

AQUARIUS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

2026 COMPENDIUM



ABOUT THE AQUARIUS RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) is a \$71.4 billion federal-state partnership dedicated to protecting America's public health. The program finances the construction and rehabilitation of critical drinking water infrastructure, along with public health-focused programs and activities across our nation.

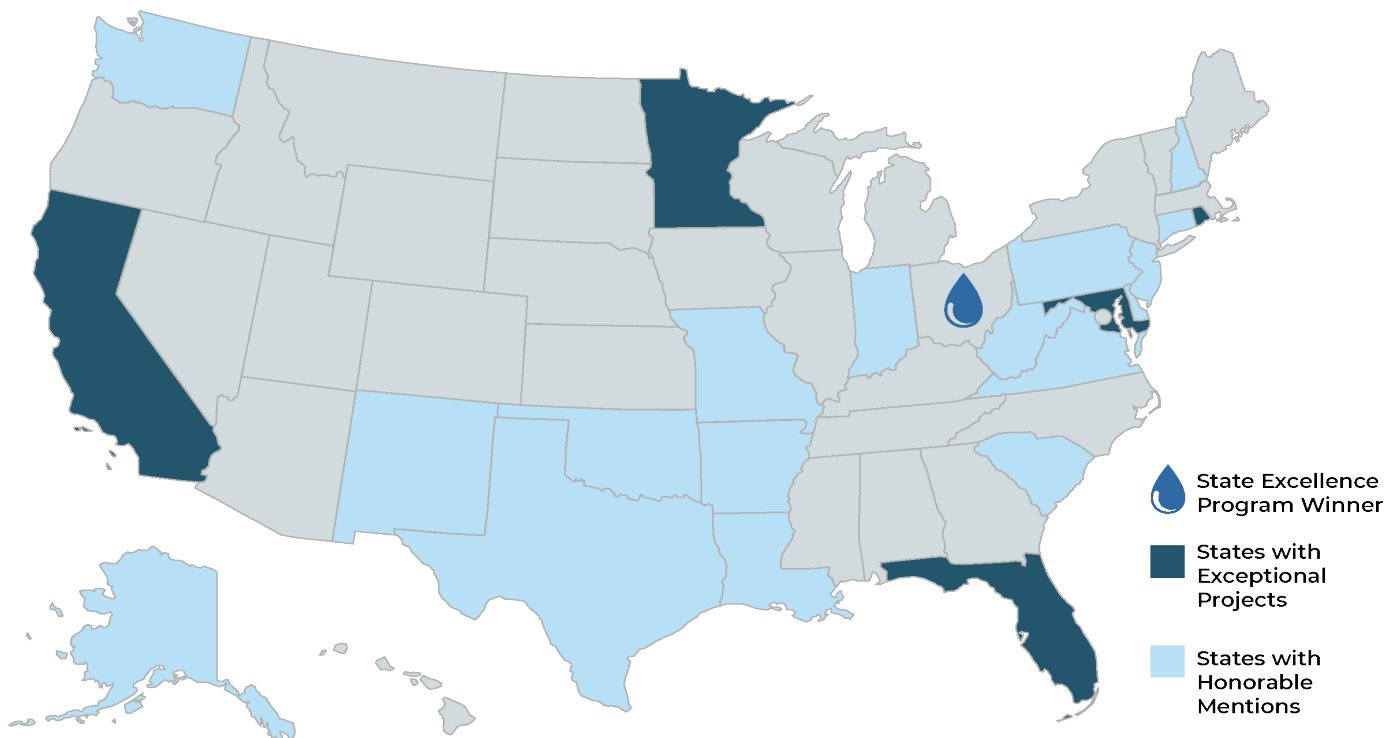
EXCEPTIONAL PROJECTS PROGRAM

The DWSRF AQUARIUS Exceptional Projects Program nationally recognizes DWSRF-funded projects for exceptional focus on five main areas. These projects are examples of the high level of innovation possible with the DWSRF. Participating states in this voluntary recognition program nominated one DWSRF project during the 2026 round. EPA received 22 nominations for projects across the country. Of these 22 projects, EPA chose one "Exceptional Project" for each of the five categories below:

- **Excellence in Innovative Financing:** Project utilizes a variety of techniques to provide the best deal to the assistance recipient, including additional subsidy and co-financing with other state and federal agencies.
- **Excellence in System Partnerships:** Project involves several stakeholders who work together and utilize DWSRF funding to solve various drinking water system challenges. Solutions include consolidation for public health reasons or creation of a regional drinking water system.
- **Excellence in Community Engagement:** Project occurs because of active community participation, and the community is engaged in all aspects of the project.
- **Excellence in Environmental and Public Health Protection:** Project addresses health-based violations with primary drinking water standards, emerging contaminants of concern, or public health threats to a non-regulated community (e.g., community on private wells).
- **Excellence in Infrastructure Designed for the Future:** Project addresses hazards by strategically planning and integrating innovative infrastructure and technology; increases resiliency to cyber-attacks or natural disasters; improves emergency preparedness and response; conservation-based and nature-based solutions; water and energy efficiency.

STATE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

EPA also recognized state DWSRF programs through the new State Excellence Recognition Program, which celebrates high-performing DWSRF programs for outstanding financial and program management and effective delivery of assistance. One state DWSRF program was recognized this year for exceptional overall performance in protecting public health and the environment.



STATE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

STATE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM



**Environmental
Protection
Agency**

STATE: Ohio

AWARD: Drinking Water State Revolving Fund State Excellence Program

RECIPIENT: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA)

SUMMARY: Ohio's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program excels in program management, pairing record-setting loan volume with a successful, flexible set-aside program that delivers more projects on the ground and measurable public health and water quality benefits.

