficiency assessment follow-up for Adams' water operations. He had conducted an initial assessment in 2024. On this visit, Matt suggested turning in the tax-exempt forms to the electric provider to remove taxes from the bill and fine tuning the VDF to maximize pump efficiency. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Adams would save \$1,102 annually for their water operations.

4/14/25	Lake Hallie Waterworks	Scott Decker	Water Operations Specialist	2228 W / 1684 WW	6.25 hrs.	\$17,950
---------	------------------------	--------------	-----------------------------	------------------	-----------	----------

WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by the Village of Lake Hallie to provide technical assistance in developing a GIS map. Dan traveled to Lake Hallie and met with Scott Decker. Together, they reviewed all documents from previous construction records, as-builts, engineering drawings, and current GIS markings. After the review, Dan taught Mr. Decker how to import data and build system map layers. Once all layers were installed, Dan provided technical training on managing specific layers. Mr. Decker requested that a layer be constructed to automatically calculate the flushed gallons from a hydrant and a layer for daily well logs and pumpage reports. With the addition of the layers, Mr. Decker and his team can streamline their day-to-day operation. During the on-site visit, Dan developed a comprehensive GIS mapping and asset management program. This service saved Lake Hallie \$16,000 on GIS programs from outside vendors and provided Mr. Decker and his staff with complete control of their mapping platform. The comprehensive nature of the program ensures all aspects of their operations are covered, giving the stakeholders a sense of security. WRWA's expertise saved Lake Hallie Waterworks a total of \$17,950.

4/29/25	Vesper Waterworks	George Brandl	Public Works Director	171 W / 171 WW	3.5 hrs.	\$1,000
---------	-------------------	---------------	-----------------------	----------------	----------	---------

WRWA Trainer/Technician Tony Roche was contacted by George Brandl to help with writing standard operating procedures for permit required sampling, pH testing, and DO testing. Tony met with Mr. Brandl to create standard operating procedures for influent and effluent sample collection, pH testing, and DO testing. During the meeting, Tony assisted Mr. Brandl with creating standard operating procedures that will aid Vesper staff with performing permit-required duties while Mr. Brandl is away on vacation or on leave. WRWA's technical assistance saved Vesper \$1,000 in consultant fees to create standard operating procedures.

5/12/25	Prairie du Chien Waterworks	John Rickleff	Wastewater Ops. Specialist	1730 W / 1730 WW	5.25 hrs.	\$1,000
---------	-----------------------------	---------------	----------------------------	------------------	-----------	---------

WRWA Trainer/Technician Tony Roche visited the Prairie du Chien wastewater treatment plant to assist John Rickleff with phosphorus testing. The department had experienced employee turnover, and Mr. Rickleff was recently tasked with conducting phosphorus analysis to maintain compliance with their Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit. Mr. Rickleff was struggling to pass quality control requirements for phosphorus analysis and was instructed by the WI DNR to create a new phosphorus detection curve. Tony trained Mr. Rickleff on the procedures needed to comply with the phosphorus detection curve and staff created a new curve that met the statistical criteria set forth by the DNR. WRWA's technical assistance saved Prairie du Chien \$1,000 in consultant fees.

6/11/25	Vesper Waterworks	George Brandl	Public Works Director	22,845 kWh		\$3,059 ann.
---------	-------------------	---------------	-----------------------	------------	--	--------------

WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler met with George Brandl and performed an energy efficiency assessment for Vesper's wastewater operations. Matt suggested replacing old motors with new energy-efficient motors and adding a VFD to one of the blowers for better process control. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Vesper would save \$3,059 annually for their wastewater operations.

6/12/25	Augusta Waterworks	Dennis Bergman	Wastewater Ops. Specialist	438 W / 438 WW	2.25 hrs.	\$1,000
---------	--------------------	----------------	----------------------------	----------------	-----------	---------

WRWA Trainer/Technician Tony Roche was contacted by Dennis Bergman to help with sludge management options needed to dispose of biosolids at the treatment plant. Mr. Bergman recently transitioned into the wastewater operator role and did not have any prior wastewater experience. Tony trained Mr. Bergman to correctly waste sludge to maintain process control and to correctly sample biosolids from the sludge storage tank in order to maintain compliance with DNR sludge sampling requirements. Tony explained the importance of regular wasting to avoid operational problems with the treatment plant. They explored different options to dispose of the biosolids from the treatment plant. Augusta is beginning the process of enrolling new agricultural fields into the biosolids program. Tony explained the necessary process to enroll a field into a biosolids program, and the soil sampling requirements needed to have the field approved by the WI DNR. WRWA's services saved the village \$1,000 in contractor fees.

6/30/25	Patch Grove Waterworks			18,438 kWh		\$2,509 ann.
---------	------------------------	--	--	------------	--	--------------

WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler performed an energy efficiency assessment for Patch Grove's wastewater operations. Matt suggested repairing the air leak at the pipe joint above the blowers, reducing the DO level from plus 5.0 mg/L to an operating area of 1.0-3.0 mg/L and replacing the old inefficient motors with new high-efficiency

motors. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Patch Grove would save \$2,509 annually for their wastewater operations.

