

# EPA Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA): Helping Communities Access Funding

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September 2024



# Agenda

- What is WaterTA?
- Initiative Highlights:
  - Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap
  - Engineering Support
- How to request assistance
- Q&A



# Speakers

## **Travis Ostrom**

Environmental Engineer, EPA Office of Wastewater Management

## **Tyler Barber**

Environmental Engineer, EPA Office of Ground Water & Drinking Water

## **Morgan Brown**

Senior Technical Assistance Specialist, EPA Office of Wastewater Management

# Housekeeping



You will be muted throughout the webinar



Please use the Zoom Q&A function to submit your questions  
Questions will be answered at the end of the presentation



We will be sharing relevant links via the chat throughout the presentation



# Many Communities Face Water Infrastructure Challenges

# EPA supports infrastructure improvements via:

## Technical Assistance (TA)

EPA WaterTA Programs  
TA providers (funded by EPA grants)  
External TA Program Partnerships

&

## Funding

Clean Water and Drinking Water State  
Revolving Funds (SRF)  
Water Infrastructure Finance and  
Innovation Act (WIFIA)  
Water Infrastructure Improvements for  
the Nation (WIIN) Act Grants  
Drinking Water Infrastructure Grants  
Tribal Set-Aside (DWIG-TSA)  
Clean Water Indian Set Aside (CWISA)

# Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

- **\$50 billion** investment in water infrastructure – the largest ever!
- Large amount of funding will be grants/forgivable loans for **disadvantaged communities**



# Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: Water Goals

- **Target resources** to disadvantaged and underserved communities
- **Make rapid progress** on lead service line replacement and lead-free water for all
- **Tackle** forever chemicals
- **Support** resilience (including climate resilience & cybersecurity)
- **Create** good jobs



# Additional Technical Assistance (TA) Programs

- In addition to assistance provided by EPA Office of Water, multiple TA programs are available from:
  - [EPA Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights \(OEJECR\)](#)
  - [EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management \(OLEM\)](#)
  - [EPA Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations \(OCIR\)](#)
  - [EPA Office of Research and Development \(ORD\)](#)
  - The [US Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) and the [Indian Health Service \(IHS\)](#) also offer robust TA programs.

# WaterTA supports communities to identify water challenges and implement solutions.

 Aging or Lack of Infrastructure

 Water Quality Concerns


 Technical, Managerial, & Financial Capacity

 Climate Resiliency


 Cybersecurity

Project Planning & Development 

Community Engagement 

Capacity Building & Training 

Engineering Reports & Studies 

Funding Identification & Application Support 

# WaterTA projects address drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater challenges, including:



Sewer backups or sewage in yards or homes



Water quality concerns



Unreliable or lack of water service



Neighborhood flooding or stormwater backups



Identifying and removing lead pipes



Water system consolidation



Treatment plant upgrades



Cybersecurity



Climate adaptation and resiliency



Workforce development



Regulatory Compliance



Source water protection



Emerging contaminants



Applying for federal funding

...and more!

# EPA WaterTA Approach

The EPA's WaterTA approach is **community-centered**. In an effort to build trust and foster relationships, many of the WaterTA initiatives:

- Proactively identify and approach under-resourced communities.
- Meet communities where they are and adjust to their needs.



# Who can receive EPA WaterTA Services?

- Local governments/communities
- Drinking water utilities/systems
- Wastewater utilities/systems
- Stormwater utilities/systems
- States, Tribes, territories
- Non-governmental organizations
- Questions? Contact [WaterTA@epa.gov](mailto:WaterTA@epa.gov)

# Technical Assistance (TA) Providers

EPA works with national and regional providers that are experts in water and supporting communities.