DESCRIPTION OF STATE PROGRAM

Ohio's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) couples record loan volume with a flexible set-aside program to accelerate the delivery of safe, reliable drinking water statewide. For four consecutive years, Ohio has committed over 100% of available DWSRF funds, generating more projects on the ground that provide public health and water quality benefits. In SFY 2025, Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) signed 146 loans totaling \$676.9 million, more than doubling their assistance from the prior year.

To sustain this high loan volume, the state developed a structured project process. DEFA assigns each project an engineering, planning, and financial contact through the process, moving borrowers from application to closeout efficiently. This requires careful interagency coordination and monthly project management meetings to identify key issues and keep projects on track. DEFA integrates the Division of Drinking and Groundwaters (DDGW) into technical reviews to streamline reviews, support timely decisions, and maintain robust oversight while advancing a large, diverse portfolio.

Ohio is strategic and flexible in its use of set-asides to best fit the needs of the state and build capacity and resiliency statewide. The Local Assistance and Other State Programs Set-Aside funds the Source Water Assessment and Protection Program, conducts lead service line inventories using contractors procured by the state, and administers highly popular mini grants. Mini grants included Emergency Generator grants that strengthen power resiliency for small and large water systems, and Source Water Protection and Assessment grants that reduce risk by preventing exposure to contaminated water. In SFY 2025, the state paused the water loss and audit program to launch the Condition Assessment Program grants informed by stakeholder feedback. This new grant program helps small public water systems better manage their assets to cost effectively and consistently provide safe drinking water. Together, these strategies have increased participation, advanced water quality outcomes, and delivered measurable benefits across Ohio's communities.

EXCEPTIONAL PROJECTS

Florida - Wells and Septic Tank Phase Out Project

Rhode Island - Water System Consolidation and Integrated Infrastructure Improvements

Maryland - LCRR Compliance Program Inventory

Minnesota - New Reverse Osmosis Plant for Nitrite

California - Brackish Water Desalination Project

Excellence in Innovative Financing

Excellence in System Partnerships

Excellence in Community Engagement

Excellence in Environmental and Public Health Protection

Excellence in Infrastructure Designed for the Future

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Connecticut

New Hampshire

New Jersey

Delaware

Pennsylvania

Virginia

West Virginia

South Carolina

Indiana

Texas

Oklahoma

New Mexico

Louisiana

Arkansas

Missouri

Alaska

Washington

City of New London (New London Department of Public Utilities)

Towns of Jaffrey and Peterborough

Passaic Valley Water Commission

Willow Tree LLC

State College Borough Authority

City of Richmond

Lubeck Public Service District

Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission and Town of Batesburg-Leesville

Citizens Energy Group

City of Brady

Welch Public Works Authority

Enchanted Forest Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association

Henderson-Nina Water System, Inc.

The City of Fifty-Six

Public Water Supply District No. 1 of Pike County

City and Borough of Wrangell

Boistfort Valley Water Company

EXCEPTIONAL PROJECTS

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATIVE FINANCING

STATE: Florida

AWARD: Excellence in Innovative Financing

RECIPIENT: Nassau County - American Beach Water and Sewer District

PROJECT: American Beach Water and Sewer District Well and Septic Tank Phase Out Project

SUMMARY: Partnering with Nassau County, American Beach Water and Sewer District used a \$1.32 million DWSRF loan plus two federal grants, as well as state and local funding, to build a centralized water and wastewater service that allowed them to deliver reliable, affordable drinking water and retire failing wells and septic systems.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

American Beach Water and Sewer District in Nassau County, Florida, faced longstanding public health and environmental risks from failing private wells and septic systems. Many homes relied on shallow wells, and drinking water was often shared through garden hoses. The community's location between two estuaries compounded environmental challenges, while the cost of modern water and sewer service remained out of reach for residents, making this a longstanding but unmet priority. At project start, 287 of 350 parcels relied on wells and there were no hydrants.

The project significantly reduced costs to ratepayers by leveraging four funding sources, including a low interest DWSRF loan to transition from failing wells and septic systems to reliable municipal service. American Beach Water and Sewer District secured a \$1.32 million DWSRF loan, a \$1.68 million Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Communities grant under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN), a \$992,000 Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) grant, and \$1 million in state legislative appropriations to build a central municipal water and wastewater system. The project installed approximately 2.5 miles of new water mains, more than 300 drinking water service lines to the edge of the County's right-of-way, and 15 fire hydrants, delivering safe, reliable service.

To increase affordability, Nassau County created a special water improvement district and used its small-community status to qualify for low interest state revolving loan terms, cutting bills and saving money. Partnering with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Nassau County funded planning, design, and construction to expand affordable service and support managed growth.

American Beach Water and Sewer District's Well and Septic Tank Phase-Out Project was also selected for recognition under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund George F. Ames Performance and Innovation in the SRF Creating Environmental Success (PISCES) Program for Excellence in Community Engagement.



Water main installation on Leonard Street.



Water main installation on James Street.

EXCELLENCE IN SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS

STATE: Rhode Island

RECIPIENT: Scituate Housing Authority

PROJECT: Rockland Oaks Water System Consolidation and Integrated Infrastructure Improvements

SUMMARY: Using \$1.66 million in DWSRF funding with 100% principal forgiveness, the Scituate Housing Authority consolidated the Rockland Oaks senior housing water system with the Scituate High and Middle School system, restoring safe, reliable drinking water for low-income seniors and strengthening shared reliability.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Scituate Housing Authority's Rockland Oaks senior housing complex, a 24-unit, low-income community identified as disadvantaged under the Safe Drinking Water Act, faced persistent drinking water safety and reliability problems. Its small, aging water source was noncompliant, with repeated exceedances for beryllium and radionuclides, frequent water pressure losses that triggered boil water advisories, and episodes of discolored water. Residents, most of whom are over age 60 and living on fixed incomes, needed permanent, affordable solutions. Multiple state agencies worked together to deliver reliable, safe, and affordable water by connecting Rockland Oaks to the Scituate High and Middle School water system and installing a new well, a pump station, new distribution infrastructure, and an emergency generator. The project received \$1.66 million in DWSRF funding with 100% principal forgiveness. The Rhode Island Department of Health, the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, and the Department of Environmental Management coordinated with local partners to plan, finance, and construct an integrated water solution that strengthened regional infrastructure and delivered benefits to both the school and the housing community.

