

Data Quality Record for Long-Term Performance Goals

Long-Term Performance Goal Text: By September 30, 2026, provide 2,203 Tribal, small, rural, or underserved communities with technical, managerial, or financial assistance to improve operations of their drinking water or wastewater systems.

Corresponding Annual Performance Goal: Number of Tribal, small, rural, or underserved communities provided with technical, managerial, or financial assistance to improve system operations.

Goal Number/Objective: Goal 5/Objective 5.1

NPM Lead: Office of Water (OW)

1a. Purpose of Long-Term Performance Goal:

The purpose of this long-term performance goal (LTPG) is to report on one-to-one technical assistance provided to communities, which will help improve capacity to assist with more complex projects. EPA is tracking this LTPG to monitor potential negative impacts to technical assistance providers due to limited resources such as limited staffing nationwide to complete project/activity assistance, or an increase in outreach to achieve the target goals relevant to impacted communities, as reflected in the 2022 estimate.

Additionally, EPA anticipates that tracking this long-term performance goal over several years will improve the Agency's understanding of the Technical Assistance Grants Program's impacts on vulnerable communities facing non-compliance challenges, flag issues that might otherwise go unnoticed, and potentially provide a channel for resources or actions that will provide positive results in these communities.

1b. Performance Measure Term Definitions:

Tribal Communities: Federally recognized tribes lacking access to basic wastewater or drinking water services.

Small and Rural Communities: Population of less than 10,000 individuals and an average daily wastewater flow of less than 1 million gallons that the [Administrator](#) determines does not have the capacity to incur debt sufficient to finance a project or activity under [subsection \(b\)](#).

Underserved Community: [Statutorily defined](#) as a political subdivision of a state that either: does not have household drinking water or wastewater services, or is served by a public water system that violates, or exceeds, as applicable, a requirement of a national primary drinking water regulation (this includes a maximum contaminant level, a treatment technique, and an action level).

1c. Unit of Measure:

This LTPG tracks the number of completed technical assistance projects as a proxy for communities served.

2a. Data Source:

- The primary sources of data are the National quarterly (and final) reports. Based on the available data provided by grantees, the number of planned and completed technical assistance projects are being used as a proxy to represent the number of communities assisted/served.
- Data collected by EPA from the "[*Training and Technical Assistance to Improve Water Quality and Enable Small Public Water Systems to Provide Safe Drinking Water*](#)" competitive grant managed by the Office of Water.
- The data are collected quarterly based on the start of the awarded project. The grantee is required to submit to EPA a quarterly report within 30 days after each reporting period. Grantees are required to provide information on the progress of the grant activities throughout the grant period.
- The smallest unit for which data are collected is communities with populations under 100 people.
- The most common unit for which data are collected is communities with populations under 2,500 people.

2b. Data needed for interpretation of (calculated) Performance Result:

The data will target Tribal, small, rural, or underserved communities with technical, managerial, or financial assistance issues living in communities of less than 10,000 people.

Total number of tribal, small, rural, or underserved communities:

- 83 communities (Clean Water). The funding cycles analyzed include 2019-2021.
- 697 communities (Drinking Water). The funding cycles analyzed include 2017, 2019, and 2020; 2018 was combined with 2017.

2021 partial annual results as a reference point include:

- 36 completed technical assistance communities (Clean Water): April 1, 2021-June 30, 2021 (11th of 12th Quarter of Grant Period. Data from most recently submitted report)
- 151 communities (Drinking Water): April 2, 2021-June 30, 2021 (11th of 12th Quarter of Grant Period. Data from most recently submitted report)

The average baseline estimates for 2022-2025 used to calculate the 1,722 communities served are:

- 679 total communities served (Clean Water). Office of Water used a 7x multiplier to reflect an increase in appropriations for this grant.
- 1043 total communities served (Drinking Water). Office of Water projected a 5% growth year after year with the current and anticipated invested resources and funding available annually.

3. Calculation Methodology:

- The Agency will have grant performance results collected from the grant quarterly reports, which are based on reporting criteria that the grantees are required to provide during the life of the grant and the related project. Information is extracted and tracked, including activities, measured outputs and outcomes.
- In anticipation of the information being made available, the information will be used to develop a matrix of correlated elements based on specific baseline information such as location or Public Water System Identification Number.
- Data are gathered quarterly and in annual/final reports to eventually provide aggregated data from planned technical assistance to completion, included specific details on the region/location that is impacted through the work conducted with the grant funding. Examples include the

potential impact of technical assistance to community population served by associated Public Water Systems.

4. Quality Assurance/Quality Controls:

Under the most recently updated grant Terms and Conditions, EPA further clarified to grantees that they ***must provide the number of technical assistance activities completed and the cumulative number of technical assistance activities completed*** in their quarterly/final submitted reports. Grantees should only report one technical assistance for the project once it is complete. EPA anticipates this new requirement will help adjust and clarify what the grantees are reporting and will deliver a more accurate number of the total technical assistance activities completed.

The EPA Project Officer maintains substantial involvement in the collection of this data and will collaborate with the grantee Project Manager in: (1) planning and monitoring project activities; and (2) evaluation and review of progress throughout the phases of the project. The grantee will discuss the reporting elements for the information presented in the quarterly progress reports with the EPA Project Officer during the grantee quarterly meetings.

EPA anticipates annual evaluations and project audits through performance audit as the objective examination of the grant from the point of view of three of the dimensions of value for money: economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, including impact to small, rural, and disadvantaged communities. The objective is an analysis on how the grant is being implemented, including information to improve performance and operations, reduce costs, and facilitate decision making by parties with responsibility to oversee or initiate corrective action. It aims to provide a linkage between financial and programmatic performance with an enhanced focus on the cost in relation with the results achieved and benefits to the community impacted.

5. Data Limitations/Qualifications:

Potential Sources of Error:

- The data must target tribal, small, rural, or underserved communities with technical, managerial, or financial assistance issues living in communities of less than 10,000 people.
- Lack of delineation between training and technical assistance.
- Lack of identification of the type of system the grantee is working with.
- For pre-FY 2022 grantees, lack of clarification if repeat grantee technical visits to a public water system were counted as one technical assistance project or one technical assistance project per visit. (Note, Quality Assurance/Quality Controls updated above)

Assumptions:

- Appropriations and grantees given opportunity to ramp up their operations to provide the increase in services.
- The number of completed technical assistance projects is being used as a proxy to represent the number of communities assisted/served.
- Trainings completed will not be counted towards this LTPG due to variability between grantees in how they track and define their training and community data. Technical assistance projects provide more thorough and complete data specific to communities served.

6. Technical Contact:

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7. Certification Statement/Signature:

I certify the information in this DQR is complete and accurate.

DAA Signature Original signed by Benita Best-Wong **Date** 5/19/2022