



September 23, 2020

The Honorable Brad Little
Governor of Idaho
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-00345

RE: Triennial Capacity Development Report for Drinking Water

Dear Governor Little,

The Safe Drinking Water Act amendments of 1996 directed states to develop a capacity development strategy for assisting public water systems in improving their technical, financial, and managerial capacity. The 1996 amendments also require the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to provide a capacity development report to the Governor every three years. Enclosed is a report summarizing many of the activities and work accomplished toward improving the technical, financial, and managerial capacities of Idaho public drinking water systems.

Since 1996, DEQ's Drinking Water Bureau, in partnership with other service providers, has worked closely with public water system owners and operators across the state to maximize training opportunities and increase awareness regarding information critical to successfully operating their water systems. The ultimate goal of the capacity development program is to ensure that public water systems have adequate capacity to reliably deliver safe drinking water to meet current and future needs.

DEQ's efforts continue to produce successful and measurable outcomes throughout Idaho. Implementing the capacity development strategy provides Idahoans with the following benefits:

- On-line tools to assist water system operators in building their capacity
- One-on-one training during sanitary surveys
- Training events throughout the state at locations convenient to water system operators
- Opportunities for partnerships between water system operators
- Improved compliance by providing auto-dialer notifications for important reminders
- Standardized inspections by qualified inspectors with timely feedback to system operators
- Planning grant assistance for facility planning projects designed to ensure safe and adequate supplies of drinking water

Continuing these efforts and expanding partnerships will ensure that public water systems across Idaho reliably provide safe drinking water.

Sincerely,



Jess Byrne
Director

Enclosure (1)

Triennial Capacity Development Report to the Governor

State Fiscal Years 2018-2020



State of Idaho
Department of Environmental Quality
September 2020





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Acronyms

CCR	Consumer Confidence Report
DEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
DWSRF	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund
EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
IdWARN	Idaho Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network
PWS	Public Water System
SDWA	Safe Drinking Water Act
SDWIS	Safe Drinking Water Information System
TFM	Technical, Financial, and Managerial

Executive Summary

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) receives funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for capacity development assistance. Water system capacity is the technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capability to operate in accordance with local, state, and federal drinking water standards. The 1996 Amendments to the Federal Safe Drinking Act (SDWA) requires each state to have a strategy to ensure water systems have the technical, financial, and managerial capacity to deliver safe water to their customers. Water systems with adequate TMF capacity are able to maintain high rates of compliance with health-based standards.

Goal: Ensure new community water systems and non-transient, non-community water systems are viable by providing guidance and technical review.

New and substantially modified water systems are required to demonstrate the systems will have adequate TMF before they can proceed with construction. DEQ provides guidance to developers, engineers, and owners through a general plan and specification review checklist and related guidance documents. Water system owners and operators are encouraged to work closely with the DEQ regional office in the area where the project will occur. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) assists with financing water system improvements by providing below-market-rate interest loans to help repair or build new drinking water facilities.

Goal: Provide safe drinking water by maintaining compliance with rules and regulations through provision of timely information and technical assistance to owners and operators.

Technical assistance to water system owners and operators is an essential foundation of the Idaho Drinking Water Program. Direct technical assistance over the telephone, via written correspondence, or in-person builds relationships and helps focus efforts on water system needs. The Public Water System Switchboard is a web-based resource with applications to assist water systems with monitoring schedules, public notification templates, rules, operator information, and other resources. The sanitary survey inspection process provides an evaluation of the systems' overall capabilities through standardized inspection criteria.

Goal: Ensure public water systems are operated by qualified personnel by requiring properly licensed operators.

Water systems operated by qualified personnel address technical, managerial, and financial issues through innovative and improved methods of operation and management. DEQ participates in operator trainings and provides training credit for continuing education units in the sanitary survey process. Resources are available on the Public Water System Switchboard to assist systems with operator licensing requirements or to search for a licensed operator.

DEQ continues to work on guidance and tools to ensure public water systems achieve compliance and have the technical, managerial, and financial capacity to deliver safe water to their customers.

