

## **Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Grants FY 2022 Project Narratives**

### **FY 2022 TAT PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING:**

#### **Alaska Forum on the Environment (AK)**

The Alaska Forum on the Environment will conduct an assessment in each participating community. They will assist communities in implementing sustainable practices that maintain safe drinking water and sanitary, environmentally sound waste disposal facilities, and identify and evaluate solutions to water and waste disposal issues. This comprehensive look at the full range of environmental issues facing a community will guide the development of a five-year Work Plan and Training Schedule for landfill operators, community environmental personnel, and others engaged in the operation and maintenance of water and waste disposal facilities.

#### **Alaskan Native Tribal Health Consortium, Inc. (AK)**

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Inc. (ANTHC) will provide technical assistance and training to water and sewer operators of the Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative, perform rate studies for each community, and recommend a rate structure that will maintain sustainability. ANTHC will also provide on-site training and technical support, and schedule off-site training for operators to build skills and maintain necessary certification levels.

#### **Tanana Chiefs Conference (AK)**

The Tanana Chiefs Conference, Office of Environmental Health, will provide five free training classes (in Fairbanks or in a surrounding road service community) to approximately 60-75 water operators, utility managers and/or council members (based on 12-15 participants per class) in low-income rural interior villages and other Alaskan communities by utilizing partnerships within the State of Alaska.

#### **Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (AK)**

The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council will: provide technical assistance and training to Yukon River Basin communities that will lead to improved water and waste facilities, and increase the use of safety practices by water and wastewater and environmental workers; provide data to contribute to Yukon River Basin communities to assist in decisions source about resolving threats to traditional alternative drinking water sites and primary water sources; provide technical assistance to expand and find financial resources for water and wastewater facilities and improvements; and increase stakeholder engagement in city, tribal ordinance development aimed at protection of primary and alternate drinking water sources.

#### **Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. (AZ)**

The Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. will implement three project activities: (1) Strengthen technical, managerial, and financial capacity of tribal water utilities by conducting comprehensive operator training and certification services, offering travel expense reimbursement stipends, and providing technical assistance; (2) Strengthen tribal water utility resilience by providing resiliency technical assistance (TA) and conducting resiliency training, including training on asset management and water loss control; (3) Improve tribal water utility capacity for complying with federal regulations by conducting federal regulations training and certification services.

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### **Earth Island Institute (CA)**

The Earth Island Institute, and its affiliates, will provide technical assistance and training that will have gain capacity to seek and identify funding opportunities and prepare and apply for grants. The goals and deliverables of this project are to: (1) direct technical assistance in the form of one-on-one support to small, rural Aqueduct Systems Organization of Puerto Rico (OSAN) staff to build fundraising capacity and submit at least three grant applications; (2) provide workshops on identifying funders, preparing Letters of Intent, writing grants and preparing applications, tools for effective communication, understanding your audience, how to communicate the value of water system to customers, and video making techniques, organization capacity issues, such as developing a funding plan, finance and budgeting, leadership, disaster preparedness and response, marketing and communications, voting structure for members, and measurement and evaluation; (3) work with five water systems to provide direct technical assistance to water system managers to more effectively communicate water issues to their communities.

### **OCT Water Quality Academy (CA) - Mobile**

The OCT Water Quality Academy will: (1) provide intensive training, in-person or one-on-one virtually, to small and very small water and wastewater disposal system operators throughout California, Arizona, Washington, and Hawaii who lack time and funds to attend existing programs in North Highlands, CA and other larger communities; (2) increase the ability of small and very small water systems to comply with EPA water quality standards, for both drinking water and wastewater; and, (3) increase the ability of small water and wastewater system operators to improve operations and maintenance of their systems.

### **OCT Water Quality Academy (CA) – Remote Learning**

The OCT Water Quality Academy (OCTWQA) is proposing to provide much needed training assistance by updating and converting highly successful in-the-seat, instructor led, classes into online classes to meet ongoing licensing, re-certification, and qualifying educational needs of operators nationwide who otherwise, would not be able to attend classes at a school site. It is OCTWQA's goal to help as many of the of the approximately 350,000 to 400,000 small water system operators as possible across the country find a wide variety of water distribution, water treatment, wastewater and collections classes to choose from for the purpose of preparing for certification examinations or to gain ongoing continuing education classes (CEUs).

### **OCT Water Quality Academy (CA) – Lab Testing**

The OCT Water Quality Academy (OCTWQA) proposes to provide financial support for the development of a rural community's laboratory training program for water operations personnel. This program will improve operations of small and very small drinking water systems and assist with achieving and maintaining compliance with legislation by providing recognized and accredited training for drinking water system samplers and Grade 1 and 2 laboratory personnel. OCTWQA proposes to provide both laboratory bench training and then certify water distribution system samplers and Grade 1 and 2 laboratory personnel.