7/14/25	Maiden Rock Water Utility	Brian Garay	Public Works Director	87 W / 50 WW	9.25 hrs.	\$21,080
---------	---------------------------	-------------	-----------------------	--------------	-----------	----------

WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by the Village of Maiden Rock and Short Elliott Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH) for technical assistance with a water tower drain down and inspection, and water main upgrade into the water tower. Dan met with Brian Garay, and they began setting up the water system to be drained and maintain pressure via a pressure relief valve. Once they had established a pressurized system, they began preparing the water tower for inspection, the water main tie-in, and the addition of a tower mixer. As the tower was being drained, a meeting took place before digging began. After a quick review of the plans, Dan noticed a significant problem with the designed plans. If the tie-in occurs, Maiden Rock will be unable to ever drain the water tower or maintain pressure for future drain downs. Dan requested that the contractor not begin any work until this item was resolved. Jeff Nussbaum, senior engineer at SHE was consulted. The three discussed the potential issue this could cause in the future. It was determined the water tie-in could be placed further downstream without requiring a change order. This significantly reduced downtime, allowing Maiden Rock to bring the tower back online three weeks sooner than anticipated. WRWA's technical assistance saved Maiden Rock \$6,250 in consultant and equipment rental fees, avoided an \$8,700 change order, and prevented 9.84 million gallons of water from being wasted, at a cost of \$6,130.

8/14/25	Gays Mills Waterworks	Dawn McCann	Clerk	227 W / 227 WW	2.25 hrs.	\$1,500
---------	-----------------------	-------------	-------	----------------	-----------	---------

WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by Gays Mills to provide technical assistance with developing an emergency chlorination plan. Dan traveled to Gays Mill and met with Dawn McCann, the Clerk, and Robert Robinson, the Ground Water Specialist. Mrs. McCann and Mr. Robinson discussed how a significant amount of water documentation had been lost during the floods and the transition of water operators. Mrs. McCann expressed concerns that Gays Mill might face substantial deficiencies during their upcoming sanitary survey inspection. Dan and Mr. Robinson began developing the emergency chlorination plan. During the on-site visit, Dan provided essential analytical and technical assistance for developing an emergency chlorination plan. WRWA's services saved Glenwood City \$1,500 in consultant fees and valuable technical assistance with developing their new emergency chlorination plan.

8/20/25	Potosi Waterworks	Ron Dressler	Water Operations Specialist	195 W / 195 WW	3.5 hrs.	\$1,600
---------	-------------------	--------------	-----------------------------	----------------	----------	---------

Ron Dressler contacted WRWA Circuit Rider Annetta Von Rueden for assistance with a whole water distribution leak survey at the request of the village engineer. When Annetta arrived in Potosi, she met with Mr. Dressler and Village Clerk Jessie Gavinski to discuss a plan to look for the leak in the distribution system. Mr. Dressler suggested it would be best to start at the water tower and work down to the bottom or end of the distribution system. A lengthy investigation of the whole system came up with several results. Five hydrants and one pipe at the end of the distribution system were leaking. The pipe had several repairs to it already. Annetta strongly suggested they consider replacing that section of the old water pipe as there is a brewery at the end of that main that requires a lot of water for production. Mr. Dressler and Ms. Gavinski will present the findings to the village board and village engineer at their next board meeting. WRWA's technical assistance saved the village \$1,600 in contracted leak detection services.

9/8/25	Alma Waterworks	Larry Grisen	Board Chairman	372 W / 372 WW	2.25 hrs.	\$127,500
--------	-----------------	--------------	----------------	----------------	-----------	-----------

WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by Larry Grisen. They planned to conduct ice pigging to address a water quality issue. Dan pointed out that while ice pigging might solve the immediate issue, the underlying cause still needed to be addressed. Dan met with Water Superintendent Bernie Bartz. Current water issues included sulfur-smelling water, a reddish-brown color, and a slimy texture. Dan noted the water problems resemble those caused by iron bacteria, and the planned ice pigging will not resolve the issue. They flushed the affected area, and Dan observed no signs of the reported water problems. However, he detected elevated levels of chlorine and air within the water system. Dan conducted multiple on-site visits, developed a water quality plan, a flushing plan, several standard operating procedures, customer complaint forms, a GIS flushing layer, and new sampling forms. At the September utility board meeting, Dan presented a comprehensive water quality plan and other documents to the board. The board approved the water quality plan and decided not to proceed with the ice pigging. WRWA's services saved Alma Waterworks \$90,000 by avoiding ice pigging, \$30,000 for a water quality plan, \$7,500 for a flushing plan, and the cost of a GIS mapping layer.

