



Building Capacity in Small and Rural Communities to Plan and Fund Water Infrastructure Improvements

Thursday, November 6, 2025



About Us

The **Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN)** is a university- and non-profit-based organization creating innovative solutions to the difficult how-to-pay issues of environmental protection and water infrastructure.

The EFCN aims to assist public and private sectors through **training, direct professional assistance, production of durable resources, and innovative policy ideas.**





Training and Technical Assistance to Improve Water Quality and Enable Small Public Water Systems to Provide Safe Drinking Water (Area 1 & Area 2)



The use of brand names and/or any mention or listing of specific commercial products or services herein is solely for informational purposes and does not imply endorsement by USEPA or our partners, nor discrimination against similar brands, products or services not mentioned.



Training and Technical Assistance to
Improve Water Quality and Enable Small
Public Water Systems to Provide Safe
Drinking Water (Area 1 & Area 2)



**Smart Management for
Small Water Systems**

EFCN Smart Management for Small Water Systems Program

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Project Leadership



WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY

HUGO WALL SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Environmental Finance Center

Wichita State University Environmental
Finance Center (WSU EFC)



SOUTHWEST
ENVIRONMENTAL
FINANCE CENTER

Southwest Environmental Finance
Center (SWEFC) - LEAD



Syracuse University
College of Engineering
& Computer Science

Environmental Finance Center

Syracuse University Environmental
Finance Center (SU-EFC)

Small Systems – Drinking Water

Training and Technical Assistance to Improve Water Quality and Enable **Small Public Water Systems to Provide Safe Drinking Water**

Community and non-community water systems serving a population of less than 10,000 persons

Covering all 50 states and 5 U.S. territories

Small Systems – Wastewater

Training and Technical Assistance for **Small Publicly-Owned Wastewater Systems and Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Systems** to Help Improve Water Quality and Sustainable Operations

Small POTWs (<1 MGD treated), onsite, decentralized systems

Covering all 50 states and 5 U.S. territories



WHAT ABOUT **STORMWATER**?

Municipal DPWs, Sewer Authorities, and other small system operators who need training and support with:

- *Understanding increasingly stringent discharge limits and innovative techniques to reduce discharges*
- *Planning, funding, or implementing Green Infrastructure or stormwater-related projects*

Also includes communities served by **septic systems**, as well as regional entities exploring green infrastructure to support and complement **decentralized water strategies**

What We Offer

From the Environmental Finance Center Network

Overview



State Trainings



National
Webinars



Technical
Assistance



Tools &
Resources



Blogs



Educational
Videos



Podcasts



Register for a Training

Take your professional development to the next level by finding specific small water systems training near you or register for an upcoming or pre-recorded webinar.



Get Help

We offer free services to water and wastewater systems, local governments, and others who seek technical, managerial, and financial solutions to environmental infrastructure challenges.



Access Our Resources

From podcasts and blogs to rates dashboards and tools, our small water systems resources inspire creative solutions to complex environmental challenges in your utility or community.

The screenshot shows the EFCN website's 'Upcoming Trainings and Events' page. The header includes the EFCN logo and navigation links: 'About Us', 'Training & Events', 'Resources', 'Our Initiatives', 'Contact', and a 'Get Help' button. The main heading is 'Upcoming Trainings and Events'. Below this, there's a section for 'See Description of Our Types of Events' with 'Virtual' and 'In-Person' options. A 'Stay up to date on webinar offerings' section includes a text input for 'Email' and a 'Subscribe' button. Search filters include 'Search', 'Location', 'Select Date Range', 'Choose Topic', and 'Type of Event'. A featured event is listed: 'Virtual Office Hours | Ask Me Anything: SRF Technical Assistance & Open Discussion' on '01 OCT' (with '17 NOV' also visible), dated '10-1-2025 - 11-17-2025', and marked as a 'Virtual Event'.



Visit: efcnetwork.org/training-events



STATE TRAININGS

- Content is **state-specific**
- Pre-approved for operator **Training Contact Hours** when applicable
- Can be **virtual** or **in-person**
- Training topics are selected by state agencies and are intended to strengthen small system TMF capacity



NATIONAL WEBINARS

- 1-hour webcast to a **national audience**
- Attendees receive a Certificate of Attendance (**no TCHs offered**)
- Wide range of drinking water and wastewater related topics, selected by the instructor or requested by past attendees



Register for a Training

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The screenshot shows the EFCN website home page. The header includes the EFCN logo and a navigation menu with links for 'About Us', 'Training & Events', 'Resources', 'Our Initiatives', 'Contact', and a 'Get Help' button. The main content area is titled 'How Can EFCN Assist Your System or Community?' and includes a paragraph about the range of services. Below this, there are three expandable sections: 'Funding & Financial Management' (which is expanded and shows a list of services), 'Asset & Utility Management', and 'Regulatory Compliance & Reporting'.

