Finding a Unicorn!
Small Wastewater System Funding Series

Session 3: Compelling Federal Award Applications Part 2
December 18, 2025

EFCN
environmental finance center network

CAPACITY COLLABORATIVE

Series Overview:

EFCN
environmental finance center network

Designed to address the needs of small wastewater systems serving < 10,000, which typically have limited capability to pursue funding without assistance.

12-part series
- learn where to look for nationally available funding,
- how to craft a high-quality proposal, and
- comply with federal requirements through project completion

Dec 2, 16, 18 2025 then every other Tuesday Jan 13 through May 5, 2026
all sessions will be recorded and available for download

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Series Overview:

EFCN
environmental finance center network

Following the project process from pre-development to closeout

Session 1 completed: The Funding Landscape

Session 2 completed: Compelling Applications Pt 1

Session 3: Compelling Applications Pt 2

Session 4: SRF Pt 1 - Basics

Session 5: SRF Pt 2 - CWSRF Options

Session 6: Grants & SRF Office Hours

Session 7: Federal Award Management

Session 8: Federal Procurement Stds

Session 9: Awards & Procurement Office Hours

Session 10: Negotiating Indirect Rates

Session 11: Award Closeout & Single Audits

Session 12: Indirect Rates & Closeout Office Hrs

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Session Purpose:

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Session 2 (Dec 16):
- Understand federal award prerequisites & prepare your organization to apply and manage a public grant
- Help guide review of federal award notices & application requirements
- Share tools for preparing a federal grant budget

Session 3 (Dec 18):
- Focus on understanding of local needs, supported by quantitative and qualitative data
- Build a logic model that clearly establishes inputs, outputs, and outcomes

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Slide 1

Today's Presenters:

EFCN
environmental finance center network

Sarah Diefendorf
Director

Elaine McCarty
Associate Director

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Finding a Unicorn! Small Wastewater System Funding Series
Session 3: Compelling Applications

Slide 2

Needs Assessment

Describes the problem

Provides evidence - qualitative and quantitative

Identifies gaps between current situation and ideal

Shows alignment between problem and project

Slide 3

Census Data

An official website of the United States government Here's how you know ⌄

United States Census Bureau

Tables   Maps

Explore Census Data
Learn about America's People, Places, and Economy

Find Tables, Maps, and more...

Help   Feedback   Advanced Search

Try searching for **commute** in **Georgia** in **2020**

https://data.census.gov/

Slide 4

Geographies   **Years**   **Trade Codes**

Topics   **Survey Type**

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

Search EPA.gov 🔍

Environmental Topics ⌄   Laws & Regulations ⌄   Report a Violation ⌄   About EPA ⌄

Ground Water and Drinking Water

- Basic Information
- Private Wells
- Consumer Confidence Reports
- Regulatory Requirements
- Standards and Regulations
- All Drinking Water Topics
- Safe Drinking Water Information System
- For Students and Teachers

Contact us about Ground Water and Drinking Water

Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) Federal Reporting Services

Welcome to the SDWIS Fed Reporting Services system. This system offers the capability to query the Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) Fed Data Warehouse via report filters and various reporting options.

Data management plays a critical role in helping states and EPA to protect public health. The term "states" refers to any entity with primacy under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) to implement and enforce national drinking water regulations. States supervise the public water systems within their jurisdictions to ensure that each system meets state and EPA standards for safe drinking water.

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires states to report drinking water information periodically to EPA. This information is maintained in a federal database, the SDWIS Fed Data Warehouse.

What information is included in the SDWIS Fed Data Warehouse?

States report the following information to EPA:

- Basic information about each public water system, including:
  - the system's name
  - ID number
  - city or county served
  - number of people served
  - type of system (residential, transient, non-transient)
  - whether the system operates year-round or seasonally
  - characteristics of the system's source(s) of water
- Violation information for each public water system, including whether the system has:
  - failed to follow established monitoring and reporting schedules
  - failed to comply with mandated treatment techniques
  - violated any Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs)
  - failed to communicate required information to their customers
- Enforcement information, including actions states or EPA have taken to ensure that a public water system returns to compliance if it is in violation of a drinking water regulation

https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/safe-drinking-water-information-system-sdwis-federal-reporting

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Climate Toolbox   APPLICATIONS ⌄   TOOLS ⌄   DATA ⌄   VIDEOS   CASE STUDIES   ACTIVITIES   GUIDANCE   NEWS   CONTACT

The Climate Toolbox

A collection of web tools for visualizing past and projected climate and hydrology of the contiguous United States.

WHAT'S NEW?

