



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Protection

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Jay Collins
Lt. Governor

Alexis A. Lambert
Secretary

September 30, 2026

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor, State of Florida
Plaza Level 01, The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis:

Pursuant to Section 1420(c)(3) of the 1996 Amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, each state is required to triennially submit a report to its governor on the efficacy of the Capacity Development Strategy and progress made toward improving the technical, managerial and financial capacity of public water systems in the state. The initial report was completed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2005; subsequent reports were completed in 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020 and 2023.

This report will be posted on DEP's website to ensure availability to the public.

If you have questions regarding this report, please contact me or John A. Coates, Director of DEP's Division of Water Resource Management, at 850-245-8709.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Lambert", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Alexis A. Lambert
Secretary

Enclosure

cc: John Truitt, Deputy Secretary of Regulatory Programs, DEP
Alex Cronin, Director of Legislative Affairs, DEP
John A. Coates, Director of Division of Water Resource Management, DEP



Florida's Strategy to Improve Public Water Supply

**Source and Drinking Water Program
Division of Water Resource Management
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
September 2026**



Florida's Strategy to Improve Public Water Supply

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction.....	5
Public Drinking Water System Supervision Program Implementation	9
Capacity Development Program for New Public Water Systems.....	9
Public Water System Supervision Program Enhancements Relating to the Capacity Development Strategy for Existing Public Water Systems	11
Development Strategy for Existing Public Water Systems.....	11
Water System Inspection Program.....	11
Technical Assistance – FRWA	14
Additional Programs to Aid Water Utilities in Florida.....	17
Apprenticeship Program.....	17
Utility Management Certification Program.....	18
Operator Licensure by Reciprocity	18
Water Assistance Tracking and Emergency Response System and Florida Water/ Agency Response Network (FlaWARN)	19
RevPlan	19
DWSRF Engineers and Project Liaison	19
Inspections.....	20
Energy Efficiency Program.....	20
Drinking Water Security/Vulnerability Assessment Program	20



Florida’s Voluntary Lead Testing Program for Schools and Childcare Facilities	21
Lead Service Line Inventories.....	21
USDA Rural Development Program.....	22
PFAS OUTreach (PFAS OUT)	22
Technical Assistance – Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP)	22
Recommendations and Conclusions	25
Appendix A: Contact Information	27
Appendix B: Activities Performed by FRWA for DEP	30

Executive Summary

As the state agency granted primary enforcement responsibility by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)¹, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is required to submit a triennial report to the governor that describes how it has been implementing the Capacity Development Program, an assistance program for drinking water facilities throughout Florida. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the efficacy of DEP's Capacity Development Strategy, as well as to highlight progress made toward improving the technical, managerial and financial capacities of the state's public water systems. Each program element listed in this report is part of a framework of capacity development related efforts. The framework provides many opportunities for systems to enhance their capacity, thus continually improving the ability of public water systems to manage their resources, operate their systems and protect the health of Florida residents and visitors.

One component of the Capacity Development Program examines proposed new facilities and the facilities' potential to successfully operate and maintain a system and deliver clean drinking water to the people they serve. Permit approval for new facilities is based upon each system's ability to demonstrate adequate capacity development.

Another component of the Capacity Development Program assists small drinking water systems with improving their ability to operate in compliance with the federal and state regulations. DEP is responsible for performing sanitary surveys and regulatory oversight of all public water systems to ensure each system is running efficiently and providing safe, quality drinking water to residents and visitors in Florida. Based on observations made during these surveys, follow-up actions may include a combination of enforcement, compliance assistance and referral to technical assistance providers to bring the systems back into compliance.

DEP collaborates closely with certified operators, professional engineers (PEs) and training professionals from the Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA), all of whom are available to provide technical assistance. These individuals visit hundreds of small drinking water facilities each year to assist in identifying and eliminating potential problems before they affect the facility's performance. They also work with representatives of facilities to improve system operations so that the facilities can achieve and maintain compliance.

Pursuant to the SDWA, as amended by Section 2012 of American Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA), DEP's Capacity Development Strategy was revised and approved by EPA on Dec. 20,

¹ Pub. L. 104-182, "Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996" (1996).

2022. Updates include a description of how the state will encourage public water systems to develop asset management plans and assist in training operators or other relevant people in implementing the plans.

For more information, please visit DEP's [Source and Drinking Water Program webpage](#) and EPA's [Learn About Capacity Development webpage](#).

Introduction

Pursuant to Section 1420(c)(3) of the federal SDWA Amendments of 1996, states are required to, "...submit to the Governor a report that shall also be available to the public on the efficacy of the strategy and progress made toward improving the technical, managerial and financial capacity of public water systems in the State."² These triennial reports have been completed by DEP and submitted to the governor since 2005, the last being submitted in 2023. The current triennial capacity development report is available to the public on DEP's [Capacity Development Program webpage](#).

On its [Learn about Capacity Development webpage](#), EPA writes, "Capacity Development is a process for water systems to acquire and maintain adequate technical, managerial and financial (TMF) capacity. TMF capacity enables water systems to have the capability to consistently provide safe drinking water to the public."³ "Technical capacity" refers to the provision and operation of source, treatment, storage, pumping and distribution structures. "Managerial capacity" includes the institutional and administrative capabilities enabling a water system to achieve and maintain compliance with requirements. "Managerial capacity" is assessed by evaluating issues that include sufficiency of maintenance for equipment, recordkeeping, operating procedures, staffing and relationships with customers or other outside entities. "Financial capacity" is the ability of a water system to acquire and manage sufficient financial resources to enable the system to achieve and maintain compliance with requirements.

The federal SDWA Amendments of 1996 provided for two categories of effort involving capacity development: (1) New Systems Capacity Development and (2) the Capacity Development Strategy for Existing Systems. New Systems Capacity Development is described in the "Capacity Development Program for New Public Water Systems" section of this report and is part of Florida's overall Capacity Development Strategy for new and existing systems.

DEP submitted its original Capacity Development Strategy to EPA in May 2000, which was approved in September of the same year. DEP's Capacity Development Strategy was revised pursuant to the amendments to Section 2012 of AWIA and was approved by EPA on Dec. 20, 2022. The 2022 revisions included a description of how the state would encourage public water systems to develop asset management plans and assist in training operators or other relevant people in implementing such plans. Implementation of the strategy involves a wide range of programs and activities to help ensure that public water systems improve TMF capabilities

² Pub. L. 104-182, "Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996" (1996).

³ EPA, Building the Capacity of Drinking Water Systems, <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/learn-about-capacity-development>.

through the combined efforts of DEP, FRWA and Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP), with direct contact and various training opportunities for the facilities and their operators.

