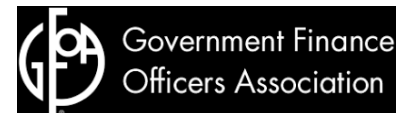




Smart Management for  
Small Water Systems

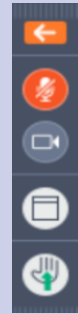
# Financial Benchmarking for Small Water Systems

October 8, 2020



# Logistics

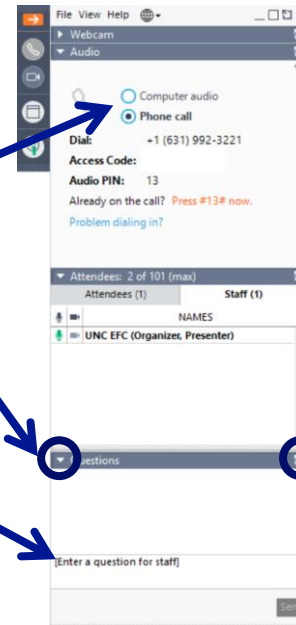
## Opening the control panel



- ← Show your control panel
- ← Mute/unmute. Please keep yourselves muted by default.
- ← Toggle between full screen/window screen view
- ← Raise your hand if you want to be unmuted and ask a question


## Using the control panel

Audio: please choose between computer audio or phone call



Click  to open in Control Panel

Submit **questions** in the Questions box at any time, and press [Send]

Click  to open in separate box and resize

If you do not hear audio right now, please check your speaker volume or enter #[your Audio PIN]# if using phone



# Requirements for 1 Credit Hour for Water Operators

This online course is approved for **1 contact hour** for licensed drinking water operators in Ohio.

Course approval # OEPA-B88604510-X.

Participants **must follow all attendance procedures** in order to receive credit:

- Be logged in with **your name**
- Must **attend the entire session** (one hour)
- **Respond to the polls** (at least every 15 minutes)
- Be **“screen attentive” for 90% or more**. This means that this GoToWebinar app must be active and the foremost, main program on your screen for at least 90% of the time. If you click into another application (e.g. email, web, etc.), you will lose “screen attentiveness” points.

*If you meet these requirements, you will receive a certificate of attendance from Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center for completing the training within 30 days.*

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact [smallsystems@syr.edu](mailto:smallsystems@syr.edu).

# About Us

**The Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN)** is a university-based organization creating innovative solutions to the difficult how-to-pay issues of environmental protection and improvement. The EFCN works with the public and private sectors to promote sustainable environmental solutions while bolstering efforts to manage costs.

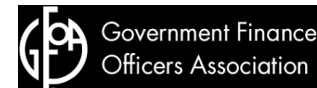


**The Smart Management for Small Water Systems Program** works in every state, territory, and the Navajo Nation. All small drinking water systems are eligible to receive free resources including training, direct technical assistance, tools, blogs, and resources.



# The Small Systems Program Team

- Environmental Finance Center at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Environmental Finance Center at Wichita State University
- EFC West
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)
- Great Lakes Environmental Infrastructure Center
- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)
- New England Environmental Finance Center at the University of Southern Maine
- Southwest Environmental Finance Center at the University of New Mexico
- Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center
- Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation
- Environmental Finance Center at California State University, Sacramento







SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Environmental Finance Center

<http://environmentalfinance.org>



Supporting fair, effective, and financially sustainable delivery of environmental programs through:

- Applied research
- Program design and evaluation
- Teaching and outreach
- Advising
- Policy analysis

*How you pay for it matters*



# Two Sessions for OH Small Water Systems

**October 6, 2020**

**2:00pm – 3:00pm ET**

Funding Programs and Q&A Session on  
Financial Recovery from COVID-19

Presentations from funding programs, and Q&A format to allow you to ask questions about financial management of your water systems during the pandemic and recovery over the next few months.

**October 8, 2020**

**2:00pm – 3:00pm ET**

Benchmarking Rates and Financial  
Performance

Presentation on assessing financial performance metrics, how to compare rates more effectively, and a demonstration of the Ohio Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboard.



# Agenda

- Welcome from Ohio EPA's Susan Schell
- Benchmarking financial performance
- Benchmarking rates
- Demonstration of the Ohio Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboard
- Questions, and resources available to help your systems

Submit your questions in the “Questions” box at any time





# **Welcome Remarks from Ohio EPA**

Susan Schell

Manager, Engineering & Infrastructure

Division of Drinking and Ground Waters

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency



# My Contact Information

Shadi Eskaf  
Research Director  
EFC at UNC Chapel Hill  
[eskaf@sog.unc.edu](mailto:eskaf@sog.unc.edu)  
919-962-2785



SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT  
Environmental Finance Center



**Poll:**

**How do you determine whether your water system is financially sustainable?**

**Select all that apply**



# **Benchmarking Financial Performance**



# What you Can Assess with Financial Performance Indicators

Is your utility self-sufficient?

Operating Ratio

Are you able to cover your debt service after paying for your day-to-day operations?

Debt Service Coverage Ratio

If your customers stop paying their bills, how long can you maintain operations?

Days Cash on Hand

Can your system meet its short-term obligations?

Quick / Current Ratio



# Whiteboard Video: Financial Benchmarking

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfs0brT\\_jkU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfs0brT_jkU)

Part of a series of whiteboard videos [at this link](#)





# Where to Find Data

## Local governments:

annual audited financial statements

## Non-governments:

balance sheets, shareholder reports, annual reports, etc.

BAVARIA	
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS	
PROPRIETARY FUND	
JUNE 30, 2011	
	Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund
<b>Assets</b>	
Current Assets:	
Cash - operating	\$ 368,001
Accounts Receivable (Net)	60,346
Prepaid Insurance	5,856
Total Current Assets	440,203
Noncurrent Assets:	
Restricted cash	177,208
Capital assets	
Land	209,556
Buildings	22,982
Improvements other than buildings	5,873,769
Machinery and equipment	896,073
Construction in progress	1,454,079
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(2,883,225)
Deferred Charge	39,833
Total noncurrent assets	5,781,215
Total Assets	6,421,418
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Current Liabilities:	
Accounts Payable	21,090
Accrued Expenses	2,767
Due to Other Funds	8,176
Customer Deposits	62,625
Deferred Subsidy Revenue	460,005
Current Portion of Long Term Debt	343,811
Total Current Liabilities	898,474
Noncurrent Liabilities:	
Compensated Absences	15,695
Revenue Bonds (Net of current portion)	233,357
Notes Payable (Net of current portion)	646,873
Total Noncurrent Liabilities	889,925
Total Liabilities	1,788,399
<b>Fund Net assets</b>	
Invested in capital assets, net of related debt	4,355,133
Restricted for debt service	114,583
Unrestricted	163,261
Total fund net assets	\$ 4,633,078



**Poll:**

**How familiar are you with audited financial statements?**



# Audited Financial Statements

You will need all of the following:

- Statement of Net Position
- Statement of Revenues, Expenses & Changes in Net Position
- Statement of Cash Flows

Explanations in the Notes could be helpful



# Operating Ratio

$$= \frac{\textit{Total Operating Revenues}}{\textit{Total Operating Expenses}}$$

Calculate two numbers:  
one including depreciation in total operating expenses,  
and one excluding depreciation

<http://efc.web.unc.edu/2015/02/27/operating-ratio/>

# Operating Ratio

## Including Depreciation

**MAYBERRY**  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS  
PROPRIETARY FUNDS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2010

	<u>Enterprise Funds</u> <u>Water and Sewer</u>	
OPERATING REVENUES		
Charges for services	\$ 444,231	
Grants	0	
Total operating revenues	<u>444,231</u>	- ①
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Personnel services	178,885	
Contractual services	63,898	
Other supplies and expense	126,202	- ③
Depreciation	142,463	- ②
Total operating expenses	<u>511,448</u>	
Operating income (loss)	<u>(67,217)</u>	

1a.

\$444,231

Operating Revenues (1)

=

0.87

\$511,448

Operating Expenses (including depreciation) (2)

# Operating Ratio

## Excluding Depreciation

**MAYBERRY**  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS  
PROPRIETARY FUNDS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2010

	<u>Enterprise Funds</u> <u>Water and Sewer</u>	
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Total operating expenses	<u>511,448</u>	OE \$511,448
Operating income (loss)	<u>(67,217)</u>	- Dep \$142,463

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \boxed{1b.} & \frac{\boxed{\$444,231}}{\boxed{\$368,985}} & = \boxed{1.20} \\ & \text{Operating Revenues (1)} & \\ & \text{Operating Expenses (excluding depreciation) (2-3)} & \end{array}$$





# Debt Service Coverage Ratio

$$= \frac{\text{Total Operating Revenues} - \text{Operating Expenses (excluding depreciation)}}{\text{Principal} + \text{Interest Payments on Long Term Debt}}$$

Bond covenants may specify a minimum target  
(usually 1.2 or higher)

<http://efc.web.unc.edu/2015/04/23/debt-service-coverage-ratio/>

## Page 1 of 2

$$\begin{array}{r} P \$49,655 \\ + 1 \$35,128 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\frac{\$444,231 - \$368,985}{\$84,783} = 0.89$$

Operating Revenues (1)      Operating Expenses (2-3)  
(excluding depreciation)

Principal & Interest on Long-Term Debt (4)



# Days of Cash on Hand

*Unrestricted cash and cash equivalents*

=

---

*(Operating Expenses excluding depreciation) / 365*

<http://efc.web.unc.edu/2015/06/24/days-cash-on-hand/>



**Poll:**

**What's a good minimum target for Days  
Cash on Hand?**

# Days of Cash on Hand

MAYBERRY  
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS  
PROPRIETARY FUND  
DECEMBER 31, 2010

Enterprise Funds  
Water and Sewer

ASSETS

Current assets

Cash

107,706

Restricted cash

176,424

Receivables, net

41,870

Total current assets

326,000

Capital assets

Land and improvements

10,229

Distribution and collection systems

5,732,845

Buildings

503,398

Less accumulated depreciation

(2,514,933)

Total capital assets

3,731,539

Total Assets

\$ 4,057,539

\$107,706

Unrestricted Cash & Cash Equivalents (5)

3.

=

107

\$368,985

/ 365

Operating Expenses (excluding depreciation) (2-3)



# Current Ratio

$$= \frac{\text{Unrestricted cash and cash equivalents} + \text{Receivables, net}}{\text{Current Liabilities}}$$

<http://efc.web.unc.edu/2015/10/01/key-indicator-current-ratio/>



# Current Ratio

4.

\$107,706

Unrestricted Cash &  
Cash Equivalents (5)

+

\$41,870

Receivables, net (6)

=

1.38

\$108,390

Current Liabilities (7)

MAYBERRY  
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS  
PROPRIETARY FUND  
DECEMBER 31, 2010

Enterprise Funds  
Water and Sewer

## ASSETS

### Current assets

Cash

107,706

Restricted cash

176,424

Receivables, net

41,870

Total current assets

326,000

### Capital assets

Land and improvements

10,229

Distribution and collection systems

5,732,845

Buildings

503,398

Less accumulated depreciation

(2,514,933)

Total capital assets

3,731,539

Total Assets

\$ 4,057,539

## LIABILITIES

### Current liabilities

Accounts payable

\$ 9,311

Customer deposits

44,229

Bonds payable current

54,850

Total current liabilities

108,390



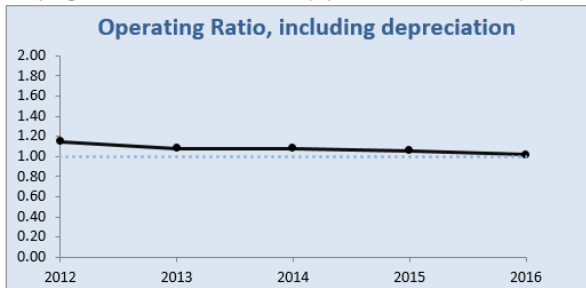
**Quiz!**

**How do you calculate operating ratio?**

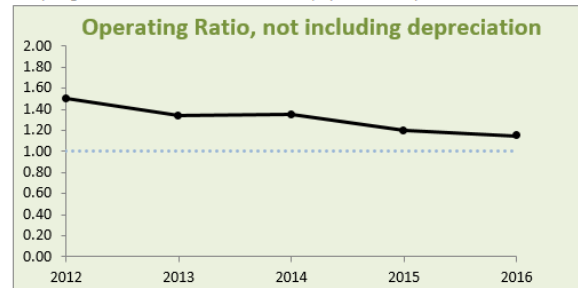
# Consider Trends in the Last 5 Years

## Assessment for Example utility

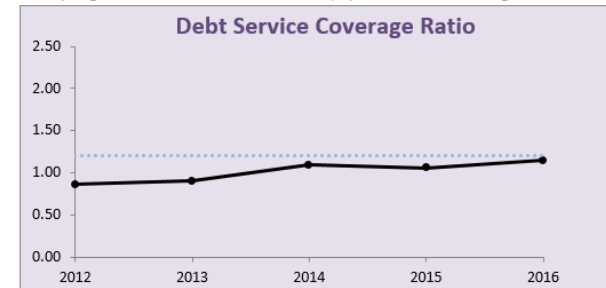
Did you generate the revenues needed to pay for O&M and a little for capital?