The consolidation replaced the aging, noncompliant source, eliminated boil water advisories, resolved violations, stabilized water pressure, and restored safe, reliable drinking water for low-income seniors. Principal forgiveness and shared operations helped minimize costs and support long-term affordability. Rockland Oaks residents now receive consistent, high quality drinking water, and the combined system enjoys shared reliability and resilience over the long term. This project demonstrates how coordinated system partnerships and targeted investments can modernize community drinking water systems and protect public health.



Rockland Oaks discolored water.



Rockland Oaks ribbon cutting ceremony.

EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STATE: Maryland

RECIPIENT: City of Baltimore

PROJECT: Baltimore City LCRR Compliance Program Inventory

SUMMARY: Baltimore City secured a \$6.95 million Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan with \$3.68 million in principal forgiveness using 2022 IIJA Lead Service Line Replacement funding, plus \$9.59 million in local contributions, to accelerate its lead service line inventory, identifying over 9,600 service lines for replacement and taking the critical first step toward targeted replacement.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

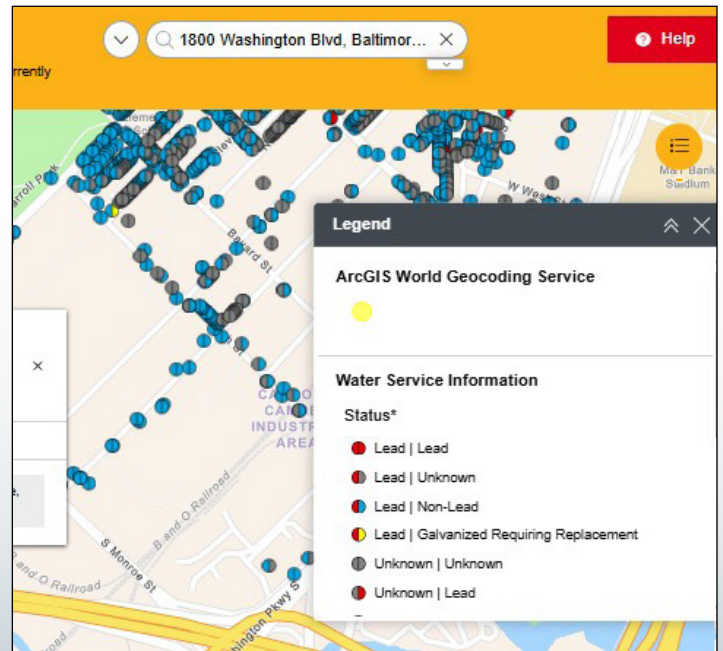
Baltimore City, Maryland's water system serves about 1.6 million residents across the city and suburbs and has a significant number of lead service lines in its system. EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) require complete inventories and prompt replacement to reduce exposure. Baltimore City submitted its interim inventory as required by the LCRR and continues review of the historical records, field investigations, inventory programming, and predictive modeling. Completing the inventory is a critical first step that will enable the city to target replacement and deliver major public health benefits.

The city secured a \$6.95 million DWSRF loan with \$3.68 million in principal forgiveness using 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Lead Service Line Replacement funding, along with contributing \$9.59 million locally to accelerate the inventory. As of September 2025, more than 9,600 service lines have been identified for replacement, and more than 58,000 are made of unknown material. About 10% of Baltimore City public schools have reported lead exceedances in drinking water. Baltimore City will target replacements where risk is highest, focusing on unknown material service lines and schools with exceedances to reduce exposure quickly.

Community engagement is central to this effort. The city effectively boosted participation and response rates by combining door-to-door canvassing, online guidance for at-home testing, in-person assistance, flyers and notices, public events, and information booths. This was complemented by minimally invasive Swordfish pipe material readings. In some neighborhoods, response rates increased nearly tenfold following outreach, according to Johns Hopkins University. This comprehensive, community responsive strategy builds trust, secures permissions, reduces the need for disruptive inspections, and accelerates inventory completion. Completing this inventory marks a major step in the city's initiative to remove lead from drinking water. Support from the DWSRF is programmed to help Baltimore City continue to refine its inventory and replace over 9,600 pipes in need of replacement in its water system.



Sign for a public meeting held by the Baltimore Service Line Partnership.



Screenshot of the Baltimore Service Line Partnership Inventory Map.

EXCELLENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION

STATE: Minnesota

RECIPIENT: City of Westbrook

PROJECT: New Reverse Osmosis Plant for Nitrite

SUMMARY: To resolve acute nitrite violations, the City of Westbrook secured a \$5.22 million DWSRF loan, a \$913,000 Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Communities grant, and a \$1.52 million State Affordability Grant to build a new reverse osmosis treatment plant and supply well.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The City of Westbrook, Minnesota, a small community of about 785 residents, twice exceeded the Safe Drinking Water Act maximum contaminant level (MCL) for nitrite in 2022, presenting an acute public health risk known as methemoglobinemia, or blue baby syndrome. An evaluation found the existing treatment approach contributed to these violations, so the city planned a new reverse osmosis water treatment plant to prevent future MCL exceedances and protect public health. The priority was immediate risk reduction for infants and other vulnerable residents while stabilizing water quality for the entire system.

