

A photograph of a water treatment facility with large blue pipes and machinery.

# Water System Collaboration & Partnerships

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# Session Objectives

- Understand the spectrum of partnership options for water systems
- Look in depth at two models—a facility managers group and an emergency response group



# Why Collaborate or Partner?



# Capacity Development

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.



# Water System Capacities

- Technical knowledge
- Adequacy of water supply
- Adequacy of treatment, storage, and distribution



Technical



# Water System Capacities

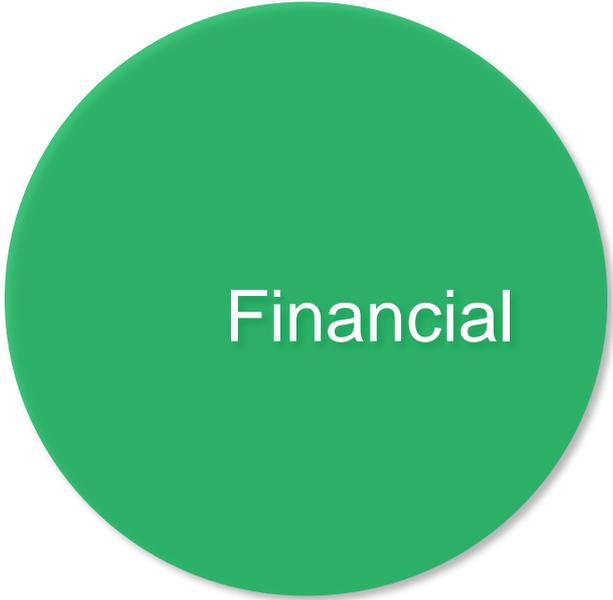
- Appropriate staffing and organization
- Accountability of ownership



Managerial



# Water System Capacities

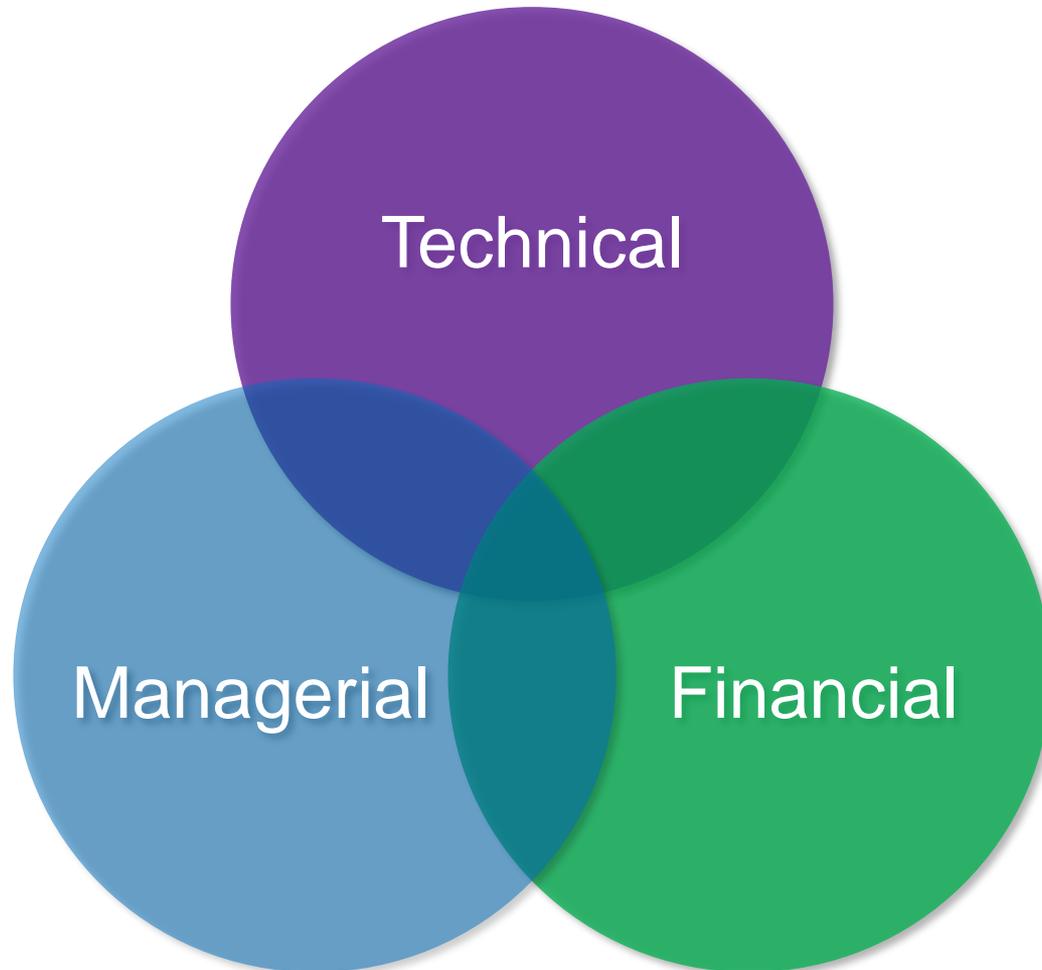


Financial

- Revenue is sufficient to cover expenses now and into the future
- Credit worthiness
- Fiscal management and controls in place