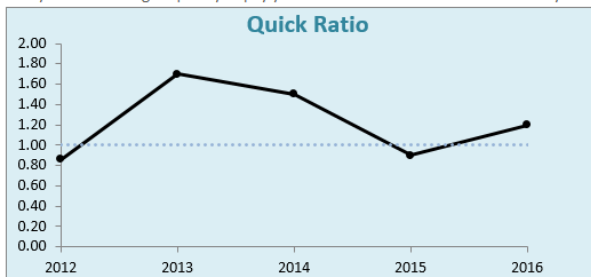
Did you generate the revenues needed to pay for O&M by itself?



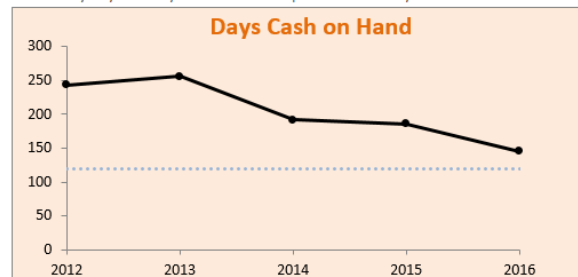
Did you generate the revenues needed to pay for O&M and existing debt service?



Did you have enough liquidity to pay your current liabilities at the end of the year?



How many days could you continue to operate the utility with the cash levels available?




# Tool: Financial Health Checkup for Water Utilities


<http://efc.sog.unc.edu> or <http://efcnetwork.org>

Find the most up-to-date version in Resources / Tools

### Financial Health Checkup for Water Utilities

**UNC**  
ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER

Developed by the Environmental Finance Center  
at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
<http://efc.sog.unc.edu>



A resource for water systems through the Environmental Finance Center Network's  
Smart Management for Small Water Systems project, funded under a cooperative  
agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection. <http://efcnetwork.org>

#### What does this tool do?



This tool assists in the assessment of the financial performance of a water (and/or wastewater) utility fund. Financial data readily available in annual financial statements are copied into this tool, which computes key financial indicators that measure a variety of important metrics, such as the ability to pay debt service, availability of cash to pay for operations and maintenance, the sufficiency of revenues generated, etc. Each metric is compared against targets that are specified by the user. The tool demonstrates the financial strengths and weaknesses of the utility fund in the past 5 years.

#### Features:

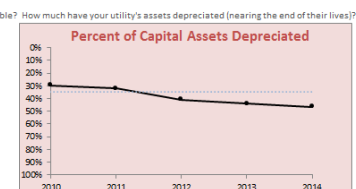
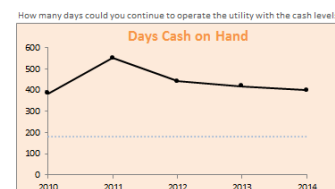
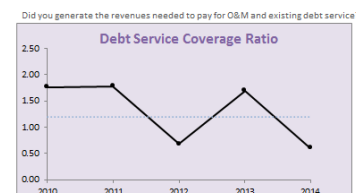
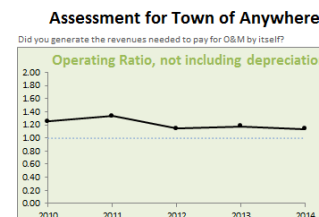
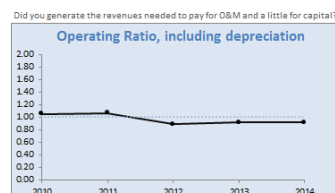
- Simple data entry (uses data already reported in your audited financial statements)
- 6 financial performance indicators with explanations
- Set your own targets
- Assessment of last year's financial ratios, improvements since previous year, and five-year trends
- Guided navigation through hyperlinked images

#### What are financial indicators?

Watch a whiteboard video explaining financial performance indicators in lay terms.



Excel®- based tool  
Free to use



Created by the Environmental Finance Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
A resource for water systems from the EFCN's Smart Management for Small Water Systems project  
funded under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. E.P.A.

# Tool: Financial Health Checkup for Water Utilities

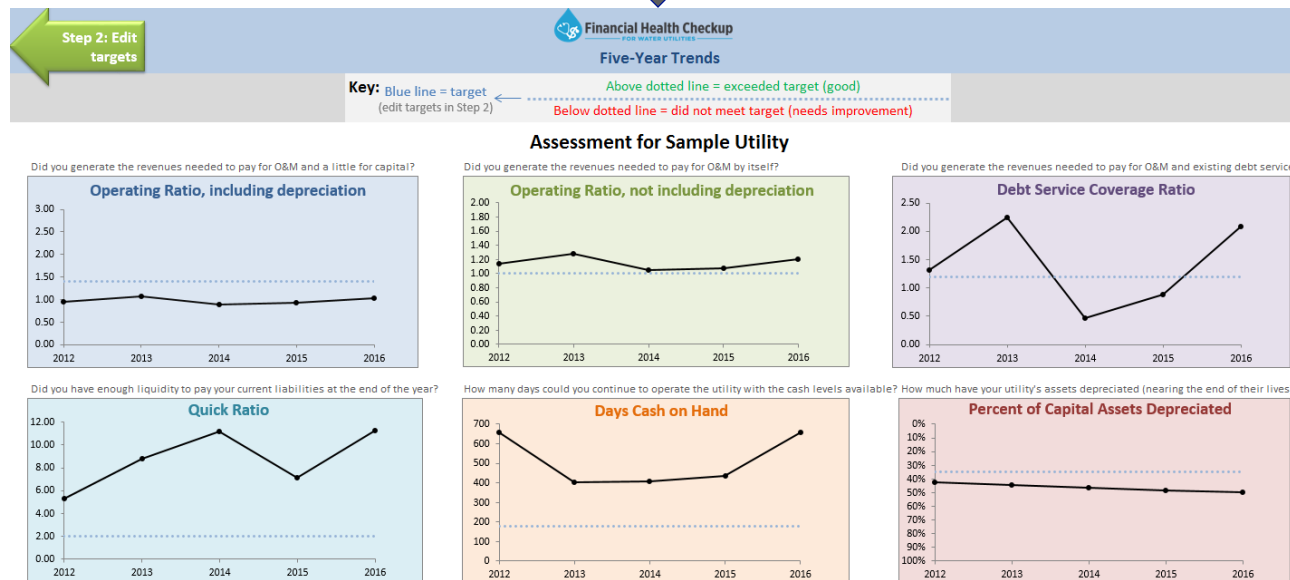
## Key Field in the financial statement/CAPX

- [1] Total Operating Revenues
- [2] Total Operating Expenses
- [3] Depreciation & Amortization Expenses
- [4] Debt Principal Payments
- [4b] Debt Interest Payments
- [5] Current Assets, excluding inventories, restricted cash, prepaids
- [6] Current Liabilities, excluding deposits & bond anticipation notes
- [7] Unrestricted Cash & Investments
- [8] Total Accumulated Depreciation
- [9] Total Depreciable Capital Assets

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
[1] Total Operating Revenues	\$ 3,984,193	\$ 3,965,968	\$ 3,901,253	\$ 4,459,727	\$ 5,074,590
[2] Total Operating Expenses	\$ 4,165,641	\$ 3,736,470	\$ 4,378,937	\$ 4,789,087	\$ 4,896,441
[3] Depreciation & Amortization Expenses	\$ 681,808	\$ 635,807	\$ 656,255	\$ 668,160	\$ 684,561
[4] Debt Principal Payments	\$ 323,177	\$ 331,520	\$ 339,490	\$ 342,512	\$ 265,342
[4b] Debt Interest Payments	\$ 55,289	\$ 53,350	\$ 47,011	\$ 38,474	\$ 147,909
[5] Current Assets, excluding inventories, restricted cash, prepaids	\$ 6,614,237	\$ 4,004,526	\$ 4,756,504	\$ 5,362,317	\$ 7,808,389
[6] Current Liabilities, excluding deposits & bond anticipation notes	\$ 1,247,456	\$ 456,465	\$ 425,164	\$ 750,171	\$ 691,223
[7] Unrestricted Cash & Investments	\$ 6,297,233	\$ 3,406,963	\$ 4,149,266	\$ 4,929,329	\$ 7,580,205
[8] Total Accumulated Depreciation	\$ 12,976,114	\$ 13,611,921	\$ 14,268,176	\$ 14,936,336	\$ 15,620,897
[9] Total Depreciable Capital Assets	\$ 30,575,353	\$ 30,686,885	\$ 30,867,768	\$ 30,994,872	\$ 31,291,993

## Instructions

Enter as shown in the Total Operating Revenues  
 Enter as shown in the Total Operating Expenses  
 Depreciation and amortization are listed in the Total Operating Expenses  
 Enter \$0 if there were no debt service payments  
 Enter \$0 if there were no debt service interest payments  
 Total Current Assets minus all inventory, restricted cash, and prepaids  
 Total Current Liabilities minus all refundable deposits and bond anticipation notes  
 Unrestricted Cash & Investments (and investments)  
 Total accumulated depreciation on capital assets  
 Enter the total value of capital assets



A blue-tinted photograph of industrial machinery, specifically large pipes and valves, likely from a factory or refinery. The image is positioned at the top of the slide, above the title.

# **Set Up and Monitor Internal Financial Performance Targets**

Set up specific financial performance targets, measure and monitor performance indicators, and adjust financial decisions to maintain success.





# Recorded Webinar on Setting Financial Targets

<https://efc.sog.unc.edu/event/setting-financial-targets-water-utilities-beyond-budget>


**Setting Financial Targets For Water Utilities  
Beyond The Budget**

Webinar  
September 25, 2018

Shadi Eskaf  
Environmental Finance Center at the UNC School of Government

Maria Hunnicutt  
Broad River Water Authority, NC

Stephen Winters  
Orange Water and Sewer Authority, NC

 **UNC** | SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT  
Environmental Finance Center

[www.efc.sog.unc.edu](http://www.efc.sog.unc.edu)



# Examples of Financial Targets

Minimum Reserves / Cash on Hand

Working Capital Reserves

Debt Service Coverage Ratio

Debt Burden or Debt-Per-Customer

Cash Financing of Capital Projects

Rates Affordability

Credit Rating



# Benchmarking Rates



**Poll:**

**True or False: it is important for our water system to compare our rates to other systems' rates**



# Sharing Information with Elected Officials when Staff Requested a Water Rate Increase

According to a national survey of 1,408 water/wastewater utilities in the U.S. in 2014:

- 94% included information about the utility's financial condition ...
- 74% included information about what nearby utilities are charging ...
- 58% included information about what similar sized utilities are charging ...

... and the information was judged by staff as “very or somewhat useful”.

Staff of 62% of the utilities compared rates to nearby utilities themselves as part of their internal rates review process prior to presenting a rate case to their governing body.