DEP continues to investigate TMF capacity of public water systems, identify solutions to improve TMF capacity, and allocate resources with priority given to those systems that are most in need. Proactive communication with public water systems helps facilities understand the rules and requirements for the TMF commitment needed to supply a sufficient quantity of safe water in a cost-effective manner both now and in the future.

DEP assesses technical capacity during the permitting process. When technical assistance needs are identified, systems are prioritized based on lack of resources to correct problems or failure to make significant progress. Systems are then referred to technical assistance providers, such as FRWA and SERCAP. Care is taken to eliminate threats to public health posed by poor water quality, and systems with a history of acute health risk violations receive the highest priority for assistance.

DEP is committed to seeking innovative approaches to asset management and new technologies to increase TMF capacity at all of Florida's water systems for long-term sustainability. The state's strategy involves a holistic approach, leveraging multiple resources from DEP programs, external organizations and other state agencies to help public water systems improve TMF capabilities. The following organizations and programs have been instrumental in implementing Florida's Capacity Development Strategy:

- DEP's Public Water Systems Supervision (PWSS) Program.
- FRWA.
- DEP's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Program.
- Florida Public Service Commission (PSC).
- DEP's Operator Certification Program (OCP).
- Florida's five water management districts (WMDs).
- Florida Department of Health's (DOH's) Public Drinking Water Program.
- EPA's Region 4 Area-wide Optimization Program (AWOP).
- DEP's Plant Operations Excellence Awards.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Rural Development Program.
- Florida Department of Commerce's (DOC's) Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program.
- SERCAP.
- Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM).

Appendix A of this report contains contact information for these organizations and programs.

The PWSS Program is administered by DEP and consists of DEP's Source and Drinking Water Program in Tallahassee, DEP's six regulatory districts geographically located throughout the state, DOH's headquarters office in Tallahassee, and the six approved DOH county health departments (ACHDs) that have received delegation to administer the program in their counties. Information on the organization of the PWSS Program is located on DEP's [Source and Drinking Water Program webpage](#).

FRWA assists both large and small water systems throughout Florida with every phase of water operations. FRWA serves as Florida's primary technical assistance provider. Its circuit riders are located throughout the state and help systems with water treatment, water distribution, water quality and compliance concerns. During state declarations of emergency, FRWA temporarily loans equipment to systems through mutual aid agreements to enable restoration of service to customers. FRWA also provides training and professional guidance to operators so they can make the best and most informed decisions.

DEP's DWSRF program provides opportunities for eligible entities to obtain low-interest loans for the planning, design and construction of public water facilities. Information received throughout the year from requests for funding is used to establish a prioritized project list for the following annual funding cycle. For eligible small, disadvantaged communities, part of the principal from these loans (ranging from 20% to 90%) may be forgiven, which can significantly reduce the amount owed. The loan terms include a 20-year amortization (30 years for financially disadvantaged communities) and low-interest rates.

Florida's PSC has jurisdiction over utilities in 38 of the state's 67 counties. Utilities under its jurisdiction are investor-owned systems, with exemptions provided by law in the Florida Statutes (F.S.). The PSC helps ensure the capacity of water systems by promoting adequate and reliable utility services at prices that are fair to both the consumer and the utility. The PSC also encourages maximum efficiency in utility company operations and management. PSC staff routinely advise systems on financial and managerial matters. If a PSC representative finds technical problems through inspection, the evaluation of documents or other means, DEP steps in to advise the system as appropriate. The PSC's statutory powers listed in section 367.121, F.S., include the authority to require repairs for any facility or to require the construction of a new facility if reasonably necessary to provide adequate and proper service.

DEP's OCP is responsible for the certification of water treatment and distribution operators. This is accomplished through mandatory training, examination and continuing education. Drinking water licenses are issued in two separate categories: water treatment plant operators and water distribution system operators. Each licensure category contains four classes of licensure; treatment plant classes are A, B, C and D (Class A being the highest), and distribution levels are 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Level 1 being the highest). Development and administration of

professional licensure examinations ensure required competencies are met by operators. OCP supports professional development and growth of operators' competencies through implementation and monitoring of continuing education, and operators continue to learn as treatment techniques or technologies develop and evolve.

The state's five WMDs serve as regional level administrators of Florida's water resources. The WMDs include the Northwest Florida WMD, the Suwannee River WMD, the St. Johns River WMD, the Southwest Florida WMD and the South Florida WMD. WMDs regulate and support water supply, water quality, flood protection and floodplain management, and natural systems restoration. DEP exercises general supervisory authority over the WMDs through cooperation and continuous communication.

Part of the DOH organizational structure, there are six ACHDs throughout the state. These ACHDs are responsible for the permitting and compliance of public water systems within their respective counties. ACHDs work with local systems to ensure they have the necessary resources to continue providing services to their customers. ACHDs refer systems to FRWA for further assistance as needed.

AWOP is a voluntary multi-state program in which states work together to support public water systems with optimization of treatment processes and distribution systems. AWOP is designed to assist water systems enhance public health protection by optimizing their physical and organizational infrastructures without encountering major improvement expenses. AWOP has provided Florida with the opportunity to host and attend training workshops to share tools and information designed for program development. DEP's Source and Drinking Water Program staff includes a dedicated AWOP coordinator charged with facilitating this training for Florida's public water systems. AWOP supports Florida's efforts related to surface and ground water system operations, operator knowledge growth and increasing system compliance rates.

DEP's Plant Operations Excellence Awards Program awards systems with proactive, innovative and measurable achievements that exceed regulatory requirements. The award selection process considers all aspects of system operation, including but not limited to maintenance, innovative treatment, waste reduction, pollution prevention, recycling, or other special technical or managerial achievements. Awards are presented at an annual series of operator conferences held throughout the state.

USDA's Rural Development Program and the DOC's Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program provide financing to assist systems with capital costs associated with increasing capacity or optimizing system efficiency.

SERCAP is a regional program operating in seven states, including Florida. It provides training and assistance for low-income communities and community-based organizations on developing affordable safe drinking water, sanitary waste facilities and other needed services for low-income rural residents.

More information on these organizations and programs is available in the “Technical Assistance” and “Additional Programs to Aid Water Utilities in Florida” sections of this report.

Systems referred to as “Subpart H” are those regulated under Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 141.3 that use surface water or groundwater under the direct influence (UDI) of surface water. Direct influence is determined for individual sources in accordance with criteria established by DEP in Rule 62-555.817, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). Water UDI of surface water is generally insufficiently protected from contamination by surface water.

Public Drinking Water System Supervision Program Implementation

Capacity Development Program for New Public Water Systems

Capacity development is undertaken to ensure that drinking water systems acquire and maintain adequate TMF to consistently provide safe drinking water.

