




# Sources of Technical and Financial Assistance for Small Drinking Water Systems



Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (4606M)  
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[www.epa.gov/safewater](http://www.epa.gov/safewater)  
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## A Quick Reference to the Guide

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#### *Technical Assistance*

### National Rural Water Association (NRWA) ..... 3

Web site: [www.nrwa.org](http://www.nrwa.org)

### Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) ..... 5

E-mail: [rcap@rcap.org](mailto:rcap@rcap.org)

Web site: [www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org)

### National Environmental Services Center (NESC) ..... 7

E-mail: [webmaster@mail.estd.wvu.edu](mailto:webmaster@mail.estd.wvu.edu)

Web site: [www.nesc.wvu.edu/](http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/)

### EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline ..... 9

E-mail: [hotline-sdwa@epa.gov](mailto:hotline-sdwa@epa.gov)

### American Water Works Association (AWWA) ..... 9

Web site: [www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)

**Note:** This document does not substitute for EPA regulation, nor is this document regulation itself. Thus, it cannot impose legally binding requirements on EPA, states, or the regulated community, and may not apply to a particular situation based upon the circumstances.

## ***Financial Assistance***

### **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) ..... 10**

Web site: [www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf.html)

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E-mail: [water@rus.usda.gov](mailto:water@rus.usda.gov)

Web site: [www.usda.gov/rus/](http://www.usda.gov/rus/)

### **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant Program ..... 14**

Web site: [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov) and [www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/)

### **CoBank ..... 16**

E-mail: [webmaster@cobank.com](mailto:webmaster@cobank.com)

Web site: [www.cobank.com](http://www.cobank.com)

# Sources of Technical and Financial Assistance for Small Drinking Water Systems

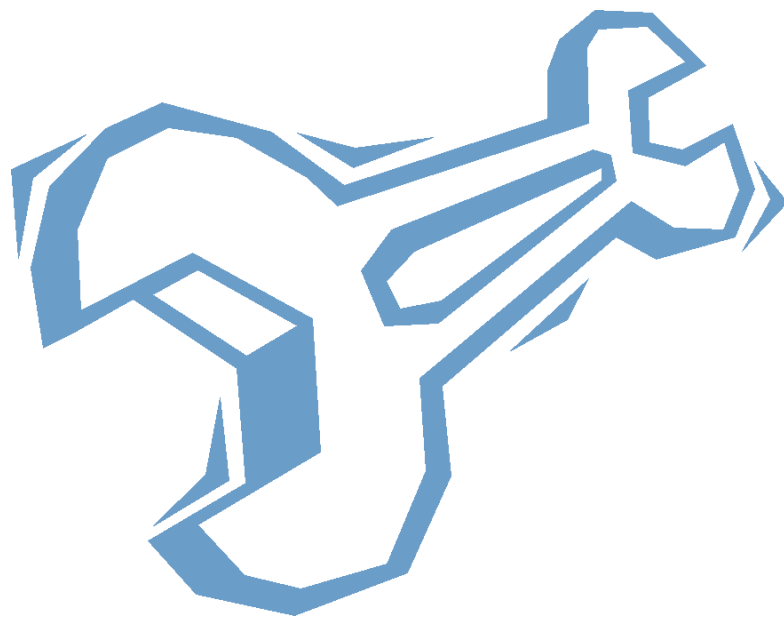
Ensuring that a water system has proper technical, managerial, and financial capacity is key to the success of the water system. Each component complements the next to form a well rounded water system capable of providing high-quality drinking water to its customers. Being aware of external resources, such as technical and financial assistance, is a key element of **managerial capacity**. Managers who are aware of these opportunities can improve the overall capacity of a water system by accessing technical assistance from a technical assistance provider, or by securing or acquiring adequate funding to make needed infrastructure improvements.

**If you are looking for technical or financial assistance** to address some of the drinking water challenges facing your small public water system (PWS), this brochure will help you get started.

The first section of the brochure identifies major sources of **technical** assistance that are available to water systems like yours. It provides contact information for

each organization and describes the relationship each has with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

It also lists each organization's mission statement and activities, and provides real-world examples of how this assistance has been used by small water systems to improve protection of public health and to meet the objectives of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).



The second section provides the same type of information for the major sources of **financial** assistance that are available to small water systems and rural communities.