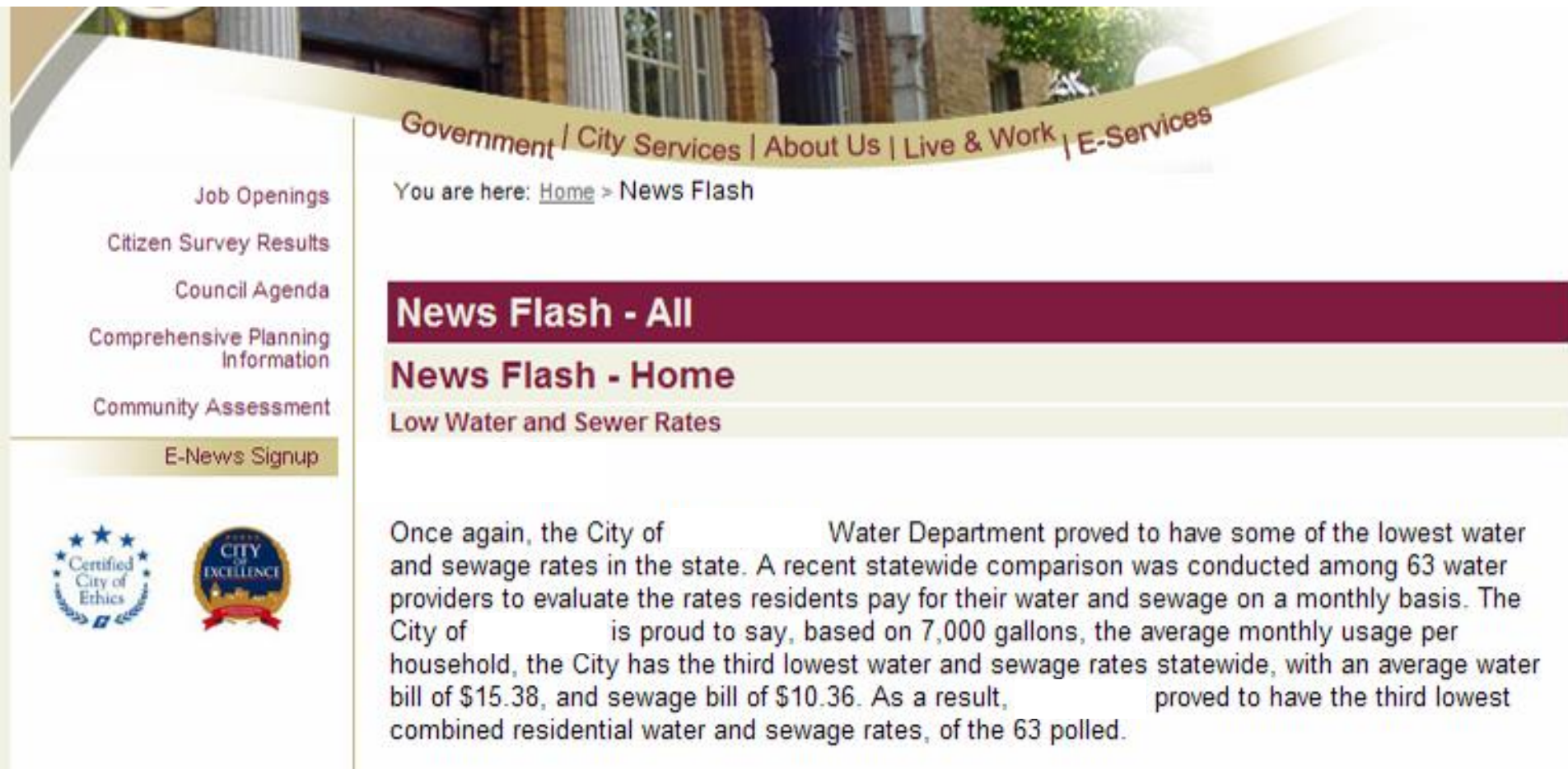
# Elected Officials Cared About the Information

315 elected officials reported that the following were “very important” or “important” factors in their decisions about whether to raise water rates:

- Long-term impact on the utility’s financial condition: **97%**
- What nearby utilities are charging: **51%**
- What similar sized utilities are charging: **56%**
- Long-term affordability for residential customers: **92%**



# Source of Pride



The screenshot shows a city website with a blue header image of industrial pipes. The main navigation bar includes links for Government, City Services, About Us, Live & Work, and E-Services. A sidebar on the left lists various city services. The main content area features a maroon banner for 'News Flash - All' and a yellow banner for 'News Flash - Home'. Below these, a section titled 'Low Water and Sewer Rates' contains a paragraph about the city's low rates compared to other providers.

Government | City Services | About Us | Live & Work | E-Services

You are here: [Home](#) > News Flash



**News Flash - All**

**News Flash - Home**

**Low Water and Sewer Rates**

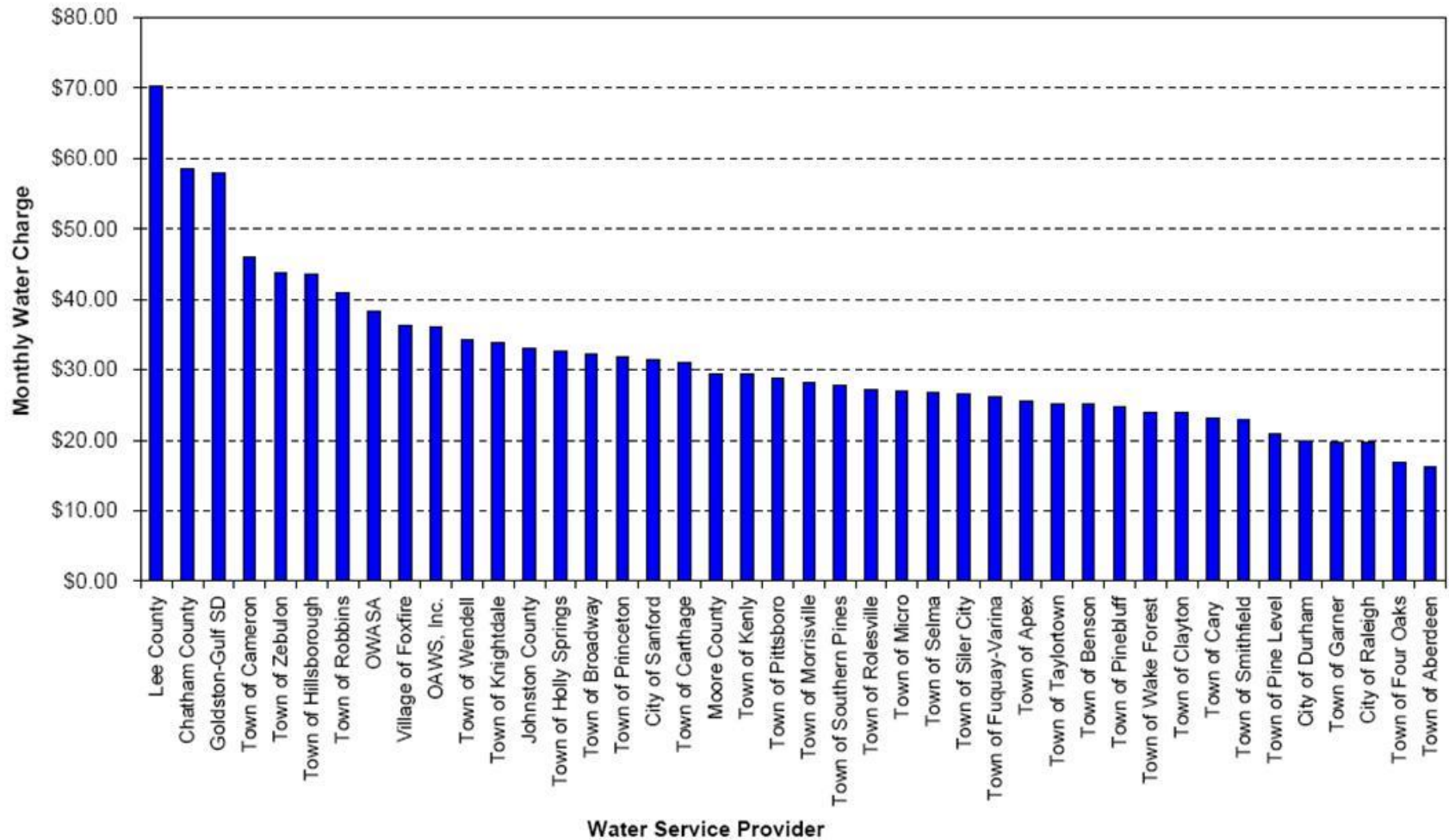
Once again, the City of \_\_\_\_\_ Water Department proved to have some of the lowest water and sewage rates in the state. A recent statewide comparison was conducted among 63 water providers to evaluate the rates residents pay for their water and sewage on a monthly basis. The City of \_\_\_\_\_ is proud to say, based on 7,000 gallons, the average monthly usage per household, the City has the third lowest water and sewage rates statewide, with an average water bill of \$15.38, and sewage bill of \$10.36. As a result, \_\_\_\_\_ proved to have the third lowest combined residential water and sewage rates, of the 63 polled.

Job Openings  
Citizen Survey Results  
Council Agenda  
Comprehensive Planning Information  
Community Assessment  
E-News Signup



# Comparing Rates – Common Way





# Problems with Benchmarking that Way

- Comparing to utilities that are not similar
- Comparing to only a few utilities
- Comparing only one bill amount
- Comparing nothing besides rates
  - pressure to keep rates low ...
  - ... regardless of financial condition of utility
  - ignores customers' ability to pay
  - ignores price signals and utility's policies



# **How Board Members Sometimes Respond to Request to Raise Rates**

“Our rates are high enough”

“The customers cannot pay any more”

“Our rates are higher here than towns X, Y and Z [already ‘too high’]” or “our rates are lower here than towns A, B and C [good, let’s not raise them]”

# Survey of Ohio Water and Wastewater Rates



## 2018 Sewer and Water Rate Survey



Office of Fiscal Administration  
Economic Analysis Unit

December 2019

- Conducted yearly by Ohio EPA since the 1980s
- 2018 rates: 445 utilities participated (70%)
- Tables showing each utility's rates over time
- Monthly bill for 7,756 gallons (1,037 cubic feet)



# Trends in Rates in Ohio

Figure 3: Annual Average Water Rates and Inflation 1990-2018

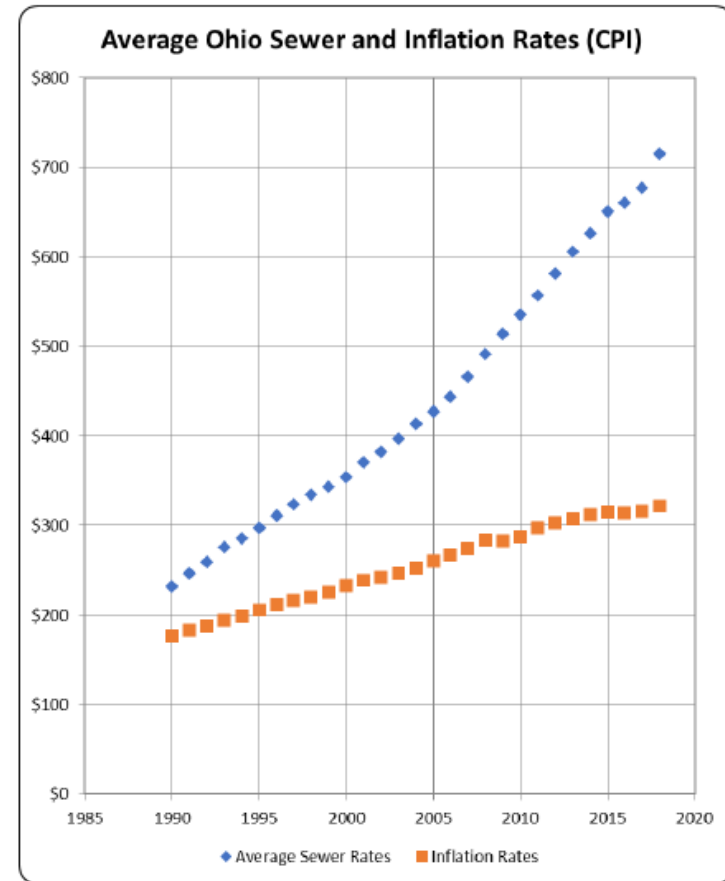
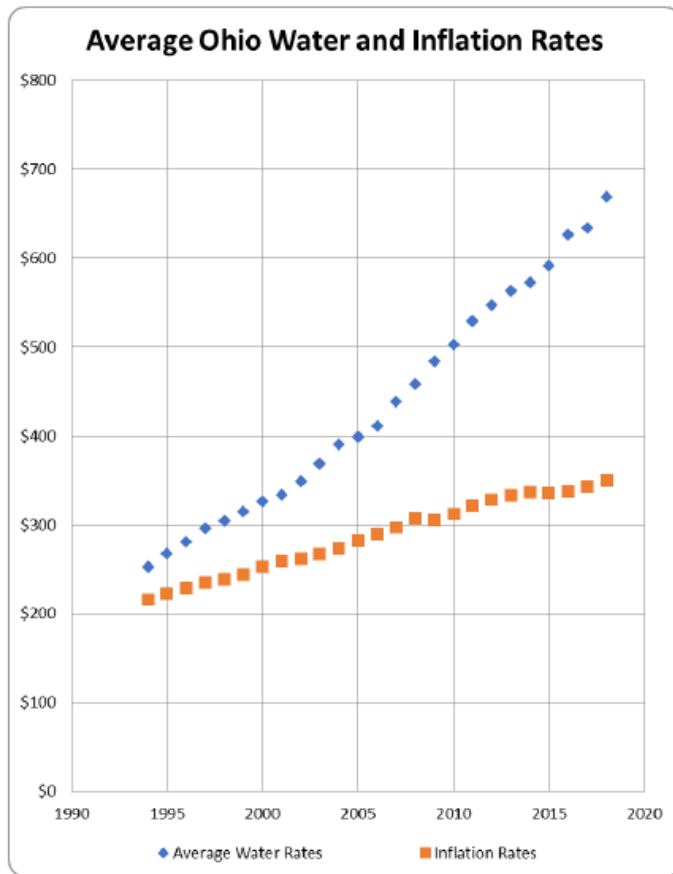