Applications

AGRICULTURE   CLIMATE   FIRE   WATER

Tools

Variable Lookup — Find which tools in the Climate Toolbox have a certain variable Launch Tool

Climate Mapper — Maps of historical and future climate information across multiple sectors Launch Tool

Historical Water Watcher — Maps of real-time water monitoring over the contiguous US Launch Tool

Historical Climate Tracker — Graphs and trend lines of historical climate variability for a location Launch Tool

Historical Climate Dashboard — Dashboard of real-time climate for a location Launch Tool

Historical Climate Scatter — Scatterplot graphs of two climate variables for a location Launch Tool

Historical Climograph — Climographs of monthly average climate for a location Launch Tool

Historical Drought Stripes — Stripes of past short and long term droughts as a timeseries for a location Launch Tool

Historical Seasonal Progression — Graphs of daily weather and forecasts for a location Launch Tool

California Water Year Index — Forecasts for the water year for river basins in California Launch Tool

https://climatetoolbox.org

Climate Toolbox   APPLICATIONS ⌄   TOOLS ⌄   DATA ⌄   VIDEOS   CASE STUDIES   ACTIVITIES   GUIDANCE   NEWS   CONTACT

WATER

A collection of tools for addressing questions relating to water resources, forecasts, and projections.

Climate Mapper — Maps of historical and future climate information across multiple sectors Launch Tool

Future Tribal Climate — Maps/graphs of future climate projections for a tribal region Launch Tool

Historical Water Watcher — Maps of real-time water monitoring over the contiguous US Launch Tool

California Water Year Index — Forecasts for the water year for river basins in California Launch Tool

Future Boxplots — Compare projections for future time periods for a location Launch Tool

Future Climate Analogs — Maps of future and historical climate analogs for locations in US National Parks Launch Tool

Future Climate Dashboard — Dashboard of future climate and growing projections for a location Launch Tool

Future Climate Scatter — Compare model projections for two variables for a location Launch Tool

Future Climate Scenarios — Generate a table of climate projections with many metrics for a location Launch Tool

Applications

Click a category below to see a collections of tools relating to addressing questions relating to Agriculture, Climate, Fire Conditions, and Water.