# Water System Capacities



# Basics of Partnerships





Loose, Less  
Formal  
Arrangements

Defined, More  
Formal  
Arrangements



Any kind of collaboration can be helpful



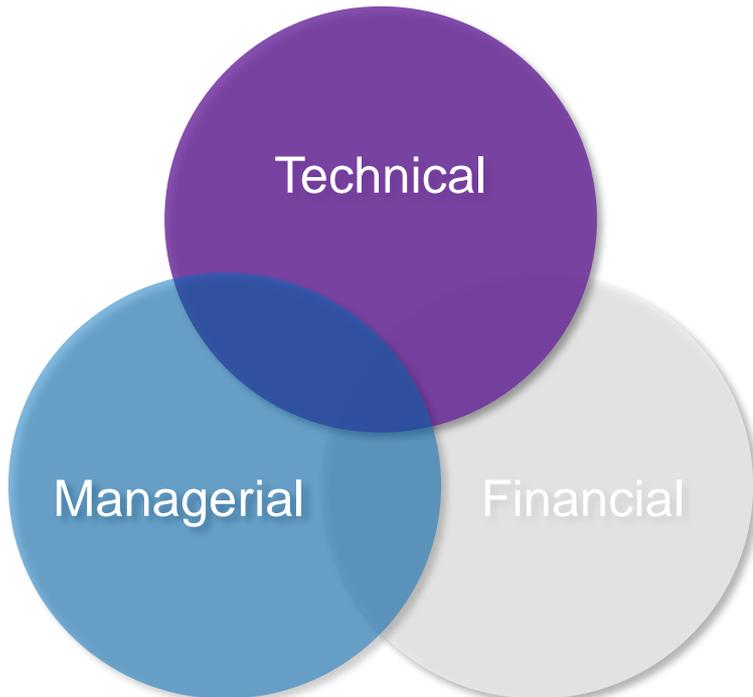
Less Formal



More Formal



Information  
Sharing



Systems share information regarding regulations, planning, infrastructure



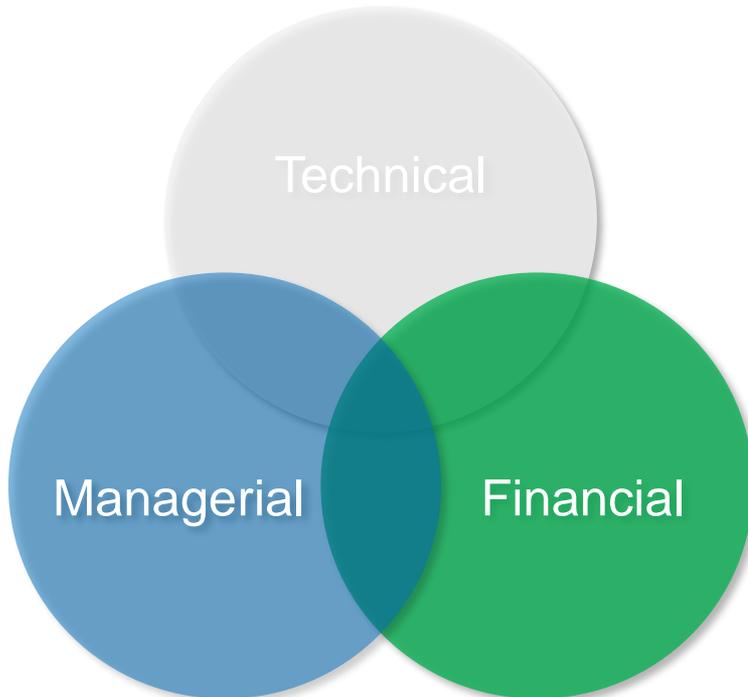
Less Formal



More Formal



Buying  
Consortium



Systems work together to buy equipment, chemicals, or supplies



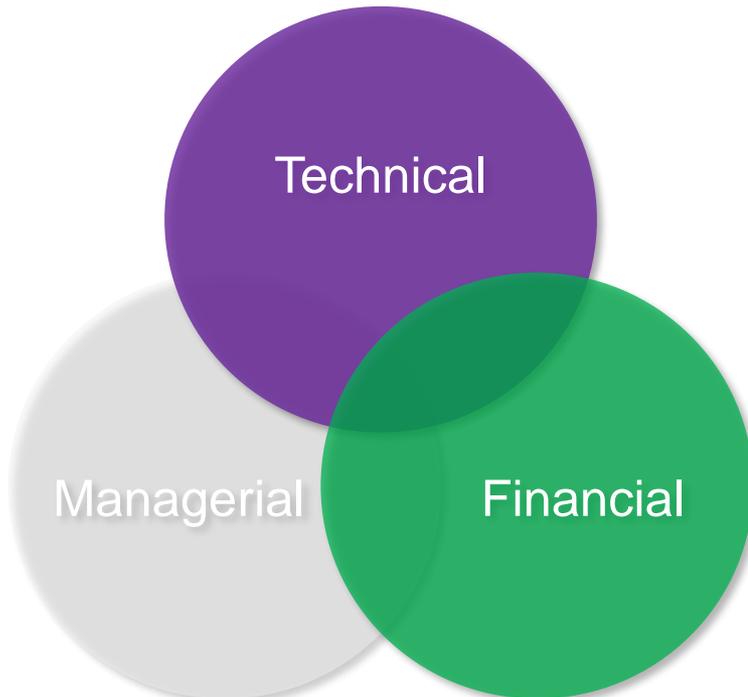
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Equipment  
Sharing