Figure 1: Annual Average Sewer and Inflation Rates 1990-2018



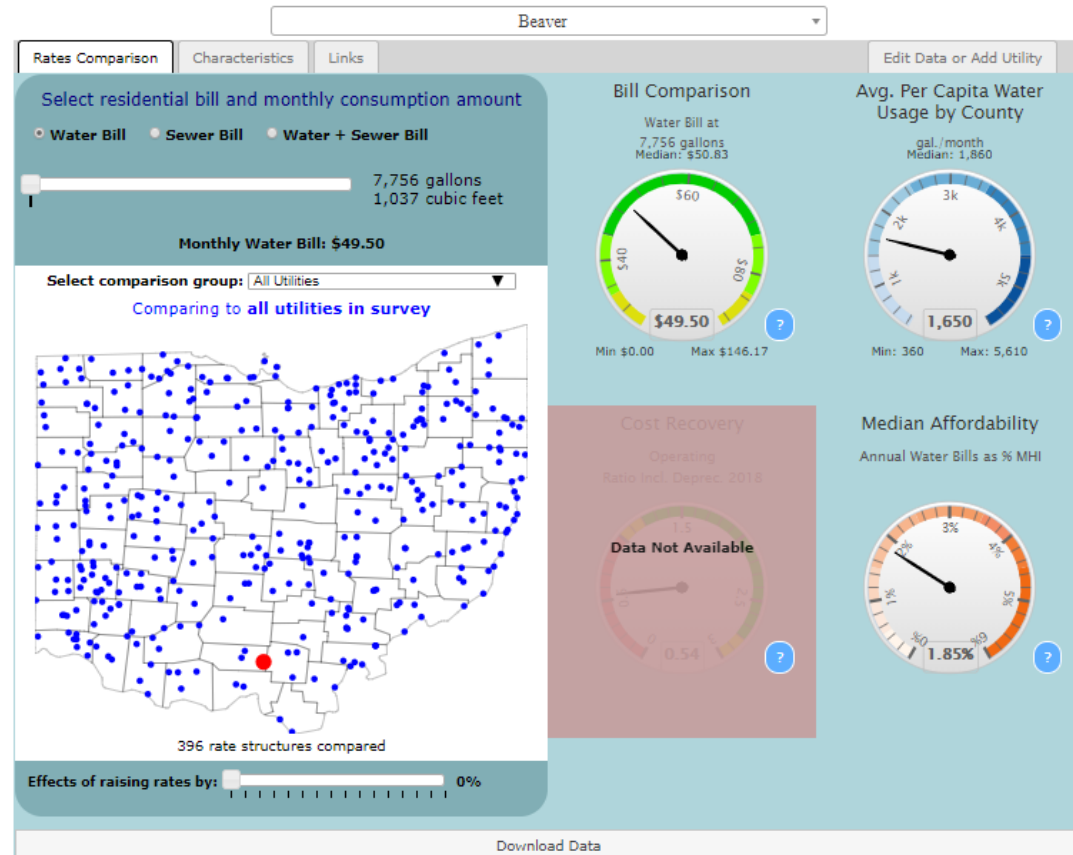
# Demonstration of the Ohio Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboard

<https://efc.sog.unc.edu/resource/ohio-water-and-wastewater-rates-dashboard>

or  
[efcnetwork.org](https://efcnetwork.org)  
Find it in  
Resources / Tools



OH Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboard  
Rates as of January 1, 2018  
Dashboard updated: April 24, 2020

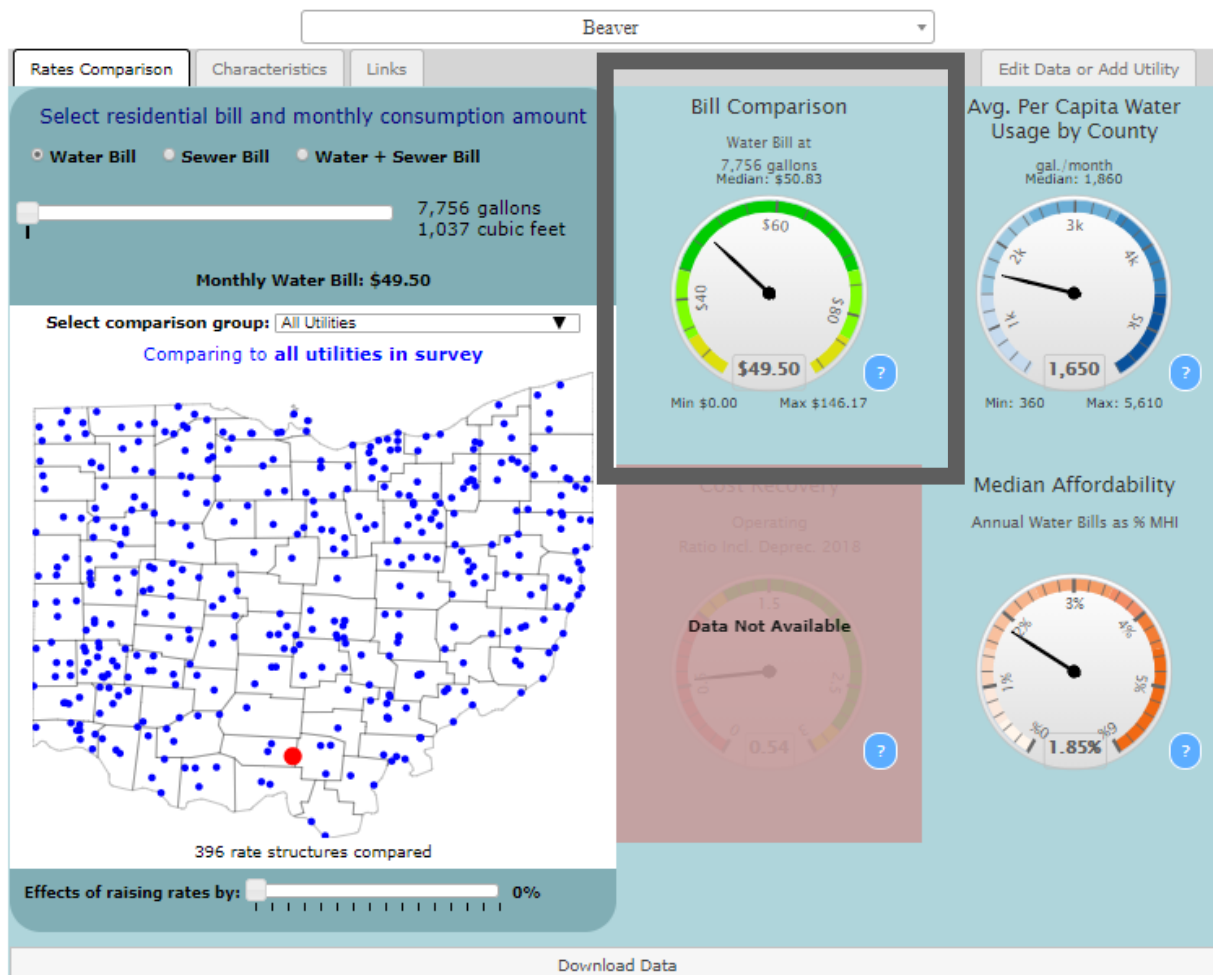




**Poll:**

**Are you already familiar with this dashboard?**

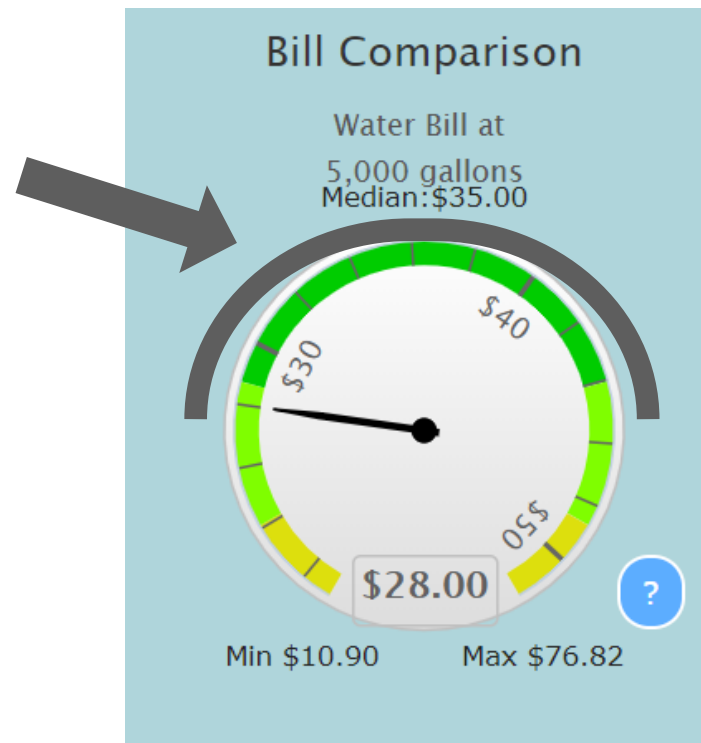




# Dial: Bill Comparison

Darkest green band = middle 50% of utilities

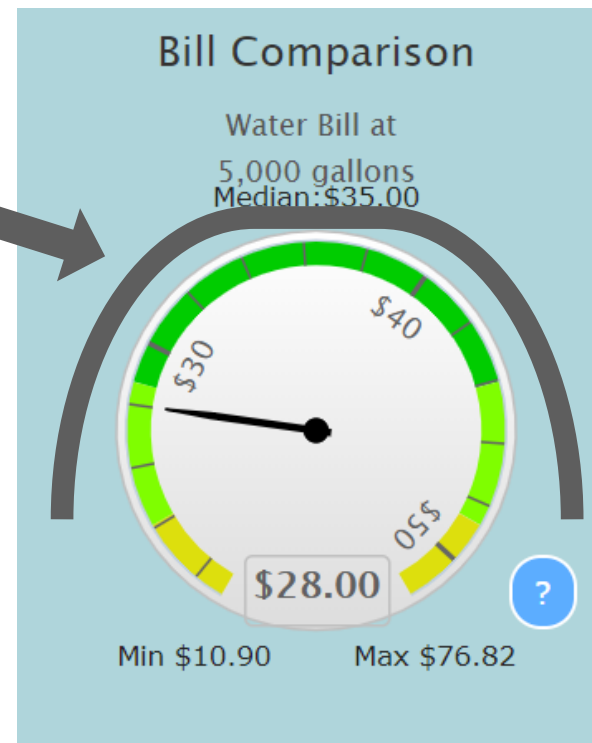
**Half** of all utilities  
in your peer group have  
bills that fall within this  
range