When amending the SDWA in 1996, the U.S. Congress mandated that states set up programs to ensure the capacity of new community water systems (CWSs), which typically serve year-round residents, and new non-transient, non-community water systems (NTNCWSs), which typically serve businesses and schools. Florida's program fulfills the congressional requirement.

Consistent with the EPA definition of “new system,” sections 62-555.525(1)(a) and (b), F.A.C., define “new systems” for purposes of capacity development as follows:

- Entirely new CWSs or NTNCWSs constructed or commencing operations on or after Oct. 1, 1999.
- Water systems that previously did not meet CWS or NTNCWS definitions but grow to become a CWS or NTNCWS through infrastructure expansion constructed or placed into operation on or after Oct. 1, 1999.
 - Water systems that previously did not meet CWS or NTNCWS definitions but grow to become a CWS or NTNCWS by adding users *without* expanding infrastructure are not considered “new systems” for capacity development purposes.

Florida's program requires that new NTNCWSs and new CWSs undergo a DEP capacity assessment. These new systems must demonstrate acceptable capacity to receive a construction permit or clearance for use.

The following excerpt from section 62-555.525(3), F.A.C., includes the fundamental Capacity Development Program requirements that new water systems must meet.

(3) Demonstrations of financial, managerial, and technical capacity for “new systems” shall contain the following:

(a) Documentation that the owner of the “new system” holds, or will hold, an operator license sufficient to fulfill the staffing requirements in Chapter 62-699, F.A.C., or that the “new system” employs, or will employ, licensed operators to fulfill the staffing requirements in Chapter 62-699, F.A.C.

(b) A demonstration that the “new system” has, or will have, the capability to conduct the monitoring and reporting required under Chapter 62-550, F.A.C., and the capability to maintain the records required under Chapter 62-550, F.A.C.

(c) A demonstration that the “new system” has, or will have, the capability to meet the operation and maintenance requirements in this chapter.

(d) A demonstration of financial and managerial capacity.

Below is a summary of the typical requirements of Florida's New Systems Capacity Development Program:

- New CWSs and NTNCWSs are subject to a capacity assessment as part of the permitting process.
 - Technical capacity is assessed through review of engineering documentation during the construction permitting process. DEP only approves permit applications for systems that document acceptable technical capacity.
 - Financial capacity and managerial capacity are assessed through review of a required New Water System Capacity Development Financial and Managerial Operation Plan. A copy of the form systems use to prepare this plan is available on DEP's [New Water System Capacity Development Financial and Managerial Operations Plan webpage](#).
 - DEP inspects each newly constructed CWS and NTNCWS for compliance with drinking water rules before allowing it to begin operating. No system is allowed to operate until any identified deficiencies are corrected.

- CWSs and NTNCWSs that began operating on or after October 1, 1999, are required to submit an updated Capacity Development Financial and Managerial Operation Plan to DEP three years after operations begin.
- Systems regulated by the PSC, which imposes its own equivalent financial requirements, are not required to complete additional DEP financial requirements.

DEP will deny the construction permit for a drinking water system or will not otherwise allow that system to operate if it fails to demonstrate acceptable capacity. A new system must submit an updated Financial and Managerial Operation Plan three years after the commencement of operations to demonstrate that it has maintained adequate capacity.⁴ DEP rules also require a capacity demonstration by new systems that change ownership.⁵ Systems not meeting capacity requirements are subject to enforcement.

Public Water System Supervision Program Enhancements Relating to the Capacity Development Strategy for Existing Public Water Systems

Development Strategy for Existing Public Water Systems

As of May 2026, there are 4,946 public water systems in Florida: 1,580 CWSs, 740 NTNCWSs and 2,626 transient, non-community water systems (TNCs). DEP conducts activities to assist all Florida public water systems in complying with applicable rules and regulations. These activities include water system inspections, provision of technical assistance (by both DEP and FRWA) and AWOP implementation.

Water System Inspection Program

DEP's sanitary survey process helps public water systems achieve and maintain capacity in accordance with the federal and state SDWA and grant conditions. DEP is responsible for performing sanitary surveys on CWSs every three years and NTNCWSs and TNCs every five years.

During a sanitary survey, inspectors are required to inspect and address the following eight elements:

1. Drinking water source.
2. Drinking water treatment.

⁴ Rule 62-555.357(2), F.A.C.

⁵ Rule 62-555.357(3), F.A.C.

3. Distribution system.
4. Finished water storage.
5. Pumps, pump facilities and controls.
6. Monitoring, reporting and data verification
7. System management and operation.
8. Operator compliance with state requirements.

DEP's sanitary survey inspections for groundwater systems are regulated under Title 40 CFR § 142.16(o)(2)(iii), and by DWSRF grant conditions. DEP conducts enhanced sanitary surveys for Subpart H systems under Title 40 CFR § 142.16(b)(3). DEP adopted and incorporated the federal groundwater rule into Rule 62-550.828, F.A.C., to formalize groundwater survey requirements.

Information from a sanitary survey's eight required elements is entered into DEP's state Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) database. DEP periodically transmits this data from its state SDWIS database to EPA's federal SDWIS database. If a deficiency is identified in one of the eight elements, documentation is added in state SDWIS on the deficiency and any corrective actions taken, including the date on which the deficiency was addressed. DEP's state SDWIS database is regularly monitored by DEP's Source and Drinking Water Program in Tallahassee, DEP's regulatory district offices and ACHDs. DEP completed the transition from its historic Public Water System database (Oracle) to state SDWIS in June 2026; this transition is expected to improve the quality of DEP's data recording and reporting.

DEP's Source and Drinking Water Program has identified specific deficiencies as being "significant," and administers rigorous corrective action procedures as specified in Title 40 CFR § 141.31(d). Elements of DEP's compliance inspections differ per system depending on system type, size, complexity and compliance history. Compliance inspections are generally conducted in less detail than a sanitary survey and, at minimum, include an assessment of the following:

1. Compliance issues.
2. Sanitary hazards.
3. Wells and pumps.
4. Treatment (primarily disinfection).
5. Operation and maintenance.
6. Water quality.

DEP provides a record of inspection results and recommendations to the system. If deficiencies are identified, the length of time given to the system to correct those deficiencies is specified. If the system does not correct the stated deficiencies within the allotted time, DEP begins enforcement to ensure the deficiencies are corrected. Systems typically work expeditiously to correct deficiencies after they are notified. Information from inspection results and

recommendations, along with DEP's technical and regulatory expertise, allow systems to continually improve. For example, DEP staff may provide guidance to a system related to water quality sampling or may refer the system to FRWA for assistance with setting rates, board member training or help using available management tools.