Systems share equipment so each one does not have to buy/own/rent all the equipment they need



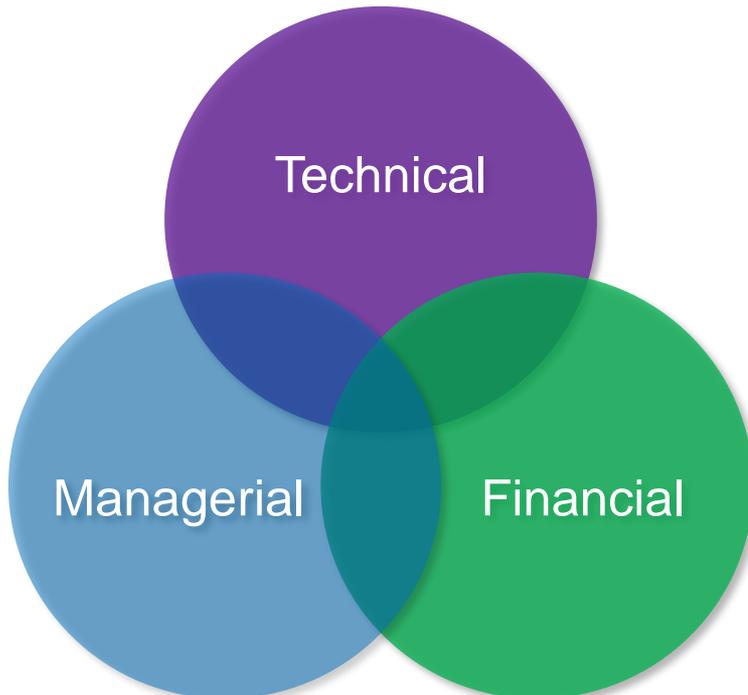
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Mutual Aid & Emergency Assistance