How Can EFCN Assist Your System or Community?

We offer a full range of services that are available at no-cost to eligible communities and utilities across all US states and territories. Please know that when you request assistance us, your information will be confidential and used solely for follow-up. [Here's how we can help:](#)

Funding & Financial Management

- Funding application services
- Accessing infrastructure funding
- Assessing your system's financial position
- Affordability and/or customer assistance programs
- Rates and fiscal planning
- Capital improvement planning and financing
- Fund management
- Effective budgeting

Asset & Utility Management

Regulatory Compliance & Reporting

The screenshot shows the 'Technical Assistance Request Form' page on the EFCN website. The header is identical to the home page. The main content area has a blue background with the EFCN logo and the title 'Technical Assistance Request Form'. It includes a paragraph about the no-cost assistance and a list of service areas. Below this, there is a section for a full list of services with a 'click here' link. At the bottom, there is a form with a 'Name' field and a 'Request Assistance' button.

Request assistance now or contact us for more information.

Technical Assistance Request Form

The EFCN offers no cost assistance to drinking water systems serving 10,000 or fewer people and wastewater systems that treat 1 million gallons per day or less. Areas of assistance we can provide include:

- Funding & Financial Management
- Asset & Utility Management
- Regulatory Compliance
- Public Engagement & Communication
- Workforce Development & Leadership
- Resilience Planning & System Collaboration
- Technical Support (math, I/I, chlorine disinfection, etc.)

For a full list of services, [click here](#).

To request assistance, please fill out the form below. You will be asked a few questions to help us understand your system and what kind of assistance you need.

Name *

Request Assistance



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Access Our Resources

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Tools & Publications

Read or view a report, assess your financial or managerial performance with a tool or checklist, or take your analysis to the next level with an interactive rates dashboard.

[Browse Tools & Publications](#)



Multimedia Library

Seeking inspiration? Our podcasts, blogs, and video content offer fresh new perspectives on environmental infrastructure.

[View Multimedia Library](#)



Funding Tables

We work with state and federal agencies to make sure that current funding opportunities are consolidated in one place.

[View Funding Tables](#)

[Browse Tools & Publications](#)

[View Multimedia Library](#)

[View Funding Tables](#)