DEP uses the inspection program as a significant tool to ensure the capacity of public water systems in Florida. DEP hosts sanitary survey training classes for inspectors from its regulatory district offices and ACHDs to improve their working knowledge of operations, maintenance, management and technology of systems they oversee. This helps inspectors accurately identify technical problems or deficiencies and bring them to the attention of operators so they can be addressed. These sanitary survey training courses are conducted twice per year for new and interested inspectors. Both beginner and advanced level classes are offered. These week-long courses include both classroom sessions and field work consisting of on-site water system facility inspections.

Internal audits of each office's inspection program are performed annually; these are known as program evaluations. Program evaluations overseen by the Source and Drinking Water Program in Tallahassee review operational aspects of ACHDs and DEP's regulatory district staff, such as data management, compliance, enforcement and permitting. This program evaluation process allows ACHDs and DEP's districts to identify internal areas for improvement. Optimizing inspection operations improves the technical and managerial assistance inspectors provide to systems.

If a system receives sanitary survey inspection results that are out of compliance, as part of DEP's capacity development efforts, the inspector may refer the system to FRWA for technical assistance.

In addition to issues discovered during inspections, a DEP district office or ACHD may determine a system needs assistance based on its exceedance of design capacity as indicated in the system's monthly operation report. DEP's Source and Drinking Water Program staff monitors EPA's quarterly Enforcement Response Policy/Enforcement Targeting Tool (ERP/ETT) lists and takes a proactive approach to ensure that DEP's district offices and ACHDs are appropriately following up with systems. DEP's district offices and ACHDs refer systems on the ERP/ETT list with noted deficiencies or violations to FRWA or other technical assistance providers for assistance. DEP and FRWA also review violations on EPA's health-based level (HBL) quarterly reports and work collaboratively to resolve identified issues, including engineering solutions, treatment needs and compliance.

Technical Assistance – FRWA

FRWA is Florida's primary technical assistance provider, assisting both large and small water systems throughout the state with operation, maintenance and management needs. Since 1990, FRWA has provided technical assistance to public water systems serving fewer than 10,000 persons under the DWSRF grant or contract with DEP.

FRWA currently serves these small systems with six circuit riders, two engineers, one trainer, one source water technician, one state groundwater technician, eight asset management technicians, one DWSRF program inspector, one utility assessment technician and additional supporting financial/managerial staff. Appendix B of this report contains a description of activities performed for DEP by FRWA under grant agreements.

FRWA makes many important contributions to DEP's permitting, compliance and enforcement activities. Systems can work with FRWA to resolve potential compliance problems before they impact the environment or the safety or health of Florida residents. FRWA also helps address compliance issues for systems on the Enforcement Targeting Tool (ETT) and Health Based Action Plan Tracking Tool (HAT) lists.

FRWA continuously works to identify systems in need of assistance and to provide technical support. Systems are identified by one or more of the following means:

- Referrals from DEP's Source and Drinking Water Program, DEP's regulatory district offices or ACHDs.
- System self-referrals.
- FRWA outreach.
- EPA's HBL quarterly report.

Services FRWA provides under its grant agreement with DEP are free of cost to public water systems, with a few exceptions, such as loaning of equipment. Systems do not need to be members of FRWA to receive assistance under DEP's grant agreement.

FRWA's circuit riders travel to water systems throughout the state each month. These circuit riders are typically certified operators, and the assistance they provide usually relates to technical aspects of water system operations. FRWA also assists systems with rate studies and other financial or managerial matters to cover the three TMF pillars of capacity development. Most circuit rider technical assistance visits help water systems achieve or remain in compliance. From June 2025 through May 2026, circuit riders spent over 6,400 hours on-site providing technical assistance to systems.

The FRWA water trainer position provides comprehensive technical assistance and training to water systems using surface water and groundwater with complex treatment. From June 2025 through May 2026, this position developed, established and held more than 22 in-person water treatment plant operator sessions for groundwater and surface water plants, with a total of 2,340 attendees. During the same period, 1,336 operators earned continuing education units to maintain their operator licenses. These sessions help reduce the shortage of effective water treatment operators at facilities and support protection of public health.

The water trainer also developed, scheduled and held 10 water distribution operator training sessions and one drinking water certification review class. An initial plan to train operators on evaluating and calculating compliance with disinfection requirements in section 62-555.350(6), F.A.C., was developed, and assistance was provided to DEP in the evaluation of disinfection byproducts compliance issues.

FRWA's financial and managerial staff provides assistance with many aspects of capacity development and completed the following activities from June 2025 through May 2026:

- Certified 17 utility professionals under the Water University/National Rural Water Association [Utility Management Certification Program](#) for improving managerial capacity, competency and effectiveness among utility managers.
- Developed and held asset management workshops to increase knowledge of preventive maintenance and prudent safeguarding of public infrastructure.
- Developed, established and published standard utility management practices for setting policies and procedures that enable utilities to fulfill their missions.
- Assisted numerous systems in setting rates and impact fees that account for the actual cost of services and provide for continuing preventive maintenance without relying on governmental grants or loans to replace infrastructure.
- Prepared water audits (analyses of water losses and unaccounted-for water) at roughly 35 systems to reduce the potential for lost revenue.
- Assisted systems in finding dependable sources for grants and loans for utility projects, including short-term, interim and long-term financing options, usually through DEP's DWSRF and the USDA's Rural Development Program.
- Provided assistance with many operational and compliance concerns, including the following:

- Customer relations and services.
- Public notices.
- Consumer confidence reports.
- Operation and maintenance manuals.
- Emergency response planning.
- Enhanced management tools and software.

From June 2025 through May 2026, FRWA's source and groundwater technicians promoted water conservation and implementation recommendations through source water and wellhead protection plans at 164 systems. These plans include best management practices (BMPs) for contaminants that are in source water protection areas, and helpful information on proper septic tank preventive maintenance, household hazardous materials, the best use of fertilizers to prevent water pollution, motor oil recycling days, prescription drug take-back days and how to properly dispose of unused prescription drugs.

From June 2025 through May 2026, FRWA's engineering program assisted approximately 184 water systems with challenges related to minor permitting, compliance, water quality, security, health, environmental issues, capacity analysis, areas of operation, maintenance and management and other issues related to providing safe, ample and reliable water to all people in Florida. Activities completed during this time by the engineering program include the following:

- Assistance with water resource development, alternative water supply projects and water supply and treatment issues.
- Assistance with SDWA, federal and state rule compliance, including provision of regulatory updates.
- Project design and permitting for small drinking water systems to correct capacity development or compliance problems.
- Assistance with long-range planning/capacity analysis for 12 systems, which includes evaluation of the remaining treatment capacity as a management tool to address timing of future expansions, regulatory compliance, impact fees, planning, funding, engineering design, permitting and construction.
- Provision of technical advice related to water treatment, water quality and hydraulics and troubleshooting system problems.
- Assistance with utility capital improvement planning, feasibility, cost estimates, emergency response planning, asset management, preventive maintenance, operation and maintenance, conservation and customer relations or services.