1 Introduction

As the state's primacy agency for implementing the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is required to develop a capacity development strategy that addresses the technical, financial, and managerial (TFM) needs of Idaho's public water systems (PWSs). The primary goal of the capacity development program is to protect public health by improving the TFM capacity of water systems.

Every three years, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires the state to submit a capacity development report to the governor, as required by Section 1420(c)(3) of the SDWA. This document fulfills the reporting requirement for state fiscal years 2018-2020.

2 Capacity Development Program

Idaho's capacity development program helps PWS owners strengthen their ability to consistently supply safe drinking water to their customers. The program achieves this goal by helping PWS owners and operators (with an emphasis on small systems) improve their *technical abilities*, *financial capabilities*, and *managerial skills* in order to comply with SDWA requirements.

- *Technical abilities* refer to the adequacy, operation, and maintenance of a drinking water system's infrastructure (e.g., water source, water treatment, storage, and distribution network).
- *Financial capabilities* refer to the monetary resources available to a public drinking water system owner to support the cost of operating, maintaining, and improving the system.
- *Managerial skills* refer to the expertise required of owners and operators who oversee the drinking water system operations.

The capacity development program is federally funded through funds set aside from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), which was authorized under the 1996 SDWA amendments.

In 2020, public water systems are challenged with maintaining a safe and healthy workplace to continue to provide safe drinking water during the COVID-19 pandemic. DEQ is committed to assisting PWS owners and operators with meeting this challenge. DEQ provided timely web-based materials to assist owners and operators with operations and sector-specific resources. DEQ coordinated with the Idaho Rural Water Association to develop a list of volunteer licensed operators to ensure water systems could continue operations in the event operators were unable to work due to COVID-19.

A new requirement for the capacity development program is asset management. Section 2012 in America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 requires state drinking water programs to include, as appropriate, asset management into their capacity development strategy. Asset management is the practice of managing infrastructure capital assets to minimize the total cost of owning and operating them, while delivering the service level customers desire. To address these requirements and to encourage the development of asset management plans, DEQ:

- Developed an asset management frequently asked questions document and made it available to drinking water staff for distribution to water systems.

- Added the *SMART management financial tool* on our on-line Public Water System Switchboard.
- Revised the managerial checklist used for water system inspections to incorporate a question regarding availability of an asset management plan.
- Added priority points on the DWSRF loan rating process for water systems who have implemented or will implement as part of a proposed project a formal asset management plan.
- Conducted asset management and source water workshops to public water system operators and owners throughout the state.
- Is revising the agency's Capacity Development Strategy to include a description of how the state will encourage the development of asset management plans by public water systems and assist in training systems in implementing such plans.

Although there is no regulatory requirement for PWSs to have asset management plans, the benefits include:

Benefit of Asset Management

- Prolonging asset life and aiding in rehabilitation, repair, replacement and operations and maintenance
- Improved security and safety of assets
- Improved emergency response
- Increased knowledge of asset location and condition
- Increased understanding of which assets are critical to the utility
- More efficient operation
- Meeting consumer demands with a focus on system sustainability
- Rate-setting based on sound operational and financial planning
- Better prioritization of capital improvement projects

3 Capacity Development and Small Drinking Water Systems

The capacity development program focuses on owners of small PWSs (i.e., those serving 3,300 or fewer customers), which are more likely to have difficulty complying with federal and state drinking water standards. In Idaho, 97% of the state's 1,991 PWSs serve 3,300 or fewer customers.

Small communities face the greatest difficulty in managing the multiple aspects of their PWSs. Because of small customer bases, these communities often lack the revenues needed to hire experienced managers and operators or to maintain and upgrade their drinking water supply facilities. Interruptions in water service and violations of drinking water standards are often problems for small drinking water systems that lack adequate TFM capacity.

To identify systems in greatest need of assistance, DEQ uses various tools such as compliance data and sanitary survey (inspection) information. Assistance provided includes one or more of the following:

- Contacting the owner/operator by phone for technical assistance.