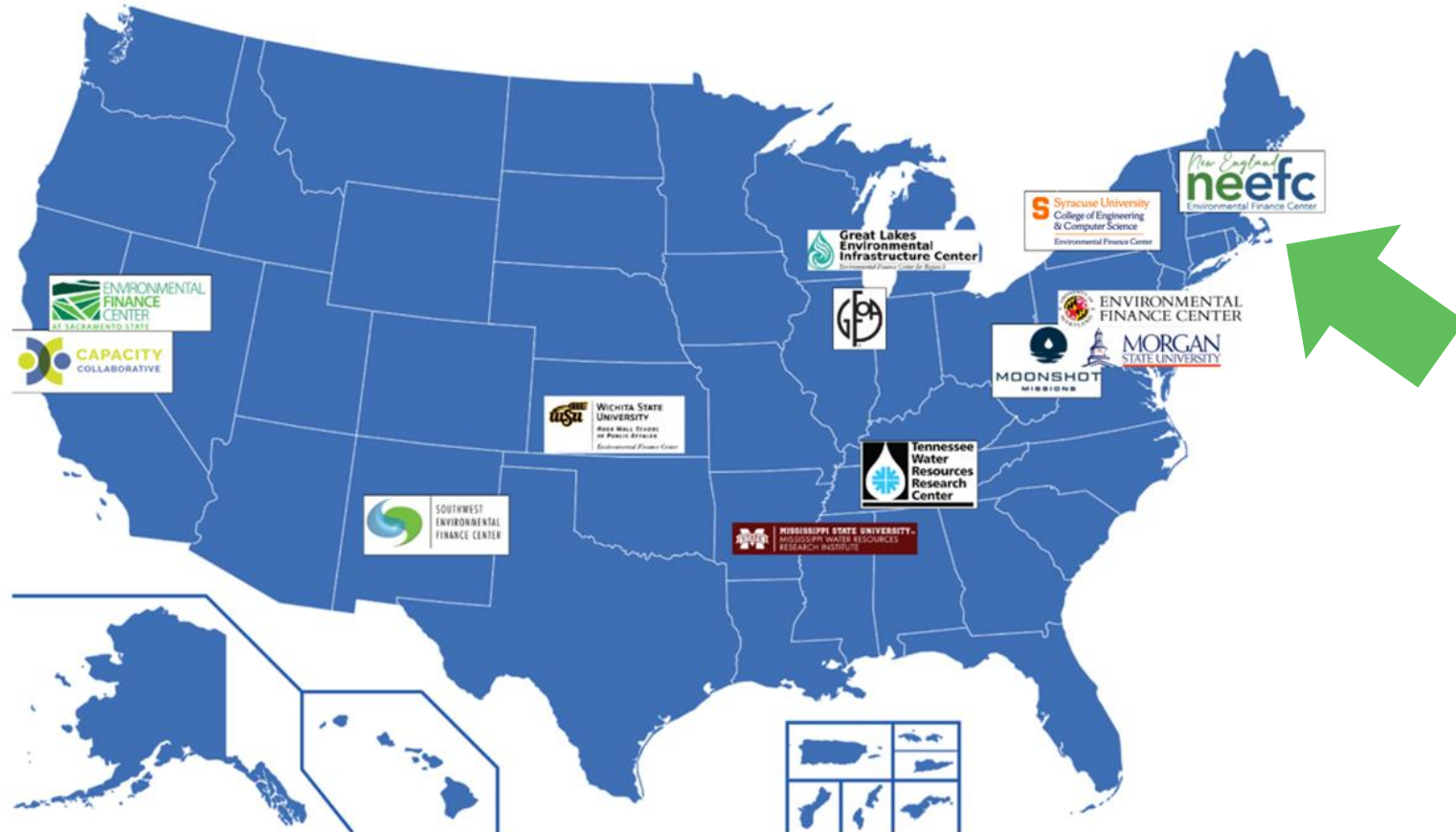
Technical Assistance Services

From the Environmental Finance Center Network

FREE Support for Small Systems Nationwide

Who is eligible for EFCN services?

- **Small drinking water systems** serving 10,000 people or fewer
- **Small wastewater systems** with an average daily wastewater flow of less than 1 million gallons per day
- **Decentralized / septic systems**



EFCN Partners

FREE Support for Small Systems Nationwide

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→ Decentralized / septic
systems

New England
neefc
Environmental Finance Center

neefc.org

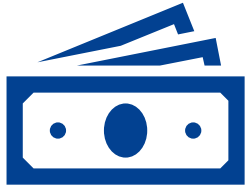
SNEP

NETWORK

snepnetwork.org

EFCN Partners

Tackle Your TMF Challenges: TA Services



Funding & Financial
Management



Asset & Utility
Management



Regulatory Compliance &
Reporting



Public Engagement &
Partnerships



Workforce Development &
Leadership



Other
Technical Support



Recent TA Project



- **Community Partner:** Borough of Hanover, PA
- **TA Lead:** University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center
- Helped develop and submit a PA DEP Growing Greener 2025 funding application to develop a comprehensive water management plan (One Water) that combines planning and management of drinking, waste, and **stormwater**
- Submitted May 2025 – award pending



PA Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Services Agency Directory Your Government ▾ Visit PA ↗ News ↗

Services > Growing Greener Plus Grant Program

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Apply for a Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Plus Grant

Apply Now ↗

Grant Applicant Video Tutorials ↗



TA Success Story!

- **Community Partner:** Halstad, MN
- **Population:** 551
- **TA Lead:** Great Lakes Environmental Infrastructure Center (GLEIC) at MTU
- Halstad identified the need to fund a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) to advance wastewater upgrades
- To help move the project forward, GLEIC recommended they apply for a USDA Rural Development SEARCH grant to fund the PER



**Great Lakes
Environmental
Infrastructure Center**

Environmental Finance Center for Region 5





TA Success Story!



Rural Development
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Together, America Prospers

Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households Grants

What does this program do?