9/9/25	Gays Mills Waterworks	Dawn McCann	Clerk	227 W / 227 WW	2.5 hrs.	\$1,000
--------	-----------------------	-------------	-------	----------------	----------	---------

WRWA Trainer/Technician Tony Roche was contacted by Dawn McCann to help complete the Capacity, Management, Operation, and Maintenance (CMOM) Report for the village. Gays Mills was recently visited by the WI DNR and was informed that their CMOM document needed to be updated to maintain compliance. Tony met with Ms. McCann and

Gays Mills operator Bob Robinson to update and complete the CMOM report. WRWA's technical assistance saved the village \$1,000 in engineering fees.

9/30/25	Bloomington Waterworks	Keith Leitzinger	Public Works Director	7,928 kWh		\$1,109 ann.
---------	------------------------	------------------	-----------------------	-----------	--	--------------

WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler conducted an energy efficiency assessment for Bloomington's water operations. Matt suggested adding a VFD to their only well and reducing the water loss in the village to less than 10%. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Bloomington would save \$1,109 annually for their water operations.

9/30/25	Amherst Waterworks	Nic Lea	Water Operator	6,599 kWh		\$967 ann.
---------	--------------------	---------	----------------	-----------	--	------------

WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler conducted an energy efficiency assessment for Amherst's water operations. Matt suggested adding a VFD to Well 2 for process control, prolonged pump life, and energy savings. He also suggested adjusting the speed of Well 1 after the UV disinfection process is added. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Amherst would save \$967 annually for their water operations.

10/9/25	Friendship Waterworks	Beth Schultz	Public Works Director	231 W / 0 WW	5.25 hrs.	\$1,200
---------	-----------------------	--------------	-----------------------	--------------	-----------	---------

WRWA Circuit Rider Dan Wundrow was contacted by Friendship Waterworks to provide technical assistance in reviewing the Wisconsin DNR study guide in preparation for the water operator exam. Dan traveled to Friendship and met with Beth Schultz, the Ground Water Specialist. During the on-site visit, Ms. Schultz acknowledged her knowledge gaps. Dan worked with Ms. Schultz on all parts she was unsure about. They went out in the system and applied some of the WI DNR study guides to practical practice. During fieldwork, Ms. Schultz demonstrated many skills and knowledge needed to pass the WI DNR operator exam. During the on-site visit, Dan provided one-on-one classroom instruction and in-the-field training. WRWA's services saved Friendship \$1,200 in consultant fees while providing new skills and education.

10/16/25	Friendship Waterworks	Beth Schultz	Public Works Director	231 W / 0 WW	3.25 hrs.	\$900
----------	-----------------------	--------------	-----------------------	--------------	-----------	-------

Beth Schultz contacted WRWA Circuit Rider Annetta Von Rueden for assistance with an inoperable fire hydrant in the village. Annetta demonstrated to Ms. Schultz and her assistant, Kiera Applegate, how to properly open the hydrant slowly to detect signs of wear on the operating rod. The hydrant opened with extreme difficulty. Annetta informed Ms. Schultz the issue was an old bushing in the operating nut, the top nut on a hydrant that turns for operation of the hydrant. Annetta, along with Ms. Schultz disassembled the hydrant to replace the bushing and reassembled the hydrant. Ms. Schultz tested the hydrant, and it operated with ease. Ms. Schultz requested Annetta demonstrate how to properly operate water distribution valves, as she has never operated a water distribution valve before. WRWA's services saved the Village of Friendship \$900, the cost to have a company come out and repair the hydrant.

10/20/25	Almond Waterworks	Greg Otto	Wastewater Superintendent	129 W / 129 WW	1 hr.	\$1,000
----------	-------------------	-----------	---------------------------	----------------	-------	---------

WRWA Circuit Rider Jesse Hass was contacted by Greg Otto to help with issues in the collection system and asked if he could drop off a sewer camera. Jesse helped train Mr. Otto on how to use the camera and check problem areas within the collection system. The village is having issues with laterals hooked to the collection system. Jesse and Mr. Otto will touch base after Mr. Otto televises areas within the collection system. WRWA saved the village \$1,000 in rental fees.

10/21/25	Vesper Waterworks	George Brandl	Wastewater Ops. Specialist	171 W / 171 WW	2.5 hrs.	\$1,000
----------	-------------------	---------------	----------------------------	----------------	----------	---------

WRWA Trainer/Technician Tony Roche was contacted by George Brandl to help with writing a standard operating procedure (SOP) for evaluating the toxicity of a phosphorus removal chemical used at the Village of Vesper wastewater pond system. The village was recently instructed by their whole effluent toxicity (WET) testing contract lab to complete an SOP to evaluate toxicity of their phosphorus removal chemical to maintain compliance with WET testing regulations. Tony met with Mr. Brandl to help complete the SOP report for the Village of Vesper. WRWA's technical assistance saved the village \$1,000 for not having to hire an engineering firm to complete the SOP report.