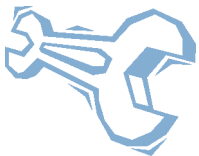
It is important to remember that the list of assistance providers that follows is not all-inclusive. Other sources of information and assistance exist at the national, regional, state, and local levels. Use the information provided in this brochure as a starting point in your search for help. Be sure to ask any national organizations you contact about regional and local sources of assistance that may be available.

It is also important to remember that this brochure provides information only. It is up to you, as a small PWS or community, to contact the various sources of technical or financial assistance available. Be proactive—these agencies and organizations exist to help you!



Technical ►

NRWA



RCAP

NESC

Other

## National Rural Water Association (NRWA)

**Address:** 2915 South 13th Street  
Duncan, OK 73533-9086

**Telephone:** (580) 252-0629

**Fax:** (580) 252-4896

**E-mail:** mail@nrwa.org

**Web site:** www.nrwa.org

For specific State Association contacts visit [www.nrwa.org/2001/members/assnlist.htm](http://www.nrwa.org/2001/members/assnlist.htm)

**EPA Affiliation:** The NRWA receives grants from EPA, as well as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Utilities Service (RUS), and various state environmental and health departments, to carry out its mission.

**Mission:** The NRWA's mission is to support State Rural Water Associations, which have more than 20,000 water and wastewater systems as members.

**Activities:** Each State Association offers a wide variety of state-specific programs, services, and member benefits. Each provides training programs and on-site assistance in areas such as drinking water utility operation and maintenance. In addition, the State Associations have trained over 40,000 water and wastewater system personnel each year for two decades and provided over 60,000 on-site technical assistance visits per year.



The NRWA is a source of on-site assistance for small rural drinking water systems.

## Examples:

- NRWA State Associations offer a wide array of on-site technical assistance and educational programs in areas including:
  - ◆ Regulatory compliance
  - ◆ Operator certification
  - ◆ Wellhead protection planning
  - ◆ Leak detection
  - ◆ Source water protection
  - ◆ Backflow/cross-connection control
  - ◆ Chlorination
  - ◆ Meters and flow measurements
- In addition, with the help of the NRWA and State Rural Water Associations, over 2,600 ground water protection plans have been adopted by local communities across the country, and another 2,300 are in the process of being adopted.

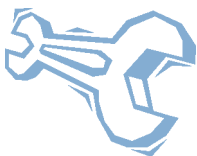


Chlorination is one of the areas in which NRWA State Associations offer technical assistance to small drinking water systems.



Technical ►

NRWA



RCAP

NESC

Other

## Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP)

**Address:** 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005

**Telephone:** (202) 408-1273

**Fax:** (202) 408-8165

**E-mail:** [rcap@rcap.org](mailto:rcap@rcap.org)

**Web site:** [www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org)

Regional RCAP office information is listed on the next page.

**EPA Affiliation:** RCAP receives funding from EPA and RUS.

**Mission:** RCAP's mission is to assist people in rural America to improve the quality of life in their communities.

**Activities:** RCAP provides training and technical assistance to help small rural communities with safe drinking water, wastewater treatment, and solid waste issues. The RCAP National Office serves as the hub of a national delivery network that includes six affiliated regional RCAP organizations, each of which covers a multi-state area. This grassroots network draws upon the expertise of more than 180 field-based rural development professionals who provide training and technical assistance to help small rural communities achieve or remain in compliance with the SDWA and protect their drinking water resources. Technical assistance includes facilities development, management and finance, operations and maintenance, planning and development, and on-site training workshops. Workshop topics include affordable treatment technologies, operation and management issues, operator training, and SDWA requirements.



Technical assistance from RCAP professionals can help small systems protect their wells from contamination by livestock and other sources.

## Example:

- Small, rural communities are often referred to RCAP by their state primacy agency for training and technical assistance. These communities' water systems often face a wide range of challenges including old and poorly maintained facilities and equipment, unprotected wells, and a lack of disinfection or other standard practices. An RCAP technical assistance provider can help a community address its specific needs.