- Preparation and submittal of asset management plans for communities to receive an interest rate reduction for DWSRF loan agreements.

FRWA's engineering program has grown over time and receives hundreds of project requests each year. This resulted in FRWA partnering with nearly 20 engineers as sub-consultants that design, permit and oversee many compliance-related projects for capacity building and problem solving.

From June 2025 through May 2026, FRWA held 468 in-person training sessions with 3,312 attendees. Available training sessions are listed on [FRWA's website](#). Examples of training session titles include Financial Resiliency for Small Water Systems, Effective Utility Management, Water Distribution Certification, Operator Certification and Comprehensive Safety Training. Examples of current online courses offered to operators include Advanced Math, Applied Confined Space Safety, Basic Environmental Chemistry, Chemical Feed Systems and Pump Calibrations, Chlorinator Maintenance, Corrosion Control Treatment Optimization, Disinfection Byproducts, Drinking Water Filtration, Hazard Communications, Maintaining Water Quality in the Distribution System, Small Water Systems, Surface Water Treatment and Valve and Hydrant Maintenance. Other online courses currently offered include Basic Board and Council Training and Basic Clerk Training. FRWA also partners with industry associations, universities and other agencies to develop and provide additional trainings as needed.

FRWA employs a training/technical assistance specialist, funded by EPA, who conducts training sessions on various compliance topics throughout the state.

DEP and FRWA work collaboratively and proactively to address TMF capacity compliance concerns at public water systems through events like the successful annual Focus on Change seminar series, which was designed to present information and training sessions to industry professionals. These single-day conferences provide valuable information to attendees and serve as a key outreach event for the industry. DEP representatives give presentations on the latest regulatory changes and provisions, addressing topics such as disaster preparedness and drinking water disinfection byproducts. Over 950 attendees participated in the 2026 series, which was held in four locations throughout Florida (Punta Gorda, Haines City, Lake City and Panama City).

Additional Programs to Aid Water Utilities in Florida

Apprenticeship Program

The FRWA Apprenticeship Program began in October 2019. This program assists water and wastewater utilities in developing skilled and trained employees through apprenticeships, a

proven method of enhancing employee skills and technical knowledge to provide the future work force with the technical training and on-the-job learning needed to become effective certified operators. There are few careers as critical to the daily life and health of all people in the state and to the protection of our environment as water supply and wastewater collection and treatment operators.

The FRWA Apprenticeship Program is approved through the U.S. Department of Labor and the Florida Department of Education (DOE). This program provides training necessary for motivated Floridians to serve their communities through stable and economically solid careers as operators. FRWA currently has 24 active apprentices throughout the state, and 40 apprentices have successfully completed the program for continued employment in this critical industry. New apprenticeship classes in both water and wastewater treatment are offered every six months. Twenty-five employers (primarily municipalities and counties) have apprentices that are currently participating in or have graduated from the apprenticeship program.

Utility Management Certification Program

FRWA provides operators an opportunity to further their careers through its Utility Management Certification (UMC) Program. This program is designed to recognize the professional educational accomplishments of individuals and to market their achievements and skills to increase the value of today's water professionals. Whether they are currently in managerial or entry level positions, the UMC designation enhances career opportunities in Florida and documents chosen fields of study as the demand for qualified management personnel increases. This program also meets the Florida Operator Certification "A" level management course requirements for water, wastewater or both.

Operator Licensure by Reciprocity

Although not directly related to workforce training or support provided to help Florida utilities with capacity development and planning efforts, in 2023, the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 162, which was codified into law as section 403.8721, F.S. This law provides criteria for licensure by reciprocity of drinking water treatment plant, water distribution system, and domestic wastewater treatment plant operators in Florida for applicants that have comparable licenses issued by another state, the federal government or certain other territorial or tribal governments. To implement this law, Florida made rule changes to Chapter 62-602, F.A.C. These statutory and rule provisions have led to the issuance of over 260 licenses by reciprocity to date, increasing Florida's supply of adequately trained and licensed operators. In addition to the increase in the number of licensed operators, the diverse skill set associated with these operators significantly increases utilities' technical capacity to support public water systems throughout the state.

Water Assistance Tracking and Emergency Response System and Florida Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (FlaWARN)

DEP developed the Water Assistance Tracking and Emergency Response system (WATER Tracker) in partnership with FRWA and FlaWARN. WATER Tracker provides resource and response tracking for emergency events, such as hurricanes, natural disasters, acts of terrorism or any unplanned events that might disrupt Florida's normal drinking water and wastewater operations. WATER Tracker allows Florida's drinking water and wastewater utilities to report detailed operational statuses, identify specific resource needs and post available resources during disruptive emergency events. This information is critical to efficiently and effectively assess damage, mobilize resources and distribute aid.

DEP supports the FlaWARN statewide mutual aid network through partnerships with the University of Florida Training Research and Education for Environmental Occupations (UF-TREEO), FRWA, and water and wastewater utilities. In the event of a natural disaster, FlaWARN assists with coordination of recovery efforts.

FRWA also operates a fleet of emergency response equipment to assist DEP in emergency response efforts. FRWA assists with fuel management and moving generators from one system to another as needed once power is restored. In addition, FRWA loans equipment such as generators or pumps to water utilities in need during emergencies.

RevPlan

FRWA partnered with Raftelis, an information technology company, to offer small water utilities in Florida free online software called RevPlan. This tool is designed to assist utilities with asset and financial management to achieve financial resiliency and long-term sustainability. RevPlan can identify the various utility funding requirements, including capital funding, operating costs and debt repayment, over a five-year planning window. It also allows utilities to identify any necessary rate adjustments to meet their funding requirements, and the impact potential rate increases may have on customers. Numerous water utilities in the state have taken advantage of RevPlan for financial planning and asset management integration.

DWSRF Engineers and Project Liaison

DEP distributes approximately \$400 million each year to water, wastewater, stormwater and other projects through low-cost DWSRF loans. DWSRF PEs work with loan applicants from water, stormwater and wastewater systems, as well as engineers as they submit requests for inclusion (RFIs). The RFI process ensures that projects are correctly sized and meet the needs of the community. These PEs review and provide comments on facility plans and business plans

and, if necessary, develop plans for small communities. The PEs also perform site visits as needed and attend conferences before, during and at the end of construction.