11/21/25	Bloomington Waterworks	Keith Leitzinger	Public Works Director	34,155 kWh	\$4,466 ann.
----------	------------------------	------------------	-----------------------	------------	--------------

WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler conducted an energy efficiency assessment for Bloomington's wastewater operations. Matt suggested replacing blower motor 3 with a new high-efficiency motor, lowering the DO from the current 5.0 mg/L plus to 1.0-3.0 mg/L, and removing the valves on the intake piping for the blowers. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Bloomington would save \$4,466 annually for their wastewater operations.

12/17/25	Merrillan Waterworks	Mike Garbers	Wastewater Ops. Specialist	233 W / 234 WW	3.75 hrs.	\$1,000
----------	----------------------	--------------	----------------------------	----------------	-----------	---------

Tony Roche was contacted by Mike Garbers to help update their Capacity, Management, Operation, and Maintenance (CMOM) Report. The village was recently visited by the WI DNR and was informed that their CMOM document needed to be updated to maintain compliance. Tony met with Mr. Garbers and the Merrilan Public Works Director, Griffin

Abbott. During the meeting, Tony assisted Village of Merrilan staff with updating the CMOM report. WRWA's technical assistance saved the Village of Merrilan \$1,000 in engineering fees to complete the CMOM report.

12/17/25	Gays Mills Waterworks	Bob Robinson	Public Works Director	4,336 kWh		\$671 ann.
----------	-----------------------	--------------	-----------------------	-----------	--	------------

WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler conducted an energy efficiency assessment for Gays Mills' water operations. Matt suggested locating and repairing system leaks to prevent unnecessary water pumping. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Gays Mills would save \$671 annually for their water operations.

12/19/25	Gays Mills Waterworks	Bob Robinson	Public Works Director	10,244 kWh		\$1,416 ann.
----------	-----------------------	--------------	-----------------------	------------	--	--------------

WRWA Energy Efficiency Technician Matt Rettler conducted an energy efficiency assessment for Gays Mills' wastewater operations. Matt suggested replacing or repairing SS lines with excessive I/I during plant upgrades. By implementing WRWA's recommendations, Gays Mills would save \$1,416 annually for their wastewater operations.

Renee Koback

From: Chris Groh
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2025 8:12 AM
To: Renee Koback
Subject: Thanks for Annie

Fwd: Hey Annie Brian Garay here, all seem to be back to normal with the Well. It was obviously the house with the frozen line causing extra pumping. Thanks again for coming down and going through town with me. You guys always go above and beyond. Thanks again.

Sent from Chris' iPhone

Maiden Rock

Renee Koback

From: John Schmitt <John.Schmitt@foremostfarms.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2025 10:11 AM
To: Renee Koback; Chris Groh
Subject: RE: Rural Water E-News 2/12/2025

Good morning,

This is in response to Renee's request for writing a letter in support of WRWA, I hope an email is okay.

I want to thank WRWA and Chris Groh specifically for the technical support and advice I have received throughout the years. Until recently, I was the only Advanced Wastewater operator in the entire Foremost Cooperative. So I need to rely on other sources of information and reference, and Chris has always done a great job with that. Whether it is confirming a hunch that I have, or helping with issues that I can't seem to figure out, Chris is an invaluable resource for all the members of the Wastewater treatment community. I really appreciate your expertise, Chris, and your willingness to help out whenever the phone rings. And I think it's even more important that the advice is never linked to a specific product line, it's information and it's very helpful and appreciated. Thank you so much.



Thank you,
John P. Schmitt
Wastewater Supervisor

john.schmitt@foremostfarms.com
Phone: 608-630-1803
932 N. Madison St
Lancaster, WI 53813
www.foremostfarms.com

Renee Koback

From: Chris Groh
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 11:10 AM
To: Dan Wundrow; Kelly Thomas; Renee Koback
Subject: Fw: CR Follow-up [EXTERNAL] 2/13/25 visit

From: Brian Davis <Brian.Davis@nrwa.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 10:55 AM
To: Chris Groh <CGroh@wrwa.org>
Subject: Fw: CR Follow-up [EXTERNAL] 2/13/25 visit

The following message was received in response to the NRWA auto-generated email following an ONS visit by one of your Circuit Riders.

From: Utility Supervisor - Joesph Galewski <indeews@independence.wi.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 10:49 AM
To: Customer Satisfaction <customersatisfaction@nrwa.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2/13/25 visit

Good Morning,

I am sending this email to confirm that Dan Wundrow did come on 2/13/25 for a visit. I wanted to express how helpful he was. He also was here earlier to help the City of Independence find a water leak. He is always very professional, knowledgeable, kind, answers all of our questions, and will always answer a text or a call. We are very grateful for his assistance!

Thanks,

Joe Galewski
City of Independence
Water/Wastewater Superintendent

(715) 965-2229 Work
(715) 538-3682 Mobile
indeews@independence.wi.gov

VILLAGE of READSTOWN

116 North Fourth Street, PO Box 247, Readstown, WI 54652

Ph. (608) 629-5627 Fax (608) 629-5699

clerk@vi.readstown.wi.gov www.vi.readstown.wi.gov

2/28/2025

Dear Wisconsin Rural Water Association,

On behalf of the Village of Readstown, our public works department and I want to extend our sincere gratitude for the exceptional work and dedication of Andrew Aslesen, Source Water Specialist, for creating our Wellhead Protection Plan. Andrew's expertise, professionalism, and commitment to safeguarding our communities' water supply went above and beyond our expectations.