### RCAP is operated through six regional affiliates:

#### **Northeast**

RHI/Northeast RCAP, 218 Central Street, Winchendon, MA 01475  
Tel: (978) 297-5300 • Fax: (978) 297-2606 • E-mail: [general@rhircap.org](mailto:general@rhircap.org)

#### **Southeast**

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc., P.O. Box 2868, Roanoke, VA 24001  
Tel: (540) 345-1184 • Fax: (540) 342-2932 • E-mail: [vwp@sercap.org](mailto:vwp@sercap.org)

#### **Great Lakes**

WSOS Community Action Commission, Inc., P.O. Box 590, 109 S. Front Street, Fremont, OH 43420  
Tel: (419) 334-8911 • Fax: (419) 334-8919 • E-mail: [glrcap@nwonline.net](mailto:glrcap@nwonline.net)

#### **South**

Community Resource Group, Inc., 2423 E. Robinson Ave., Springdale, AR 72764  
Tel: (501) 756-5583 • Fax: (501) 756-1905 • E-mail: [mrounsavall@crg.org](mailto:mrounsavall@crg.org)

#### **Midwest**

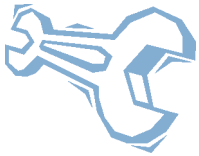
Midwest Assistance Program, P.O. Box 81, New Prague, MN 56071  
Tel: (952) 758-4334 • Fax: (952) 758-4336 • E-mail: [map@bevcomm.net](mailto:map@bevcomm.net)

#### **West**

Rural Community Assistance Corporation, 3120 Freeboard Drive, Suite 201, West Sacramento, CA 95691  
Tel: (916) 447-2854 • Fax: (916) 447-2878 • E-mail: [rcacmail@rcac.org](mailto:rcacmail@rcac.org)

Technical ►

NRWA



RCAP

**NESC**

Other

## National Environmental Services Center (NESC)

**Address:** West Virginia University

P.O. Box 6064

Morgantown, WV 26506-6064

**Telephone:** (304) 293-4191 or (800) 624-8301

**Fax:** (304) 293-3161

**E-mail:** [webmaster@mail.estd.wvu.edu](mailto:webmaster@mail.estd.wvu.edu)

**Web site:** [www.nesc.wvu.edu](http://www.nesc.wvu.edu)

**EPA Affiliation:** NESC receives funding from Congress, EPA, and RUS. It is made up of four national environmental programs and one state program.

**Mission:** NESC's mission is to help small and rural communities prevent pollution and provide a cleaner, healthier environment to their citizens.

**Activities:** The five NESC organizations help small communities with drinking water, wastewater, solid waste management, and training needs. The organizations with drinking water program activities are as follows:

- **The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC)** develops and delivers drinking water, wastewater, and solid waste training customized for small communities.
- **The National Drinking Water Clearinghouse (NDWC)** assists small communities by collecting, developing, and providing timely information relevant to drinking water issues.

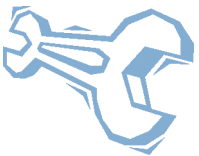
- **West Virginia Technical Advisory Program (WVTAP)** is a collaborative initiative to support economic growth in West Virginia with a commitment to clean water and community health.

### Examples:

- NESC coordinates community drinking water and wastewater engineering assessments by NESC staff or a cadre of national experts. These comprehensive assessments provide options and solutions for present and future needs of the community.
- NESC programs produce four national quarterly publications: two water and wastewater magazines, a wastewater newsletter, and an environmental training newsletter for a combined list of more than 75,000 readers. NESC also offers hundreds of free and low-cost brochures, booklets, books, manuals, technical papers, and videos.



Often, systems lacking a safe, reliable water source must develop alternative sources. Here, an operator drills a well to access a new water source. NESC produces several publications, including NDWC's free newsletter *On Tap*. *On Tap* offers articles and tips focusing on a variety of important source water issues.

	Technical ►
	NRWA
	RCAP
	NESC
	Other

## EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline: (800) 426-4791

\*\*The Hotline can be reached Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM EST

**E-mail:** [hotline-sdwa@epa.gov](mailto:hotline-sdwa@epa.gov)

EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline is available to help the public, drinking water suppliers, and state and local officials understand the regulations and programs developed in accordance with the SDWA. This includes information about drinking water requirements, source water protection programs, underground injection control programs, guidance, and public education materials. The Hotline also provides contact information for resources such as state-certified labs and EPA regional offices.