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### **Painted Desert Demonstration Projects, Inc. (AZ)**

The Painted Desert Demonstration Projects, Inc. will continue the STAR School Water Technical Assistance and Training Program with the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribes by providing outreach and education services. The project team will: (1) conduct on-going community needs assessment; (2) interview members of the community as well as tribal leaders to gather input; (3) disseminate educational materials with the goal of improving the management, operation, and maintenance of water and wastewater disposal facilities; and (4) host in-community workshops focusing on basic water/wastewater topics. The proposal will resolve pressing water and wastewater issues by providing direct technical assistance that will: (1) identify and evaluate alternative solutions; (2) develop projects based on recommended solutions; (3) estimate project costs; and (4) develop funding strategy. Additionally, the project will increase disadvantaged groups access to Federal and State financial assistance programs including grants and loans by: (1) matching the nature of the projects with available Federal grant and loan programs; (2) developing 1 or 2 sound water and wastewater projects in Navajo, Hopi, or other Native American communities; and (3) assisting Native American individuals and groups with the preparation of 2 or 3 water and wastewater loan and grant applications. Finally, the project will demonstrate water and wastewater technologies, provide hands-on training to Native American youth and adults utilizing the demonstration systems that have been developed or will be developed in Navajo, Hopi, San Carlos Apache, and White Mountain Apache communities.

### **American Water Works Association (CO)**

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) is a national organization with 49,000 members that will partner with Engineers Without Borders, USA, in carrying out the proposed program and will direct this grant to support USDA's objectives in strengthening the capacity of small, rural, and underserved communities in improving safe and sustainable access to water and wastewater services. This will be done through: 1) Process a community application for a CECorps project and use the AWWA PSS workshop process to evaluate and prioritize the needs of some select water utilities; 2) Identify and prepare a qualified volunteer team to conduct the engineering project; 3) Create an agreement between the volunteer team and Client detailing the background, scope, and schedule for engineering services to be provided; 4) Create an engineering report that satisfies the agreement after it undergoes review through independent CECorps engineers. Provide ad-hoc additional training, education, workshops, and resources through AWWA trainers or Sections: 5) Conduct a closeout to gather data, lessons learned, and write a success story on the work that the volunteers and training staff conducted.

### **National Rural Water Association (OK)**

The National Rural Water Association will expand to 94 technicians and provide the following: (1) Partner with RUS State Offices to support the sound development of rural communities and growth of our economy without endangering the environment; (2) Enhance the sustainability of utility system governance, management, and operations through project development and the delivery of the *Sustainable Utility Management* program, and hands-on technical assistance in all 50 states; (3) Enhance sustainability, reduce costs, and provide technical assistance and training to modernize and upgrade infrastructure to prioritize climate change solutions, such as reducing energy consumption, encouraging conservation, reducing footprints, and improving efficiency;

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(4) Continue to target and prioritize assistance toward the smallest communities with the lowest incomes and poor sanitation, emphasizing designated Opportunity Zones and areas where at least 20 percent of the population is living in poverty; (5) Create nine new positions dedicated to providing assistance to projects located in Substantially Underserved Trust Areas; (6) Provide education and implementation support that assists utility systems in addressing emerging contaminants of concern, including Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances chemicals; (7) Maintain a highly competent technical field staff of Wastewater Technicians who deliver quality services; and, (8) Provide emergency planning, rapid response, and recovery assistance during disasters.

#### **National Rural Water Association (OK) – Energy Efficiency**

The National Rural Water Association will develop energy efficiency optimization recommendations for 840 utility systems in 28 states. This will be accomplished by: (1) enhancing the sustainability of Rural Utilities Service customers by conducting Energy Efficiency Assessments; (2) assisting systems in modernizing and upgrading infrastructure to more energy-efficient technology and equipment; and (3) promoting and enhancing the utilization of green energy and accelerate renewable energy deployment in rural communities.

#### **National Rural Water Association (OK) - Apprenticeship**

The National Rural Water Association will continue to create a career pathway for water workers through the National Apprenticeship/Workforce Development Program, to enhance quality of life, create jobs, and promote economic development opportunities in rural America while improving water and wastewater infrastructure across the country. Activities will be provided to ensure workforce development. The specific goals and objectives for this proposal are: (1) establish a nationally recognized credential that certifies occupational proficiency, is portable, and provides a pathway to economic opportunity; (2) build a qualified workforce that will protect USDA's investment in rural America, and improve service to rural customers; (3) develop a systematic approach to training that ensures highly skilled employees for rural water and wastewater utilities, with a focus on technology and innovation; (4) create and maintain a nationwide clearinghouse for training materials and resources; (5) establish nationwide water industry training courses and certifications; (6) enhance workforce participation in rural America, with a special focus on women, youth and veterans; (7) enhance retention of water workers in small and rural communities through the proven earn-and-learn training model of apprenticeship; and, (8) increase emergency preparedness and resiliency to natural disasters in RUS-eligible communities through a well-trained workforce.