# Dial: Bill Comparison

Both greens combined = middle 80% of utilities

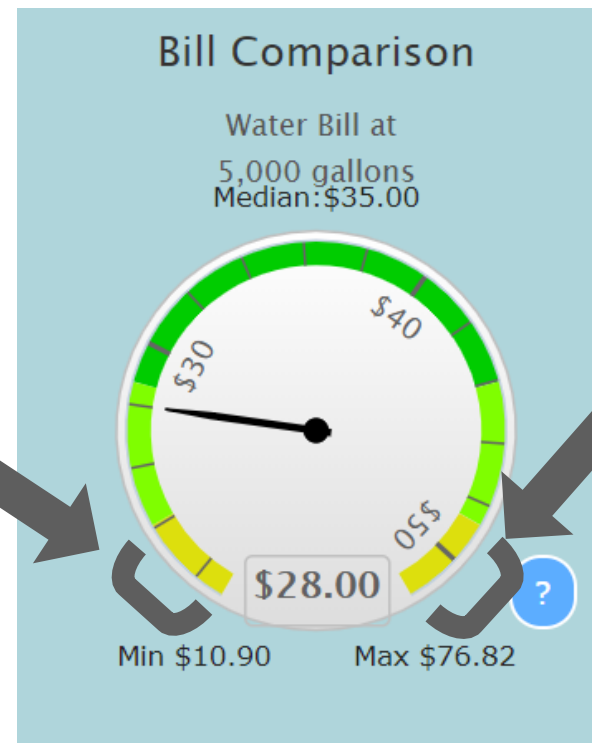
**The majority** of all utilities in your peer group have bills that fall within the range of the green bands

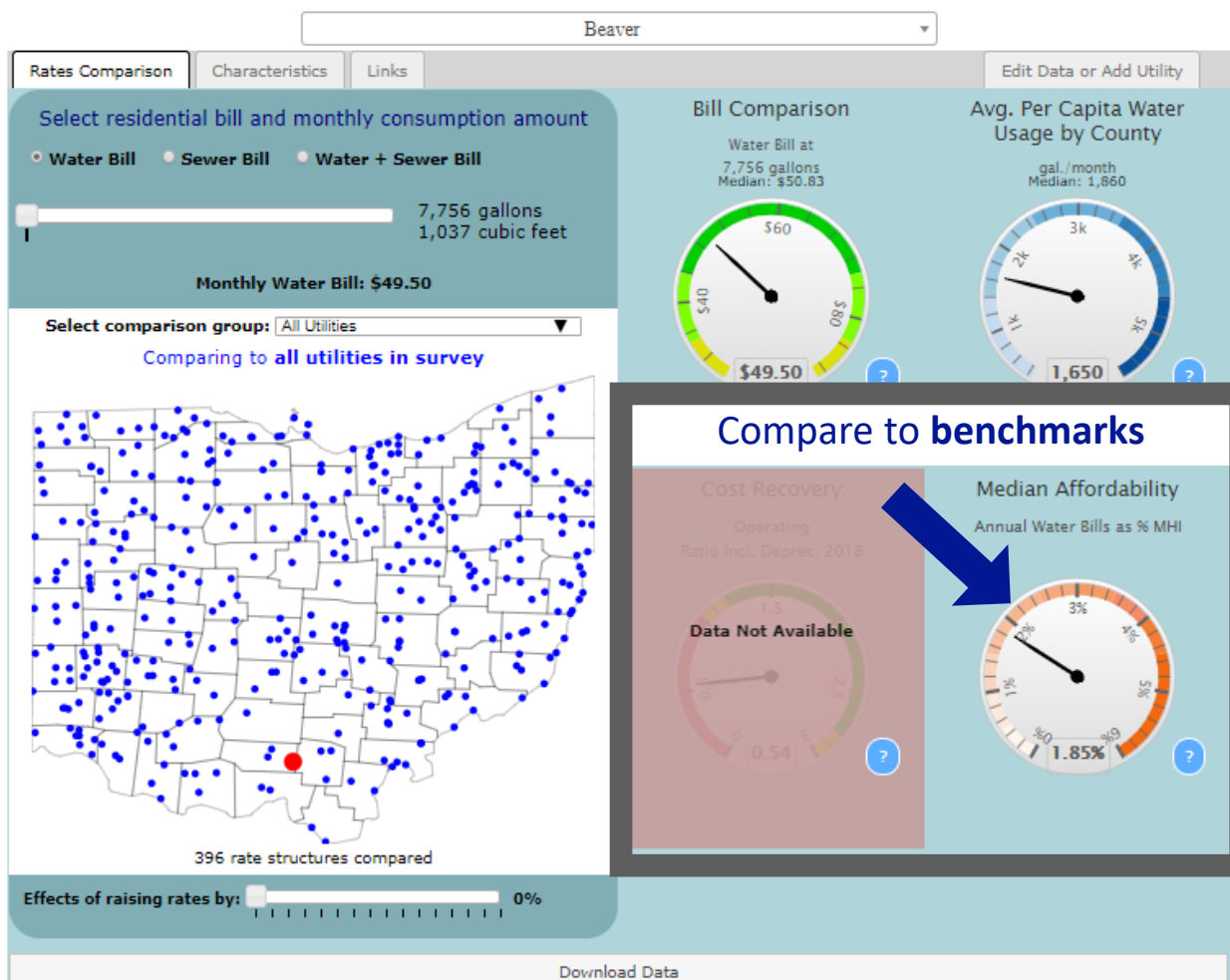


# Dial: Bill Comparison

Yellow = the lowest and highest 10% of utilities

**10%** of utilities  
in your peer group  
have bills **lower** than  
90% of other utilities,  
**10%** have bills **higher**  
than 90% of utilities



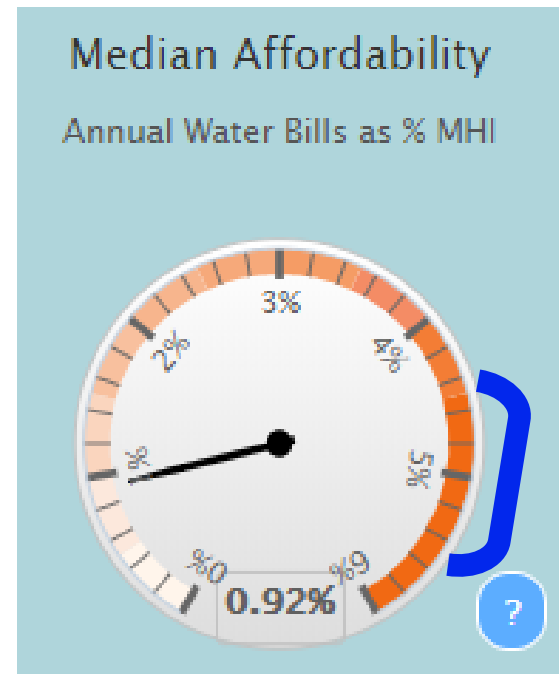




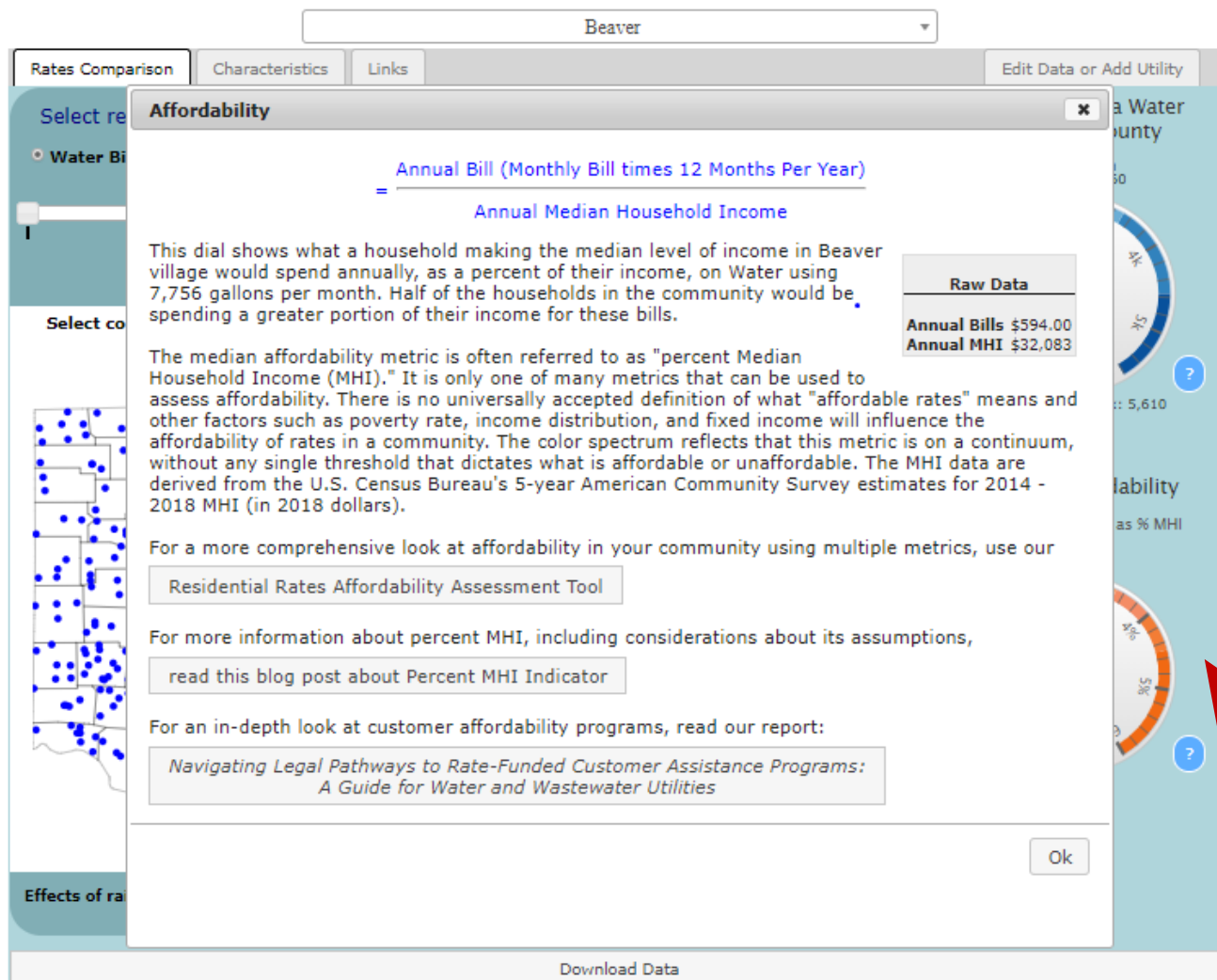
# Dial: Median Affordability

Darker shades of orange indicate a higher percentage of MHI spent annually on bills

The percentage of median household income (MHI) spent annually on water and wastewater bills