Westbrook secured a \$5.22 million DWSRF loan with \$2.9 million in principal forgiveness, a \$913,000 Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Communities grant, and a \$1.52 million State Affordability Grant to build a new reverse osmosis water treatment plant and a new supply well. Treatment includes aeration, four filter cells, reverse osmosis, and chemical feed systems for sodium permanganate, sodium bisulfate, chlorine, fluoride, caustic soda, antiscalant, and orthophosphate to remove nitrite and improve water quality. The plant also improves operational control and reliability through modern automation, operator training, and preventive maintenance planning, while the new well adds source reliability.

Since the facility came online, nitrite levels have remained consistently below the MCL, addressing previous exceedances and restoring a reliable safe drinking water supply. The combination of reverse osmosis and corrosion control has improved overall water quality, protecting the health of residents, reduced the likelihood of taste and discoloration complaints, and strengthened long term system resilience.



New water treatment plant.



Reverse osmosis filters used to remove contaminants from drinking water.

EXCELLENCE IN INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGNED FOR THE FUTURE

STATE: California

RECIPIENT: City of Antioch

PROJECT: Antioch Brackish Water Desalination Project

SUMMARY: To reduce dependence on purchased water and maintain a reliable drinking water supply during times of drought, the City of Antioch financed a brackish desalination plant with a \$60 million DWSRF construction loan and co-funded with a state grant.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The City of Antioch, California, has a population of around 115,000 people and relies on the San Joaquin River for drinking water, but during drought the river's salt levels rise and degrade raw water quality, causing the city to purchase treated water from Contra Costa Water District. The city needed a cost-effective solution that reduces dependence on the Contra Costa Water District and provides a reliable, resilient water supply for years to come. In 2016, during drought, the city launched a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund planning effort to evaluate a 6 million gallons per day (MGD) brackish desalination treatment system that would enable year-round use of the San Joaquin River and reduce dependence on other districts when salt levels are high. The goal was a reliable, resilient local supply that improves the long-term water security and rate stability for an economically stressed community.

The city secured a \$1 million DWSRF planning loan in 2017 and then a \$60 million DWSRF construction loan in 2021. The construction loan funded replacement of the river intake pump station, construction of the desalination facility, and installation of source water and brine conveyance pipelines, securing a dependable local supply when river salt levels rise. This project's co-funding included a \$10 million California Department of Water Resources Proposition 1 Desalination Construction Grant. The desalination plant now supplies about 40% of daily demand to the city, ensuring reliable local supply during severe drought and high-salinity periods. The plant also reduced reliance on expensive purchases of treated water, improving rate stability for an economically stressed service area. As the Delta's first brackish desalination plant, it provides a replicable model for resilient drinking water supplies during drought and periods of high river salinity across California.



Construction of the desalination plant's reverse osmosis train.



Final reverse osmosis train and booster pump station, used to remove salts and contaminants from drinking water and move treated water through the system.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: Connecticut

RECIPIENT: City of New London (New London Department of Public Utilities)

PROJECT: System-wide Lead Service Lines Replacement Construction – Phase 1A

SUMMARY: The City of New London completed a materials inventory, an LSL replacement plan, and Phase 1A construction to improve public health and meet federal Lead and Copper Rule requirements using a \$6.95 million DWSRF loan. The project used 2022 lead service line replacement funds with \$4.38 million in principal forgiveness and \$1.45 million in state grant-in-aid.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The City of New London, Connecticut, a municipality serving roughly 11,200 people, used DWSRF loans to spur lead service line inventory development and full replacements to meet federal deadlines and protect the health of the community.

The New London Department of Public Utilities (NLDPU) secured a \$6.95 million DWSRF loan with \$4.38 million in principal forgiveness using 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) funding, and \$1.45 million in state grant-in-aid, to conduct a Materials Inventory, Lead Service Line Replacement Plan, and replace lead service lines. These funds covered Phase 1A of the project, which replaced 143 lead service lines, installed 32 new water meters, and completed 3,202 test pits to verify unknown service line materials. This work was essential to meet the October 2024 statutory inventory deadline. Construction was completed by May 2025, and this was the first LSLR project funded by Connecticut Department of Public Health under the DWSRF. This project involved robust community engagement, including town halls and a dedicated website, to build trust and keep residents informed.

Existing lead service pipe being replaced with new copper pipe.

STATE: New Hampshire

RECIPIENT: Towns of Jaffrey and Peterborough

PROJECT: Cold Stone Springs Water Supply Project

SUMMARY: To address chronic water supply deficiencies in the small, disadvantaged towns of Jaffrey and Peterborough, New Hampshire, the Cold Stone Springs project acquired a 528-acre wellfield, built a new treatment plant, installed over 14,000 feet of mains, and created an emergency interconnection. The towns secured \$7 million in DWSRF funding with \$1.22 million in principal forgiveness and over \$17 million from eight additional agencies, securing a reliable long-term water supply.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Residents of the Towns of Jaffrey and Peterborough in southern New Hampshire faced chronic water supply deficiencies that threatened reliability of water delivery to their communities. Identified by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services under the Safe Drinking Water Act as small and disadvantaged, the two communities serve about 8,300 people. In 2019, they agreed to develop and share a joint water source to address the supply deficiencies in both communities.

The towns acquired the 528-acre Cold Stone Springs parcel in Sharon, NH with three permitted wells, built a new water treatment plant in Jaffrey, installed over 14,000 feet of water mains, and created an emergency interconnection to supply either town during long-term outages. The communities secured \$7 million in DWSRF funding (\$3 million to Jaffrey; \$4 million to Peterborough), including \$1.22 million in principal forgiveness, and more than \$17 million in additional funding from eight programs, including Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund grants (Peterborough: \$5.83 million; Jaffrey: \$430,000), the American Rescue Plan Act (\$400,000), Community Development Block Grant (\$500,000), Northern Borders Regional Commission (\$1 million grant), Economic Development Agency (\$2.34 million), and direct contributions from the Town of Jaffrey and a local company with operations located in Jaffrey. Completed in July 2025, the project adds critical redundancy, strengthens system reliability, and secures a resilient, long-term water supply for both towns.