From start to finish, Andrew demonstrated remarkable knowledge and attention to detail, ensuring that our plan not only met regulatory requirements but also reflected the unique needs of our village. Andrew's willingness to guide us through the process, answer our questions, and provide invaluable insights made all the difference.

We truly appreciate the Wisconsin Rural Water Association's commitment to supporting communities like ours. Please pass along our deepest thanks to Andrew Aslesen-his hard work will have a lasting impact on our village's future.

With gratitude,

Chelsey Hoffman

Village Clerk/Treasurer
Village of Readstown

Andrew,

Thank-you for your hard work
and dedication!

Austin Aldrey
Chris Stein
Chris Stein

Chelsea Hoffman

Renee Koback

From: Chris Groh
Sent: Sunday, April 13, 2025 6:55 AM
To: Renee Koback; Brenda Staudenmaier
Subject: Fw: Training

Very nice letter. John is a great supporter.

From: John Hauth <JohnH@lancasterwisconsin.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 12, 2025 8:48 AM
To: Chris Groh <CGroh@wrwa.org>
Subject: Training

Hi Chris,

I attended the Advancing Water and Wastewater Systems, Practical Solutions, Technology and Leadership for Operators training held at First Supply in LaCrosse on April 10th. Brenda from WRWA and the staff from ISG did a fantastic job of organizing and presenting this class, it was one of the best I have attended. The range of topics provided good information, ideas to take back to our communities and discussion amongst attendees and presenters. Keep up the good work.



John Hauth
Public Works Director, City of Lancaster
206 S Madison St., Lancaster, WI 53813
☎ (608)723-7543 📠 (608)723-4789

Renee Koback

From: Firkus, Kathi - RD, WI <kathi.firkus@usda.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 2:36 PM
To: Renee Koback
Subject: RE: [External Email]WRWA 2025 Outdoor Expo Call for Presentations

Hi Renee....

Just letting you know that Monday is my last day with RD....so in the future, please send these sort of e-mails to Lisa Paulson as she is the acting CP director.

Lisa.Paulson@usda.gov

Could also copy in Steve.Opatik@usda as he is our state engineer...he is located here at the state office for now.

I did let Chris and the staff know last week Monday when they were here for our meeting.....but wanted to be sure to reach out to you also.

Thank you SO much for all that you have done for WI RD, and for all you do every day for Rural communities throughout Wisconsin.

It has been a pleasure working with you and I really appreciate all your hard work...it does not go unnoticed.

Take care,

Kathi

Kathi Firkus
Community Programs Specialist
Rural Development - Community Programs

 **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**
Wisconsin Rural Development – State Office
5417 Clem's Way – Stevens Point, WI 54482
Ph: (715) 345-7651

From: Renee Koback <RKoback@wrwa.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2025 2:01 PM
To: Renee Koback <RKoback@wrwa.org>
Subject: [External Email]WRWA 2025 Outdoor Expo Call for Presentations

[External Email]

If this message comes from an **unexpected sender** or references a **vague/unexpected topic**;
Use caution before clicking links or opening attachments.
Please send any concerns or suspicious messages to: Spam.Abuse@usda.gov

2025 Outdoor Expo

Renee Koback

From: Mark Levra <mark@elkmound.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 6:52 AM
To: WRWA
Subject: Tony Roche

Good Morning:

I just wanted to drop and email to let you know how appreciative The Village of Elk Mound is with the assistance that Tony Roche and Chris Groh provided while we worked on figuring out a treatment issue at our WWTP. They made multiple trips, checked in weekly, and provided us with resources while we worked to get back on track. A big shout out to these two and the effort they put in to helping us get back to compliance. Proud to be a member of WRWA.

Mark Levra
Director of Public Works
Village of Elk Mound
E206 Menomonie Street
Elk Mound, WI 54739
(715)556-4566

Renee Koback

From: Chris Groh
Sent: Friday, May 30, 2025 3:09 PM
To: Renee Koback; Tony Roche; Jesse Hass; Brooke Klingbeil
Subject: Fw: Feedback- Thank you!

Maybe shadowing an auditor would be good for the DNR and our operators?

Renee, a great one for the journal

Chris Groh

Executive Director
Wisconsin Rural Water Association
cgroh@wrwa.org
(715) 340-2055



From: Sijan, Zana Z - DNR <Zana.Sijan@wisconsin.gov>
Sent: Friday, May 30, 2025 1:21 PM
To: Chris Groh <CGroh@wrwa.org>
Subject: Feedback- Thank you!