Systems assist each other during an emergency or time of need



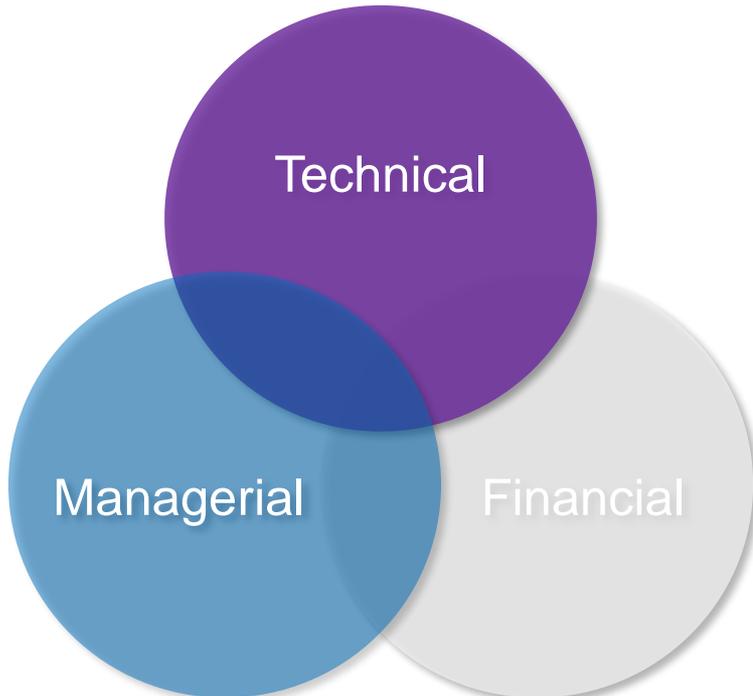
Less Formal



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Emergency  
Interconnect



Systems have a physical connection that is only used during emergencies



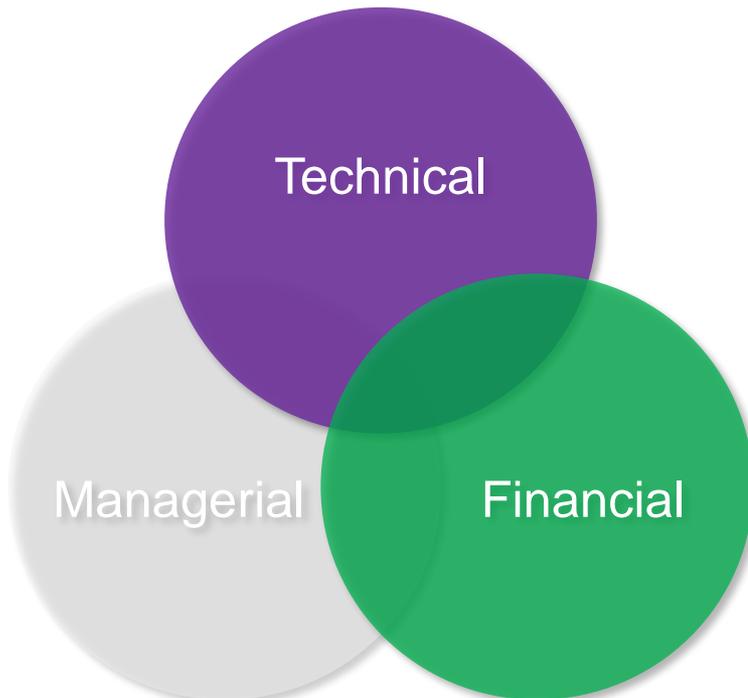
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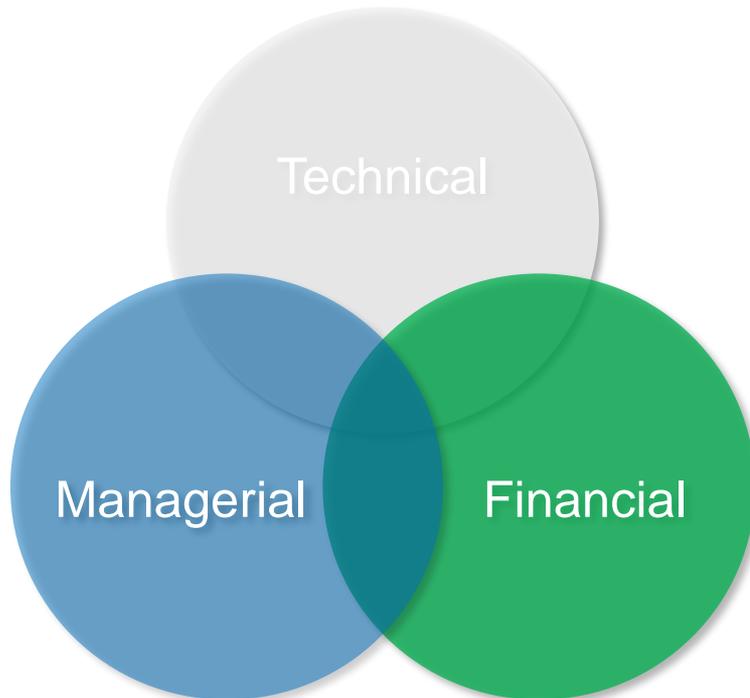
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Operational  
Collaboration



Systems share an operator or contract with the same operator or operation company



Systems share a financial connection. Many options available.



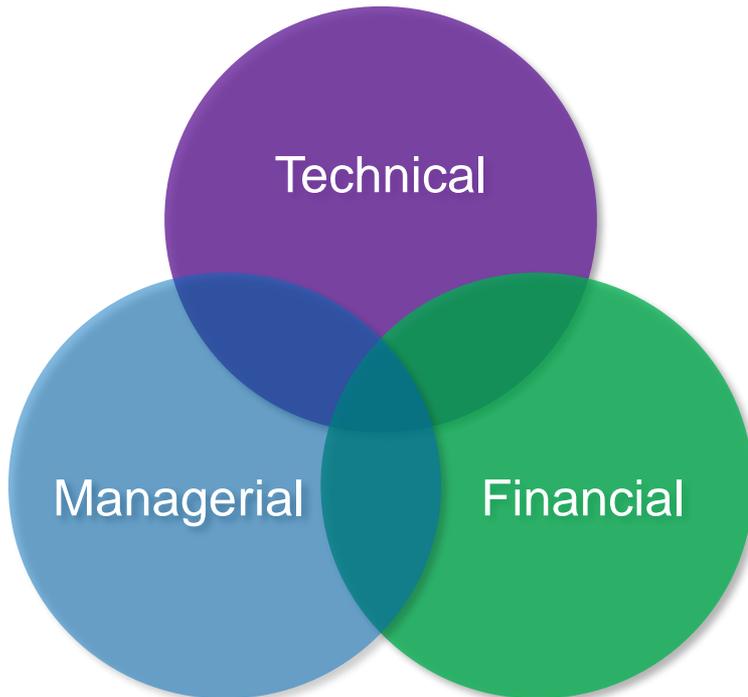
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Managerial  
Collaboration