Treatment plant construction.

HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: New Jersey

RECIPIENT: Passaic Valley Water Commission

PROJECT: PVWC Lead Service Line Replacement in Main System

SUMMARY: PVWC replaced 4,722 lead/galvanized service lines identified across Clifton, Passaic, Paterson, and Prospect Park with \$37.2 million in DWSRF financing, including \$27.78 million in principal forgiveness. Replacements were completed ahead of the state 2031 deadline at no cost to owners, supported by multilingual, community-centered outreach

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Passaic Valley Water Commission (PVWC), serving 306,700 residents across Clifton, Passaic, Paterson, and Prospect Park, faced widespread public health risk from lead service lines. Strengthened federal requirements under EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Improvements heightened urgency for proactive replacement to protect public health and ensure compliance. In Phase I, PVWC conducted extensive test pits, confirming 4,722 lead or galvanized service lines, and set a course to replace identified lead service lines well ahead of New Jersey's 2031 deadline.

PVWC secured \$37.2 million in DWSRF funding, including \$27.78 million in principal forgiveness, yielding an estimated \$46.37 million in total savings over 30 years compared to financing independently. Using Phase I data, Phase II construction proceeded to replace 4,722 lead and galvanized service lines from the main to the meter at no cost to property owners who granted access. Multilingual, community-centered outreach, including town halls, neighborhood canvassing with trusted groups, resident ambassadors, and local media, built trust, secured permissions (including in renter-occupied properties), and helped reduce lead exposure across all neighborhoods.

Applying a surface patch after lead service line replacement.

STATE: Delaware

RECIPIENT: Willow Tree LLC

PROJECT: Willow Tree Mobile Home Park (MHP) Water System Upgrades

SUMMARY: The drinking water system in Willow Tree Mobile Home Park in Kent County, Delaware had low water pressure, poor water quality, frequent leaks, and no monitoring or backup power. Willow Tree LLC secured a \$1.97 million DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness to replace the distribution system and added backup power, improving water quality and restoring reliable, resilient service to the people living there.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Willow Tree Mobile Home Park in Kent County, Delaware, is a small community with 58 service connections, served by a community public water system on Kitts Hummock Road. The system was undersized and failing, resulting in inconsistent water pressure and poor water quality, while aging materials caused frequent leaks and service disruptions. With no storage, monitoring, alarms, or emergency power, the community faced elevated risks to public health, water reliability, and emergency response.

The community was identified as disadvantaged by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control under the Safe Drinking Water Act, allowing Willow Tree LLC to secure a \$1.97 million DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness, supplemented by \$10,000 in State Bond Bill/Clean Water Trust funds, to replace a failing distribution system with modern infrastructure. Improvements included looped C900 PVC mains and new valves, services, and blowoffs. System monitoring and an emergency generator were added to improve reliability. The upgrades improved drinking water quality and pressure, reduced leaks and operation and maintenance costs, restored reliability, and increased resilience.

Pipe installation on site.



HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: Pennsylvania

RECIPIENT: State College Borough Authority

PROJECT: Nixon-Kocher Water Treatment Facility

SUMMARY: State College Borough Water Authority in State College, Pennsylvania lacked a reliable backup if its main plant went offline, making the system vulnerable to drought and emerging contaminants. A \$24.95 million DWSRF loan financed the new Nixon-Kocher Water Treatment Facility and well upgrades with advanced treatment, providing full backup, stronger drought resilience, and more reliable service.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

State College Borough Water Authority (SCBWA) in State College, Pennsylvania is home to Penn State University and serves 14,471 people. The well fields met current regulations, but the system faced critical resilience challenges. The system lacked the ability to meet demand and water quality standards if the Woodside Drive Water Filtration Plant went out of service. The system was also vulnerable to prolonged droughts and emerging contaminants.

With a \$24.95 million DWSRF loan, SCBWA built the Nixon-Kocher Water Treatment Facility and upgraded its wells. The project installed membrane filtration, ultraviolet disinfection, granular activated carbon, modern chemical feed systems, energy-efficient variable-frequency drives, and 99.9% decant recycling. These upgrades provide full backup, strengthen drought resilience, and enhance treatment of emerging contaminants while cutting waste and boosting efficiency. The plant is designed to stay in compliance if the Nixon-Kocher wells are later classified as groundwater under the direct influence of surface water (GWUDI). It maintains performance when raw water quality changes and when water table levels fluctuate, as shown by pump tests. As a backup to the Woodside Drive plant, the new facility lets SCBWA shift production and rest wells during dry periods, protecting aquifers and ensuring reliable, compliant service.

Granular activated carbon treatment system used to remove contaminants from drinking water.

STATE: Virginia

RECIPIENT: City of Richmond

PROJECT: City of Richmond-LEAP-Lead Service Line Replacement and Inventory-Phase IV

SUMMARY: The City of Richmond conducted a lead service line inventory and replaced identified lead service lines, directly benefiting more than 110 households, through a \$750,000 DWSRF loan.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Richmond, Virginia, a historic city of about 230,000 people, faces serious public health risks from lead service lines. More than 60% of the 1,956 identified lead service lines to date are concentrated in neighborhoods identified as disadvantaged by the Virginia Department of Health under the Safe Drinking Water Act. To comply with EPA's federal requirements, the city launched the Lead Elimination Assistance Program (LEAP) Phase IV to inventory service line materials and replace identified lead service lines on both public and private property.

The city secured a \$750,000 DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness to conduct a comprehensive inventory and replace lead service lines in the project area. Phase IV used a clear, repeatable approach: block-by-block field verification of service line materials; door-to-door outreach and enrollment; same-project full replacement of both the public and private sides by trained local plumbers and contractor crews; coordinated permits, scheduling, and post-replacement flushing; and real-time data updates to the city's inventory and GIS. Phase IV's approach replaced lead service lines for more than 110 households, protecting an estimated 330 people and building trust in priority neighborhoods. This paved the way for approvals of Phase V (\$5 million) and Phase VI (\$20 million), which will accelerate block-by-block replacements and finalize remaining inventory, positioning Richmond to achieve their goal of a lead-free system.