This program helps small, financially-distressed rural communities pay for predevelopment feasibility studies, design, and technical assistance for proposed water and waste disposal projects.

What is an eligible area?

Eligible service areas must be rural, considered financially distressed, and:

- Be located in cities, towns, or unincorporated areas with populations of 2,500 or fewer, according to the most recent U.S. Census data
- Have median household incomes either below the poverty line - or less than 80 percent of the statewide, nonmetropolitan median household income - using 2006 - 2010 American Community Survey data.

How can funds be used?

- Builds or relocates public or private buildings, roads, bridges, fences, or utilities, or makes other improvements necessary for the successful operation or protection of facilities

How do we get started?

- Applications are accepted year-round through your local USDA Rural Development office. A list is available at this link: <https://go.usa.gov/xtpEe>.
- Program resources such as guidance, forms, certifications, and so on, are available at this link: <https://go.usa.gov/xzBQD>.



Great
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Environmenta



TA Success Story!

Community Partner: Halstad, MN

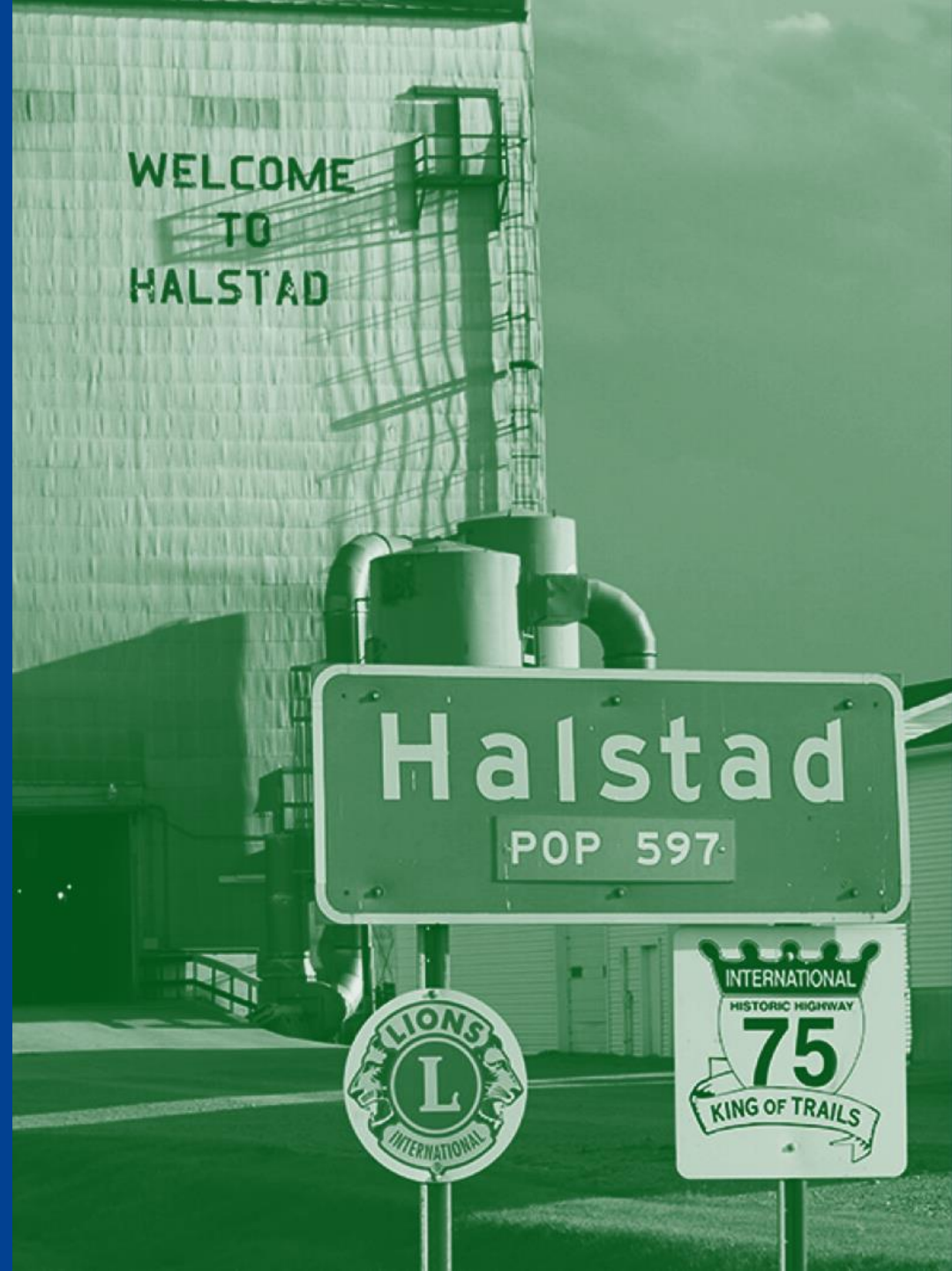
Support provided by the GLEIC:

- Connected Halstad with their USDA RD representative and assisted with RDAPPLY access
- Advised them on procuring an engineering firm
- Completed the USDA RD SEARCH application on Halstad's behalf in July 2024, and helped gather required financial information and city council-adopted policies



**Great Lakes
Environmental
Infrastructure Center**

Environmental Finance Center for Region 5





TA Success Story!

Community Partner: Halstad, MN

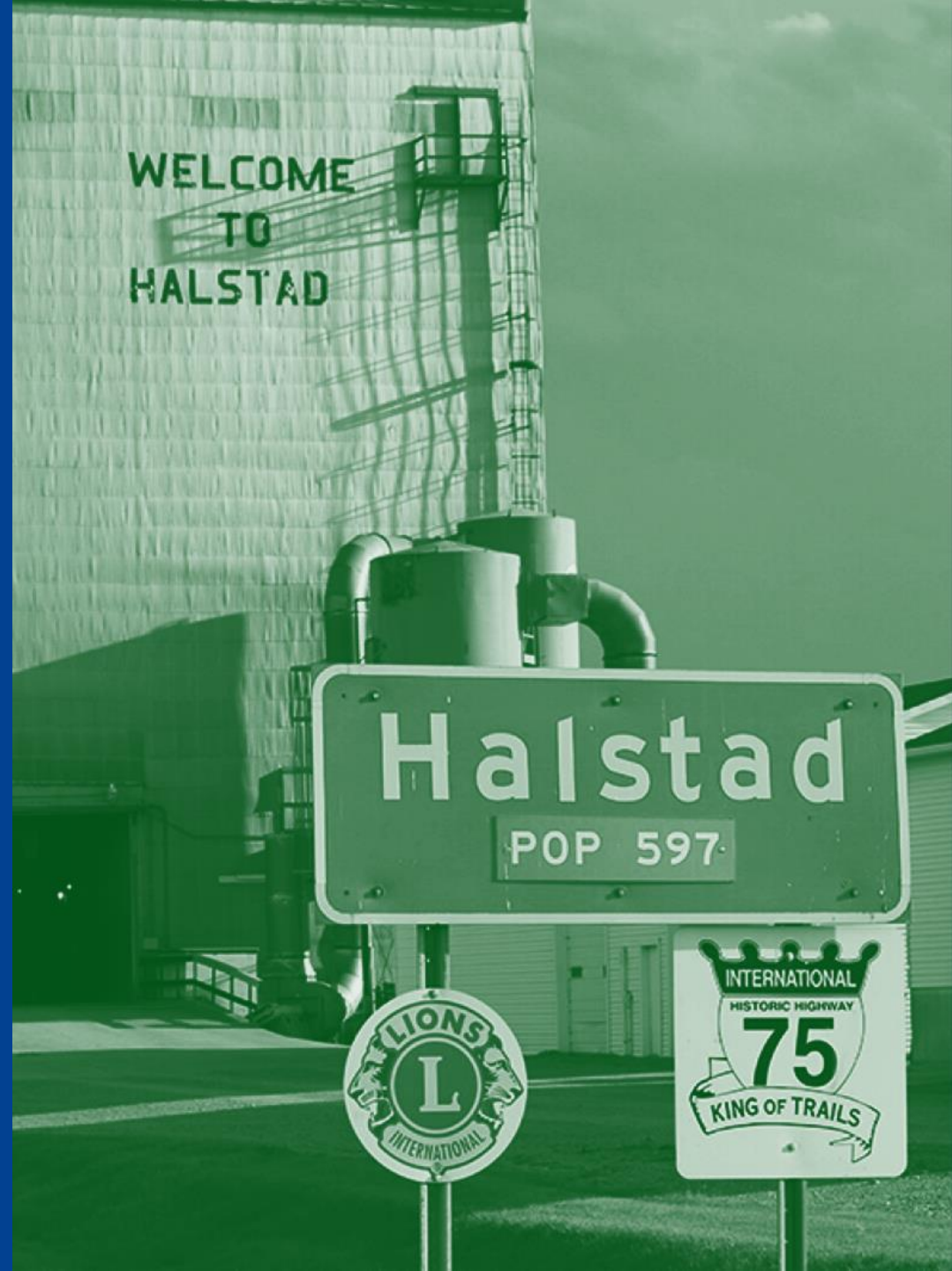
OUTCOME:

- By November 2024, Halstad was awarded **\$30,000** through the USDA RD SEARCH grant, allowing them to proceed with their Preliminary Engineering Report.
- This funding is a key step in helping the community plan for necessary wastewater system improvements.



**Great Lakes
Environmental
Infrastructure Center**

Environmental Finance Center for Region 5



efcnetwork.org



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[Get Help](#)



Environmental Finance Center Network

Building Capacity | Innovative Resources | Practical Assistance



Get Help from the EFCN Today!



SCAN ME
to access our
Technical
Assistance
Request Form



Or visit: efcnetwork.org/get-help



Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Grant (EC-SDC)

Funds provided to states by USEPA – administered in
Massachusetts by MassDEP

Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Grant



What is it?

- A **MassDEP** administered [grant](#) for Public Water Suppliers (PWS) with projects that address emerging contaminants in drinking water (including PFAS)
- Supports planning, design, construction, testing, and **source water protection** activities that reduce or prevent EC contamination at the drinking water source
- Funded by US EPA

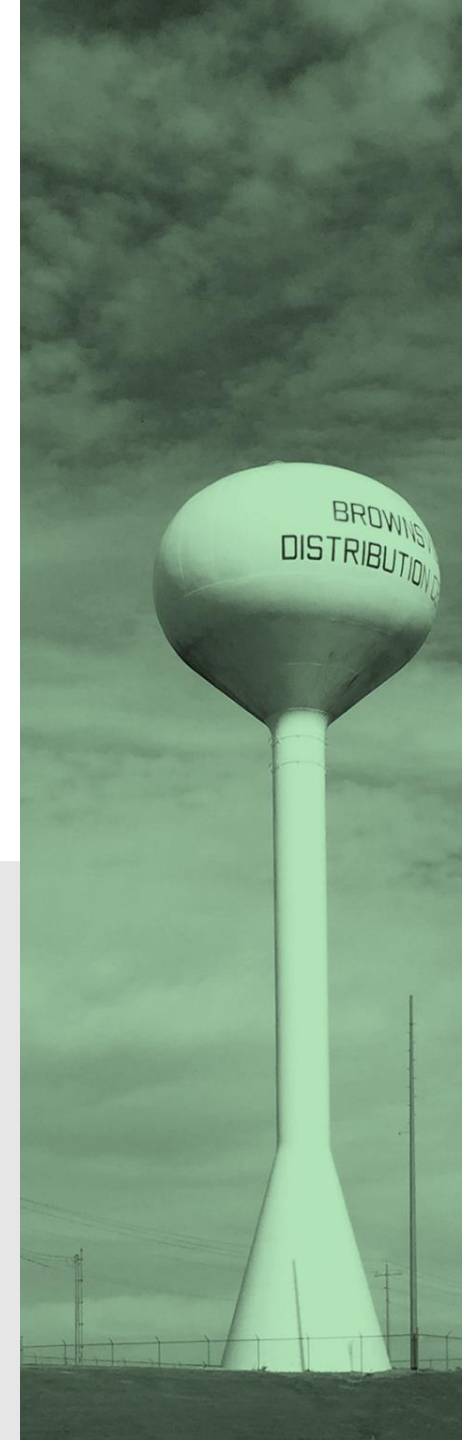
EC-SDC Grant – Who is Eligible

- Community PWS (public or private) and non-profit non community systems serving under 10,000 or located in a disadvantaged community (defined by the [Clean Water Trust](#))



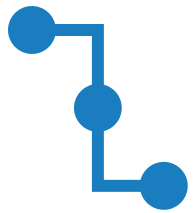
MASSACHUSETTS
CLEAN WATER TRUST

Not sure if your
community is
considered
disadvantaged?
SCAN ME!