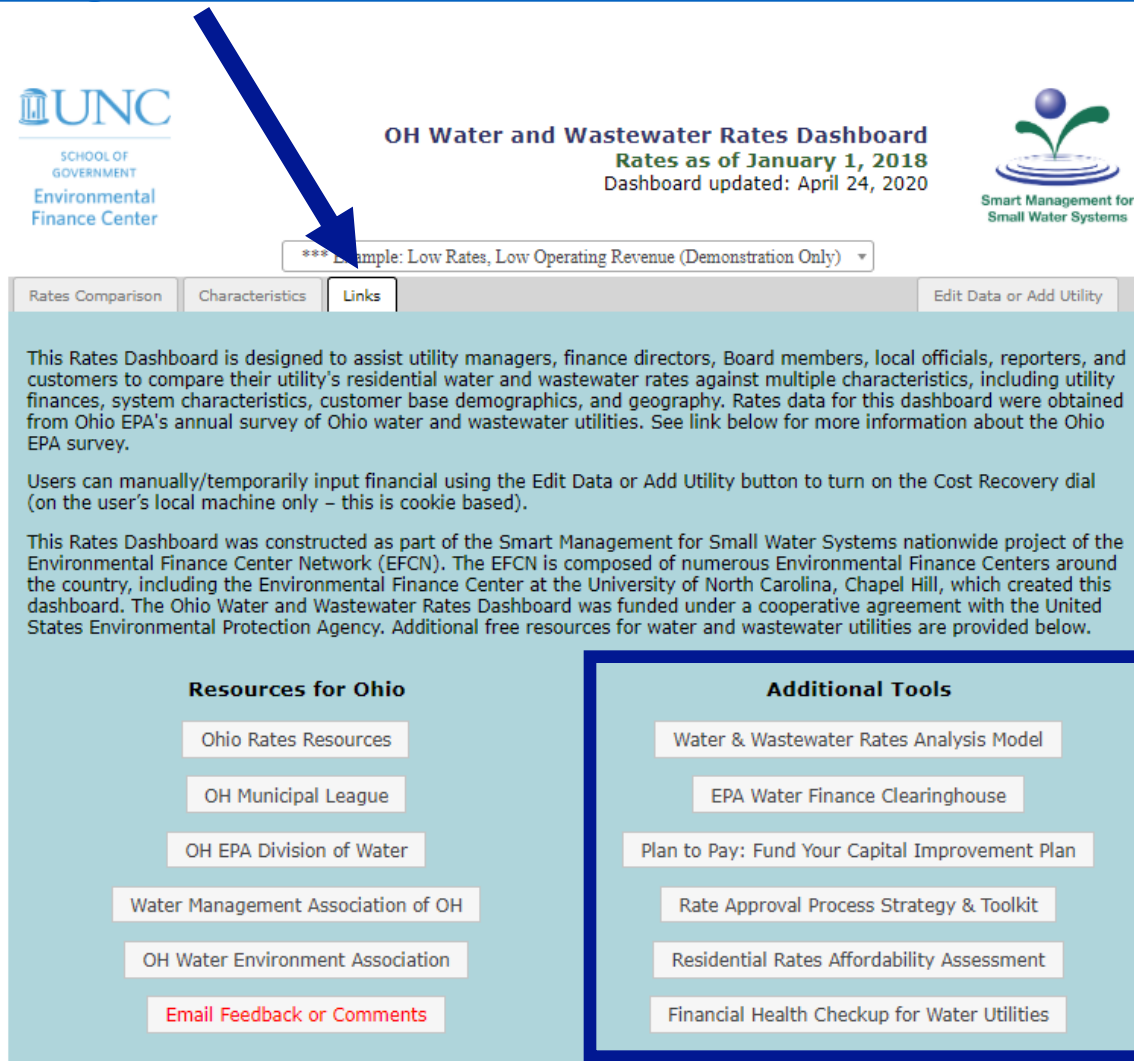






# Additional Resources

<https://efc.sog.unc.edu/resource/ohio-water-and-wastewater-rates-dashboard>



**UNC**  
SCHOOL OF  
GOVERNMENT  
Environmental  
Finance Center

**OH Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboard**  
Rates as of January 1, 2018  
Dashboard updated: April 24, 2020

Smart Management for  
Small Water Systems

\*\*\* Example: Low Rates, Low Operating Revenue (Demonstration Only) ▼

Rates Comparison | Characteristics | **Links** | Edit Data or Add Utility

This Rates Dashboard is designed to assist utility managers, finance directors, Board members, local officials, reporters, and customers to compare their utility's residential water and wastewater rates against multiple characteristics, including utility finances, system characteristics, customer base demographics, and geography. Rates data for this dashboard were obtained from Ohio EPA's annual survey of Ohio water and wastewater utilities. See link below for more information about the Ohio EPA survey.

Users can manually/temporarily input financial using the Edit Data or Add Utility button to turn on the Cost Recovery dial (on the user's local machine only – this is cookie based).

This Rates Dashboard was constructed as part of the Smart Management for Small Water Systems nationwide project of the Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN). The EFCN is composed of numerous Environmental Finance Centers around the country, including the Environmental Finance Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, which created this dashboard. The Ohio Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboard was funded under a cooperative agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Additional free resources for water and wastewater utilities are provided below.

### Resources for Ohio

- Ohio Rates Resources
- OH Municipal League
- OH EPA Division of Water
- Water Management Association of OH
- OH Water Environment Association
- Email Feedback or Comments

### Additional Tools

- Water & Wastewater Rates Analysis Model
- EPA Water Finance Clearinghouse
- Plan to Pay: Fund Your Capital Improvement Plan
- Rate Approval Process Strategy & Toolkit
- Residential Rates Affordability Assessment
- Financial Health Checkup for Water Utilities



# **Free Assistance and Resources to Small Water Systems by the Environmental Finance Center Network**

**<http://efcnetwork.org>**



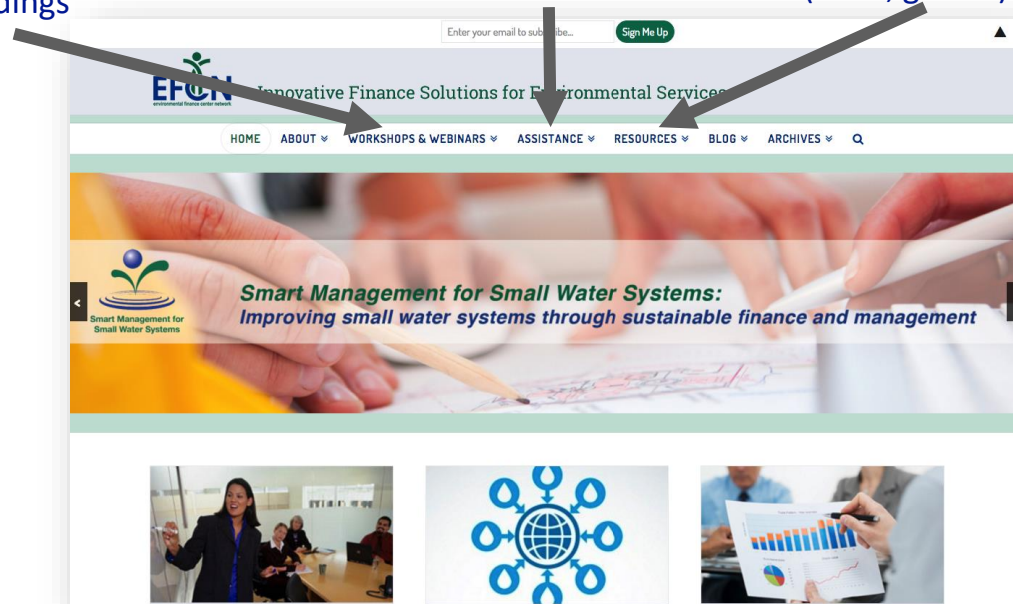
## Small water systems

# [www.EFCNetwork.org](http://www.EFCNetwork.org)

Workshops,  
webinars,  
and recordings

Sign up for free in-depth  
(multi-day or multi-hour)  
direct assistance

Collection of resources  
for small water systems  
(tools, guides)



Free, thanks to  
a cooperative  
agreement  
with the U.S.  
E.P.A.



# Tools To Assist Water Utilities With Financial Decision Making

<http://www.efc.sog.unc.edu/project/utility-financial-tools>

or <http://efcnetwork.org/resources/tools/>



## **Water and Wastewater Rates Analysis Model**

Use this tool to review your rates to ensure projected revenues cover projected expenses. This tool will help you determine whether proposed rates will keep the utility financially self-sufficient for the next few years.



## **Financial Health Checkup for Water Utilities**

Use this tool to get a snapshot of your utility's financial health and demonstrate the financial strengths and weaknesses of your utility over the past 5 years. The tool uses your utility's financial data to calculate and visualize 6 financial performance indicators.



## **Residential Rates Affordability Assessment Tool**

Use this tool to assess how affordable rates are to your customer base using multiple metrics.



## **Plan to Pay: Scenarios to Fund Your Capital Improvement Plan**

Use this tool to help plan how to pay for future capital projects. The tool will estimate the effects that paying for capital projects will have on your rates under various scenarios.



## **Water Utility Customer Assistance Program Cost Estimation Tool**

Use this tool to estimate the funds needed from your utility (or other organization) to create a Customer Assistance Program that helps residential customers when they cannot afford to pay their water bill.

# Financial Health Checkup for Water Utilities

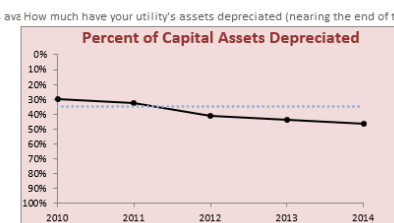
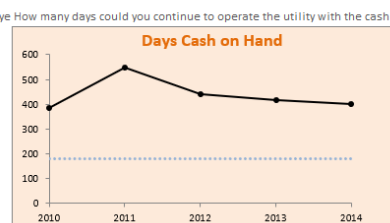
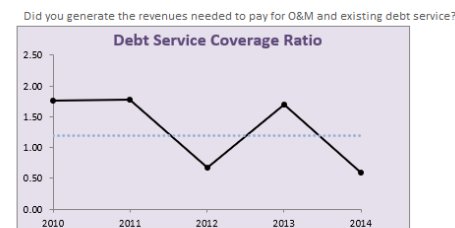
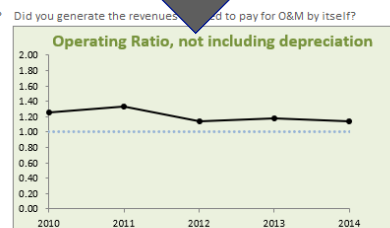
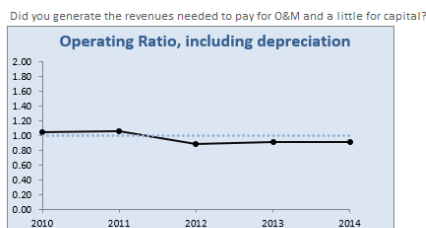
<http://efc.sog.unc.edu>

or <http://efcnetwork.org>

Find the most up-to-date version in Resources / Tools

Free, simplified Excel tool allowing you to track and benchmark financial performance metrics for your water/sewer fund in the past 5 years

Key	Field in the financial statement/CAFR	Fiscal Year End					Instructions
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
[1]	Total Operating Revenues	\$ 2,341,857	\$ 2,556,399	\$ 2,271,777	\$ 2,334,236	\$ 2,501,286	Enter as shown in the Total Operating
[2]	Total Operating Expenses	\$ 2,229,208	\$ 2,403,938	\$ 2,565,282	\$ 2,555,504	\$ 2,740,266	Enter as shown in the Total Operating
[3]	Depreciation & Amortization Expenses	\$ 362,047	\$ 490,007	\$ 569,998	\$ 568,179	\$ 534,000	Depreciation and amortization are listed
[4]	Debt Principal Payments	\$ 185,000	\$ 279,242	\$ 333,558	\$ 132,742	\$ 436,459	Enter \$0 if there were no debt service
[4b]	Debt Interest Payments	\$ 84,859	\$ 81,330	\$ 72,808	\$ 71,620	\$ 55,535	Enter \$0 if there were no debt service
[5]	Current Assets, excluding inventories, restricted cash, prepaids	\$ 2,986,691	\$ 3,565,601	\$ 3,266,234	\$ 3,050,573	\$ 2,941,629	Total Current Assets minus all inventor
[6]	Current Liabilities, excluding deposits & bond anticipation notes	\$ 757,776	\$ 776,266	\$ 495,555	\$ 656,257	\$ 547,019	Total Current Liabilities minus all refun
[7]	Unrestricted Cash & Investments	\$ 1,961,851	\$ 2,883,569	\$ 2,411,154	\$ 2,273,697	\$ 2,415,013	Unrestricted Cash & Investments (and
[8]	Total Accumulated Depreciation	\$ 5,125,329	\$ 5,520,510	\$ 7,661,024	\$ 8,229,207	\$ 8,763,207	Total accumulated depreciation on cap
[9]	Total Depreciable Capital Assets	\$ 17,221,067	\$ 17,144,542	\$ 16,697,849	\$ 18,744,028	\$ 18,854,157	Enter the total value of capital assets