- Providing the owner/operator a tutorial of our Public Switchboard: www.deq.idaho.gov/pws-switchboard (*Idaho DEQ's hub of all Drinking Water Information: Rules, Monitoring Schedules, Lab Forms, Drinking Water Watch, Training Calendar, etc.*). This allows the operator to obtain information about various DEQ programs, access to state and federal regulations and policies, and downloads of instructional aids.
- Performing a site visit to evaluate system operations or to conduct Revised Total Coliform Rule assessments.
- Providing the operator with technical assistance through referral to a third party service provider.
- Providing reminder calls and emails through an auto-dialer system for such things as monitoring or public notification requirements.
- Providing written correspondence regarding sampling requirements, failure to monitor letters, e-mail, etc.
- Planning grants for facility planning projects designed to ensure safe and adequate supplies of drinking water

4 Goals of the Capacity Development Program

The capacity development program goals are geared toward both new and existing PWSs:

1. Ensure new community water systems¹ and non-transient, non-community water systems² are viable by providing guidance and technical review.
2. Provide safe drinking water by maintaining compliance with rules and regulations through provision of timely information and technical assistance to owners and operators.
3. Ensure public water systems are operated by qualified personnel by requiring properly licensed operators.

Each capacity development goal is detailed below, with an emphasis on achievements from the last three state fiscal years.

Goal: Ensure new community water systems and non-transient non-community water systems are viable by providing guidance and technical review.

Before owners of new PWSs can begin construction and operation, a comprehensive review of requirements in the “Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems,” IDAPA 58.01.08.500 is made to ensure the water system owner/operator/developer demonstrates that ongoing TFM capabilities are achievable.

¹ **Community water system:** A public water system that serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents (IDAPA 58.01.08.003.15). Examples include municipally owned public drinking water supplies (cities, towns) or privately owned drinking water suppliers such as homeowner associations, apartment complexes, and mobile home parks.

² **Nontransient, noncommunity water system:** A public drinking water system that is not a community water system and that regularly serves at least 25 of the same persons over 6 months per year (IDAPA 58.01.08.003.89). Examples include schools, day care centers, hospitals, offices, industrial parks, and major shopping centers.

IDAPA 58.01.08.500 states that “No person shall proceed, or cause to proceed, with construction of a new or substantially modified community or non-transient, non-community drinking water system until it has been demonstrated to the Department that the water system will have adequate technical, financial, and managerial capacity, as defined in Section 003 of these rules...”

Demonstration of these capacities must be submitted to DEQ prior to, or concurrent with, submittal of system engineering plans and specifications. The documentation is then reviewed by DEQ professional engineers.

Owners proposing material modifications of existing systems, as defined in IDAPA 58.01.08.003.72, must also submit engineering plans and specifications for review and approval. At times, even a change in ownership may result in a system not having adequate TFM capacity. In those instances, DEQ works closely with the PWS owner to clearly outline the steps necessary to achieve requirements, along with establishing a reasonable timeline.

To assist water systems with this process, DEQ recommends water systems contact the Regional Office in the area which their project will occur. Checklists to assist with these processes are provided for engineers and developers and can be found at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/assistance-resources/for-engineers-developers/checklists/>.

DEQ is in the process of updating its guidance document, *How to Demonstrate Financial, Technical, and Managerial Capacity in New Public Water Systems*. The document will align asset management information with DEQ’s Capacity Development Strategy and make information more understandable and easier for public water system operators, owners, and consultants to complete.

Goal: Provide safe drinking water by maintaining compliance with rules and regulations through provision of timely information and technical assistance to owners and operators.

DEQ accomplishes this goal through various means, discussed below.

Public Drinking Water System Assistance

DEQ and its partners strive to improve the capacity of PWSs by offering direct assistance and providing online tools to help with reporting requirements.