Systems share  
management  
structure but  
systems are not  
interconnected



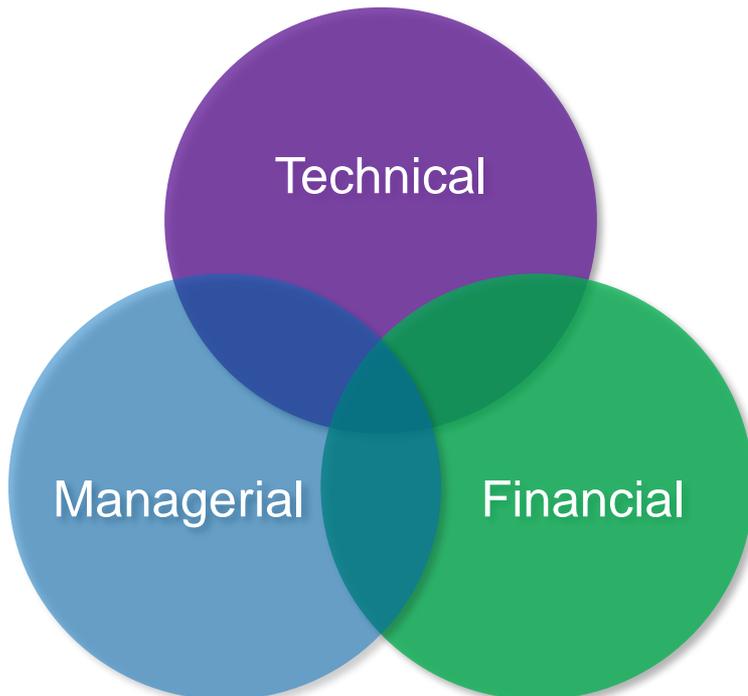
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Regional Entity



Systems form a regional entity either as a separate option or the only option. All have a role on the board.



Less Formal

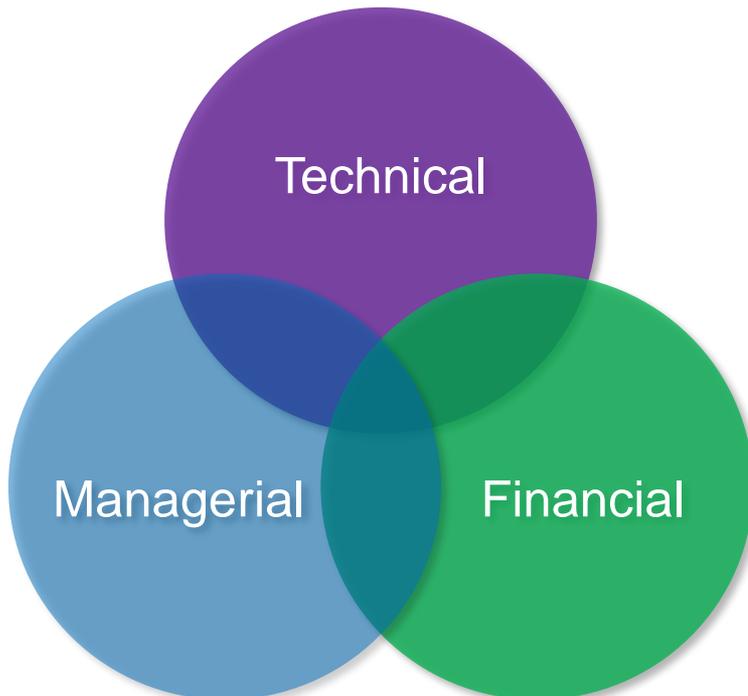


More Formal



Systems dissolve into neighboring entity

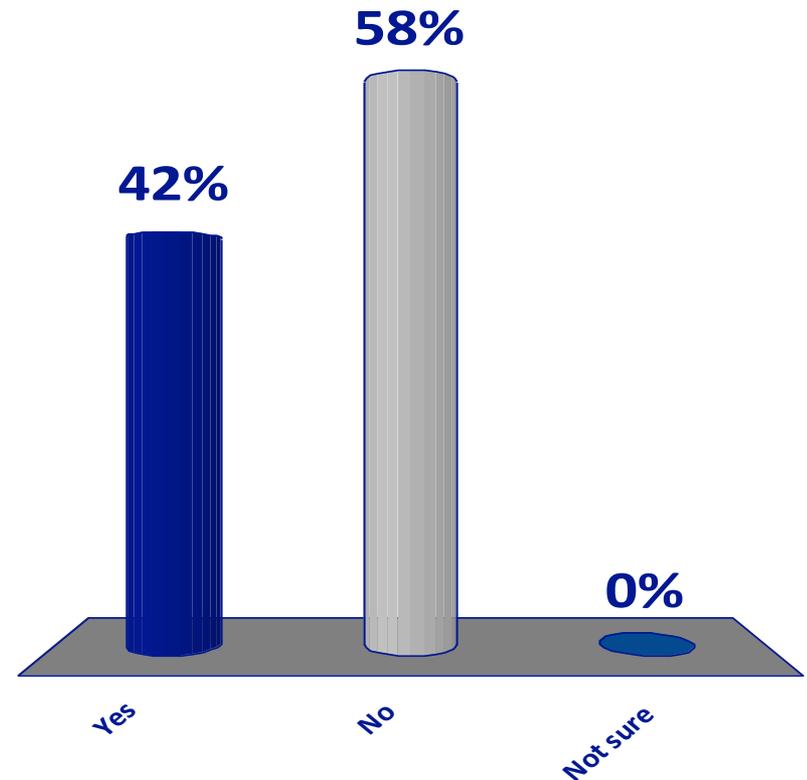
Systems lose independence. Only one utility remains.