The DWSRF project liaison coordinates with and schedules inspectors for periodic site visits to ensure compliance with DWSRF procedures and standards. The project liaison also functions as an intermediary between stakeholders involved in the funding process for utilities, including sponsors, DEP, FRWA, engineers, consultants, etc. This coordination assistance is intended to minimize project costs and delays and to inform members and sponsors about what to anticipate throughout the process.

Inspections

FRWA directly assists DWSRF by performing DWSRF-funded project inspections checking for adherence to program and federal compliance requirements. This program has saved water utilities money by detecting problems early so consultants and construction contractors are able to implement solutions prior to project close-out. This minimizes additional costs when problems needing corrective action that were caused by contractors are resolved before the contractors are paid.

Energy Efficiency Program

On average, a water utility spends 30% of its annual budget on energy costs. This expense continues to grow as new regulations require electric companies to reduce environmental impacts. FRWA's Energy Efficiency Program helps systems reduce the cost of purchasing electricity by improving energy efficiency. The process involves an on-site visit and a review of the system's electric bills for the past 12 months. The resulting report provides helpful tips and customized advice for each unique system. This program can also help systems secure funding from DEP's DWSRF or USDA's Rural Development Program and may inform the system of additional funding sources or incentives. This service typically costs \$15,000 but is performed free of cost to FRWA members.

Drinking Water Security/Vulnerability Assessment Program

Over the past 18 years, a few key federal directives have led to the development of a specific risk assessment for the water sector, as well as guidelines for implementing both physical and cybersecurity measures. DEP selected FRWA to conduct a drinking water and wastewater Security and Vulnerability Assessment Program throughout Florida to comply with a requirement of the 2018 AWIA. FRWA met with utilities beginning in September 2018 in order to improve benchmarking of standards for both drinking water and wastewater utility businesses. The resulting reports strengthened Florida's water systems in the areas of cybersecurity, intrusion, natural disaster, terrorism and vandalism, and also benefited other stakeholders

through identification of areas of vulnerability within supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems.

More recently, DEP worked with EPA's Office of Water Emergency and Cybersecurity in 2026 to host a Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan webinar and accompanying Cybersecurity Overview and Tabletop Exercise. These training events assisted utilities with developing a cybersecurity incident response plan that could be tested against an incident presented during the tabletop exercise. A total of 126 utility personnel registered for the training events.

Florida's Voluntary Lead Testing Program for Schools and Childcare Facilities

Section 2107 of the federal Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act authorized EPA to provide financial assistance for states to develop voluntary lead testing programs to check drinking water in schools and childcare facilities. DEP applied for and was awarded this EPA grant funding and contracted with FRWA to manage and operate the state's Voluntary Lead Testing Program for Schools and Childcare Facilities. Partners in this effort include DOE, DOH and the Florida Department of Children and Families.

More than \$1,677,000 has been invested through this important program to protect children's health in Florida while reassuring parents and providing positive public relations for schools and childcare facilities. Over 40,800 samples have been collected to date from over 600 schools in 16 counties and 124 childcare facilities in 33 counties. Less than 2% of the samples collected had values greater than 15 parts per billion. For more information on this program, including sampling results, please visit [DEP's Voluntary Lead Testing Program for Schools and Childcare Facilities webpage](#).

Lead Service Line Inventories

The 2021 revisions to the federal Lead and Copper Rule (Title 40 CFR § 141.80-.91) required, in part, all community and NTNCWSs to create initial inventories of all their service lines and submit the inventories in Florida, to DEP district offices or ACHDs by Oct. 16, 2024. These lead service line inventories (LSLIs) were required to include a classification of each service line as, "lead," "non-lead," "galvanized requiring replacement" or "lead status unknown." The creation of the LSLIs was a critical first step for systems to identify materials used for construction of service lines within their respective water distribution service areas. This initial LSLI process allowed systems to identify and report any lead service lines in Florida, and the systems' continued maintenance of their inventories provides a method of tracking needed replacements over time.

FRWA and DEP's DWSRF program worked together to provide no-cost assistance to participating small, rural Florida water systems to help them create their LSLIs. This assistance

included performing record reviews, evaluations and visual inspections. Contractors selected by the participating systems conducted fully funded LSLIs and were reimbursed by FRWA through DWSRF set-aside funding. Of the 158 water systems that submitted completed LSLIs to DEP, only two lead service lines were identified, and no “unknown” service lines were reported. More information on this initiative is located on [DEP's LSLI webpage](#).

USDA's Rural Development Program

USDA's Rural Development Program is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America by offering loans, grants and loan guarantees to help create jobs and support economic development and essential services, such as water infrastructure. Through the USDA's Rural Utilities Service Water and Environmental Program (WEP), rural communities obtain technical assistance and financing necessary to develop drinking water and waste disposal systems. WEP provides funding for the construction of water and waste facilities in rural communities and is the only federal program exclusively focused on the rural water and waste infrastructure needs of rural communities with populations of 10,000 or less. WEP also offers funding to organizations that provide technical assistance and training to rural communities related to their water and waste activities. WEP is administered through staff in the USDA's national office in Washington, D.C., and a network of field staff in each state.

PFAS OUTreach (PFAS OUT)

In the spring of 2025, EPA announced PFAS OUT, an initiative designed to help systems address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water by connecting them with funding, technical assistance and other key resources. DEP is participating in this new program that proactively works with communities and water systems to reduce exposure to perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonate (PFOS) in drinking water.

Recognizing that small, rural and disadvantaged water systems often have fewer resources, PFAS OUT assists any drinking water system dealing with PFOA or PFOS to effectively understand the challenges and to reduce exposure as quickly as possible while positioning the system for successful compliance with enforceable drinking water standards.

Technical Assistance – SERCAP

SERCAP is a regional program that provides training and technical assistance to low-income communities and community-based organizations to assist them with developing affordable safe drinking water, sanitary waste facilities and other facilities needed to serve rural residents.

SERCAP provides on-site technical assistance to under-served rural communities that operate water, wastewater and/or stormwater utilities to help them find and secure funding resources and

to develop needed infrastructure, programmatic and environmental projects. This assistance is funded by DEP's DWSRF program through monies received by the Rural Infrastructure Application and Development Assistance for Drinking Water and Wastewater Systems Project. Systems in high-poverty communities are prioritized for assistance; 80% of these have populations of fewer than 5,000 residents.

