



EPA's Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative - Pilot and Expansion Update

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Disclosures

The comments and opinions made in this presentation are those of the presenter and not of NOWRA or the Mega-Conference sponsors.

Scenarios and practices identified in this talk may not be applicable to every community; technical assistance is an individualized practice.

Wastewater Challenges in Rural America

- Small, rural communities often struggle to provide adequate sanitation services to residents.
- An estimated 2.2 million people in the U.S. lack basic running water and indoor plumbing in their homes.
- The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) presents a historic opportunity to invest in communities and address wastewater infrastructure needs.
- The BIL provides \$11.7 billion through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF).



Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative

- Provides no-cost technical assistance (TA) to communities with failing septic systems or without wastewater infrastructure.
- In 2022, EPA piloted the program in 11 places across the southern regions of the country that demonstrated significant need.

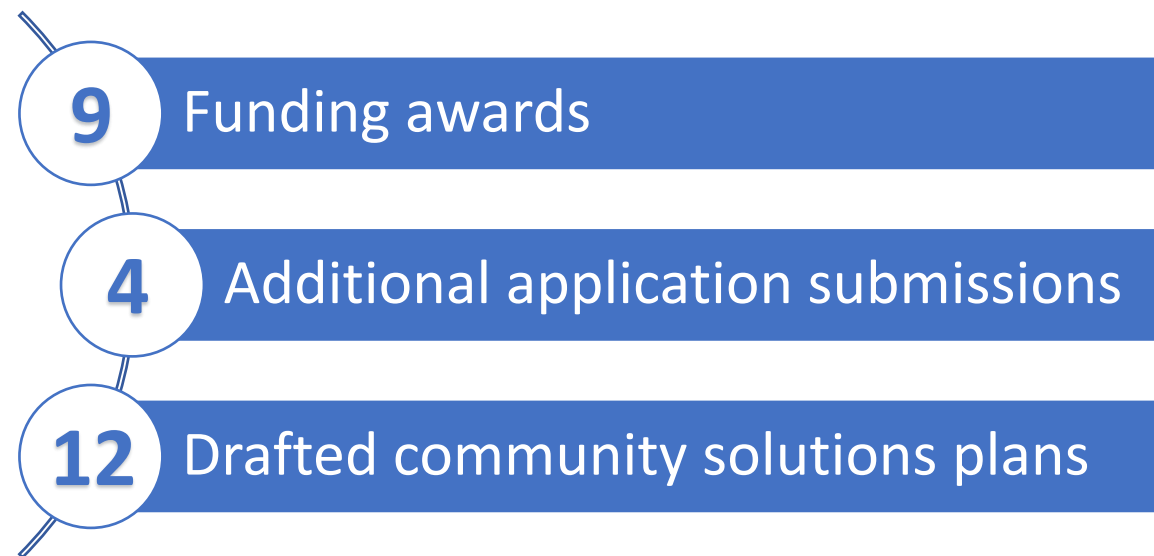
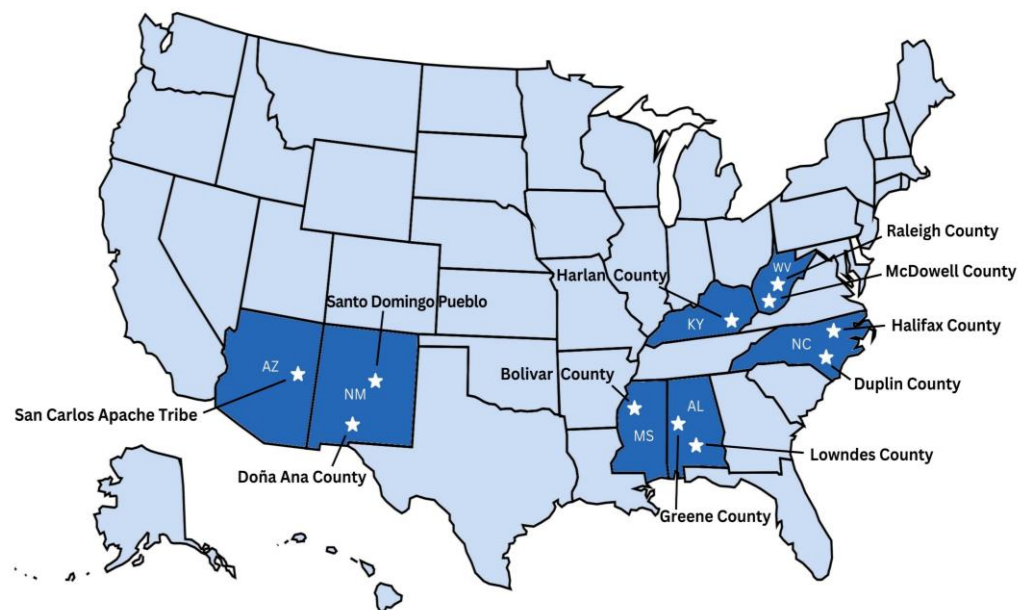


Expanding to 150 Communities

- In February 2024, EPA announced the expansion of the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative to 150 additional communities.
- The expansion will increase EPA's ability to help communities address inadequate, non-existent or failing wastewater infrastructure.
- Recipients of technical assistance will access solutions-oriented guidance that focuses on community's wastewater needs.