# EPA WATER TA

*Environmental Finance Centers*

*Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap*

*Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerators Pilot*

*Direct Technical Assistance*

*Clean Water Rural, Small & Tribal Assistance*

*Get the Lead Out (GLO) Initiative*

*Engineering Support*

*Community Solutions Team Pilot*

*Training and Technical Assistance for Small Systems*

*Cybersecurity Technical Assistance*

*Creating Resilient Water Utilities*

*and more!*



# Initiative Highlights: Engineering Support & Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap



# WaterTA Engineering Support

- Fills a need identified by states – addresses a frequent funding barrier
- Enhances WaterTA Programs with no-cost, supplemental engineering resources
- Helps communities identify needs, conduct preliminary project planning, and produce the engineering documents for federal water infrastructure funding

## Goals for providing engineering support:

- Project is eligible for SRF or tribal set-aside funding, and support will lead to a federal funding application
- Priority given to disadvantaged communities that have not historically accessed federal funding

# WaterTA Engineering Support

## Services include:

- Preliminary engineering analyses such as project planning, asset management, needs assessments, alternatives analyses, and design
- Development of preliminary engineering documents, including Preliminary Engineering Reports, often required for funding applications
- Environmental documentation
- Quick turnaround preliminary cost estimates for pre-applications (e.g., to help get projects listed on State Intended Use Plans) or applications
- Other engineering services on an as-needed basis

# Accessing WaterTA Engineering Support Services

- **Who can access engineering support?**
  - **Communities, including Tribes** seeking engineering support services to complete federal funding applications
  - **WaterTA providers** requiring engineering support to fill WaterTA gaps and complete engineering analyses to support federal funding applications
    - TA providers under EPA grants
    - State TA providers
- Communities are accepted on a rolling basis, there is no deadline to apply
- Support may be stand alone or coordinated with other WaterTA services/service providers to provide holistic community support

# Engaging Local Engineering Firms

- Participate as key stakeholder and key advisor for community

OR

- EPA's prime WaterTA Engineering Support Contractors may subcontract with local contractors for the benefit of the community
  - At the discretion of the Prime Engineering Support Contractors
  - Firms must be willing to execute a subcontract with EPA's Prime Contractor,
  - Subcontractor will need to meet all applicable EPA federal subcontracting requirements
  - Preliminary instructions and requirements can be provided in advance for consideration

# Big Valley Band of Pomo Indian Tribe, Lake County, California: Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements

## Community:

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Facility  
(serving ~400)

## Challenges:

- Structural integrity of the packaged wastewater treatment plant
- Treatment facilities lacking influent screening and waste activated sludge wasting capabilities
- Low quality effluent

## WaterTA support:

- Structural evaluation of existing treatment facility
- Environmental review
- Preliminary Engineering Report development



# Maine Manufactured Home Communities

## Drinking Water System Improvements

### Communities:

- Two mobile home cooperative communities, each with >80% of the households under 80% of the Area Median Income.

### Challenges:

- Both systems are on Maine's SRF FY24 Priority List for various improvements to their water systems
- Volunteer boards with limited time to pursue funding

### WaterTA Support:

- New England Environmental Finance Center and partner Cooperative Development Institute working collaboratively to help secure ME DWSRF funding
- Comprehensive PER needed for SRF application and to inform the structuring of the project
- The communities will be part of an application for new CDBG infrastructure improvement funds



# Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative

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



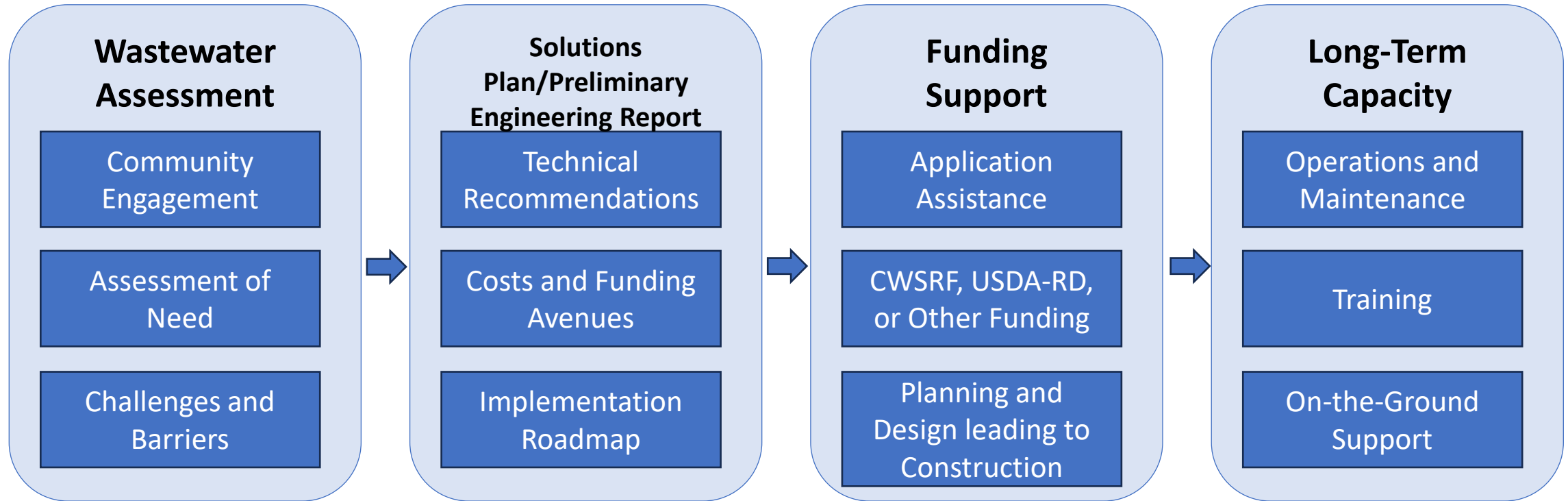
# Expanding to 150 Communities

- In February 2024, EPA announced the expansion of its successful Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Initiative to serve 150 additional communities.
- The expansion increases 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.





# Assistance Provided



# Pilot Profile: San Carlos Apache Tribe, Arizona

EPA has outlined a Wastewater Treatment Improvement Plan, which compiles recommendations for the onsite systems, central sewer system, wastewater management, education, and water and wastewater governance.



Water Infrastructure

CONTACT US

# Local Infrastructure Investment Stories



<https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/local-infrastructure-investment-stories>

EPA Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) Community Story: Akron, M... Share

Watch on YouTube

**Akron, MI**

*Funding: This is a WaterTA community that is actively pursuing funding.*

Located in rural Michigan, the Village of Akron's 450 residents have begrudgingly accepted that they can't buy or wear white. This is because the village's aging and rusty water pipes yield brown water that stains clothes and forces many residents to purchase bottled water instead. As part of EPA's water technical assistance (WaterTA) efforts, this community is working hand-in-hand with water infrastructure and financing experts to pinpoint solutions that work for them.

# Additional Project Examples

- Drinking/wastewater treatment plant and pipe upgrades or building new water infrastructure
- Connecting households or small drinking water/wastewater systems to larger systems
- Stormwater, flood control, and green infrastructure projects
- Water conservation projects
- Addressing nonpoint source pollution of waterbodies
- **Many more possibilities...**



# WaterTA Connection

*There are multiple pathways for communities to access WaterTA:*

- Recommended by a State or EPA Region
- Directly contacted/referred by a WaterTA provider
- Referred by stakeholder/partner organization/utility
- Community submits a WaterTA Request Form

# Request WaterTA at [www.epa.gov/WaterTA](http://www.epa.gov/WaterTA)



## What is WaterTA?

The EPA's free Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) services may include:

- Identifying lead pipes for removal
- Enhancing resilience against cybersecurity threats
- Identifying climate adaptation strategies
- Providing resources for workforce development
- Addressing stormwater challenges
- Complying with the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Acts

WaterTA can also assist interested entities in applying for federal funding solutions a reality. The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) presents an unprecedented address water infrastructure needs by providing \$50 billion in new funding investment in water in the history of our nation. WaterTA can assist communities for this funding to address their most pressing needs.

Learn more about the many [EPA WaterTA Initiatives](#) available or view presentations.