Lead service line replacement in the City of Richmond.



HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: West Virginia

RECIPIENT: Lubeck Public Service District

PROJECT: New England Ridge Road Waterline Extension

SUMMARY: To address PFAS-contaminated private wells, Lubeck Public Service District extended centralized water service to 35 homes along New England Ridge Road. They installed 13,900 feet of new water mains and related infrastructure to provide a reliable drinking water supply without PFAS contamination, using a \$2.6 million DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Lubeck Public Service District (PSD) in Wood County, West Virginia, serves a rural area where private wells along New England Ridge Road, Pine Run Road, and Champion School Road were compromised by PFAS contamination from adjacent creeks. Twenty of the wells were tested and all contained PFAS, with fourteen testing above 70 parts per trillion (PPT), the federal health advisory level at the time of testing. The community needed a permanent solution to secure safe, reliable potable water.

Lubeck PSD secured a \$2.6 million DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness to extend centralized service to 35 homes in the New England Ridge Road area. The project installed 13,900 linear feet of 6-inch PVC watermain, two fire hydrants, 35 water meters, and other associated components. The extension reduced PFAS exposure and provided a reliable water supply for the affected households.

Water mains and fire hydrants were installed along New England Ridge Road.

STATE: South Carolina

RECIPIENT: Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission (JMWSC) and Town of Batesburg-Leesville

PROJECT: JMWSC Water Supply to Batesburg-Leesville

SUMMARY: Partnering with the Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission that serves nearby Lexington, Batesburg-Leesville used DWSRF funding to build a shared supply from West Columbia's Lake Murray Water Treatment Plant. This project delivered safe drinking water to all customers while resolving PFAS contamination and long-standing capacity concerns. In total, they secured a \$12.54 million DWSRF loan including more \$9 million in principal forgiveness, and \$20 million in American Rescue Plan Act grants.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Batesburg-Leesville, South Carolina, a town identified by the South Carolina Department of Environmental Service (SCDES) as disadvantaged under the Safe Drinking Water Act, faced longstanding capacity and water quality challenges. Under a SCDES Consent Order to address capacity concerns since 2013, the town's previous source tested for high levels of PFOA and PFOS in 2020, suggesting elevated public health risks. The town needed a solution that could satisfy their Corrective Action Plan, address capacity constraints, and reduce exposure to PFOA and PFOS.

Partnering with the Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission (JMWSC), which serves nearby Lexington, the project delivered a shared supply from West Columbia's Lake Murray Water Treatment Plant and major infrastructure upgrades, including approximately 70,000 linear feet of 24-inch water main, two booster pump stations, one elevated tank, fire hydrants, and associated components. Financing combined a \$12.54 million DWSRF loan with more than \$9 million in IJA Emerging Contaminants principal forgiveness, and \$20 million in American Rescue Plan Act grants. All Batesburg-Leesville customers now receive safe drinking water from JMWSC, demonstrating effective system partnership and measurable public health protection.



Inside the elevated tank.

HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: Indiana

RECIPIENT: Citizens Energy Group

PROJECT: Martindale-Brightwood Lead Service Line Replacement-Phase 1

SUMMARY: The Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood in Indianapolis, Indiana received an \$11 million DWSRF IIJA Lead Service Line Replacement loan to replace high-risk lead service lines in this low-income priority area, coordinating with city projects and local partners to reduce costs and disruption and advance citywide elimination.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood in Indianapolis, Indiana is home to roughly 13,000 residents and faces aging distribution infrastructure and elevated public health risks from lead service lines. A risk-based analysis identified the neighborhood as a priority area for replacement due to its low median household income, and a high concentration of lead service lines.

The Citizens Energy Group secured an \$11 million DWSRF 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) loan to replace lead service lines on both public and private property where access is granted. Coordinated replacements with planned city infrastructure projects minimized costs, construction impacts, and community disruption. Local community organizations partnered in outreach, educating residents, facilitating communications, and encouraging participation in the replacement program. Next steps involve expanding the program to additional priority areas identified through a risk-based analysis with the goal of eliminating lead service lines city wide.

Removal of lead service line.

STATE: Texas

RECIPIENT: City of Brady

PROJECT: Water System Improvements

SUMMARY: The City of Brady faced decades of radionuclide exceedances in groundwater and disinfection byproducts in surface water. With \$15.53 million in DWSRF funding and co-funding from Texas's Economically Distressed Areas Program (EDAP), the city built a new groundwater radionuclide treatment plant, expanded storage, and upgraded transmission mains, restoring compliance, reducing health risks, and delivering reliable, affordable services for a largely economically stressed community.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The City of Brady serves a population of 5,500, roughly half of whom are living below the poverty level; their drinking water relies on groundwater from the Hickory Aquifer and a surface water plant. The groundwater exceeded EPA's maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for radionuclides while the surface water plant received MCL violations for disinfection byproducts. The city operated under an EPA Agreed Order and a 2015 state public health nuisance declaration.

To achieve lasting compliance and reliability, the city secured \$15.53 million in DWSRF funding with approximately \$5 million in principal forgiveness, and \$15.18 million from the State's Economically Distressed Areas Programs (EDAP). EDAP funded the planning and design, while the DWSRF loan funded the construction of new radionuclide reduction treatment plant, transmission mains, elevated and ground storage, and surface water pretreatment improvements, adding iron removal and upgrading microfiltration and reverse osmosis. The integrated upgrades stabilized treatment performance and water pressure, lowered disinfection byproducts, and reduced radionuclides to meet MCLs. With ongoing operations and maintenance, the system now delivers safer, more reliable, and more resilient service for city's residents.