Since the 2023 publication of this report, SERCAP staff has leveraged over \$70 million in loan and grant dollars for projects in Florida. In addition to providing direct application assistance, SERCAP works to help rural communities with capacity development activities. The following is a list of technical assistance training courses that SERCAP provides to eligible communities, and topics covered in each:

- Sustainable Utility Management – Managing all aspects of utility operations effectively to keep systems in compliance, sustainable over time, and financially viable through best practices and data-driven decision-making; based on EPA's "Rural and Small Systems Guidebook to Sustainable Utility Management."
- Asset Management – Moving systems away from reactive maintenance and toward strategic and proactive replacement of capital assets through inventory, assessment and planning. Focuses on the asset management process, building it into budgets and integration of available tools, as AWIA requires states to incorporate measures that encourage asset management practices in all water systems.
- Rate Setting and Financial Management – Enhancing financial capacity through proper budgeting, measuring financial health, structuring and pricing rates and collecting revenue to cover current and future costs, which include operations, debt service and reserves for capital improvements and emergencies.
- Regionalization/Partnerships – Encouraging cooperation with other systems, from formal arrangements to reduce costs and redundancy to merging systems to achieve economies of scale. AWIA gives states and territories the authority to require regional assessments for systems with a history of noncompliance. Focuses on EPA's new "Partnership Training Toolkit," which the Regional Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) helped to develop.
- Board and Elected Official Roles, Responsibilities and Policy Development – Educating leaders and key decisionmakers for water systems on their technical, managerial and financial roles and responsibilities, as well as the need to have policies in place to support best practices for system management.

- **Obtaining Infrastructure Funding** – Helping systems identify and apply for state, territorial and federal infrastructure programs, including loans or grant funding from the DEP's DWSRF, USDA's Rural Development Program, DOC's Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, U.S. Economic Development Administration's Public Works Program and other sources geared toward water systems; includes guidance from RCAP on program requirements and tips on applications.
- **Security, Resiliency and Emergency Response** – Planning for and responding to emergencies, including drought, flooding, earthquakes, hurricanes, other natural disasters or unexpected system failures. AWIA requires the development and ongoing maintenance of Risk and Resilience Assessments and Emergency Response Plans including cybersecurity components for small community water systems serving more than 3,300 people.
- **Mapping** – Transitioning systems from aged and often-outdated paper maps to electronic maps that are key to efficient, effective and sustainable operations and enhance the effectiveness of asset management programs, disaster response, emergency planning and the transfer of knowledge.
- **Workforce Development and Planning** – Mitigating the impacts small water systems face from aging workforces, lack of skilled/licensed operators, lack of knowledge management and competition from larger systems and other industries by increasing retention of systems' best employees, growing and finding new employees, implementing succession plans and managing retirements or other staff departures.
- **Water Loss Control** – Measuring real and apparent water loss (non-revenue water) using the American Water Works Association methodology; addressing deficiencies to lower costs, increase revenue, reduce the need for additional infrastructure and efficiently use limited water resources.
- **Energy Management and Conservation** – Obtaining energy cost savings of 10% to 50% annually through energy efficiency, water conservation, water reuse and on-site energy generation. Approximately 30% to 60% of average municipal budgets are associated with water and wastewater energy costs.

SERCAP receives funding through EPA (as a sub-recipient to RCAP) to provide assistance focused on compliance and capacity building to rural communities. SERCAP is also funded through programs from USDA's Rural Development and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Since the 2023 publication of this report, SERCAP's Florida staff worked on 166 projects for systems serving a total of 578,675 individuals. Over 217,758 households (38%

low-income) benefited from the services provided by Florida SERCAP office. Examples of these services are listed below:

- Community and leadership development.
- Compliance and environmental health.
- Emergency preparedness.
- Response and recovery.
- Facilities development.
- Operations and maintenance.
- Source water protection.
- Community facilities assistance.
- Environmental outreach and education.
- Geographic information system (GIS) assistance.
- Management and finance.

Florida SERCAP staff use a drone to facilitate asset management planning projects to determine the condition of assets such as water towers.

In addition to technical assistance, SERCAP held 22 workshops for rural communities on the topics listed below.

- Water loss/water audits – four workshops.
- Lead and Copper Rule and lead service lines – eight workshops.
- Asset management – four workshops.
- PFAS – one workshop.
- Utilizing Diamond Maps and Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Mapping systems – one workshop.
- Water/wastewater system maintenance – three workshops.
- Sanitary sewer overflows – one workshop.

Recommendations and Conclusions

DEP is committed to meeting the evolving needs of Florida's population and infrastructure. The state's Capacity Development Strategy is working effectively to ensure adequate technical, managerial and financial capacity of Florida's public water systems, including development and implementation of asset management plans. The programs outlined in this report are examples of successful strategy components.

Initiatives such as the sanitary survey inspection program help systems achieve and maintain capacity through regular inspections, follow-up actions and technical assistance.

Technical assistance provided by FRWA and SERCAP enables systems to improve viability through non-regulatory means. DEP monitors the work funded by grants and coordinates closely with FRWA to ensure the continued safe delivery of drinking water to Florida's residents and visitors. Most of these services are free to the public, cover a wide range of technical, managerial and financial topics, and are provided on-site at participating water systems.

DEP's Source and Drinking Water Program plans to continue managing and supporting these programs, as they are directly related to both capacity development and the program's core mission to ensure the provision of safe drinking water and effective management of the state's water resources. Each program element listed in this report is part of a framework of capacity development related efforts that provides many opportunities for systems to improve capacity. Florida's Capacity Development Strategy is continuously improving the ability of public water systems to manage resources, operate systems and protect the health of Florida's residents and visitors.

Appendix A: Contact Information

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Source and Drinking Water Program, Division of Water Resource Management

2600 Blair Stone Rd., MS 3520

Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400

Sydney Cummings, Environmental Administrator, Capacity Development Supervisor

Phone: 850-245-8633

Email: Sydney.Cummings@FloridaDEP.gov

Marian Fugitt, P.G., Capacity Development Coordinator

Email: Marian.Fugitt@FloridaDEP.gov

Website: <https://floridadep.gov/water/source-drinking-water>

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program and Water Restoration Program,

Division of Water Restoration Assistance

3900 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 3505

Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

Eric Meyers, Program Administrator

Phone: 850-245-2969

Email: Eric.V.Meyers@FloridaDEP.gov

Website: <https://floridadep.gov/wra/srf>

Operator Certification Program, Division of Water Resource Management

2600 Blair Stone Rd., MS 3506

Tallahassee, FL 32399-2400

Chad Hardy, Environmental Administrator

Phone: 850-245-8396

Email: Chad.Hardy@FloridaDEP.gov

Website: <https://floridadep.gov/water/certification-restoration>

Florida Department of Health

Drinking Water Programs, Bureau of Environmental Public Health

4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-08

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1710

Bob Vincent, Environmental Administrator

Phone: 850-245-4240

Email: Bob.Vincent@FLhealth.gov

Website: <https://www.floridahealth.gov/community-environmental-public-health/environmental-public-health/water-quality/water-section-phone-list/>