## Help for Your Community

If your community is facing challenges such as updating aging infrastructure, building resilient or even removing lead service lines, we encourage more about [who can receive WaterTA services](#) via a webform request via the following button:

[Click Here to Request Water Technical Assistance for Your Community](#)



## WaterTA Community Stories

Explore [examples of WaterTA in action](#).



## Resources for WaterTA Providers

## Water Technical Assistance Request Form

OMB Control Number: 2030-0051



Expiration Date: 9/30/2024

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](#). Contact [WaterTA@epa.gov](mailto:WaterTA@epa.gov) if you have any questions regarding your organization's eligibility.

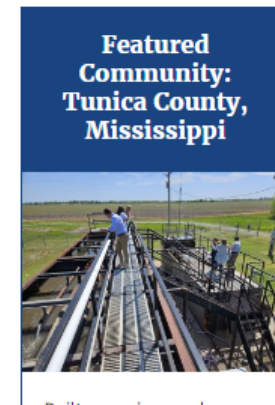
If you include your email address in your submitted form, you will receive a confirmation email from [WaterTA@epa.gov](mailto:WaterTA@epa.gov). After reviewing your submission, the EPA or a technical assistance provider will respond with potential next steps. Response times may vary depending on the volume and types of requests we receive. Many states also offer WaterTA services. Thus, the 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 initiatives does not guarantee funding through the State Revolving Funds (SRFs) or other initiatives.

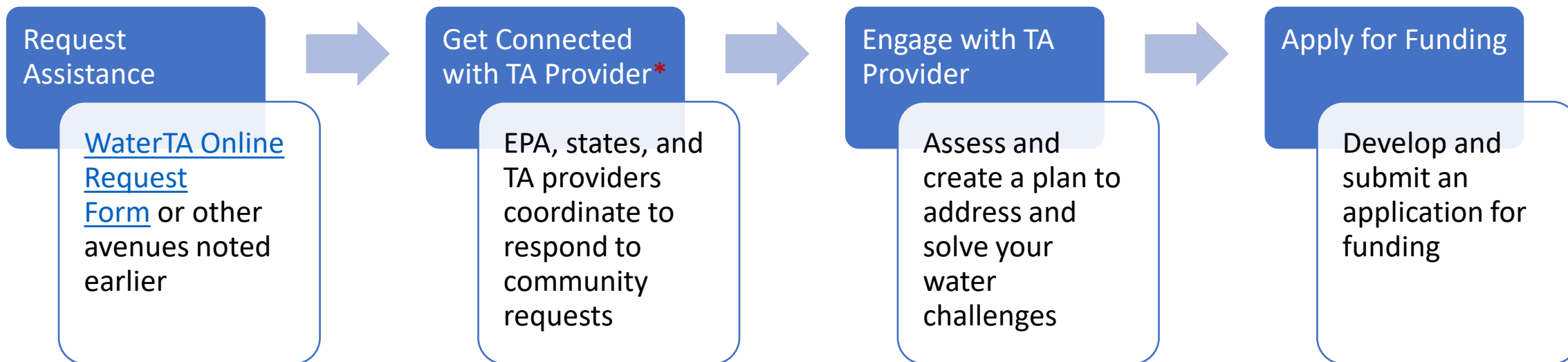
For more information, [return to the WaterTA main page](#). To receive updates on EPA initiatives, helpful resources, and notifications of upcoming webinars and training events, sign up for the EPA's [Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center email list](#). If you have any questions or concerns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