Hi Chris,

I would like to thank the WRWA organization and Tony for providing onsite training at the Prairie du Chien Treatment Plant lab. The training included, but not limited to, the generation of a passing calibration curve for total phosphorus using the Hach TNT plus kit as well as the first day testing for the initial MDL study for total phosphorus. Thanks to Tony's great work, the lab has been set up for success on the total phosphorus test. Having WRWA as an additional resource for labs to reach out to for training is invaluable especially in the current environment where many labs are experiencing significant turnover in staffing. When labs have multiple training interactions (i.e. WRWA onsite training, DNR onsite visits and phone conversations), the lab staff are offered opportunities to get all of their questions answered, resolve existing issues and learn at a greater capacity. The Laboratory Certification Program will continue to reach out to WRWA when training opportunities come up.

If the WRWA training team is interested, I would love to extend an invitation to have the training staff shadow our auditor Patricia Doerflinger for an onsite audit(s) as a way to increase consistency and exchange of ideas. Please let me know if this is something that WRWA would be interested in and I would be happy to facilitate.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Have a great weekend!

Zana Šijan
she/her/hers

Manager, Certification Services
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Phone: 608-512-6070
Zana.Sijan@wisconsin.gov



dnr.wi.gov

Our core values include professionalism, integrity, and customer service.

Please visit our [survey](#) to provide feedback on your experience interacting with any DNR employee.



Rural Water Employees,
We would like to send a special thanks to
Brooke & Dan W. who came out to help the
Village on June 18, 2025. We appreciate
all of the hard working employees that
Rural Water has. They are always there
to help us answer our water questions
and to deal with the challenges that
a small Rural Village faces.

Thank-You so much. Village of Bay City

Kev.

Sandra

Chris

John

Renee Koback

Subject: FW: WRWA Appreciation letters

From: Scott Kwick <skwick@ci.altoona.wi.us>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 4:34 PM
To: Renee Koback <RKoback@wrwa.org>
Subject: Re: WRWA Appreciation letters

Hi Renee,

On behalf of the City of Altoona, I'd like to express our sincere appreciation for the outstanding support provided by Andrew Aslesen through the Source Water Protection Program. Andrew played a key role in helping us develop our wellhead protection plan and was instrumental in guiding us through the process of getting it formally adopted as a city ordinance.

Andrew was a pleasure to work with—knowledgeable, responsive, and always willing to go the extra mile. His assistance not only helped us protect our drinking water supply but also ensured that the plan met the necessary technical and regulatory standards. Thanks to his help, our community is in a much better position to safeguard our wells for the long term.

I would highly recommend that any municipality or system interested in developing a wellhead protection program reach out to Andrew and take advantage of this valuable resource.

Thank you to WRWA and the Source Water Protection Program for continuing to provide this kind of hands-on, local support to communities across Wisconsin. Your work truly makes a difference.

Sincerely,

-Scott

Scott Kwick | Public Works Director

City of Altoona, Wisconsin

1303 Lynn Avenue | Altoona, WI 54720

Desk: 715-839-2948 | Cell: 715-271-6693

E-mail: skwick@ci.altoona.wi.us

Renee Koback

To: Keith Leitzinger
Subject: RE: WRWA Appreciation letters

From: Keith Leitzinger <bwwt@villageofbloomington.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 4:38 PM
To: Renee Koback <RKoback@wrwa.org>
Subject: RE: WRWA Appreciation letters

Hi Renee, Id like to say a thank you to Annetta Rueden and Matt Rettler. Annetta came down to introduce herself, and I had showed her a few things, which she is going to contact me about. Then Matt Rettler came to do the energy audit, he was very helpful and informative.



Thursday, July 10, 2025

Wisconsin Rural Water Association
350 Water Way
Plover, WI 54467

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Village of Trempealeau, I would like to extend our sincere appreciation for the outstanding support and technical assistance we have received from Dan Wudrow, one of your Municipal Water Circuit Riders.

Dan has been a tremendous resource to our utility. He consistently brings industry best practices, thoughtful guidance, and a collaborative approach to every interaction. His help with reviewing and interpreting water statistics for our year-end reporting has given us confidence that we are staying aligned with regulatory expectations and maintaining transparency in our operations. Having another set of expert eyes on our data has been extremely valuable.

Dan has also provided meaningful connections to other utilities that led to a substantial financial benefit for our community. Through one of those connections, we were able to purchase a significant quantity of used water meters at a greatly reduced price. These types of opportunities help small utilities like ours remain fiscally responsible while still making necessary upgrades to our systems.

The WRWA's continued support of communities across Wisconsin, especially through programs like the Circuit Rider program, has a real and measurable impact. We are grateful not only for the help we have received, but also for the chance to show our support for keeping these vital programs funded and available to other communities.

Thank you for the work you do and for the dedicated team you have assembled.