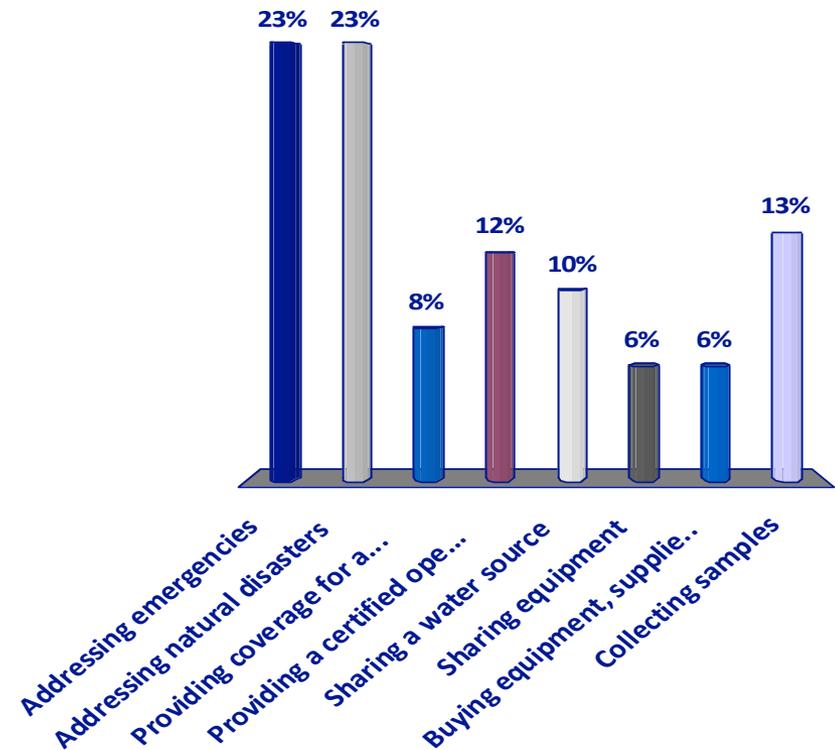
# Have you ever collaborated or partnered with any other water system?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not sure



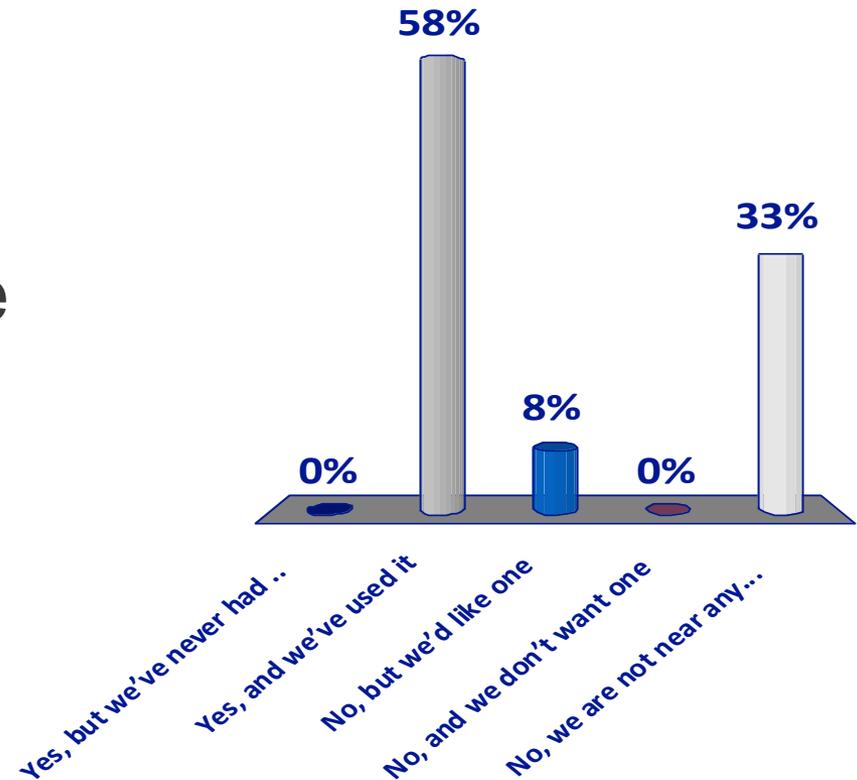
# What types of collaboration are you interested in? (Check all that apply)

- A. Addressing emergencies
- B. Addressing natural disasters
- C. Providing coverage for an operator who's on vacation
- D. Providing a certified operator if you don't have one or you lose your certified operator
- E. Sharing a water source
- F. Sharing equipment
- G. Buying equipment, supplies, chemicals together
- H. Collecting samples



# Do you have an emergency interconnect with any other system?

- A. Yes, but we've never had to use it
- B. Yes, and we've used it
- C. No, but we'd like one
- D. No, and we don't want one
- E. No, we are not near any other water system