First name

Last name

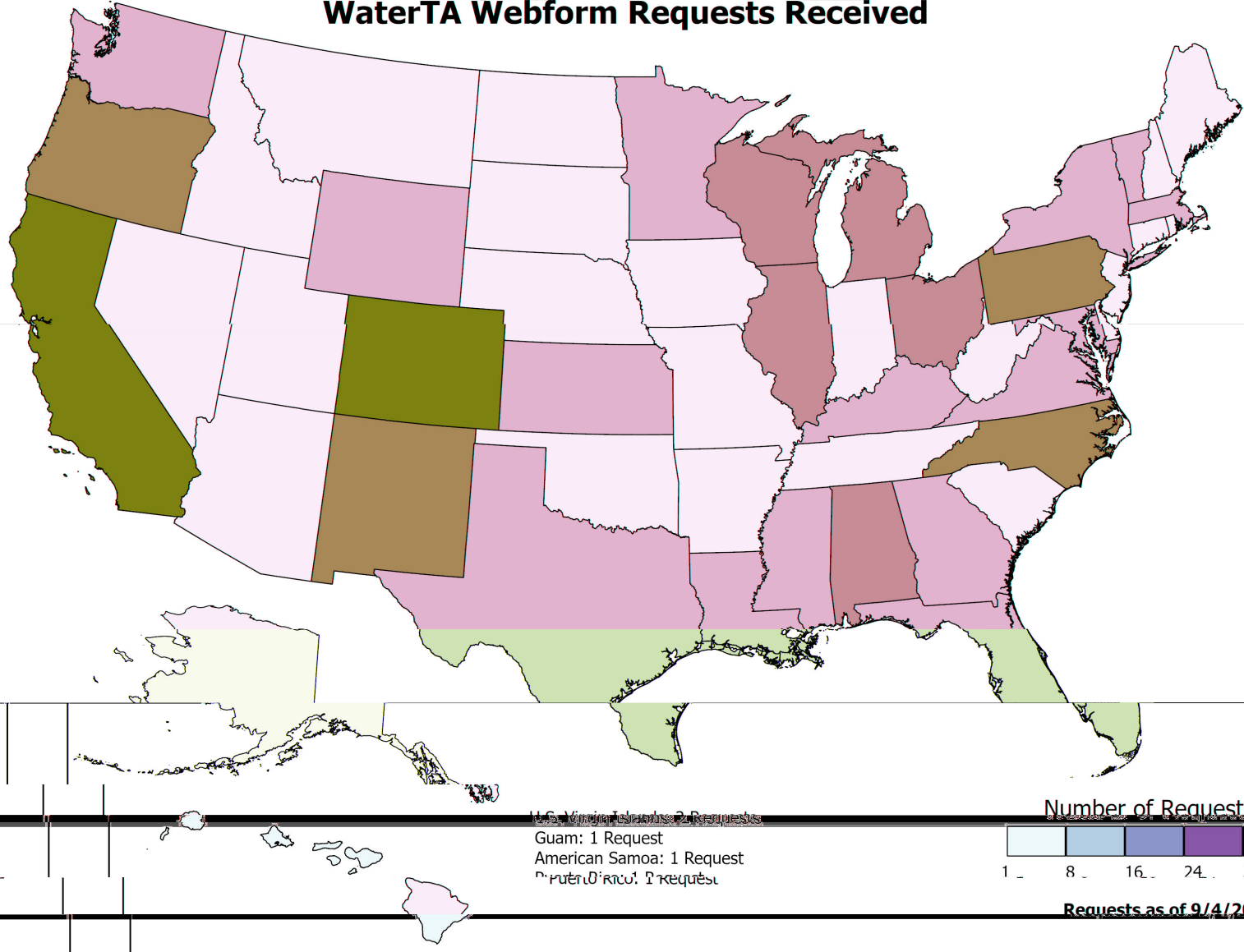


# What Happens Next?



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# WaterTA Webform Requests Received



As of September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024...

over 328 requests connected to WaterTA Providers



# Want to learn more about WaterTA?

- Email your questions to [WaterTA@epa.gov](mailto:WaterTA@epa.gov)
- Visit [www.epa.gov/waterta](http://www.epa.gov/waterta) for more information
- Visit <https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/forms/water-technical-assistance-request-form> to submit a request for WaterTA

# Questions?



**Please use the Zoom Q&A function to submit your questions. If you prefer to remain anonymous, please check the box before submitting your question.**

Learn more or request assistance at  
[www.epa.gov/WaterTA](http://www.epa.gov/WaterTA)