11 Pilot Communities: Progress So Far

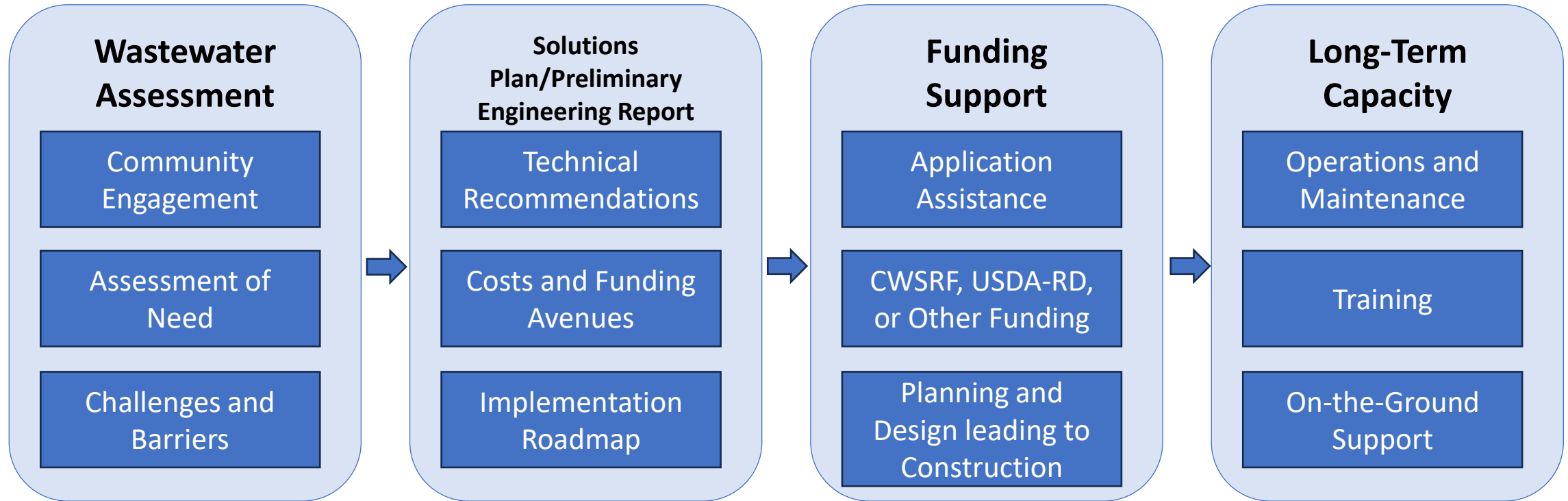


Projects continue, with funding applications in development and all solutions plans being finalized and posted to EPA's [Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap webpage](#) in the early spring.

Pilot Profile: Harlan County, KY



Assistance Provided in Expansion



Who Can Qualify?

- Do septic systems back-up into homes or cause sewage to pool in yards?
- Does the town struggle to provide adequate sanitation services to their residents?
- Does the community struggle to rebuild wastewater and septic systems damaged by natural disasters?

If any of these conditions apply, then communities may be eligible through this program.