AGRICULTURE   CLIMATE   FIRE   WATER

Climate Toolbox   APPLICATIONS ⌄   TOOLS ⌄   DATA ⌄   VIDEOS   CASE STUDIES   ACTIVITIES   GUIDANCE   NEWS   CONTACT

Choose Metrics ▾

Select from the menus below

Time Scale:
Past/Real-Time: Observations

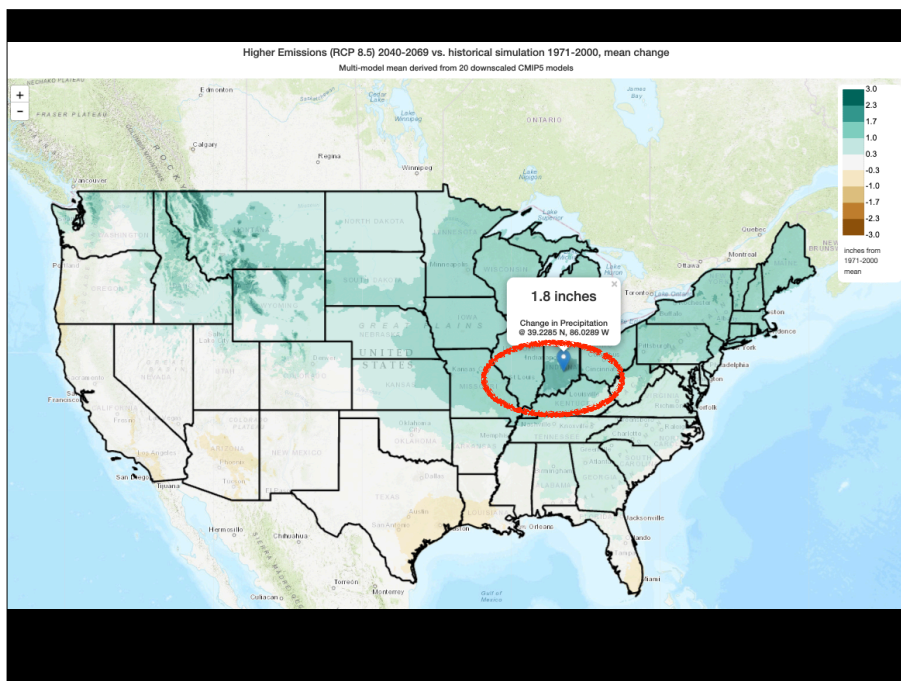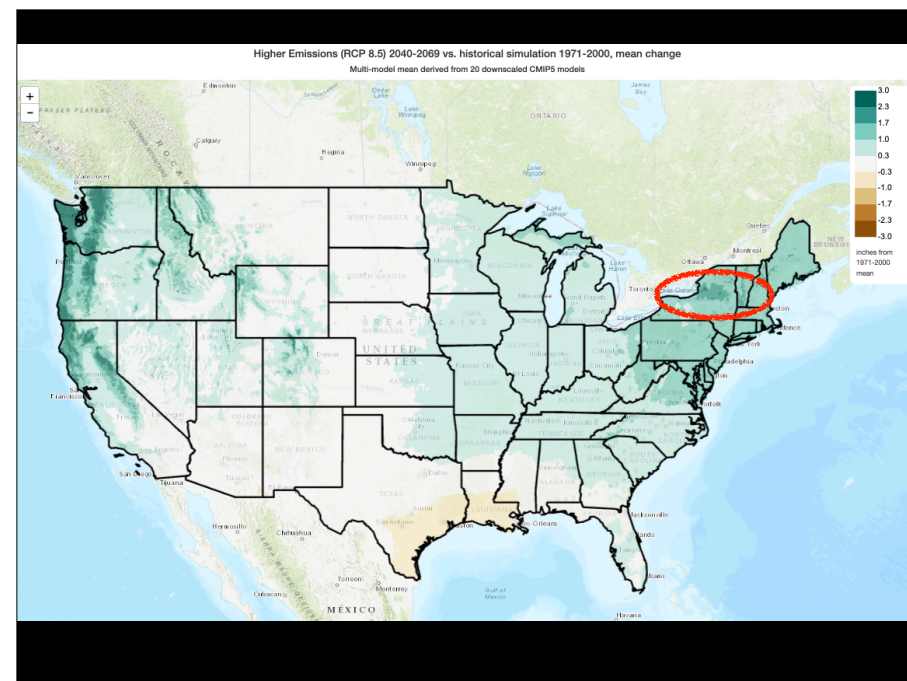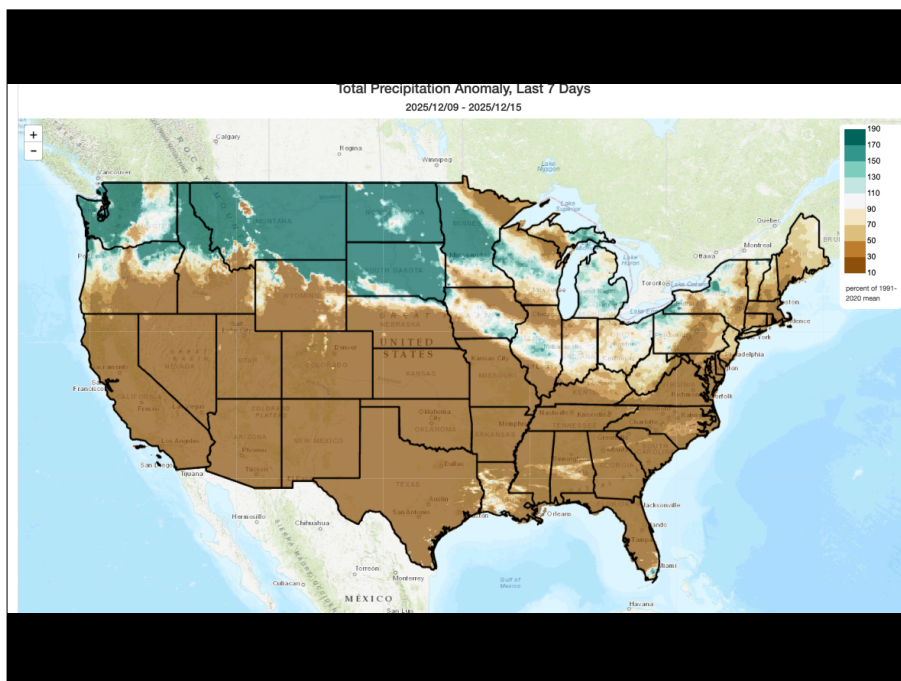**Impact Area:**
Climate (Contiguous US, gridMET)

Climate Variables
- ✓ Mean Temperature
- Maximum Temperature
- Minimum Temperature
- Precipitation
- Potential Evapotranspiration (Grass)
- Vapor Pressure Deficit (kPa)

Climate Anomalies
- Mean Temperature Anomaly
- Maximum Temperature Anomaly
- Minimum Temperature Anomaly
- Precipitation Anomaly (%)
- Precipitation Anomaly
- Potential Evapotranspiration (Grass) Anomaly (%)
- Potential Evapotranspiration (Grass) Anomaly
- Vapor Pressure Deficit Anomaly (kPa)

Climate Percentiles
- Mean Temperature Percentile
- Maximum Temperature Percentile
- Minimum Temperature Percentile
- Precipitation Percentile
- Potential Evapotranspiration (Grass) Percentile
- Vapor Pressure Deficit Percentile

Mean Daily Temperature, Last 7 Days
2025/12/09 - 2025/12/15

Total Precipitation Anomaly, Last 7 Days
2025/12/09 - 2025/12/15

Higher Emissions (RCP 8.5) 2040-2069 vs. historical simulation 1971-2000, mean change
Multi-model mean derived from 20 downscaled CMIP5 models

Higher Emissions (RCP 8.5) 2040-2069 vs. historical simulation 1971-2000, mean change
Multi-model mean derived from 20 downscaled CMIP5 models