DEQ Technical Assistance - DEQ regional and state office staff provide a variety of direct technical assistance over the telephone, through correspondence, and in person (both one-on-one and in training workshops) to system owners and operators. This assistance includes providing information on submitting updated facility plans for review, complying with microbiological and chemical sampling requirements, conducting sanitary surveys, reviewing operation and maintenance plans, reviewing cross-connection control programs, handling water quality complaints, and issuing public notification regarding drinking water emergencies, such as contamination events and boil water advisories.

DEQ develops and publishes regulatory guidance for PWS owners and operators to help them interpret and implement rules and regulations. All of these guidance documents are available to the systems and the public at www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/drinking-water/pws-tips-

[guidance/guidance-fact-sheets](#). Hard copies are also available from DEQ regional offices and district health departments.

District Health Department Technical Assistance - DEQ contracts with the state's seven district health departments to provide technical assistance to Idaho's small PWS owners and operators. The district health departments provide the same one-on-one assistance that DEQ provides to larger system owners and operators and performs a service that is essential to the success of the Idaho Drinking Water Program.

Consumer Confidence Report Assistance - DEQ and district health departments assist community PWS owners with meeting the requirements for consumer confidence reports (CCRs). CCRs are annual water quality reports to the customers of community water systems. The report summarizes system information regarding water sources used, any detected contaminants, the status of system compliance, and includes general public educational information. The CCR reports are due to DEQ annually on July 1.

To make CCR reporting easier, DEQ provides online applications to help owners and operators complete their required CCR report. This report is completed by each community system with the monitoring results and violation information from their files or that same information can be easily downloaded from an online DEQ application. All of these components help water system owners and operators communicate effectively with their customers. The entire CCR report can be prepared online and sent electronically (or by mail) to the local DEQ regional office.

Auto-Dialer - DEQ provides automated telephone and e-mail reminders to PWS owners and operators to help inform them of upcoming sampling deadlines. This low-cost, high-impact activity has been well received by the operator community and resulted in a significant reduction in monitoring violations since it began in 2010. DEQ has expanded the notifications to include reminders for public notifications, sanitary survey significant deficiencies, Revised Total Coliform Rule seasonal system start-up procedures and lead consumer notification at homeowner's taps. The auto-dialer has also been used to notify water systems impacted by a regional power failure of the need to disinfect and flush the system.

SMART Financial Tool - This tool is designed to assist water systems with assessing their overall financial health. The tool allows the water system to enter information on revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities, debt, and reserves. Once information is entered, a set of dials will move to reflect the "financial health" of the water system. This application has the potential to be used to satisfy the financial capacity question asked during the sanitary survey, demonstration of TFM requirement of revenue sufficiency, and assist with SRF loan underwriting.

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)

The SDWA of 1996 allowed states to establish a DWSRF program to assist public drinking water system owners with financing infrastructure upgrades needed to protect public health and achieve and maintain compliance with SDWA requirements. The DWSRF authorizes grants to states to capitalize revolving loan funds. A revolving loan fund is a self-replenishing pool of money using annual federal capitalization grants, investment earnings, and interest and principal payments on old loans to issue new ones.

DEQ uses DWSRF loans to assist eligible PWS owners with infrastructure improvements. Interested system owners apply to DEQ, and loans are made to system owners with the managerial and technical capabilities (or who will achieve these capabilities through the loan project) and can demonstrate need through a competitive ranking process. Details regarding all components of this program can be found at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/grants-loans/water-system-construction-loans.aspx>.

Source Water Protection Grants

In SFY 2020, DEQ reinstated the source water protection grant program. Twelve drinking water systems were awarded source water protection grants. The grant money comes from the State Revolving Fund wellhead protection program and can be used for activities that lead to the reduction in risk of contamination of a drinking water source. Projects funded include fencing, well abandonment, watershed erosion planning, and assessment of threats to the aquifer.

Sanitary Surveys

DEQ makes periodic inspections, called sanitary surveys, of all PWSs to ensure they are properly built, operated, and maintained. Sanitary surveys provide a positive approach for evaluating and assisting PWS owners since the physical condition of a PWS often reflects its TFM capacities.