Community Selection Criteria

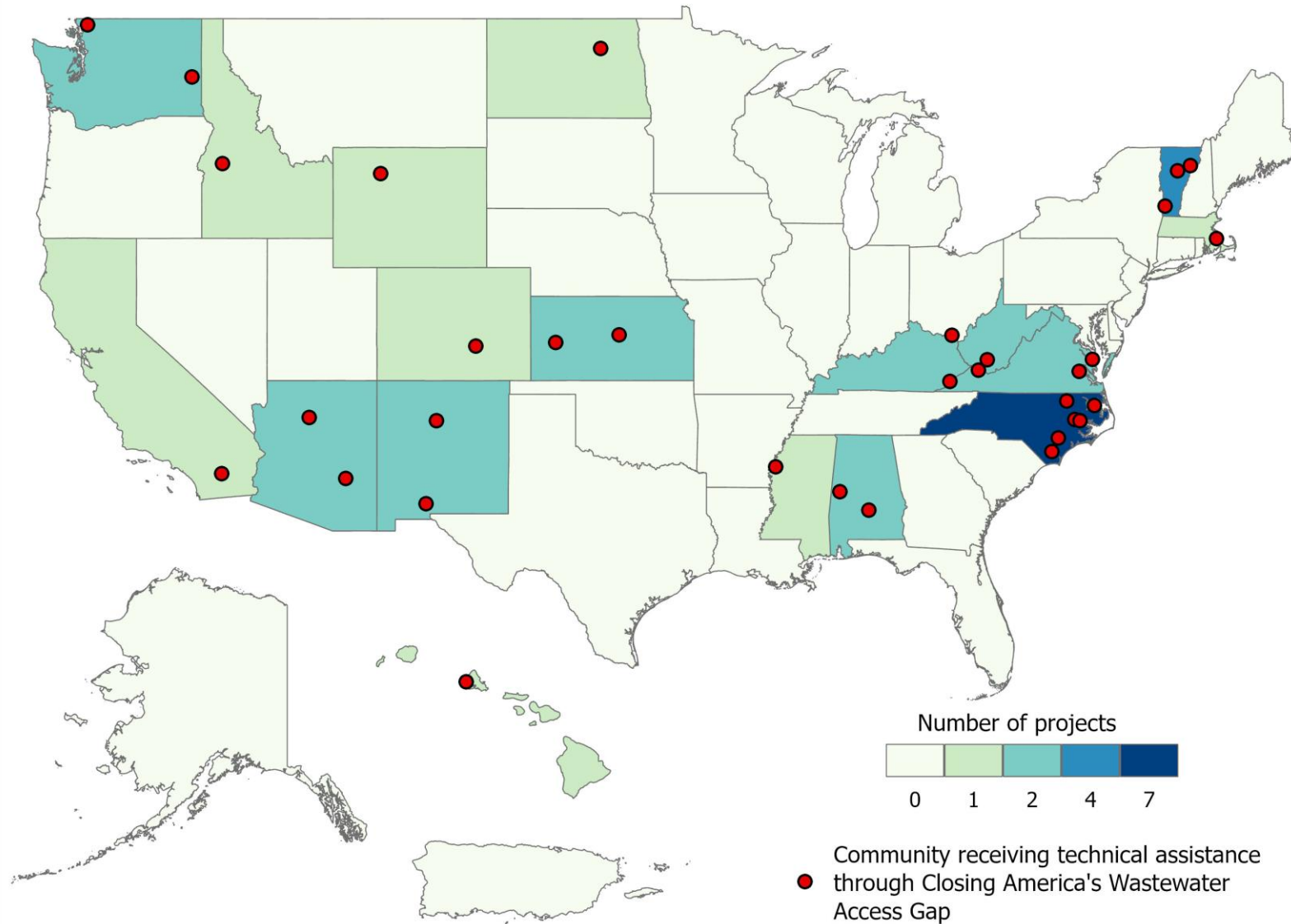
- Community Need
- Failing Wastewater Infrastructure
- Openness to receive TA



Community Identification and Selection

- EPA is collaborating closely with the EPA Regions, Tribes, states (and their municipalities), and territories to identify communities that would be a good fit for this technical assistance.
- EPA is also conducting local outreach to community organizations, nonprofits, etc.
- EPA is prioritizing needs in disadvantaged communities and communities that would otherwise be unable to address their wastewater infrastructure needs.
- EPA welcomes community suggestions from septic providers and decentralized industry professionals.

Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative



Expansion Community Spotlight: Malden, WA



- 80% of homes and structures destroyed in September 2020 wildfire.
- All lots are served by individual onsite systems permitted by Whitman County.
- As town and residents rebuild, Whitman County is requiring the town to install a centralized sewer collection and treatment system.
- Many existing onsite systems do not meet current code and were installed before onsite regulations were implemented.
- Lot sizes are also small and cannot meet current setback requirements.
- Town received \$5.4 million EPA Community Grant but an estimated \$7 million to \$8 million needed to construct new centralized system.

