



WATER FINANCE EXCHANGE
NO COMMUNITY LEFT BEHIND

TAKING ACTION ON TEXAS WATER INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

WEBINAR - SEPT. 14, 2023



Questions & Answers

At the webinar, Taking Action on Texas Water Infrastructure Opportunities, the panel fielded many insightful questions from attendees. Those questions, including some that were not addressed during the webinar due to time limitations, are answered here. If you have further questions on the topics discussed in the webinar, contact info@waterfx.org.

How is WFX funded? Do you charge the entities for your services?

The Water Finance Exchange is funded by philanthropic partners, including philanthropic foundations located in Texas, that fund WFX to be able to work directly with small, rural, and underserved communities. WFX does not charge entities directly for its services, but in some cases, the organization is able to defray its expenses by having costs reimbursed through successful state and federal financing applications for water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

Do you think the Legislature is starting to grasp the importance of technical assistance? Is there anything else they could be doing in terms of policy interventions?

The Texas State Legislature has continuously highlighted the importance of technical assistance, as evidenced by the language in Senate Bill 28 that would allot increased funding for technical assistance support. WFX, RSAH2O, TWF, and other partners such as Texas 2036, Texas Rural Water, and Communities Unlimited are working together to help more effectively define technical assistance support in Texas to inform the legislature and state funding and regulatory bodies to inform further policy interventions.

How can communities prepare to access SB28 funding and/or IJIA Funding?

Communities can prepare for the new and existing funding resources by preparing the necessary base documents for applications, such as financial audits and engineering designs. In addition, communities can begin identifying the types of projects that will address their problems.

Webinar Speakers



Hank Habicht
Co-founder, WFX



Carlos Rubinstein
Principal, RSAH2O



Rogelio Rodriguez
Director of the Texas Infrastructure Fund, WFX



Sarah Schlessinger
Executive Director, Texas Water Foundation

Would you address the issue of communities that don't have the ability to support their own systems due to low population/ expensive water sources and why the state's role in helping and subsidizing them is needed? i.e. why we should not let them disappear?

WFX believes that no community should be left behind. Many water systems were installed during the time when infrastructure was funded by the construction grants program, which allowed communities to utilize nearly complete grant funding for water infrastructure. Now, as these systems are nearing the end of their lifecycle, new funding and technical assistance structures are necessary to work directly with these types of systems that have low populations and/or more expensive water resources. WFX believes that regional solutions offer these communities economy of scale solutions that allow for sustainable systems.

Is there any consideration for increasing funding for high growth areas that need investment or is funding focus only for underprivileged areas?

The Texas Water Development Board has a mix of funding programs that include funding opportunities for economically disadvantaged communities, as well as certain projects in high growth areas. WFX works with communities in high growth areas to explore alternative funding and financing mechanisms that may be better suited for other funding programs outside of the State Revolving Funds.

About WFX

Water Finance Exchange (WFX) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit comprised of experienced water and finance professionals who work closely with communities to address head-on their water infrastructure funding needs and opportunities. Our mission is to help communities build sustainable and resilient utilities that are the foundation of economic growth and prosperity.

The point system for the TWDB is still the same, you all just help out on trying to see how we can score higher? Is this correct?

The point system remains consistent for the Texas Water Development Board, but new opportunities for projects that focus on elements such as green infrastructure, lead-service lines, or PFAs may allow for higher scoring. In addition, WFX works with communities to ensure that all possible points are accounted for, such as environmental regulatory requirements, asset management planning, or economically disadvantaged community criteria.

I'm curious to know the panel's thoughts and reactions to the recent National Infrastructure Advisory Council's report on water infrastructure. It had a number of recommendations (some more useful than others) but it included a recommendation on alternative service deliveries (P3's, concessions, etc.). With Vista Ridge, Mesa Water and others, is Texas already ahead of the game or do state and local procurement requirements still stifle innovation?

Texas has seen large water projects, such as Vista Ridge, delivered under a P3 model. There is much discussion about the need to allow private capital to enter the water space, as all needs cannot be met with public dollars alone. Recent legislative action is pointing towards P3 as a serious consideration for water and other infrastructure projects. There is one entity in particular that is promoting P3 consideration by the state and local entities. Please visit <https://investtexasCouncil.com>. Having said that, there are many more opportunities in Texas water space that should seriously consider P3. Local understanding of the value of risk transference is key.