Florida Public Service Commission

2450 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850
Tom Ballinger, Director of Division of Engineering
Phone: 850-413-6910
Website: <https://www.psc.state.fl.us/>

Florida Commerce

Community Development Block Grant Program
107 E. Madison St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Website: <https://floridajobs.org/community-development/small-cities-and-rural-communities/community-development-block-grant---cv>

Florida Division of Emergency Management

2555 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100
Phone: 850-815-4000
Website: FloridaDisaster.org

Florida Rural Water Association

2970 Wellington Circle W., Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32309
Alicia Keeter, Executive Director
Phone: 850-668-2746
Email: Alicia.Keeter@FRWA.net
Website: <https://www.frwa.net/>

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP)

347 Campbell Ave. SW
Roanoke, VA 24016
Phone: 540-345-1184
Website: <https://sercap.org/>

Northwest Florida Water Management District

81 Water Management Drive
Havana, FL 32333-4712
Phone: 850-539-5999

Website: <https://nwfwater.com/>

Suwannee River Water Management District

9225 County Rd. 49

Live Oak, FL 32060

Phone: 386-362-1001

Website: <https://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/>

St. Johns River Water Management District

P.O. Box 1429

Palatka, FL 32178-1429

Phone: 386-329-4500

Website: <https://www.sjrwmd.com/>

Southwest Florida Water Management District

2379 Broad St.

Brooksville, FL 34604-6899

Phone: 352-796-7211

Website: <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/>

South Florida Water Management District

3301 Gun Club Road

West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Phone: 561-686-8800

Website: <https://www.sfwmd.gov/>

USDA Rural Development Program

Servicing Office

P.O. Box 66889

St. Louis, MO 63166

Phone: 1-800-414-1226

Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/>

Appendix B: Activities Performed by FRWA for DEP

Drinking Water Permitting Program

PROGRAM AREA	TYPICAL RELATED SERVICES PROVIDED BY FRWA
Education for systems about DEP requirements.	Individualized on-site training on various topics, e.g., bacteriological sampling.
Completion of permitting documents.	Assistance with renewals of WMD consumptive use permits and DEP construction permits. Assistance with permit applications related to drinking water system operation. Assistance with permit applications for certain projects needed if a sanitary survey finds a part of the facility is in use without proper permit. Assistance in compliance related project permitting, preliminary engineering reports (PERs), and engineering of effective and affordable projects to attain compliance and receive project funding.
Water source planning.	Assistance for communities in the planning process (using non-DEP funding sources).
"Under the Direct Influence of Surface Water" technical assistance and well evaluation.	Identification of well maintenance and rehabilitation methods for wells that DEP has determined to be "under the direct influence of surface water."
Securing funding.	Assistance for systems applying to various funding opportunities, e.g., DWSRF.

Drinking Water Compliance Program

PROGRAM AREA	TYPICAL RELATED SERVICES PROVIDED BY FRWA
Educating systems on DEP requirements, including those related to maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) and treatment techniques.	Individualized on-site training on various topics, e.g., bacteriological sampling. Coordination and sponsorship of the annual Focus on Change seminar series, held in several cities throughout Florida each spring. Seminar topics include pertinent or emerging issues and updates related to drinking water and wastewater rules and operations. Training (using funding from non-DEP sources) including small group sessions for operators and other interested attendees on an as-needed basis throughout the state. Topics of past sessions include operator certification review, water conservation and beneficial use, water chemistry, introduction to operations, how to prepare for a DEP sanitary survey inspection and corrosion control. Annual technical conference and joint technical conferences with other states that are open to both FRWA members and non-members.

PROGRAM AREA	TYPICAL RELATED SERVICES PROVIDED BY FRWA
	Individual assistance and training workshops related to Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs). These are held in addition to DEP workshops. Individual training related to lead and copper, including measuring water quality parameters, conducting desktop studies using software and making corrective action recommendations to systems. FRWA has also assisted systems with permit applications, as mentioned above under the “Drinking Water Permitting Program” section (this includes an emergency grant program for installing treatment). Assistance with compliance related concerns, including the Disinfection Byproducts Rule, Groundwater Rule and other DEP and SDWA regulations.
Long-term viability of water systems.	Rate reviews, including management assistance, training and reviews to improve water system viability. Assistance with obtaining DWSRF and other funding (refer to information above under the “Drinking Water Permitting Program” section). Asset management plan projects – over 20 systems per year.
Sanitary surveys.	Training assistance for systems referred to FRWA by DEP representatives for help correcting sanitary survey deficiencies. Training classes are also provided for water system operators on how to best prepare for a sanitary survey.
Groundwater protection and source water assessment program.	Development of wellhead protection plans/source water plans for systems throughout the state conducted by FRWA groundwater/source water specialists. This component of the FRWA/DEP grant agreement helps to ensure that sources of drinking water are better protected from contamination.
Short-term viability of water systems.	Individualized on-site assistance and training.

Drinking Water Enforcement Program

PROGRAM AREA	TYPICAL RELATED SERVICES PROVIDED BY FRWA
Sanitary survey deficiencies.	Training assistance for systems referred to FRWA by DEP representatives for help correcting sanitary survey deficiencies that are under enforcement.
Monitoring problems/other.	Assistance for systems referred to FRWA by DEP representatives for monitoring failures. Deficiencies are corrected through training about rule requirements and field sampling procedures. Services provided on-site help address problems for systems on the Return to Compliance (RTC) list.

Emergency Management Program

PROGRAM AREA	TYPICAL RELATED SERVICES PROVIDED BY FRWA
Drinking water drought management.	Assistance for systems referred to FRWA by DEP representatives for water shortages due to excessive well drawdown; WMDs can identify those in special need by taking field measurements of well pumping levels to establish regional trends. FRWA performs water audit, leak detection, conservation plans and other water use reduction activities.
Hurricane damage assessment (drinking water and wastewater facilities).	Assistance for systems that have incurred storm damage, including on-site inspections and helping maintaining operational status. This covers both widespread storms (e.g., hurricanes, tropical storms, etc.) as well as storms with more localized impacts.

Drinking Water/Domestic Wastewater Operator Certification and Staffing Program

PROGRAM AREA	TYPICAL RELATED SERVICES PROVIDED BY FRWA
Operator certification.	Operator certification review training (see information above under “Drinking Water Compliance Program” section). This training provides operators opportunity to earn continuing education units required for maintaining certification and provides prospective operators education needed to pass operator certification exams.
Operator capability.	Many services that enable operators to improve ability to operate water systems; see information above under the “Drinking Water Permitting Program,” “Drinking Water Compliance Program” and Drinking Water Enforcement Program” sections.