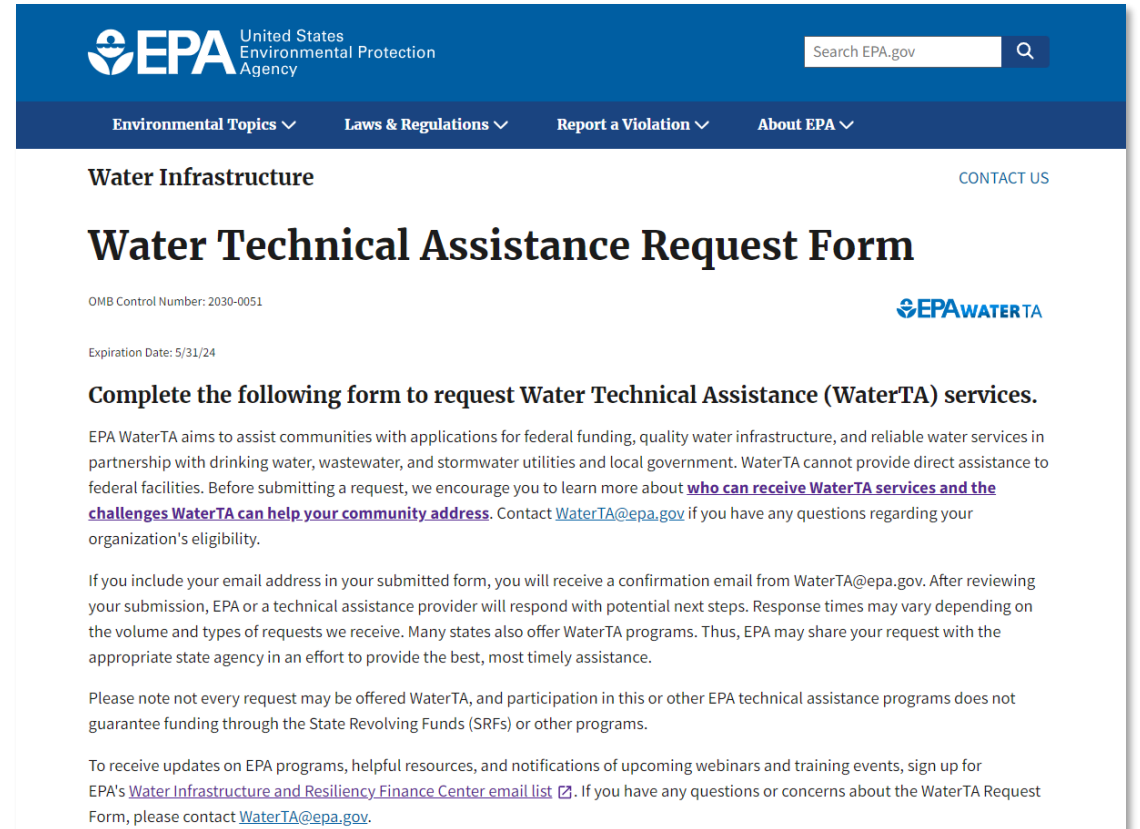
Expansion Community Spotlight: Pueblo County, CO



- St. Charles Mesa is an agricultural area that has a mix of small to large lots on septic systems and a high groundwater table.
 - Farm workers generally live on smaller lots.
 - Evaluating where it makes sense to extend sewer or repair and replace septic systems onsite.
- Baxter Street area is a small enclave area with small lots near an industrial park without municipal water or sewer.
 - Evaluating options between the city and county to extend the city sewer system.
 - Working with County Health Department to do outreach to septic system owners.

How Communities Can Request Support


- Technical assistance can be requested through the WaterTA request form.
- Communities – including homeowners and utilities – and all states, Tribes, and territories can submit the request.
- Communities are selected on a rolling basis; there is no deadline to apply.
- For questions, email SepticHelp@epa.gov.



The screenshot shows the EPA website header with the logo and navigation menu. The main content area is titled "Water Infrastructure" and "Water Technical Assistance Request Form". It includes the OMB Control Number (2030-0051), the EPA WaterTA logo, and the expiration date (5/31/24). The text explains that the form is used to request WaterTA services, which aim to assist communities with federal funding, quality water infrastructure, and reliable water services. It also provides contact information for questions and a link to the request form.

Water Infrastructure CONTACT US

Water Technical Assistance Request Form

OMB Control Number: 2030-0051 

Expiration Date: 5/31/24

Complete the following form to request Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) services.

EPA WaterTA aims to assist communities with applications for federal funding, quality water infrastructure, and reliable water services in partnership with drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities and local government. WaterTA cannot provide direct assistance to federal facilities. Before submitting a request, we encourage you to learn more about [who can receive WaterTA services and the challenges WaterTA can help your community address](#). Contact WaterTA@epa.gov if you have any questions regarding your organization's eligibility.

If you include your email address in your submitted form, you will receive a confirmation email from WaterTA@epa.gov. After reviewing your submission, EPA or a technical assistance provider will respond with potential next steps. Response times may vary depending on the volume and types of requests we receive. Many states also offer WaterTA programs. Thus, EPA may share your request with the appropriate state agency in an effort to provide the best, most timely assistance.

Please note not every request may be offered WaterTA, and participation in this or other EPA technical assistance programs does not guarantee funding through the State Revolving Funds (SRFs) or other programs.

To receive updates on EPA programs, helpful resources, and notifications of upcoming webinars and training events, sign up for EPA's [Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center email list](#). If you have any questions or concerns about the WaterTA Request Form, please contact WaterTA@epa.gov.

www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/forms/water-technical-assistance-request-form

Questions?

Contact info:

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To send community suggestions for Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap, please submit a request through the WaterTA webform or email a description to SepticHelp@epa.gov.