EC-SDC Grant – Who is Eligible

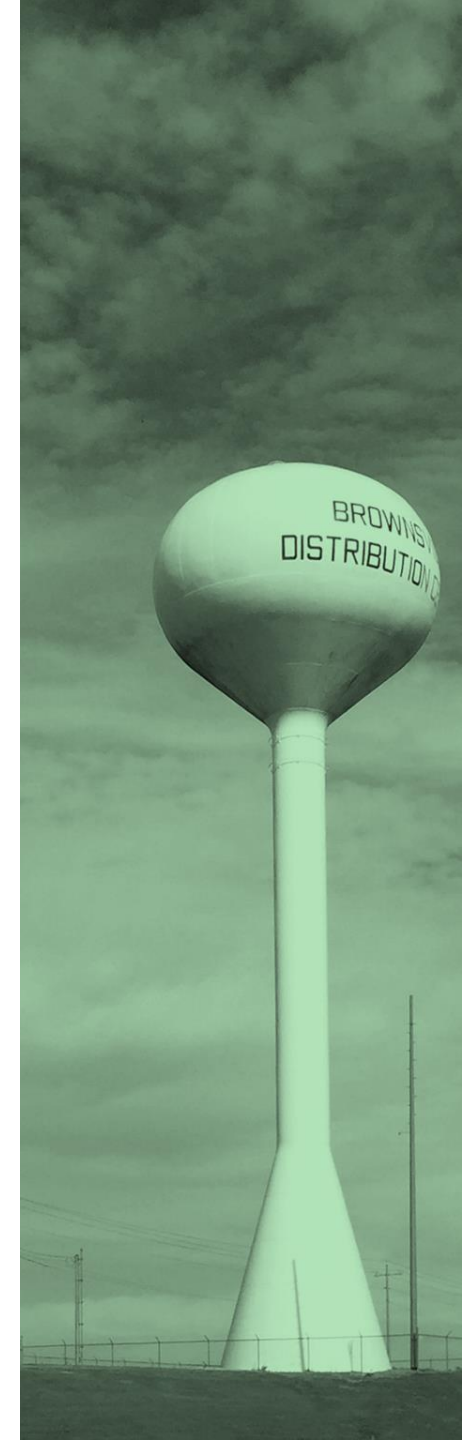
- **Special Eligibility Cases:**



For profit TNC or NTNC systems, and medium or large Community PWS, may qualify only when the project **consolidates** or **interconnects** with a qualifying Community PWS (must be the grantee)



Connecting households with **private wells** to a qualifying Community PWS (must be the grantee) may also be eligible



EC-SDC Grant – Eligible Project Categories



Research, planning, design, treatment, and pilot testing for EC removal



Water system restructuring, interconnection, consolidation, or creation



Technical assistance, public education, and workforce development



Source water activities related to emerging contaminants, including activities that reduce ECs entering source waters from land uses



Providing households access to drinking water services (only PWS)



WHAT ABOUT *STORMWATER*?

Examples of stormwater related activities that may be eligible include:

- Source water protection planning that includes modeling, mapping, or assessing EC transport in watersheds
- Monitoring or studies to identify EC presence linked to stormwater runoff
- Stormwater controls that trap or treat ECs before they reach drinking water sources (ex. catch basins, erosion control, rain gardens)
- Nutrient or sediment reduction strategies that help prevent EC formation in source waters (including stormwater management and green infrastructure)



***VIEW THE FULL LIST OF PROJECT
EXAMPLES BY VIEWING THE
EC-SDC IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL***