## American Water Works Association (AWWA)

**Address:** 6666 W. Quincy Avenue  
Denver, CO 80235

**Telephone:** (800) 366-0107 (Small Systems Helpline)

**Web site:** [www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)

AWWA is a nonprofit organization dedicated "to the promotion of public health and welfare in the provision of drinking water of unquestionable quality and sufficient quantity." It is the largest organization of water supply professionals in the world, and its membership includes more than 4,000 utilities that supply water to roughly 180 million people in North America. It offers an "online bookstore," which contains a wealth of resources including archived issues of *Journal AWWA*; the AWWA Small Utility Network, a problem solving/information service dedicated to small water systems (call the toll-free helpline for more information); and frequent technical workshops and conferences.

Financial ►

DWSRF



RUS

HUD

CoBank

## Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

**Address:** U.S. EPA  
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20460

**Web site:** [www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf.html)

For specific state and regional contact information visit [www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf/contacts.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf/contacts.html)

**EPA Affiliation:** EPA administers this program through capitalization grants to the states.

**Mission:** The 1996 SDWA Amendments established the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to make funding available to drinking water systems to finance infrastructure improvements. EPA provides these funds to states in the form of capitalization grants; states, in turn, provide low-interest loans to drinking water systems.

**Activities:** States must make funds available to small systems and can establish provisions for disadvantaged community assistance as part of their DWSRF programs. Through its disadvantaged assistance program, a state may provide additional subsidies such as principal forgiveness, or extend loan repayment periods to up to 30 years. The DWSRF program also encourages the use of funds for programs that use pollution prevention to ensure safe drinking water.

### Examples:

- Several states have developed programs to provide DWSRF loans from state set-aside funds for source water protection projects. These projects include fencing cattle and other animals from sensitive areas, restricting public access to critical areas in source water protection areas, evaluating agricultural practices and providing instruction in best management practices, installing signs at boundaries of zones or protection areas, and building structures to protect the source by diverting contaminated runoff.



DWSRF funding helps improve the quality of drinking water for small communities such as this Alaska native village where drinking water must be hauled from a community tap.

**Financial** ►

DWSRF

**RUS**

HUD

CoBank



## Rural Utilities Service (RUS)

**Address:** Mail Stop [see links to national and state staff below],  
Room [see links to national and state staff below]  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

**Telephone:** See links to national and state staff below

**E-mail:** [water@rus.usda.gov](mailto:water@rus.usda.gov)

**Web site:** [www.usda.gov/rus](http://www.usda.gov/rus)

For specific mailing and contact information for the national office visit [www.usda.gov/rus/water/natstaff.htm](http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/natstaff.htm)

For specific mailing and contact information for state offices visit [www.usda.gov/rus/water/states/usamap.htm](http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/states/usamap.htm)

**EPA Affiliation:** Not applicable.

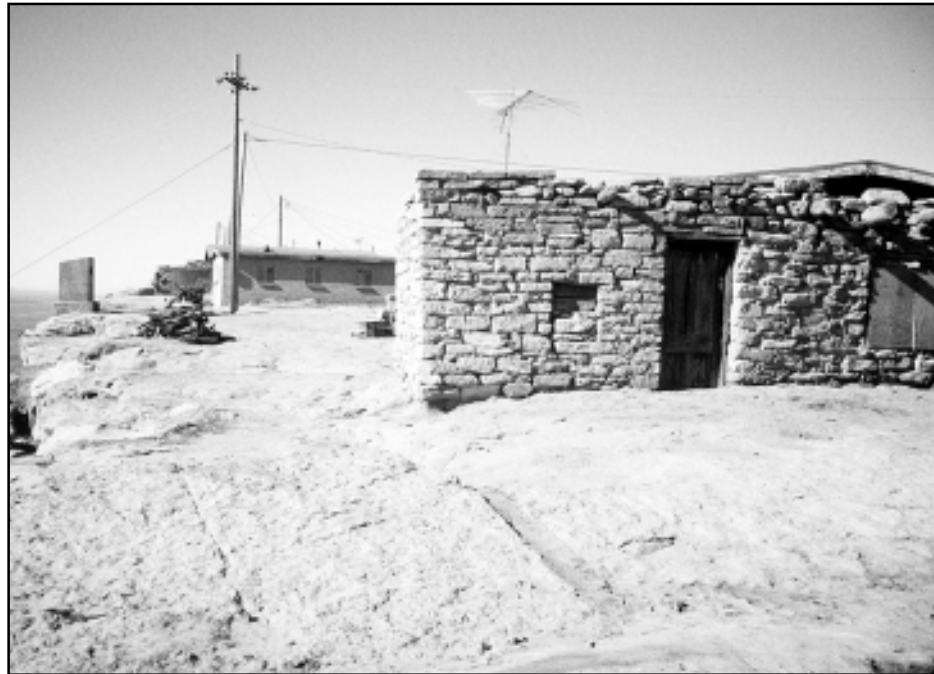
**Mission:** RUS is the federal agency responsible for providing rural infrastructure assistance in electricity, water, and telecommunications. As a federal credit agency in the USDA, RUS provides leadership, loans, and technical guidance to the rural utilities industries. The public-private partnership forged between RUS and these industries results in billions of dollars in rural infrastructure development.