1.8 inches

Change in Precipitation
@ 39.2285 N, 86.0289 W
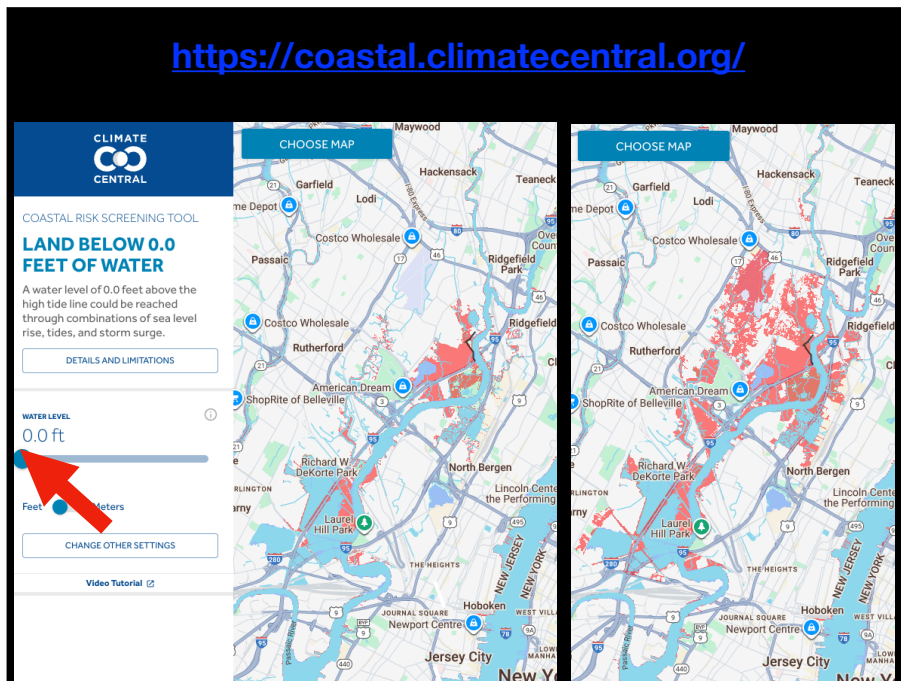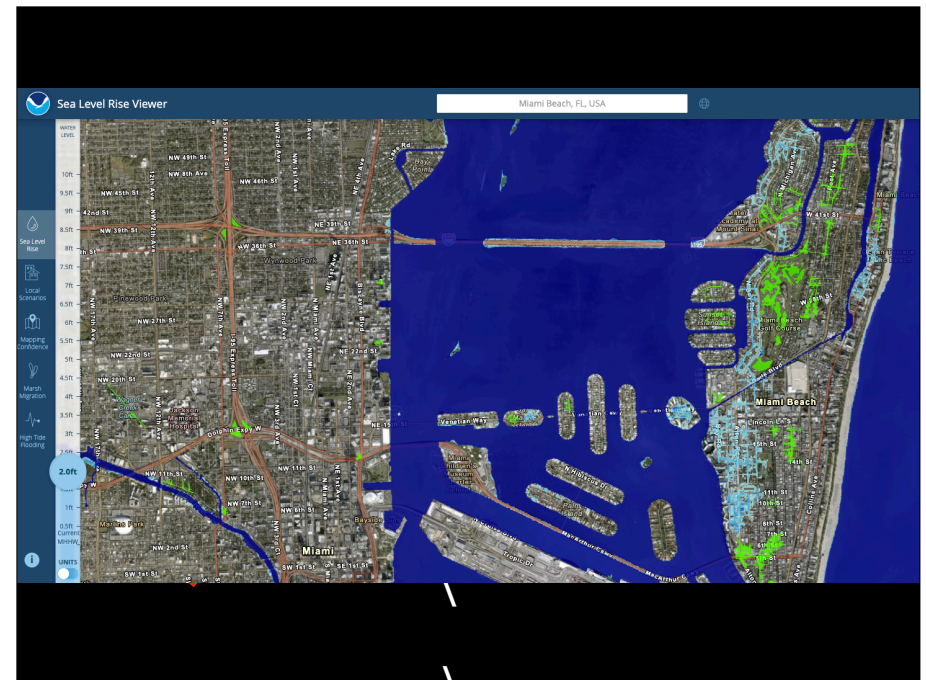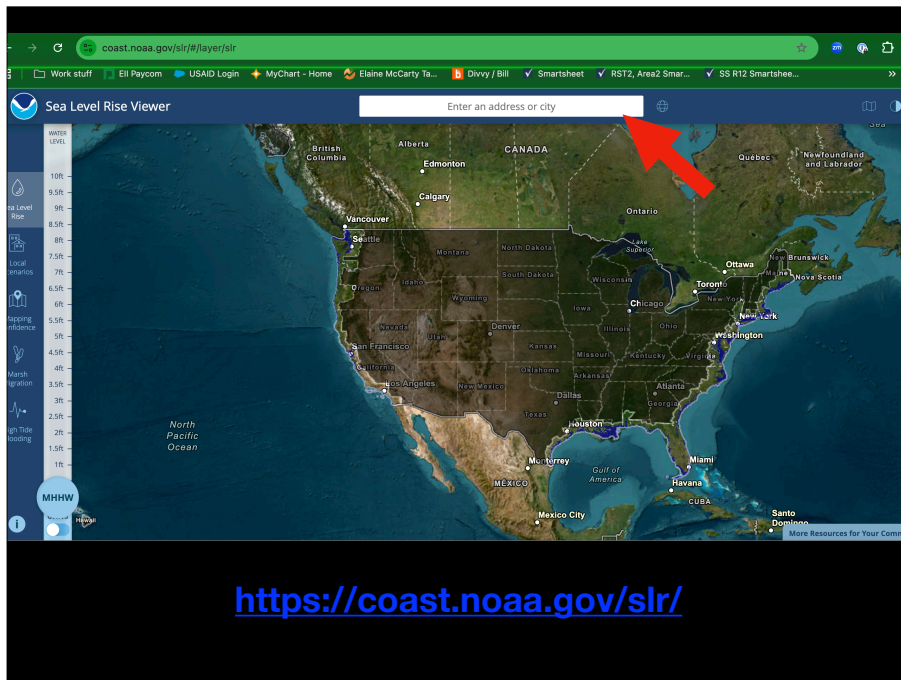