Radionuclide reduction system at water treatment plant.



HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: Oklahoma

RECIPIENT: Welch Public Works Authority

PROJECT: Ion Exchange Water Treatment Plant

SUMMARY: Welch Public Works Authority built an ion exchange water treatment plant that removes radium to below federal limits, restoring compliance and improving drinking water quality at minimal cost to residents using a \$450,000 DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness and approximately \$500,000 in co-funding.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Welch Public Works Authority serves the small, rural town of Welch, Oklahoma of about 800 residents, where economic hardship and aging infrastructure pose serious challenges. The community's groundwater contained elevated radium, a radioactive contaminant that increases cancer risk and can trigger regulatory violations under the Safe Drinking Water Act. As a community identified by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality under the Safe Drinking Water Act as severely disadvantaged, Welch needed an affordable, long-term solution to protect public health and ensure compliance.

Welch secured a \$450,000 DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness, along with \$234,000 in co-funding from Communities Unlimited, \$139,000 in local funds, and a \$127,000 Rural Economic Action Plan grant to construct an ion exchange water treatment plant designed specifically to remove radium. The new facility consistently reduces radium to below the federal maximum contaminant level, restoring compliance and improving drinking water quality at a minimal cost to residents.

Ion exchange columns for reducing radium contamination.

STATE: New Mexico

RECIPIENT: Enchanted Forest Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association

PROJECT: Enchanted Forest MDWCA Water Distribution Replacement Project

SUMMARY: To replace its failing distribution system and restore reliable service, Enchanted Forest MDWCA installed 14,400 feet of new mains and components, boosting flow, stabilizing water pressure, and eliminating brown-water events. This was possible through a \$750,000 DWSRF loan with \$562,500 in principal forgiveness and an additional \$3.55 million in co-funding.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Enchanted Forest Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association (MDWCA), serving about 260 residents in the mountains of Lincoln County, New Mexico, lacked adequate water pressure and left the system at risk of contamination from backflow. The system, originally built to serve only two homes, expanded in an ad hoc manner. As additional wells were connected, storage tanks were built and connected to the distribution system, so they fill when demand is low and feed it when demand is high. The result was a water system incapable of providing acceptable water pressure to all customers and a configuration that stressed the wells. In February 2022, a well failure left the community without water for six months, highlighting the urgent need to replace failing infrastructure.

MDWCA secured a \$750,000 DWSRF loan with \$562,500 in principal forgiveness, and \$3.55 million in co-funding (about \$1.1 million from New Mexico's Capital Outlay Bureau, \$2.4 million Water Trust Board loan/grant, \$50,000 Local Government Planning Fund grant) to replace the entire distribution system. The project installed 14,400 feet of new mains along with gate valves, fire hydrants, and six combination air/vacuum valves. Outcomes included increased service flow from roughly 5 gallons per minute (gpm) to about 30 gpm, stabilizing water pressure, enabling proper flushing, and preventing the air-related brown water events previously observed. All 260 residents now receive more reliable, higher-quality drinking water.

Hydraulic hammer to break apart rock for water main installation.



HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: Louisiana

RECIPIENT: Henderson-Nina Water System, Inc.

PROJECT: Water System Improvements

SUMMARY: Henderson-Nina Water System addressed water quality and reliability issues by building new water mains, consolidating small systems, installing meters, and connecting nearly 1,000 customers to a modern centralized supply using over \$24 million in funding, including \$4 million in DWSRF financing with 100% principal forgiveness.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Henderson-Nina Water System, serving the Butte LaRose area of Louisiana, faced widespread reliability and water quality issues across private wells and small single-source systems, including documented arsenic contamination. The system also lacked enough backup well supply and treatment capacity to keep water flowing if a well or treatment unit failed. Consolidation and distribution upgrades were needed to transition new customers from failing sources to a modern, compliant system, while ensuring service to existing customers.

The utility secured over \$24 million in combined funding, including a \$4 million DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness, \$12.57 million from the Louisiana Water Sector Program, and \$8.51 million from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. Building on a prior loan that addressed insufficient well supply and treatment capacity in the event of a well or component failure, this project constructed new water mains, consolidated struggling single-source systems, and installed meters to further improve water quality and strengthen system redundancy. As a result, the project connected nearly 1,000 customers from seven small single-source systems to Henderson-Nina's centralized system, improving water quality, reliability, and compliance.

Water main installation along Herman Dupuis Road.

STATE: Arkansas

RECIPIENT: The City of Fifty-Six

PROJECT: Fifty-Six Installation of Water Mains

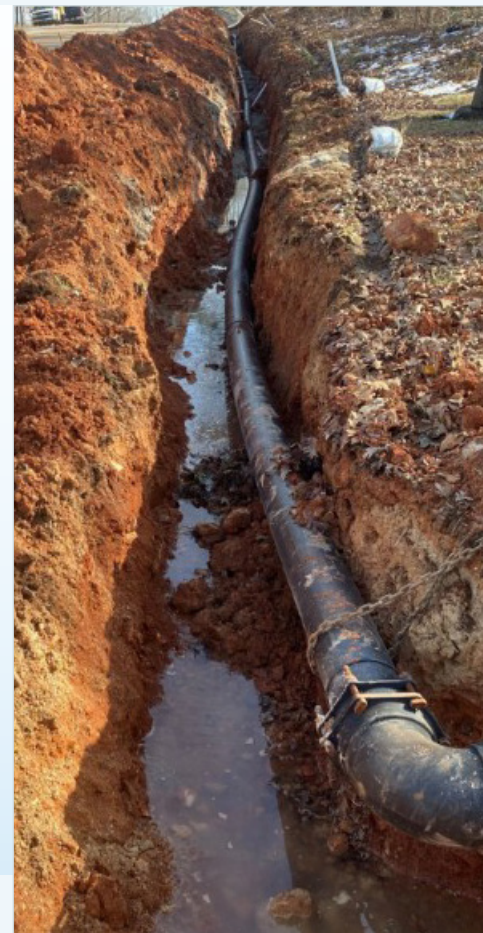
SUMMARY: To address a severe well output decline that left over 240 customers without water, the City of Fifty-Six, Arkansas, constructed 4.7 miles of 8-inch main to Mountain View and added a new booster pump station, delivering a stable regional water supply financed by a \$2.64 million DWSRF loan with \$396,000 in principal forgiveness.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The City of Fifty-Six, Arkansas, saw its water supply well's output drop from about 30 gallons per minute (gpm) to 15 gpm, leaving more than 240 customers without water and prompting National Guard support. As a temporary solution, Fifty-Six connected above-ground to the Mountain View Public Water System, as well as supplemented from Big Flat's water system through an existing interconnection. However, during peak demand, Big Flat could not reliably supplement Fifty-Six while meeting its own needs, underscoring the need for a permanent regional solution.