**Activities:** RUS's Water and Environmental Programs (WEP) provides loans, grants, and loan guarantees for drinking water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, and storm drainage facilities serving up to 10,000 persons in rural areas and in cities and towns. Public bodies, non-profit organizations, and federally recognized Indian tribes may qualify for assistance. WEP also makes grants to nonprofit organizations to assist rural communities with water system technical assistance and training.



### Examples:

- In FY 2001, WEP obligated \$1.2 billion in direct loans and grants to fund 968 projects to develop water and waste disposal facilities in rural areas.
- RUS provides funding for on-site technical assistance to help ensure cost-effective operation of rural water systems. RUS has assisted rural water systems, via contracting, with day-to-day operational, financial, and management problems. The assistance is provided at no charge and may be requested by officials of rural water systems or by Rural Development personnel. It complements supervisory assistance provided by Rural Development personnel.
- RUS funds are also used to create unique partnership opportunities between nonprofit water associations and tribal governments. Projects such as these help individual counties meet pressing needs for high-quality drinking water while benefitting low-income communities.



RUS works with rural communities and with tribal governments to provide high-quality drinking water to remote villages such as this one atop a mesa.

Financial ►



DWSRF

RUS

HUD

CoBank

## U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant Program

**Address:** 451 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20410

For specific contact information visit: [www.hud.gov/assist/contactus.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/assist/contactus.cfm)

**Telephone:** (202) 708-1112 TTY: (202) 708-1455

**Web site:** [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

For specific state contact information visit: [www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/)

**EPA Affiliation:** Not applicable.

**Mission:** The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) mission is to provide a decent, safe, and sanitary home and suitable living environment for every American. HUD creates opportunities for homeownership; provides housing assistance for low-income persons; works to create, rehabilitate, and maintain the nation's affordable housing; enforces the nation's fair housing laws; helps the homeless; spurs economic growth in distressed areas; and helps local communities meet their development needs.

**Activities:** HUD provides Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) to states, which distribute grants to small towns and rural counties. Since 1975, about \$82 billion has been allocated for this purpose. For the past few years, about \$4.2 billion has been available annually. The primary purpose of the CDBG program is to improve communities by providing decent housing, healthy living conditions, and economic opportunities—all principally for lower-income people. Projects funded by CDBGs must clear two hurdles. First, the project must be one the law considers "eligible." Second, the activity must either benefit lower-income people, or help to prevent or eliminate "slums and blight."

**Example:**

- HUD, through its Community Development Block Grants, provides small rural water systems with the funds necessary to improve compliance and overall drinking water quality. In the past, systems have used HUD grants to meet state and federal regulations by: developing new water sources; improving treatment techniques; constructing production wells, backup wells, and pump stations; and replacing distribution system pipes.



Among the uses of HUD Community Development Block Grants is funding the replacement of pipes that distribute drinking water to the customers of small rural systems.

Financial ►

DWSRF

RUS

HUD

CoBank

## CoBank

**National Office:** P.O. Box 5110

Denver, CO 80217

**Telephone:** (303) 740-4000 or (800) 542-8072, ext. 4310

**E-mail:** [webmaster@cobank.com](mailto:webmaster@cobank.com)

**Web site:** [www.cobank.com](http://www.cobank.com)

For regional contact information visit [www.cobank.com/find/cebgooffices.html](http://www.cobank.com/find/cebgooffices.html)

**EPA Affiliation:** Not applicable.

**Mission:** A leading lender to some of America's most successful businesses since 1916, CoBank specializes in cooperative, agribusiness, rural utility, and farm credit association financing. It provides services through 13 offices throughout the United States. The Bank is owned by its customers—approximately 2,600 U.S. agricultural cooperatives, rural communications and energy systems, agricultural credit associations, and other businesses that serve rural America.