Sincerely,

Isaac Pooler

Isaac Pooler, CPA
Village Administrator / Finance Director
Village of Trempealeau & Trempealeau Municipal Utilities

Renee Koback

Subject: FW: WRWA Appreciation letters

From: John Rickleff <jrickleff@prairieduchien-wi.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2025 10:11 AM
To: Renee Koback <RKoback@wrwa.org>; Tony Roche <TRoche@wrwa.org>
Subject: RE: WRWA Appreciation letters

Dear Renee,

I wanted to send you this email thanking Tony Roche, Wastewater Technician from Wisconsin Rural Water Association, for teaching me everything about HACH TNT843 phosphorous test method. Our previous lead operator took a different job, so that put me as the operator in charge. I reached out to Tony and he was able to make it to our facility within a matter of days. Tony is very knowledgeable and great to work with. Anytime I had a question, he was on it! Tony does a great job of making contact time to time just checking in to see how operations are going and to see if I have any questions. As a newly advanced operator, it is a great feeling to know I have someone to count on if I have technical questions. I just wanted to say thanks again for all your hard work and dedication. I would recommend other operators to use the resources Wisconsin Rural Water has to offer!

Thanks,
John Rickleff
Prairie du Chien WWTF

Renee Koback

Subject: FW: WRWA Appreciation letters

From: Rita Bulin <cazvillageclerk@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, July 11, 2025 4:44 PM

To: Renee Koback <RKoback@wrwa.org>

Subject: Re: WRWA Appreciation letters

Thank you to the Wisconsin Rural Water Association!

The Village of Cazenovia lost our long time Public Works Director when he passed unexpectedly earlier this year. As a new Director came on and worked on learning our water system, we realized we needed some help. It was suggested to us to call the Wisconsin Rural Water Association. After speaking with Annie Van Rueden over the phone, we knew we had contacted the correct place. Annie is a wealth of information and let us know of the services Rural Water is able to provide. I called Annie on a Thursday, and by Tuesday of the following week she was able to be in our community and working with us hands-on. What an unbelievable great resource we have with Rural Water in a location as remote and as small as Cazenovia. We will be contacting Rural Water again in the future as we continue to serve the needs of our village.

Thank you!

--

Rita Bulin
Village of Cazenovia, Clerk-Treasurer
303 N. State Highway 58
P.O. Box 151
Cazenovia, WI 53924
Email: cazvillageclerk@gmail.com
Phone: (608) 983-2099
Office Hours: 9am - 3pm Mon - Fri
Village Office Dropbox: located on the front door

Renee Koback

From: Chris Groh
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 10:20 AM
To: Renee Koback
Subject: Fw: CR Follow-up [EXTERNAL] On Site Visit

Maybe could go in the journal?

From: Brian Davis <Brian.Davis@nrwa.org>
Sent: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 7:43 AM
To: Chris Groh <CGroh@wrwa.org>
Subject: Fw: CR Follow-up [EXTERNAL] On Site Visit

The email below was received in response to the automated message sent following an on-site visit by one of your Circuit Riders.

From: John Hauth <DPW@lancasterwisconsin.com>
Sent: Monday, July 14, 2025 2:57 PM
To: Customer Satisfaction <customersatisfaction@nrwa.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] On Site Visit

Hello,

I want to express my appreciation for the rural water circuit rider program and to thank Annetta Von Rueden of the Wisconsin Rural Water Association for her recent visit. Over the years WRWA has provided technical assistance and guidance to our water and wastewater systems along with training opportunities.



John Hauth
Public Works Director, City of Lancaster
206 S Madison St., Lancaster, WI 53813
(608)723-7543 (608)723-4789

Please note that the Lancaster Department of Public Works has updated its primary contact email. Please direct all future correspondence to: dpw@lancasterwisconsin.com

This email has been scanned for spam and viruses by Proofpoint Essentials. Click [here](#) to report this email as spam.

Renee Koback

From: Kim Lunda <kim@vil.baycity.wi.us>
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 9:08 AM
To: Renee Koback
Subject: Thank You so Much for being Here for the Village of Bay City.

The Village of Bay City appreciates all the help that has been received from WRWA, they have helped us with many things and made trips here to help us with reports. We are in the process of completing drilling a new well and they have made multiple trips to meet with us on how they feel we need to proceed and help us to know what type of testing we need to do for test sites.

We have been able to borrow tools from them, and they have really helped us cut cost with not having to buy those tools. The WRWA staff has come to our offices and helped us with completing state reports that we have not had to report on before.

WRWA has been an extraordinary help to us here at the Village of Bay City. Thank You so much for being there for us. I hope that the state funding continues for you as this entity is just so important for rural Wisconsin, America!!

Thank-You

All of the Village of Bay City Wisconsin Staff
Phone (715) 594-3168
Cell (715) 530-4401

VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH

130 N CHESTNUT STREET, ELLSWORTH, WI 54011 | PHONE 715-273-4742 | FAX 715-273-6460

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Village of Ellsworth, I would like to express our appreciation for the support we received from the Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA) Office throughout 2025. The guidance, resources, and professional assistance provided by WRWA continue to play an important role in helping us operate and maintain our water and wastewater systems effectively.

In addition, the continuing education opportunities offered through WRWA have been essential in ensuring that our staff remain current with their wastewater and water certifications. This support helps us stay compliant, improve system performance, and better serve our community.