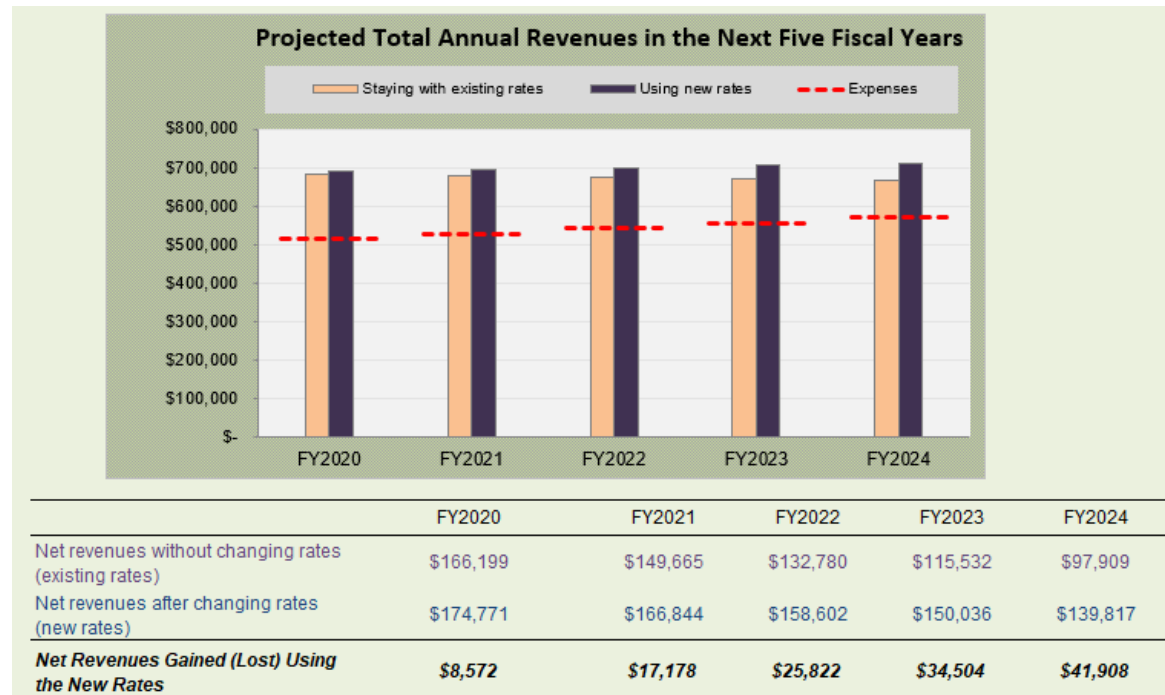


# Water & Wastewater Rates Analysis Model

<http://efc.sog.unc.edu> or <http://efcnetwork.org>

Find the most up-to-date version in Resources / Tools

Free, simplified Excel tool allowing you to model and compare two rate structures on your projected fund balance



# Plan to Pay: Scenario to Fund Your Capital Improvement Plan

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS - 20 YEARS		Project Expenditure/ Construction Period (years)	Estimated Construction Cost ...		Annual Construction Cost Inflation Factor (%/year)	Expected Grants at Time of Construction	Financing Mechanism: Debt Financing or Capital Reserves?	Term of Debt (years)	Interest Rate Charged for Debt (%/year)	First Year of Capital Reserve Allocation	Additional Annual O&M Costs (\$/year)
List all known projects for the next 20 years		Select here to sort by year	In the Start Year ...	Today (i.e. in FY18)							
1	Project 1 - type in name or description	FY27	2	\$ 2,000,000		\$ 100,000	Capital Reserves			FY22	\$ 2,500
2	Project 2 - debt financed portion	FY21	3	\$ 2,200,000	2.8%	\$ -	Debt Financing	15	5.00%		\$ 10,000
3	Project 2 - capital reserves financed portion	FY21	3	\$ 500,000		\$ -	Capital Reserves			FY21	\$ -
4	Project 3 - immediate project. Start new year	FY19	1	\$ 350,000	2.0%	\$ -	Capital Reserves			FY19	\$ 1,500
5	Project 4 - energy efficiency reduces O&M	FY29	5	\$ 3,500,000	2.8%	\$ -	Debt Financing	20	2.50%		\$ (250,000)
6											
7											

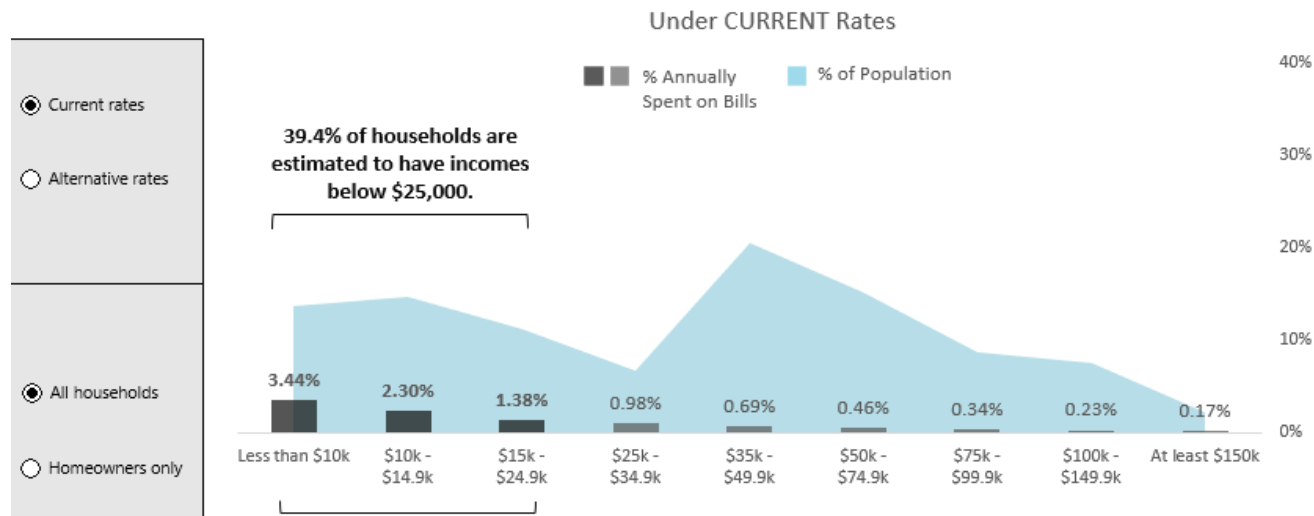


Project cost in the start year net of grants	Number of years before project starts	Years of construction	Year payments end	Yearly allocations to reserves for capital reserve-financed projects	Number of years allocating to reserves for capital reserve-financed projects	Annual payment: debt service if debt-financed or cash payments during construction years if capital reserve-financed
\$ 1,900,000	9	FY27-FY28	FY28	\$ 316,667	6	\$ 950,000
\$ 2,390,023	3	FY21-FY23	FY35			\$ 230,260
\$ 500,000	3	FY21-FY23	FY23	\$ 500,000	1	\$ 166,667
\$ 357,000	1	FY19	FY19	\$ 357,000	1	\$ 357,000
\$ 4,742,336	11	FY29-FY33	FY48			\$ 304,207



# Residential Rates Affordability Assessment Tool

Affordability of Water Rates Assessed at 4000 Gallons/Month and the 2017 Income Levels



39.4% of residential customers are estimated to have had less than \$25,000 in annual income. These households will have spent more than 1.38% of their income under the current rates for water bills at 4000 gallons/month. 13.6% of households will have spent more than 3.44% of their income. However, a substantial number of low-income households may be living in rental homes and apartments and do not pay water bills, which may be included in their rent.

# Financial Resilience Dashboard

- This dashboard is designed to show the impact of revenue losses on a utility in light of COVID-19.
- What data do you need?
  - Operating revenues
  - Percent of revenues anticipated to be lost due to COVID-19
  - Operating expenses
  - Unrestricted cash
- <https://public.tableau.com/profile/efc.at.unc#!/vizhome/InputCOVIDDashboard/Landing>

## FINANCIAL RESILIENCE DASHBOARD

A GLIMPSE INTO THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19  
FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITIES

Please input the values below utilizing the *most up to date* information on the utility's finances.

Operating Revenues	Unrestricted Cash
<input type="text" value="\$1,000,000"/>	<input type="text" value="\$250,000"/>
Operating Expenses	Percent of Revenues Anticipated to Lose
<input type="text" value="\$900,000"/>	<input type="text" value="30%"/>

Based on these inputs, the utility can expect to have the following financial outcomes:

Days Cash on Hand	101
Days the Utility can Operate by Supplementing Revenue Loss with Unrestricted Cash	456

\*These values assume that ALL of the unrestricted cash at the utility will be used to supplement revenue loss and not to buffer other short-term expenses. Unrestricted cash often has many uses for the utility, including covering emergency expenses.

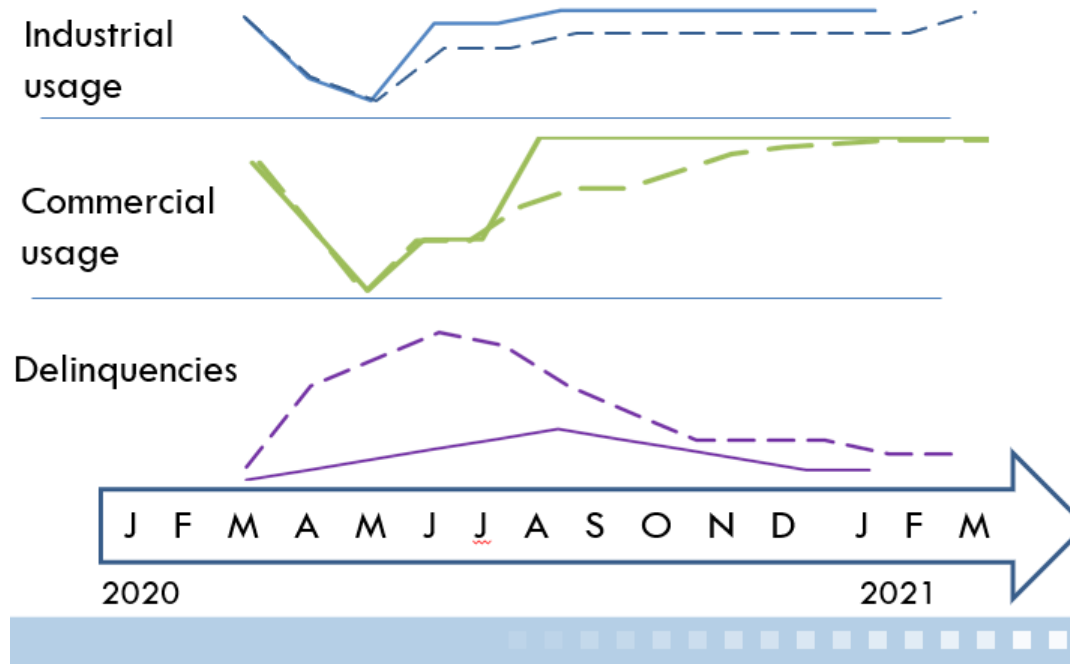
[< Click to View Landing Pg](#)[Click to View Inputs >](#)

- This tool integrates any changes in usage, delinquencies, capital improvements, and expenses to provide a more in-depth understanding of COVID-19's impacts going forward.