**Activities:** Currently, CoBank loans money to 100 water and wastewater utilities in the United States. CoBank provides assistance to water and wastewater systems in unincorporated areas or systems in incorporated towns with fewer than 20,000 people. Loans can be used for a variety of activities including debt refinancing, new construction, improvements to an existing system, system acquisitions (assets), water rights purchases, and interim construction financing. The minimum loan size is \$1 million and the term will normally not exceed 20 years.



### Example:

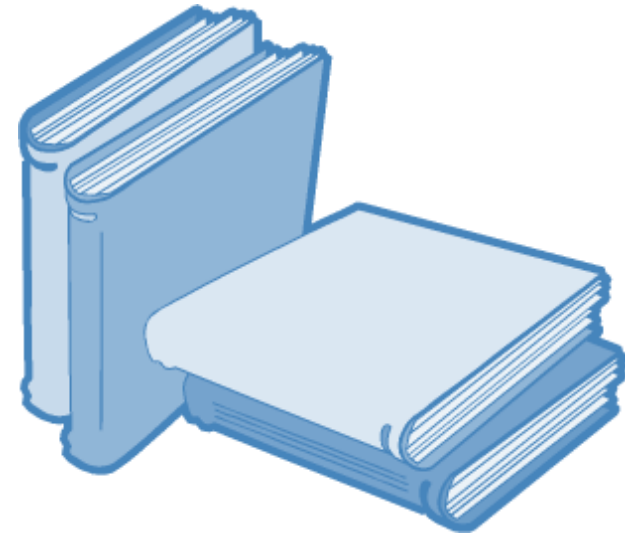
- CoBank provides funds to systems in unincorporated areas and systems in communities of fewer than 20,000 inhabitants to make improvements in water treatment and system components. Using CoBank funding, systems have improved water quality with the addition of treatment technologies, including lime softening. Systems have also used the funding to make internal system improvements, including the addition of storage towers, control systems, hydraulic systems, and new distribution lines to reach more customers.



Standpipes such as this one are an example of the types of projects to benefit small drinking water systems that are eligible for CoBank funding.

## STEP Guides

EPA is producing a series of Simple Tools for Effective Performance (STEP) documents for small drinking water systems. The currently available STEP documents can be obtained from EPA by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791 and requesting the document by its publication number. To check on the availability of STEP documents listed below as under development, go to [www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/ssinfo.htm](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/ssinfo.htm).



### AVAILABLE NOW

#### *Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Regulation Overview Brochure for Small Systems*

This brochure summarizes SDWA regulations that currently exist, are proposed, or are under development, and which affect or will affect small water systems. The brochure emphasizes how the regulations relate to each other. It explains the multi-barrier approach to protecting against microbial and chemical risks and how SDWA regulations fit into this type of framework. The brochure also emphasizes how most small systems can achieve compliance through process optimization and more efficient system management. Publication number EPA-816-R-02-004

#### *Small Systems Guide to the Total Coliform Rule (TCR)*

This workbook is designed to help small systems understand the TCR and the mandatory monitoring required under the rule. The workbook provides sample worksheets to help systems organize and track TCR monitoring data, and provides appropriate follow-up actions should monitoring show a positive presence of coliform. Publication number EPA 816-R-01-017A

## *Arsenic Rule STEP and Small Entity Compliance Guide*

This guide is designed to help systems understand and achieve compliance with the Arsenic rule. The guide provides sample worksheets to help systems organize data, and provides guidance for small systems on their selection of appropriate compliance options. Publication number EPA 816-R-02-008A

## **UNDER DEVELOPMENT**

### *Disinfectants/Disinfection By-Products (D/DBP) Rule Workbook*

Publication number EPA 816-R-02-007A

### *Strategic Planning Workbook*

Publication number EPA 816-R-02-005

### *Asset Management Workbook*

Publication number EPA 816-K-02-006