



Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative

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Households in many communities in the United States live without the basics—including safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater systems. Inadequate and failing water infrastructure poses direct health risks to families and stymies economic growth and community vitality.

Starting as a pilot in 2022, and expanding to assist up to 150 communities in 2024, the [Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative](#) provides no-cost technical assistance to communities with failing septic systems or without existing wastewater infrastructure. Through this Real Water Technical Assistance ([RealWaterTA](#)) initiative, EPA helps small, rural, and Tribal communities identify and pursue federal funding opportunities to address their wastewater needs, ensure compliance, uphold water quality standards, and protect public health. This initiative seeks to change the odds for rural communities who are burdened by the lack of clean and safe wastewater services.

Technical Assistance Provided

Communities with inadequate, aging, non-existent, or failing wastewater infrastructure are eligible for assistance through this initiative. Recipients of technical assistance access solutions-oriented guidance that focuses on their community's needs. EPA also helps the community apply for funding through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program, including Tribal and territory programs funded through CWSRF appropriations, and other funding sources to address their needs.

Examples of technical assistance provided through the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative:

- Conduct an assessment of the community's wastewater needs.
- Evaluate the feasibility of wastewater solutions, including performing a rate study.
- Identify funding options, such as grants and financing.
- Help with completing the preliminary engineering and paperwork requirements for funding applications.
- Assist community/county with establishing an ordinance for wastewater management.

Participating communities are matched with an EPA contractor that has expertise specific to the community's infrastructure challenges. Because every community is different and unique, the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative meets communities where they are – providing community-centered, feasible solution options.

How to Request Assistance

Request assistance by completing the RealWaterTA request form at: <https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/forms/real-water-technical-assistance-request-form>. Communities – including homeowners and utilities – and all states, Tribes, and territories can submit a request. Communities are selected on a rolling basis; there is no deadline to apply. For questions, email SepticHelp@epa.gov.