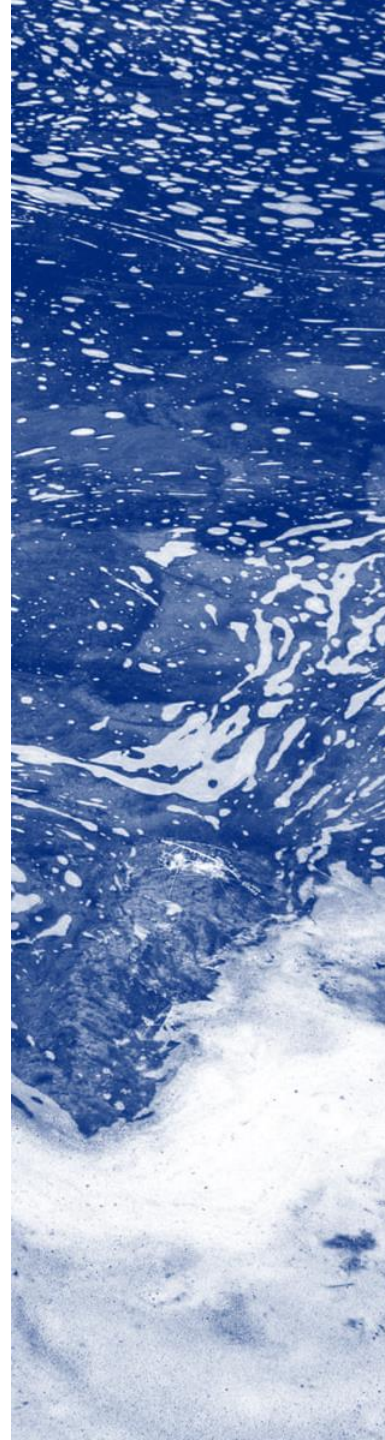


EC-SDC Grant – How to Apply

1. First step is for the PWS to complete and submit a [Needs Assessment Survey](#) to the **MassDEP** Drinking Water Program
2. MassDEP reviews eligibility and scope, with final review by EPA
3. Once approved, MassDEP issues an award letter and contract paperwork
4. After contracting is complete, the PWS may begin invoicing



EC-SDC funding is **non-competitive**, projects are reviewed case by case by MassDEP and EPA





Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Grant (EC-SDC)

Funds provided to states by USEPA – administered in
Massachusetts by MassDEP



Questions? Contact:

Abby Jacobs, MA EC-SDC manager

Abigail.Jacobs@mass.gov

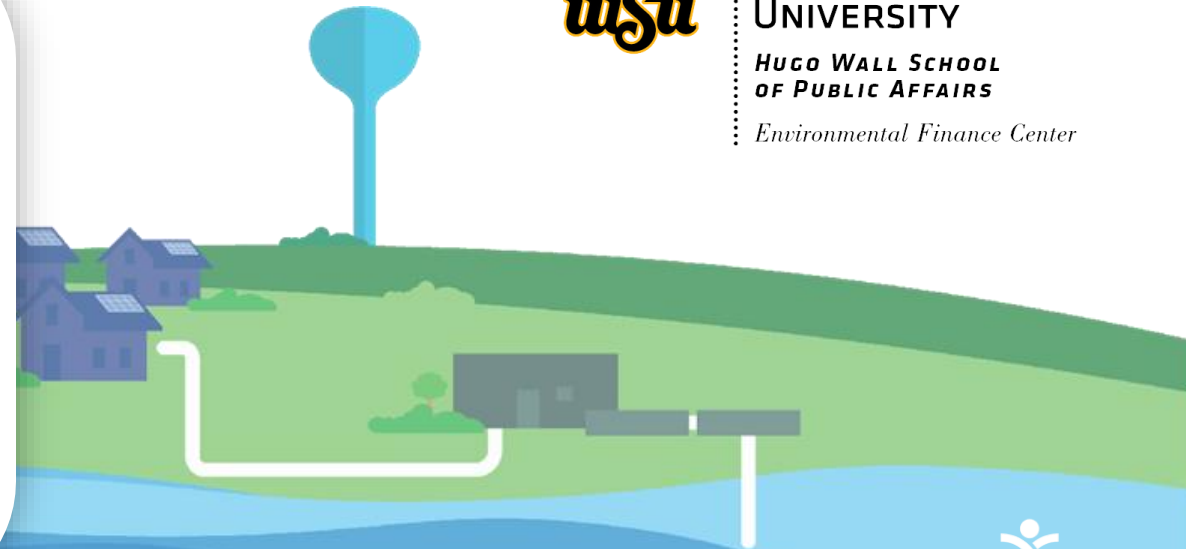
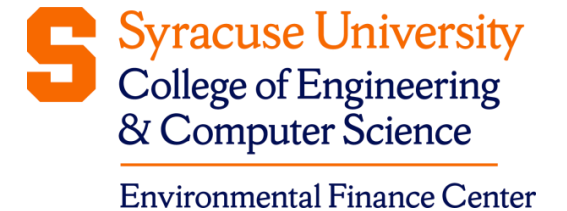


mass.gov/info-details/emerging-contaminants-in-small-or-disadvantaged-communities-grant

Thank You!



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Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center
E: adavis02@syr.edu



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