Sea Level Rise Viewer

Sea Level Rise

View sea level rise and potential coastal flooding
impact areas and relative depth.

GET STARTED

DATA UPDATES   DISCLAIMER

https://coast.noaa.gov/slr/

https://coast.noaa.gov/slr/

https://coastal.climatecentral.org/

Local non-profits

Consumer Confidence Reports

Environmental Topics | Laws & Regulations | About EPA

Search EPA.gov

Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR)

CONTACT US   SHARE

Find Your Local CCR

Each year by July 1st you should receive a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR), also known as an annual drinking water quality report from your water supplier. Your CCR tells you where your water comes from and what's in it.

Find your CCR via the map or State list below
Please note: CCRs for all water systems may not be available.
Here are some tips for refining your search:
- Only populate the state field, click 'Search', then browse the results for your CWS, or
- Narrow your state search by adding the name of your county.

Washington State Department of HEALTH
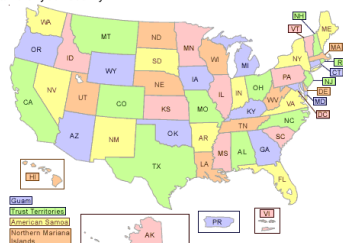
About Us | Contact Us | Newsroom

Search

You & Your Family | Community & Environment | Licenses, Permits, & Certificates | Data & Statistical Reports | Emergencies | Public Health & Provider Resources

Home | Community & Environment | Wastewater Management

Wastewater Management

In this section

- **Wastewater Management**
- Forms & Publications
- Greywater Reuse
- LOSS Program
- On-site Sewage Systems (OSS)
- Regulatory Jurisdiction
- Rules and Regulations
- Septic System
- Toilet Use During Emergencies

Homeowner Septic Systems

- Septic Systems (On-site sewage systems)
- Basics of Septic Systems, 101 Video
- Caring for Your Septic System
- Do-It-Yourself Septic System Inspection Video
- Hiring a Septic System Professional
- Septic Tank Lid Safety
- Signs of Septic System Failure
- Proprietary Onsite Wastewater Product Feedback Form

Large On-site Sewage Systems

- Large on-site sewage systems (LOSS)

Water Conservation and Reuse

- Greywater Reuse
- Water Conservation
- Water Reclamation

Measuring Impacts for Your Proposal

Outputs

Examples of Output Measurements

of people reached in outreach campaign

households reached

training events

people certified in septic inspection

septic systems pumped

Output	Possible method to measure
Outreach: # of people reached in outreach campaign	-Flyers distributed -Webpage visits -FB likes -Video views

Output	Possible method to measure
Workshops: # of people trained	-Sign in sheets -Registration forms -Zoom attendees

Outcomes

Examples of Outcome Measurements

Change in knowledge, awareness, ability

Change in health and safety

Change in access to resources

Outcome measurements from building a small wastewater system that puts 30 homes in a rural community in Alabama on a new wastewater system that reuses water?

Expected changes in environmental & human health

Tools/Methods for Measuring Outcomes

Assessments/evaluations

Pre- and post- assessments/testing

Conduct interviews

Data available through existing resources

Outcome	Possible method to measure
Change in knowledge, awareness, ability	Pre- and post-assessments Post training evaluations

Ask people to self assess their understanding:

Rate your level of understanding of septic maintenance on a scale of 1-5

. . . then compare % change of before and after

Assess their knowledge with a quiz:

Which of the following items are indicators your septic system needs to be pumped?

Name 3 indicators you might see your home indicating your septic needs to be pumped . . .

. . . compare % change scoring in before and after

Outcome	Possible method to measure
Change in health and safety	Questions for pre/post assessments: -Change in # events -Self-reported/perceived condition

Ask them to self report incidences:

How often do members of your household experience unexplained GI problems?

How many times have you visited the doctor due to unexplained GI issues?

