

ATTAINS Web Services: How to Get an API Key

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Purpose: Users and applications will soon need a free API Key to access the public ATTAINS Web Services. This document explains how to obtain an API key and how to test your API key with ATTAINS web services.

Audience: This document is intended for individuals who want to call the ATTAINS web services directly. It also applies to application owners who have built applications on top of ATTAINS web services.

These changes do not affect: 1) data partners who access ATTAINS through the ATTAINS User Interface or Exchange Network, 2) users who access ATTAINS data through Expert Query, or 3) users who access ATTAINS web services indirectly through applications like How's My Waterway.

Upcoming Changes to ATTAINS Web Services

ATTAINS will be updating the public ATTAINS Web Services to require the use of a free Application Programming Interface (API) Key from Data.gov. This will also include changing the endpoint of the ATTAINS web services. These changes are necessary as part of security and performance improvements for ATTAINS.

Timing

These changes are planned during May 2026. Once the changes are implemented, the old web service endpoints will stop working. In addition, calls to the new web service endpoints will require a valid API key.

Users may obtain an API key now and start adapting their applications in anticipation of the upcoming changes. Once ATTAINS fully transitions to requiring API keys, the old ATTAINS web service endpoints will stop working. Instructions for obtaining and testing an API key are provided below.

How to Register for an API Key

ATTAINS is utilizing free API keys issued from Data.gov. Individuals or applications may request an API key for ATTAINS from Data.gov's [API Key Sign Up page](#). It typically takes a few minutes to sign up and receive your free API key.

How to Test Your API Key

You can begin testing your web service calls and your API key now using the format below. If the API key is missing or invalid, a message will indicate the issue and explain where to get a valid API key. If the API key is valid, the web service call will return results.

1. Substitute the new base URL for the ATTAINS web service endpoint before the web service name.
 - a. The old base URL for the ATTAINS web service endpoint was:
<https://attains.epa.gov/attains-public/api/>
 - b. The new base URL for the ATTAINS web service endpoint is: <https://api.epa.gov/attains/>
2. For example, to call the Domains service and request the list of allowed values for Parameter Status, without adding an API key, this is the web service call:
 - a. Old URL: <https://attains.epa.gov/attains-public/api/domains?domainName=ParameterStatus>
 - b. New URL: <https://api.epa.gov/attains/domains?domainName=ParameterStatus>
3. Next, add your API key to the web service call using the query parameter "api_key=". (Make sure you use an underscore in the query parameter name; do not use a space.)

- a. If there are no other query parameters for the service call or this is the first query parameter, then use the question mark prefix: “?api_key=”
 - b. If there are other query parameters for the service call and this is not the first query parameter, then use the ampersand prefix: “&api_key=”
4. Next, add your API key to the web service call after the “api_key=” query parameter. In the examples below, the “DEMO_KEY” is a valid API key, but it has a very low usage limit. The demo key is intended for illustrative purposes only. Most web service users will need to register for their own API key. **Substitute your API key for the text “DEMO_KEY”, below.** (Note: Do not include the quotation marks around your API key value in your web service call; the quotation marks are for visual reference only.)
- a. Domains web service call for Parameter Status:
 - i. Old web service call:
<https://attains.epa.gov/attains-public/api/domains?domainName=ParameterStatus>
 - ii. New web service call:
https://api.epa.gov/attains/domains?domainName=ParameterStatus&api_key=DEMO_KEY
 - b. Assessment Units web service call with a request to return the count of Assessment Units:
 - i. Old web service call:
<https://attains.epa.gov/attains-public/api/assessmentUnits?stateCode=DC&returnCountOnly=Y>
 - ii. New web service call:
https://api.epa.gov/attains/assessmentUnits?stateCode=DC&returnCountOnly=Y&api_key=DEMO_KEY
5. If you have an application and would prefer alternatives to passing the API key as part of a URL Query Parameter (i.e., an alternative to Steps 3 and 4 above), then Data.Gov lists two other options for passing the API key as part of their Developer Manual: <https://api.data.gov/docs/developer-manual/>