



## Tackling Emerging Contaminants (TEC) Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### What is TEC WaterTA?

The Tackling Emerging Contaminants (TEC) Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) initiative provides technical assistance to small or disadvantaged communities to assess and address drinking water contamination from emerging contaminants and perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). TEC aims to further administration of the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities ([EC-SDC](#)) grant program by delivering direct, community centered technical assistance to address emerging contaminants and PFAS in small and/or disadvantaged communities.

### What kind of services can TEC WaterTA provide to communities?

TEC WaterTA assists small or disadvantaged communities nationwide to assess and address emerging contaminants and PFAS challenges in their public water system. The EPA's contractors offer no-cost services to develop:

- **Sampling and analysis activities**, including initial diagnostic monitoring, sampling plans, laboratory analyses, and water quality evaluation reports.
- **Technical plans**, including alternatives analysis, preliminary engineering reports, and source water contaminant identification, mitigation evaluations and plans.
- **Implementation support / funding deliverables**, including identifying funding options and preparation of funding application materials such as cost estimates or preliminary engineering reports.
- **Operational training support**, including sampling training, operator training for new treatment systems, operation manuals, and standard operating procedures.
- **Community engagement plans**, including developing outreach and engagement strategies in collaboration with the water system, identifying community-based partners and stakeholders, identifying and hosting public events and other opportunities to engage with and solicit feedback from community members, and sharing relevant and accessible information with the public.

### Does TEC WaterTA offer funding to communities?

No, TEC WaterTA does not offer funding. It offers free direct technical assistance to small and/or disadvantaged communities to help them assess and address emerging contaminants and PFAS challenges. TEC WaterTA supports implementation of the EC-SDC grant by helping communities access those and other available infrastructure funds to address emerging contaminant concerns.

### Which communities are eligible for support from TEC WaterTA?

To receive TEC WaterTA, communities must meet EC-SDC eligibility requirements for small or disadvantaged described in section 1459A of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA):

“Disadvantaged Community” is one determined by the state to be disadvantaged under the affordability criteria established by the state under section 1452(d)(3) of the Safe Drinking Water Act or may become a disadvantaged community as a result of carrying out a project or activity under the grant program. As with the

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program, each state has statutory discretion to set its own criteria.

“Small Community” is one that has a population of less than 10,000 individuals that the Administrator determines does not have the capacity to incur debt sufficient to finance a project or activity under the grant program. This is a statutory definition.

### **How can my community/water system receive this technical assistance?**

Communities can request TEC WaterTA via the online [WaterTA Request Form](#). The EPA will also consult with states, Tribes, territories, regions and other stakeholders to identify communities that may benefit from this technical assistance.

### **What contaminants can be addressed with TEC WaterTA?**

TEC WaterTA can provide assistance with addressing concerns with any of the contaminants listed in any of the EPA’s [Contaminant Candidate Lists](#) (CCLs). Examples include PFOA, PFOS, perchlorate, manganese, 1,4-dioxane, and others. TEC WaterTA cannot address contaminants for which the EPA has set a maximum contaminant level (MCL) under the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) other than PFAS.

### **Who will be conducting the work for TEC WaterTA?**

The services provided by the TEC WaterTA will be conducted by the EPA and their contractors in coordination with water systems and states. The TA service contractors are experienced in working with drinking water systems in different areas, including technical aspects, communications, and community engagement, to address emerging contaminants and PFAS.

### **Can my sampling results from TEC WaterTA be used for the PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) initial monitoring sampling?**

Yes, PFAS sampling results from TEC WaterTA can be used by the water system to help address the needed sampling for PFAS initial monitoring. The water systems are ultimately responsible for understanding the sampling requirements and following the timeframes needed to meet the requirement in the regulation (see 40 CFR 141.902(b)(1)). Additional information regarding the PFAS NPDWR can be found [here](#).

### **Can I receive assistance from TEC WaterTA if I’m already working with another TA provider?**

Yes, TEC WaterTA can complement the work of other TA providers.

### **Are private well owners eligible?**

No, TEC WaterTA does not assist private wells or individuals; TEC WaterTA services are only available to public water systems. Private well owners may be eligible for certain other EPA funding programs and services. Please visit the [EPA Training and Technical Assistance for Small Systems](#) and [EC-SDC grant](#) program pages for more information.

### **Do communities need to pay for TEC WaterTA?**

No, the services provided by TEC WaterTA are at no cost to the community. In order for the projects to be successful, the community water system’s participation, which will involve time (e.g., gathering data) and coordination resources, is critical.

### **Will TEC WaterTA produce any publicly available resources?**

Yes, the EPA will create tools and case studies to share information and best practices between the Agency, state and Tribal programs, water system managers, and community leaders.

### **What kind of water quality monitoring technical assistance can TEC WaterTA provide?**

TEC WaterTA can assist communities with water quality monitoring to identify and characterize presence of emerging contaminants and PFAS. For example, TEC WaterTA can support collecting and evaluating historical operational and water quality data and sampling for emerging contaminants and PFAS in water including initial analytical monitoring. TEC WaterTA can also help community water systems develop sampling and analysis plans, quality assurance / quality control (QA/QC) plans, and provide operator training to support subsequent monitoring. Specific assistance will be tailored to the needs of the community.

### **How can TEC WaterTA assist communities to address emerging contaminant and PFAS contamination?**

TEC WaterTA can assist communities with identifying and developing projects for their water system to address emerging contaminant and PFAS contamination, including assisting with assessing project alternatives, project planning and design, developing preliminary engineering reports (PERs), and feasibility analyses. TEC WaterTA can also assist with source water protection planning activities related to emerging contaminants and PFAS, and support for the development or update of source water protection assessments and plans to address emerging contaminants and PFAS in source water, including evaluating alternate sources. TEC WaterTA also supports communities identify and prepare funding applications to receive necessary resources to address emerging contaminants in their drinking water. Specific assistance will be tailored to the needs of the community.

### **How can TEC WaterTA assist operational training?**

TEC WaterTA can provide technical assistance with operational training support for communities, such as developing operations manuals, new treatment system operator training, sampling training, and other technical assistance to ensure proper operations of water utilities to address emerging contaminants and PFAS. Specific assistance will be tailored to the needs of the community.

### **What kind of community engagement and outreach capacity can TEC WaterTA provide?**

TEC WaterTA can assist communities with conducting research and outreach to identify community-based partners and stakeholders to support engagement strategies, in collaboration with the water system, the EPA Region, and state. For example, it can also help promote and support local level coordination on drinking water emerging contaminants and PFAS issues. TEC WaterTA can assist community leaders and decision makers to conduct community engagement and outreach, such as listening sessions and customer notifications, and ensure public health protection while the utility system works to mitigate the problem. It can help develop outreach materials, including translations for the locally relevant languages. Specific assistance will be tailored to the needs of the community.

### **What is the difference between TEC WaterTA and WaterTA**

[EPA WaterTA](#) connects communities to experts who help assess and implement solutions for their drinking water, sewage, and stormwater needs. TEC WaterTA is one of many initiatives under the WaterTA umbrella.