# Partnerships in Action



# Saipan Facilities Management Association



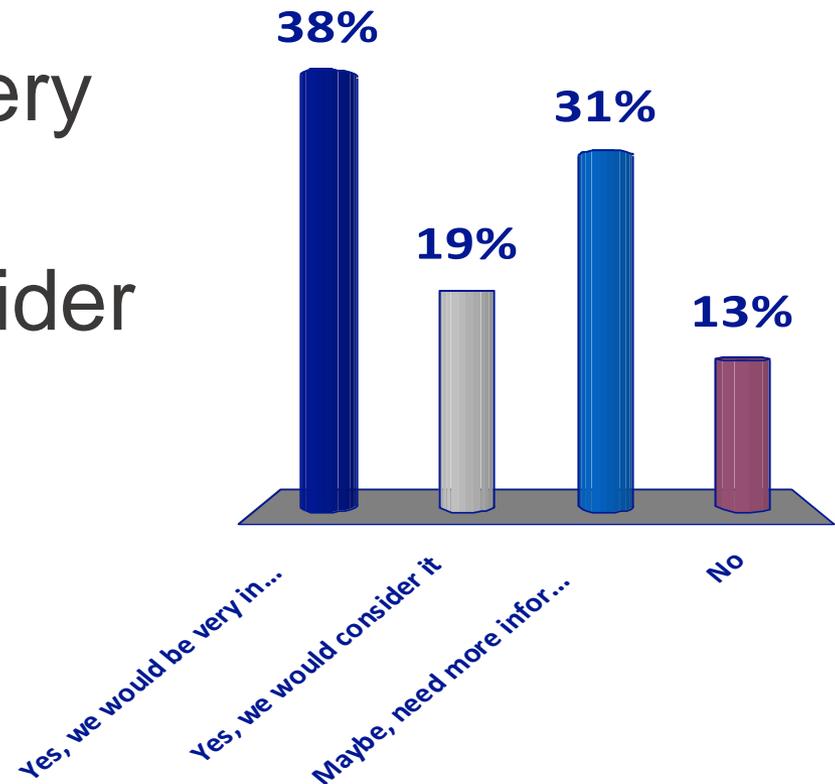


# Saipan Facilities Mgmt Assoc

- Informal group of property managers, many of whom run their own water systems to discuss common problems
- Met monthly and rotated which site hosted the meetings

# Would you be interested in participating in a facilities management group?

- A. Yes, we would be very interested
- B. Yes, we would consider it
- C. Maybe, need more information
- D. No





# Water & Wastewater Agency Response Networks (WARN)

Let's see an overview...

# Overview of WARN



The National WARN Program



# WARN

A mutual aid and assistance network provides water and wastewater utilities with the means to obtain help in the form of personnel, equipment, materials and associated services quickly from other utilities to restore critical operations impacted during an emergency.



# WARN

“Becoming a member of a mutual aid and assistance network before an emergency can make all the difference when your community’s water or wastewater system is in need of help.”





# Emergency in Chapel Hill: Don't drink the water

By [Lisa Sorg](#)

February 3, 2017

In [Environment](#)

374



114



4

In an [emergency announcement](#) posted at 11: 20 this morning, OWASA has ordered its customers not to use their water until further notice because of potential contamination. Using water could result in contamination of the OWASA system, the utility said today.

A water main break on the northeast side of Chapel Hill near Dobbins Drive has reduced OWASA's supply — already depleted from an earlier incident — to very low levels. Yesterday an accidental overload of fluoride at the Jones Ferry Road Water [Treatment](#) Plant forced OWASA to get water from Durham; the two utilities have an agreement to provide water to the other in emergency situations.

OWASA customers are asked to use bottled water for all uses. Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools also closed early because of the water emergency. The current demand for water is about 6.5 million gallons per day.

OWASA's water supply originates in Cane Creek and University Lake watersheds, west of Carrboro. It serves Chapel Hill and Carrboro in southern Orange County.



# WARN Features

- WARN membership is all water systems regardless of ownership
- Each additional member enhances the probability of a successful response to an emergency, regardless of system size



# WARN and Small Systems

- Existing WARNs have found that small systems are typically best prepared to respond to other small systems' requests, since they are more familiar with the equipment used at small systems



# WARN Features

- No member system is obligated to send resources if they decide not to for any reason
- Systems can also be members of other mutual aid or assistance agreements if they so choose



# Legal Agreement

- Each WARN enters into a mutual aid and assistance agreement that best meets the member system needs
- These agreements clarify liability, reimbursement, response procedures and joint planning efforts



# Model WARN Legal Agreement

## **Model Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement for Intrastate Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN)**

*This Model Agreement contains procedures and standards for a water and wastewater utility Mutual Aid and Assistance Program. The Model is based on existing water and wastewater utility Mutual Aid and Assistance agreements implemented in California, Florida, Texas, Louisiana, South Carolina, Oregon, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. While the Model shares some similarities with each of the eight agreements, it is a unique document in and of itself.*

*Creating an agreement for Mutual Aid and Assistance involves a number of policy decisions. The Model Agreement proposes specific approaches to Mutual Aid and Assistance Program issues; however, reasonable minds will differ as to whether the approaches presented in the model are the best. Accordingly, notes are included for each provision of the Model Agreement. These notes highlight significant issues that arise in the drafting of a mutual aid and assistance Program and how the Model Agreement approaches those issues. The notes also explain why certain provisions are included in the Model Agreement.*