. . . compare % change of before and after

Collect raw data:

Public Health Department

Insurance Company Data

. . . report changes in response to intervention

Outcome	Possible method to measure
-Increased access to information	-Count changes/improvements in access -Count change/improvements resulting from access

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Improve access to information:

Water testing at discharge locations

. . . post results of water quality

. . . report changes in water quality over time/in response to intervention

Improve access to information:

Create program to notify public when waterways are not safe for swimming

. . . track # days/year waterways are above safe levels

. . . report changes resulting from intervention

Wastewater Treatment Plant Nutrient Removal and Wet Weather Flow Management Upgrade and Expansion Project

"The WWTP is the most sustainable facility in the nation . . . The plant produces the cleanest water discharged to the San Francisco Bay and is designed to withstand sea level rise. The plant protects public health and the environment by preventing sewer overflows during wet weather events, is designed to withstand storm surges, and reduce greenhouse gases and carbon impacts."
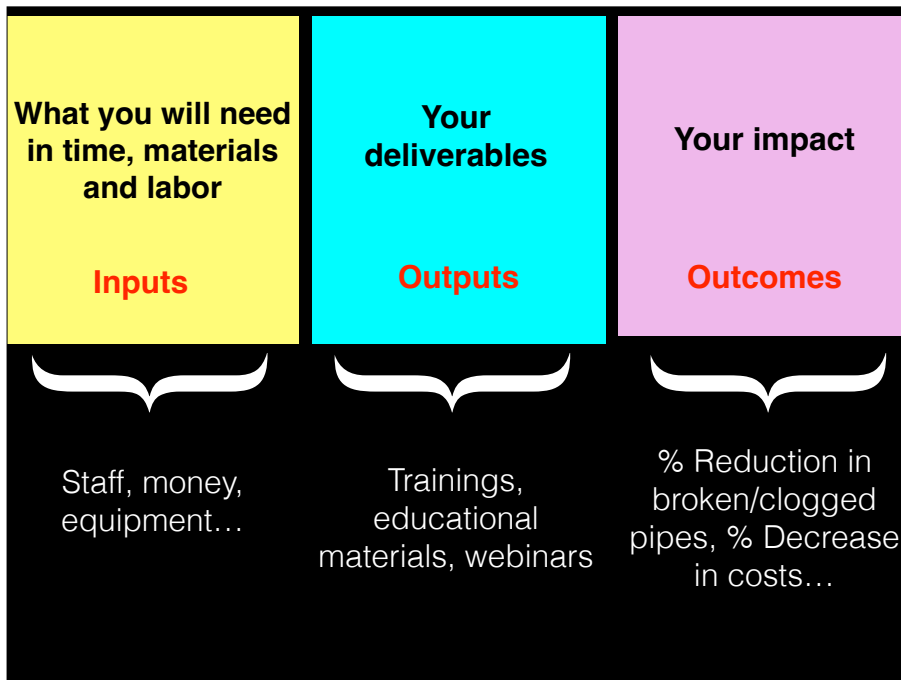
The project team secured $277M in low interest federal financing saving $20M in interest. The project includes walking and bike paths and public art.

Source: https://cleanwaterprogramsanmateo.org/

The Logic Model

Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes

Panel 1 (top left)

What you will need in time, materials and labor	Your deliverables	Your impact
Inputs	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**

Staff, money, equipment…

Trainings, educational materials, webinars

% Reduction in broken/clogged pipes, % Decrease in costs…

Panel 2 (top right)

Federal Agencies Want:

Measurable Inputs

Measurable Outputs

Measurable Outcomes

Panel 3 (bottom left)

Input: The project will include **4** operators working **25%** FTE and **1** senior staff working **25%** FTE

Panel 4 (bottom right)

Outputs

What we produce: Technology installation, Technical assistance and/or training

Outcomes

What our products will achieve: Safe communities/healthy children

Outputs

Something we produce or do: Education, technical assistance, install new technology, upgrade system etc.

Should be measurable:

% increase in capacity

Small systems attending a workshop

Of systems in compliance (could also be an outcome)

Of new homes served

Output

We provide **1** year of community college wastewater education classes

Outcomes

So **100%** of our students have access to wastewater industry jobs

And reduce minimum wage employment by **25%**

EPA Logic Model:

Logic Model Guide – What each category means

Inputs

Resources	Activities	Outputs	Audience	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
What you invest!	*What you do!*	*What you produce or deliver! (#)*	*Who you reach!*	*Change in:*	*Change in:*	*Change in:*
•Time •Money •Partners •Equipment •Facilities	•Plan •Meet •Educate •Create •Clean up	•Workshops •Events •Publications •Resident involvement	•Customers •Participants •Decision-makers **Define Community**	•Knowledge •Skills •Attitude •Awareness •Motivation **End of project**	•Behaviors •Practices •Procedures **6-12 months after project**	•Environment •Social conditions •Economic conditions •Policies **2+ years after project**

