

Ask Me Anything! Case Study: Lead Service Line Replacement 12.15.2025

Quick recap

The meeting focused on lead service line replacement efficiencies in Michigan, presented by Jean Devlin from Quantified Ventures. Jean discussed challenges communities face, including incomplete inventories, rising costs, and limited staffing. She shared best practices for financing, partnering with local organizations, expediting residential access, and regional procurement. She highlighted case studies from Michigan communities, which explored innovative solutions such as a lead abatement fee and joint procurement with neighboring cities. Jean emphasized the importance of early planning, multi-year approaches, and engineering efficiencies to improve timelines and reduce costs. The session concluded with a reminder about upcoming SRF training sessions and an invitation for participants to reach out with any questions.

Summary

Lead Service Line Replacement Strategies

Jean discussed the history of the Lead and Copper Rule, including recent changes, and highlighted common challenges faced by municipalities in completing lead service line replacements. She shared best practices and real-world examples from pilot studies in Michigan, and concluded by inviting questions and discussion from the audience.

Lead Service Line Replacement Challenges

Jean discussed the challenges communities face in replacing lead service lines, including incomplete inventories, rising costs, and limited staffing. She noted that most states are updating their programs by 2027, with a national target of completing replacements by 2034. Jean mentioned that communities should expect to complete their work within 10 years of the final rule implementation, with states enforcing milestones through annual reporting. She also touched on the competitive nature of funding programs and the potential impact of not meeting replacement goals.

Lead Service Line Replacement Challenges

Jean discussed challenges in lead service line replacement projects, particularly in states with large numbers of rental units and absent landlords. She explained that communities often need to leverage a capital stack to finance replacements, as SRF funding may not be

sufficient for all projects. Jean highlighted the importance of multi-year planning and identifying a full financing strategy that includes local funds and internal subsidies for increased staffing and outreach efforts.

Lead Service Line Replacement Best Practices

Jean discussed three best practices for lead service line replacement projects. First, she highlighted the financial benefits of internal subsidies, which can cover part of the costs while supporting both public and private line work. Second, partnering with local organizations was recommended for effective community outreach, improving public trust, and reducing duplication of efforts, especially in multilingual regions. Third, Jean emphasized the importance of expediting residential access to avoid delays and cost increases, suggesting strategies like clear communication and feedback loops to improve efficiency.

Utility Access and Resource Sharing

Jean discussed strategies for expediting access to residential properties for utility work, including using access waivers with deadlines, partnering with local organizations, and training staff to handle common questions. She also highlighted the effectiveness of adopting a renter's ordinance to expedite access to properties where landlords may not live nearby. Jean further explored regional procurement and resource sharing as a best practice, particularly useful in small communities, which can improve efficiencies through shared equipment, contractors, and collaborative planning with other utilities.

Lead Service Line Replacement Best Practices

Jean discussed best practices for lead service line replacement projects, including aligning standards, piloting small contracts, and stabilizing the workforce. She highlighted the importance of assessing current staffing needs and identifying potential changes in staffing. Jean also addressed navigating funding programs, noting the benefits and challenges of state and federal programs, and emphasized the need to begin pre-development work early and engage in public comment processes.

Water Line Replacement Best Practices

Jean discussed best practices for planning and executing water line replacement projects, emphasizing the importance of early planning and preparing for potential reductions in federal funding. She highlighted the need for rate analysis and long-term planning, as well as engineering efficiencies to reduce costs and expedite timelines. Jean encouraged communities to consider various funding sources, standardize designs, minimize

pavement disturbance, and track productivity to optimize their water line replacement projects.

Lead Service Line Replacement Updates

Jean emphasized the importance of early partner identification and multilingual outreach for communities with diverse populations. Ashley reminded attendees of upcoming SRF training sessions and encouraged questions or further discussions.

Disclaimer: this summary was generated using AI but was reviewed and edited by a Human.