[illegible]

# COVID-19 Revenue Loss Tool

## Scenario 1 and 2 Inputs

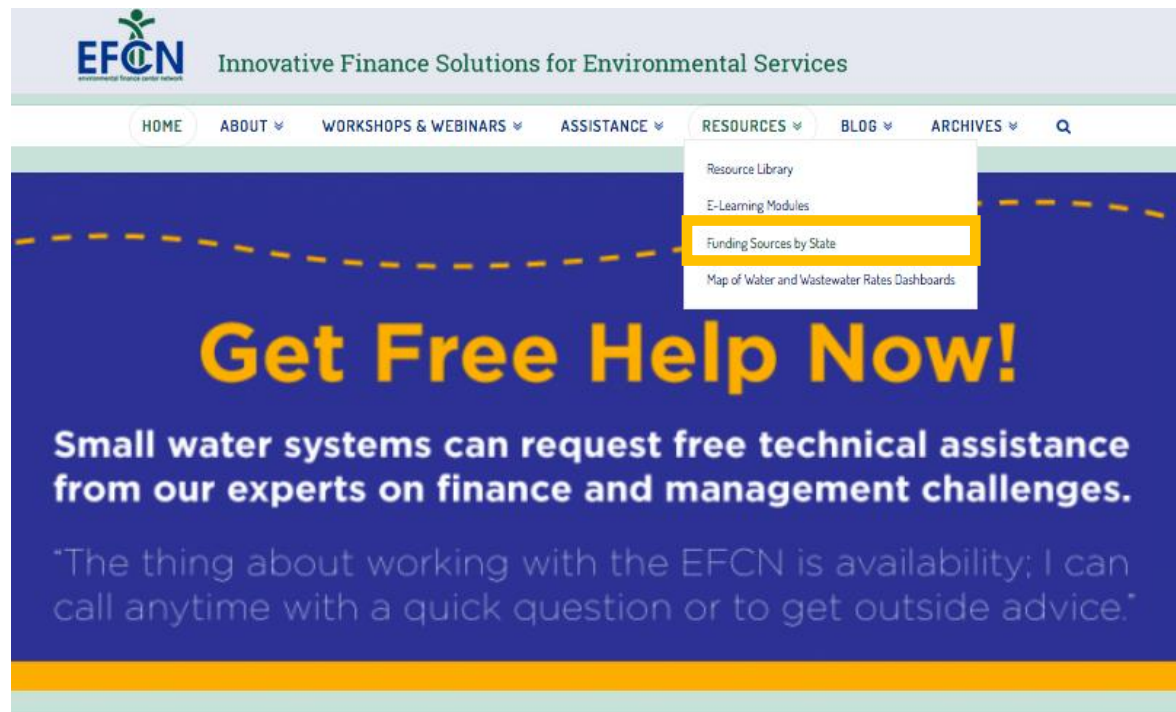


- Scenario 1 (solid line) is a more hopeful outlook with the impacts of COVID-19 lessening sooner than later
- Scenario 2 (dotted line) is a worse off case with the impacts of COVID-19 lasting longer

# Funding Tables By State


<http://efcnetwork.org>

Select “Funding Sources by State” under the Resources Tab.



# Rates and Finance Dashboards

Select “Map of Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboards” under the Resources Tab, and click on any state in blue to view its dashboard.



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[MAP OF WATER AND WASTEWATER RATES DASHBOARDS](#)

Resource Library

E-Learning Modules

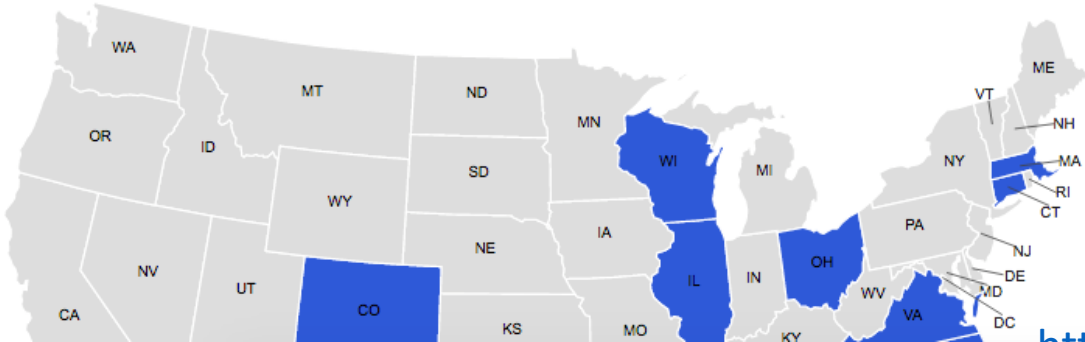
Funding Sources by State

Map of Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboards

## Map of Water and Wastewater

This map shows Water and Wastewater Rates Dashboards created by the EFCN:

Click a state in blue to view its dashboard

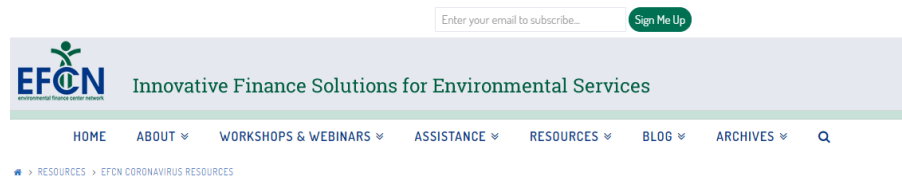


<http://efcnetwork.org>



# Resources From the EFC Network (efcnetwork.org)

<https://efcnetwork.org/resources/efcn-coronavirus-resources/>



## EFCN Coronavirus Resources

Last Updated May 28, 2020

In these uncertain times, small water systems are facing difficult decisions about how to maintain operations and ensure financial sustainability, while providing essential services to the public and limiting personal interactions during the COVID-19 outbreak. We've heard your concerns and are doing all we can to address your questions. While we have suspended our in-person trainings indefinitely, we want to take a minute to remind you of the numerous other resources we provide:

- Upcoming Webinars on a host of challenges that small water systems face, and how to best address those challenges
  - Webinar Recording: A Conversation Regarding Coronavirus and How it Might Affect Your Small Water System's Finances and Management
  - Webinar Recording: Ask the Expert: Protecting and Investing in the Water Workforce Through COVID-19 and Beyond
- Free technical assistance related to asset management, financial planning and rate setting, capital planning, energy use, identifying funding, water system collaboration, resiliency planning, and workforce planning to water systems serving a population of less than 10,000 people.
- Blog posts related to finance and management of small water systems:
  - Financial Implications of COVID-19 for Water and Wastewater Systems
  - Communicating with Utility Staff During COVID-19
  - Water System Reserves During the COVID-19 Pandemic

# EFC Blog

Where to stay updated on environmental finance topics?

<http://efc.web.unc.edu/>



## How are North Carolina Utilities Faring During the Pandemic? Four Key Insights from Survey Results

JUNE 18, 2020 / RADHIKA KATTULA / 0 COMMENTS

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, utilities across the nation continue to adapt to rapidly changing conditions through a number of measures, from suspending water shut-offs to implementing cost-saving maneuvers like reducing energy costs.



## How Utilities in the Past have Saved Money during Economic Hardship: Similarities and Differences for COVID-19

MAY 19, 2020 / ELSEMARIE MULLINS / 0 COMMENTS

Co-written by Erin Ambro

Right now, water utilities are facing great uncertainty about the coming months and years. When will moratoria on water shut-offs end? When will water consumption be back to "normal"? Will utility staff get COVID-19? And the "Big One" -- What will revenue loss be for utilities in the coming months and years?



## Visualizing the Value (of a State Revolving Fund Loan)

JUNE 3, 2020 / AUSTIN THOMPSON / 0 COMMENTS

Imagine a town called "Smallville." Smallville, as you might guess, is small. The town's water utility needs a new water tank, and they need it now. Like most systems across the US, Smallville's system is aging and has significant infrastructure needs. Smallville generally knows the assets that are most critical



## Municipal Finance in a Pandemic: How is the Market Responding?

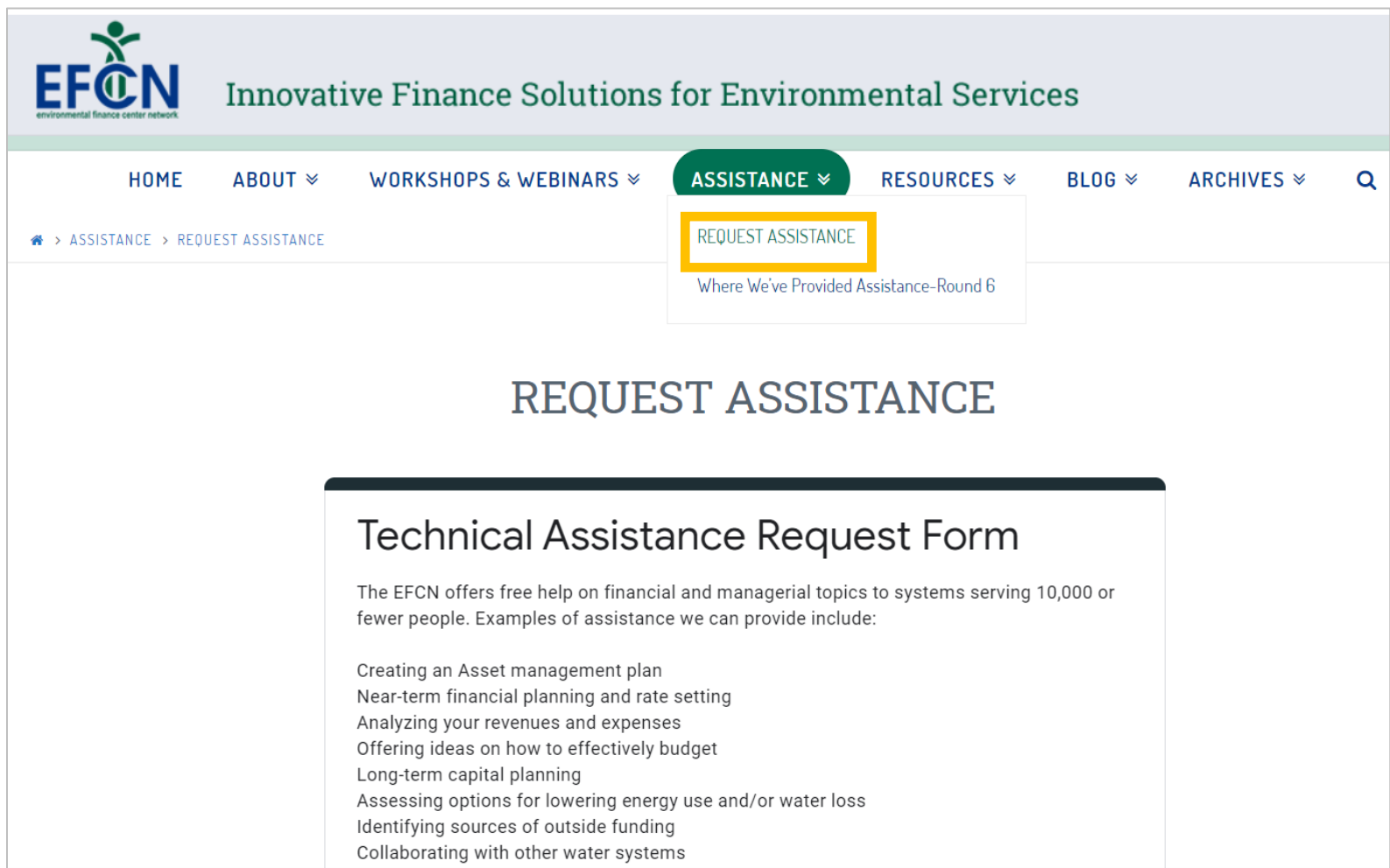
APRIL 22, 2020 / AUSTIN THOMPSON / 0 COMMENTS

### Municipal Bonds & COVID-19: What is going on?

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the US, the municipal ("muni") bond market was strong. Investors looking for a non-taxable rate of return were hungry for municipal bonds, driving interest rates down for borrowers (state and local governments) and pushing more debt into the marketplace. Most governments

# Request Technical Assistance

Select “Request Assistance” under the Assistance Tab off the EFCN homepage to access and submit the TA request form electronically. <http://efcnetwork.org>



The screenshot shows the EFCN website homepage with the 'ASSISTANCE' menu item highlighted. A dropdown menu is visible, showing 'REQUEST ASSISTANCE' as the selected option. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads 'HOME > ASSISTANCE > REQUEST ASSISTANCE'. The main heading is 'REQUEST ASSISTANCE'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Technical Assistance Request Form' which includes a description of the service and a list of examples of assistance provided.

**EFCN** Innovative Finance Solutions for Environmental Services  
environmental finance center network

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🏠 > ASSISTANCE > REQUEST ASSISTANCE

**REQUEST ASSISTANCE**  
Where We've Provided Assistance-Round 6

## REQUEST ASSISTANCE

### Technical Assistance Request Form

The EFCN offers free help on financial and managerial topics to systems serving 10,000 or fewer people. Examples of assistance we can provide include:

- Creating an Asset management plan
- Near-term financial planning and rate setting
- Analyzing your revenues and expenses
- Offering ideas on how to effectively budget
- Long-term capital planning
- Assessing options for lowering energy use and/or water loss
- Identifying sources of outside funding
- Collaborating with other water systems



**Poll: would you like  
assistance?**



# Questions?

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919-962-2785



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