Ex: Septic Maintenance Education
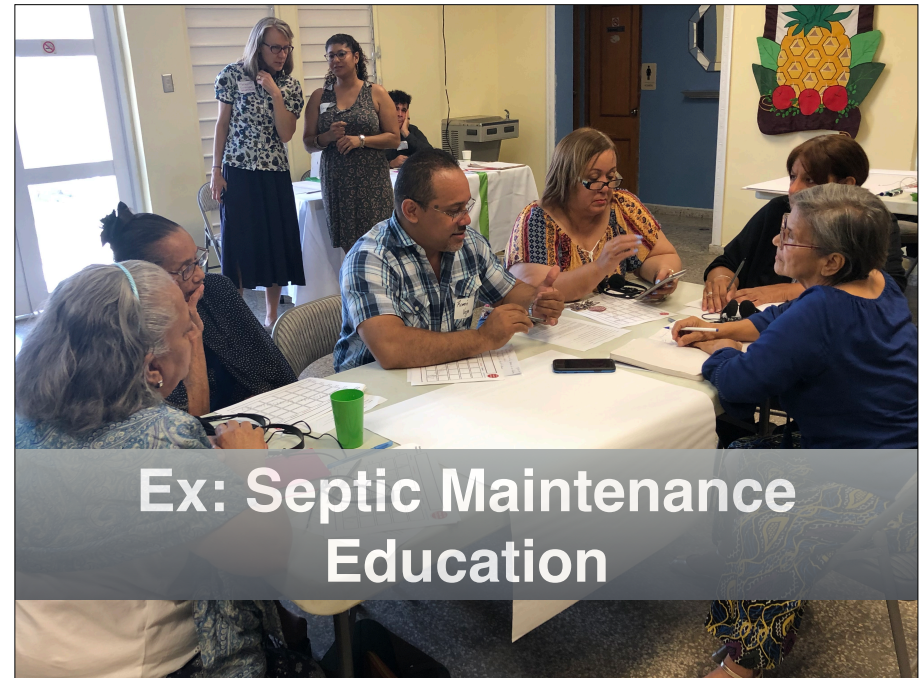
Outputs/ Deliverables

Start with outputs since they will determine your inputs

6 Month Community Assessment and Outreach Program

3 Community Workshops & 3 Focus Groups

Outreach Material

THE AVERAGE ADULT POOPS ABOUT 300 POUNDS/YEAR

THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF A LARGE BLACK BEAR

SAVE YOUR SEPTIC!

SAVE YOUR SEPTIC!

FOUL ODERS LIKE ROTTEN EGGS?

That's a sign your septic tank may need pumping

Learn more here:

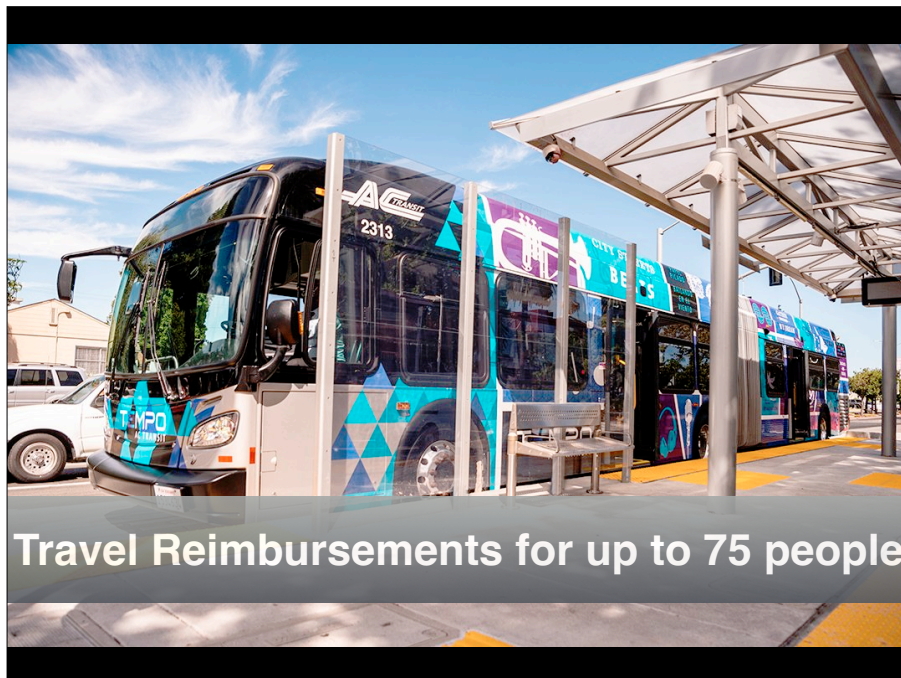Save Your Septic Community Campaign

Reports, Plans & Presentations

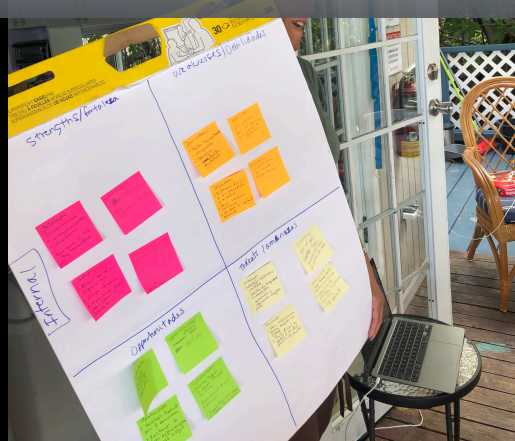Inputs

Communications Consultants

Local Community Advocates

Room Rental for Workshops and Focus Groups

Travel Reimbursements for up to 75 people

Food for up to 75 people

Staff Time/FTE

Supplies?
Updating Software
0 %

Outcomes/Impact

Or..So What?