#### **Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (DC) – Colonia**

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (RCAP) will provide on-site technical assistance to at least 39 projects benefitting more than 12 Priority 1 and 2 Colonia areas. At least eight projects will be 'regional'. RCAP will develop a pipeline of Colonia water and wastewater projects, secure engineering, legal and other professional services, assist with organizational (and regional) creation, and with preparation of loan and grant applications.

#### **Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (DC) - Technitrain**

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (RCAP) will provide in-depth on-site technical assistance through at least 636 projects, serving approximately 636 small systems, which shall be selected in consultation with state and area USDA Rural Development (RD) offices.

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### **Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (DC) - Tribal**

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (RCAP) will provide on-site technical assistance and training to at least 20 systems serving large numbers of tribal members/tribal systems in at least 10 states, selected in consultation with state USDA offices and other federal agencies, as appropriate. RCAP will also convene 23 trainings for tribal systems or gatherings of Native American Water Masters Associations (NAWMAs). NAWMA's goal is to bring tribal operators together regularly to share their common water/wastewater challenges, receive related training, promote operator advancement, and build capacity to create stronger utilities. In 1995, RCAC, the western RCAP, worked with tribes in Southern California to form the first NAWMA group. If NAWMAs cannot convene, RCAP will instead provide training on key issues for tribal water/wastewater operators and managers.

### **North Central Regional Planning Commission (KS)**

The North Central Regional Planning Commission's (NCRPC) purpose in applying for funding is to offer free, or further subsidized, services to our qualifying member cities with populations under 5,500. Often cities that served by the NCRPC are short on cash, resource, and time. The communities find federal funding applications daunting, unattainable, and most often, cost-prohibitive when hiring trusted and knowledgeable help. The NCRPC is applying for funds to offer our technical assistance with the application, environmental work, and Letter of Conditions assistance services to our twelve-county service area.

### **Native American Water Association (NV)**

The Native American Water Association proposes a combination of activities including network group coalition building among Tribal entities nationwide, development and delivery of classroom style and online course training opportunities including Workshop-in-a-Box and Wastewater systems training, and direct on-site and webinar based tribal follow-up activities that address specific tribal needs requested by participating tribes. Activities will be provided to support workforce development.

### **Syracuse University – Environmental Finance Center (NY)**

The Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center will host five workshops, present at four to six sessions at additional conferences, and hold two workshops each in New York and Puerto Rico. Syracuse University will host three webinars to be recorded for future review and develop and distribute publications based on information gathered from the Community Needs Survey results from 2018 and 2019. They will provide technical training and individualized assistance to rural municipalities in New York and Puerto Rico for community planning, water resource management, and utility resilience.

### **United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (TN)**

The United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) will: (1) reach the 33-member Tribal Nations in the USET region to provide resources through the Tribal-FERST resource platform that is utilized as a clearinghouse of case studies and success stories pertaining to the field of environmental resource management; provide technical, managerial, and financial training to USET member Tribal leaders, board members, and utility managers; identify and evaluate solutions to specific water problems of rural USET member Tribal Nations. Activities will also address issues relating to

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source, storage, treatment, or distribution of water; create engineering reports specifically targeting a lack of potable water at the Tribal Nation or potable water that does not meet the SDWA. Identify and evaluate solutions to waste problems of USET member Tribal Nations in rural areas relating to collection, treatment, or disposal by providing six site visits that require hands-on personal service to achieve operator success or assistance to resolve compliance, maintenance, or process issues.

Assistance will be provided in the preparation of water and/or waste loan and grant applications for the water facilities receiving an engineering study to move the project to the next step for delivery of safe drinking water to Tribal citizens. Program funding will pay expenses associated with providing technical assistance and authorized training for certain Tribal Nation utility team members to attend events.

#### **Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center (WA)**

The Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center is proposing to provide technical assistance training in Fats, Oils, and Greases (FOG) abatement to small, rural communities throughout the western United States. Specifically, Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center will: (1) Organize and conduct 20 *FOG Abatement Technical Trainings* across the nation, 10 virtual and 10 in-person, all with interactive components, and to create and provide a new access-based tool so trainees can establish and maintain a data-driven FOG Abatement Program; (2) Enhance the *National Resource Reference Guide*, the online, supplemental information resource that programs use for further clarification, details, instruction and best management practices following training to enhance implementation of their FOG abatement program; and, (3) *Measure Success* of programs trained in FY21 and past years.

#### **West Virginia University Research Corporation (WV)**

The West Virginia University Research Corporation has instituted the Appalachian Community Technical Assistance and Training Program to focus on counties in West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee with water systems serving populations less than 2,500. Assistance is targeting those systems deemed viable, marginal, or failing, design and validate training program model, and provide training to multiple communities within the targeted areas. They will provide Workshop in a Box trainings per state as well as hands-on, one-on-one technical assistance with the communities previously identified as well as new communities derived from the latest Workshop in a Box training sessions.