To restore reliable service, Fifty-Six secured a \$2.64 million DWSRF loan with \$396,000 in principal forgiveness to permanently connect to Mountain View PWS via approximately 4.7 miles of 8-inch water main along Arkansas Highway 14. The project added a new booster pumping station on Hidden Ridge Road and upgraded two pump stations in Fifty-Six, providing capacity to fill a second water tank. This project also added pumping capacity for Fifty-Six to send water to Big Flat through the existing interconnection when needed. As a result, roughly 600 consumers in Fifty-Six and Big Flat now have a stable source of drinking water, and the communities benefit from a regionalized system that meets changing demand.

Water main installation along Arkansas Highway 14.



HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: Missouri

RECIPIENT: Public Water Supply District No. 1 of Pike County

PROJECT: Connection to City of Silex

SUMMARY: To resolve long-standing radionuclide exceedances, the City of Silex partnered with Public Water Supply District No. 1 of Pike County to build a permanent regional interconnection, financed by a \$387,900 DWSRF loan with 100% principal forgiveness and substantial city co-funding.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The City of Silex, a small community of about 187 residents, faced long-standing maximum contaminant level (MCL) violations for radionuclides and operated under Administrative Orders on Consent from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (2018) and EPA (2023). While the city provided bottled water, it needed a permanent solution to retire its impacted wells and return to compliance.

In partnership with Public Water Supply District No. 1 of Pike County (PWSD #1), the city constructed a regional interconnection to purchase treated water wholesale. Pike County PWSD #1 secured \$387,900 in DWSRF funding with 100% principal forgiveness to extend a transmission main toward the city. The co-funding from a \$5 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant, a \$591,500 state grant, and a \$15,000 local match provided by the city allowed for the extension of a transmission main toward Pike County PWSD #1 to meet in the middle, along with other various needed improvements to the city's system. The project restored compliance with radionuclide standards, ended the need for bottled water service, improved water pressure, and secured a reliable, long-term drinking water supply for the community.

Valve pit installation, which houses valves to control water flow in the pipes.

STATE: Alaska

RECIPIENT: City and Borough of Wrangell

PROJECT: Water Treatment Plant Improvements

SUMMARY: The City and Borough of Wrangell constructed a new water treatment plant with multimedia filtration and associated system upgrades, improving water quality and regulatory compliance for roughly 2,100 residents and critical facilities, using \$9.6 million in DWSRF funding, including \$500,000 in principal forgiveness and \$23.3 million in co-funding.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Wrangell is a remote community identified as disadvantaged by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation; it serves about 2,100 residents and critical facilities. Its ozonation and slow sand filtration plant struggled to meet water quality standards. Residual organics clogged filters multiple times per week, disrupted biological treatment, and contributed to seven Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) Maximum Contaminant Level (MCLs) exceedances. Turbidity, disinfection targets, pH control, and removal of color, iron, and manganese were inconsistent.

Wrangell secured \$9.6 million in DWSRF funding, along with co-funding from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, a State legislative grant, American Rescue Plan Act funds, and local sources to build a new dissolved air filtration system with multimedia filtration. The project also added improved waste handling, a new on-site chlorine system, upgraded power with a backup generator, full automation with central control, and new pumps. The treatment plant has reported no HAA5 exceedances since startup, restoring compliance and reliability for the community.



Aerial view during construction of Wrangell water treatment plant.

HONORABLE MENTIONS



STATE: Washington

RECIPIENT: Boistfort Valley Water Company

PROJECT: Chehalis River Surface Water Intake, Transmission Main, and Adna Water Treatment Plant Relocation

SUMMARY: The Boistfort Valley Water Company relocated its surface water intake downstream, constructed a new water treatment plant on higher ground outside the floodplain, relocated the membrane filters to the new plant, converted the old plant into a pump station, and installed a new transmission main. Using \$6.6 million in DWSRF funding, the project addressed water-right requirements and restored reliable, compliant service for about 2,800 residents.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Following a Washington Department of Health Bilateral Compliance Agreement, issued because the water treatment plant for the community of Adna was in the Chehalis River floodplain and lacked a permanent water right, the Boistfort Valley Water Company secured \$6.6 million in DWSRF loans with nearly \$3 million in principal forgiveness to address the issues. The company used the funds to relocate the surface water intake downstream to avoid impacts to senior water right holders and to build a new water treatment plant located uphill out of the floodplain. The funds also allowed the company to relocate their membrane filtration system, convert the old plant to a pump station, and install a new transmission main.

The project restored peak-demand capacity and positioned the community for future upgrades at their secondary Wildwood treatment plant. It also restored reliable, compliant service for about 2,800 residents and strengthened affordability through principal forgiveness and waived fees. These investments set up future phases to replace aging assets, add treatment capacity, and improve resilience across the system.

New water treatment plant and backwash tank.