We value the services WRWA provides to municipalities across Wisconsin, and we are grateful for the ongoing assistance that strengthens the technical and operational capabilities of systems like ours.

Thank you for your continued support of these programs.

Sincerely,
Bradley Vick
DPW Village of Ellsworth

TO: Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA)
FROM: Kevin Garnett (DNR# 37561), Village of Elk Mound Public Works
DATE: December 2nd, 2025
RE: Program Excellence and Support

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Kevin Garnett, and I am a Water and Wastewater Operator for the Village of Elk Mound in Western Wisconsin.

Over the course of the last 18 Months, our Activated Sludge Wastewater Plant began to give us problems. We began to lose our treatment and with that, inched closer to becoming non-compliant with our Permit Numbers for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. I, along with our other operators and director of Public Works, worked tirelessly to attempt to rectify the issue with no success.

Feeling like we had exhausted our options within our abilities, we reached out to WRWA. Tony Roche, WRWA Wastewater Technician along with Chris Groh, WRWA Executive Director, came to our aide and attempted to get our plant back and pointed in the right direction. Chris and Tony both demonstrated a vast and complex knowledge of plants like ours and offered up many ideas to try. Chris was well-spoken and had an exceptionally good understanding of what might upset our plant. Tony had an extensive knowledge of the meters we were using, the chemistry within our plant as well as some process control options we could try. Both gentlemen were extremely accessible and responded to many emails, texts and calls. Tony and Chris both were on-site on multiple occasions helping us identify legitimate next steps.

Over the course of many months, our plant slowly returned to a compliant state, and we once again started to discharge a very high-quality effluent to our Muddy Creek Watershed.

We are proud to be a part of the WRWA, we attend the annual conference and believe highly in the part they play within our state. Without programs such as these and folks like Chris and Tony, our Natural Resources would suffer. Having guys like this to bounce ideas off of, to have question our plan and process control, help municipalities like ours ensure we are making the right decisions that are in the best interests of our constituents, taxpayers and the natural resources we work so hard to protect!

The Village of Elk Mound FULLY endorses the work that the Wisconsin Rural Water Association does within the State of Wisconsin! They are vital partners for Water and Wastewater Programs around the state!

Respectfully,

Kevin A. Garnett

Kevin A. Garnett
Village of Elk Mound Water and Wastewater Operator

Village of Friendship

507 West Lake Street

P.O. Box 206

Friendship, WI 53934

Phone: 608-339-3243

FAX: 608-339-4763

Dear Wisconsin Rural Water Association Team,

As the new Public Works Director for the Village of Friendship, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the tremendous support WRWA has provided me this year. Your guidance has been instrumental in helping me navigate my responsibilities and ensure our Village meets essential standards.

Your team's visit to our Village to demonstrate proper fire hydrant maintenance and inspection was invaluable. Additionally, your assistance in explaining the requirements for passing water tests through the DNR gave me the confidence to manage these processes effectively.

I would like to give special recognition to Annie and Dan who have been an incredible resource. Their willingness to answer questions and provide guidance whenever needed has made a significant difference in my transition into this role.

Thank you for your dedication and for offering such outstanding support. I truly appreciate everything WRWA has done for me and our community, and I look forward to continuing our partnership.

Sincerely,
Beth Schultz
Public Works Director
Village of Friendship

Renee Koback

From: Cheryl Cushman <wastewater@platteville.org>
Sent: Thursday, December 4, 2025 7:19 AM
To: Renee Koback
Subject: Thank You

To Whom it may concern,

I attended another training session that Wisconsin Rural Water organized (Anaerobic Digester Course). These trainings provide the opportunity to maintaining Continued Education Credits required for operator licensure. The information from these trainings and the networking with other operators that attend the trainings has proven invaluable.

Thanks,

Cheryl Cushman
WWTP Foreman
wastewater@platteville.org
office: 608 348-9741 x2249
cell: 608 778-2771



Renee Koback

From: George Taylor
Sent: Thursday, December 4, 2025 11:05 AM
To: Renee Koback
Subject: FW: Nedland Waters Sample/

Thank you letter from Nedland Industries.

Thanks ,

George Taylor

Wisconsin Rural Water Association

715-321-4145

Gtaylor@wrwa.org

From: Curt Olson <curt@nedland.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 4, 2025 10:25 AM
To: George Taylor <GTaylor@wrwa.org>
Subject: Nedland Waters Sample

Hello George,

Just wanted to let you know how much we appreciate your knowledge and assistance in collecting our water samples and making sure we are in compliance with state requirements.

Thank you,
Curt

Contoller,
Nedland Industries, Inc.
(715) 949-1982

Renee Koback

From: bernard <cityalmawwtp@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 12:59 PM
To: Renee Koback
Subject: ThankYou Would like to thank Dan Woodrow and others who have helped us and continue to help us here at the City of Alma to help solve our problems with both water and sewer.

Thanks Everybody for the help.

Bernard Bartz Operator City of Alma