Saving community members money
(reduced septic replacement costs by ___%)

Protecting the Environment (reduced fecal coliform levels by ___%)

Protecting the Health of Our Children (reduced instances of diarrhea, MIRSA, etc. by ___%)

MAHALO NUI.

Save Your Septic!

SCAN HERE

Resources & Inputs	Outputs & Activities	Outcomes
Communications consultants	Community outreach program, door to door, local radio, flyers	Saving low income community money
Community advocates	3 community workshops	Protecting the environment
Training space/room rental	3 focus groups	Protecting children and families
Travel Reimbursements	Outreach material (banners, inserts, radio announcements, TV…)	
Food	Save Your Septic Campaign	
Supplies: Butcher paper, pens, projector screens (2), projectors (2), 20 page	Success metrics, reports, communications plan…	
Staff time - 2 FTE		

How much $ is available? Do I need to revise Outputs?

The budget makes your case

Or not

Don't annoy them with too little information

And don't claim you can do too much

A well done logic model feeds your budget…

Slide 1
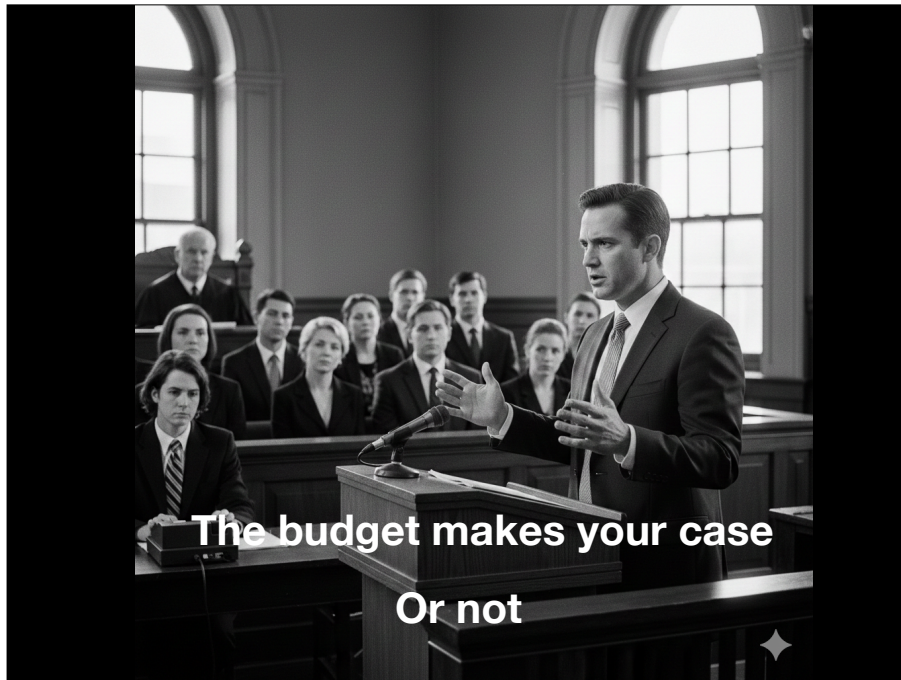
Logic Model Guide – What each category means

Inputs	Outputs		Audience	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
What you invest!	*What you do!*	*What you produce or deliver! (#)*	*Who you reach!*	*Change in:*	*Change in:*	*Change in:*
•Time •Money •Partners •Equipment •Facilities	•Plan •Meet •Educate •Create •Clean up	•Workshops •Events •Publications •Resident involvement	•Customers •Participants •Decision-makers	•Knowledge •Skills •Attitude •Awareness •Motivation	•Behaviors •Practices •Procedures	•Environment •Social conditions •Economic conditions •Policies

The budget should reflect the costs of your necessary inputs and outputs

Slide 2

The budget narrative should reflect the measurable inputs & outputs

Staff: The project will include **4** operators working **25%** FTE and **1** senior staff working **25%** FTE for a total of **$$$**

Supplies: Supplies include include **2 laptops** at a cost of **$$**, **1** projector for **$$**

Other: Room rental for workshops and focus groups will cost **$$**

Slide 3

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Slide 4

Join us next time!

EFCN

Register for Session 4:
State Revolving Funds - Part 1, The Basics
Tuesday, Jan 13 10-11am PT/1-2pm ET

Register for Session 5:
State Revolving Funds - Part 2, Navigating CWSRF
Tuesday, Jan 27 10-11am PT/1-2pm ET

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