*Representatives of the water and wastewater industry can use this Model Agreement as a tool to facilitate discussion on drafting an Intrastate Mutual Aid and Assistance agreement that best illustrates their needs. However, while each intrastate steering committee may revise portions of this Agreement, it is important to note that this Model Agreement allows for inclusion and eventual connection with a national interstate mutual aid and assistance agreement. Because mutual aid and assistance programs require standardized operational procedures, consistency*

<https://www.epa.gov/waterutilityresponse/mutual-aid-and-assistance-drinking-water-and-wastewater-utilities>



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Related Topics: [Emergency Response for Drinking Water and Wastewater Utilities](#)

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# Mutual Aid and Assistance for Drinking Water and Wastewater Utilities

On this page:

- [Learn about Water and Wastewater Agency Response Networks \(WARN\)](#)
- [Join a WARN](#)
- [Access WARN Resources](#)
- [Access WARN Training Tools](#)

A mutual aid and assistance network provides water and wastewater utilities with the means to quickly obtain help in the form of personnel, equipment, materials and associated services from other utilities to restore critical operations impacted during an emergency.

Becoming a member of a mutual aid and assistance network before an emergency can make all the difference when your community's water or wastewater system is in need of help. Use the resources below to ensure you have an effective support system in place.

**Learn about WARN**

## Related Info

[WARN Fact Sheet](#)

Let's see  
the WARN  
in action

# WARN in Action

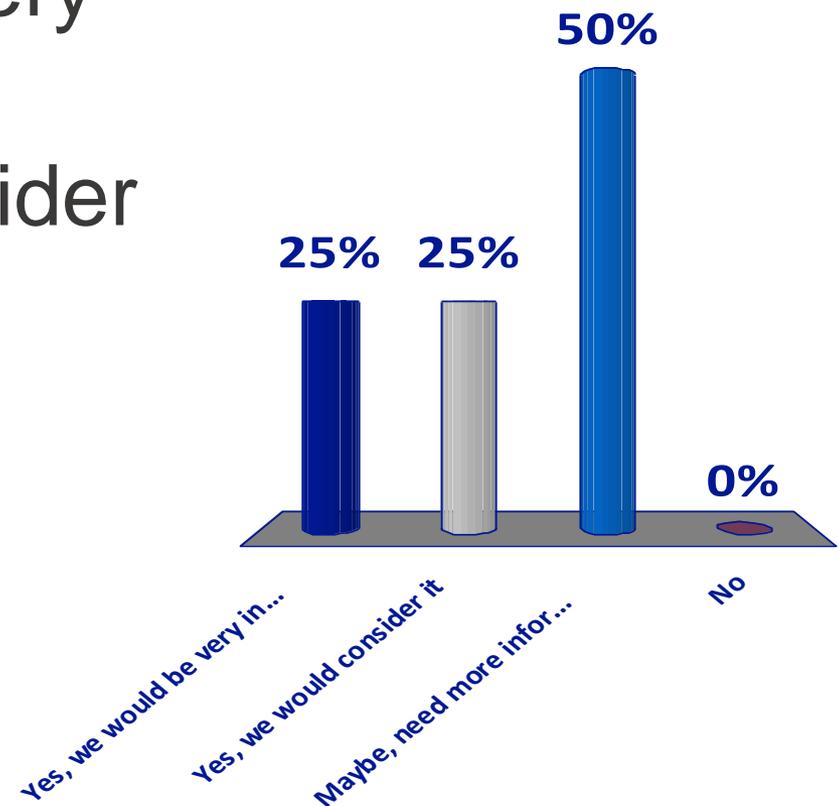
## WARNs in Action



[www.epa.gov/mutualaid](http://www.epa.gov/mutualaid)

# Would you be interested in participating in WARN?

- A. Yes, we would be very interested
- B. Yes, we would consider it
- C. Maybe, need more information
- D. No



<https://epa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=cfccb8b4975d4d72869bd0770510c1b0>



Contact Us 

# Water System Partnerships

Collaborative Approaches to Address Drinking Water Challenges





<http://efcnetwork.org/resource-library/>

✕ How can we work with other water systems to lower costs?

## Tools

No posts found.

## Publications

June 12, 2017

Workshop in a Box: Sustainable Management of Rural and Small Systems Workshops

August 16, 2013

Gaining Operational and Managerial Efficiencies Through Water System Partnerships

August 15, 2013

System Partnership Solutions to Improve Public Health Protection (Volume I)

April 16, 2009

Enhancing Performance of Small Water Systems through Shared Management

August 26, 2013

Crafting Inter-Local Water Agreements: Tips Relating to Issues You May Not Have Thought of or that You Were Hoping to Avoid

August 15, 2013

System Partnership Solutions to Improve Public Health Protection (Volume II)

January 9, 2013

Alternative Financing of Water and Wastewater Infrastructure in Rural Communities

July 16, 2005

Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure in Appalachia: An Analysis of Capital Funding and Funding Gaps

A photograph of a water treatment facility with large blue pipes and machinery.

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