To assist system owners and operators in preparing for their sanitary survey, the “State of Idaho Public Water System Sanitary Survey” form used by state inspectors is available on DEQ’s website at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/60176938/sanitary-survey-form.xlsx>.

The Drinking Water Bureau uses a sanitary survey inspection platform with questions focused on evaluating and documenting the capabilities of a water system’s sources, treatment, storage, distributions system, operation and maintenance, and overall management and financial capacity. The questions address deficiencies that must be corrected within the water system. Deficiencies that are designated as significant constitute health hazards and due to their potential public health impact, must be fixed as soon as possible. Each question has an associated report statement that identifies the rule citation and the authority for the requirement. All deficiencies that are considered significant have a potential health risk statement for clarification. The sanitary survey checklist includes capacity-related questions including asset management.

Each year, approximately 20% of the 1,991 PWSs in Idaho undergo a sanitary survey. The sanitary survey allows a comprehensive review of a system’s technical financial and managerial capacity. The survey produces a preliminary findings report that not only reflects the language found in the rules, but also outlines what the system owner must do to meet compliance, and ultimately, to protect public health. Water systems have the opportunity to request assistance from third party providers as part of this preliminary findings report. A copy of the request for assistance is sent to the Idaho Rural Water Association and Rural Community Assistance Corporation. Third party providers have assisted water systems with asset management plans, rate studies, leak detection, cross connection control and information on loan and grant availability. These collaborative efforts have become increasingly important to leverage limited resources and for the collective benefit of the public.

To help operators of small water systems maintain their licensure requirements, continuing education units are provided for successfully completing limited pre-inspection “homework,” actively participating in the sanitary survey, and follow-up corrective action planning.

Transparent Access to Information

Data management and data entry procedures, through DEQ’s Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) database, are critical to efficiently track water system compliance and support DEQ enforcement efforts. More importantly, the database is a critical tool for ensuring drinking water standards are met and water is safe to drink. DEQ’s database is a vital resource for DEQ’s six regional offices and the seven district health departments to oversee the state’s PWSs and for the operators and owners to maintain compliance and reporting requirements.

The Public Water System Switchboard (Switchboard) has applications within it that use information from DEQ’s SDWIS database. The Switchboard provides owners and operators with links to rules, monitoring schedules, plans and specifications, public notification templates, sanitary survey forms, drinking water system classification requirements, operator licensing, and more. The Switchboard is available at www.deq.idaho.gov/pws-switchboard. The following tools are among the various aids that use SDWIS data and can be found on the Switchboard:

- **CCR Tool** - The CCR tool provides the sampling and violation history of a community water system for their required annual CCR. Water systems can go online to gather the necessary information to produce their own CCR. This approach has been efficient and effective for the community water system owners as well as the DEQ regional offices and district health departments. See <http://www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/ccrtool/MainPage>.
- **Monitoring Schedules** - This DEQ application helps PWS operators and owners easily review their current monitoring requirements. The report also identifies if the monitoring requirement has been satisfied once the sample has been entered into SDWIS. See <http://www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/monitoringschedulereport>.
- **Lab Forms** - DEQ has an application to help operators and owners produce laboratory request forms using data in the state drinking water database to identify samples that are due during the current year. See www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/DWLabForms.
- **Sample Results** - Sampling results are available online through an application that utilizes information from DEQ’s SDWIS database. The application is available via the online Drinking Water Watch tool at <http://dww.deq.idaho.gov/IDPDWW>.
- **SMART Management Financial Tool** – This tool is designed to assist water systems with assessing their overall financial health. The tool prompts systems to enter information regarding their revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities, debt and reserves. Once the information is entered, the final screen has a set of dials which move to reflect the “financial health” of the water system. The application can be used to demonstrate the technical, financial and managerial requirement of revenue sufficiency, satisfy the financial capacity checklist question in the sanitary survey and assist with SRF Loan Underwriting. See <http://www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/SMSWS/>.
- **Source Water Planning Tool** - The planning tool assists water systems in developing a source water protection plan and emergency response plan. The tool prepopulates information into the report including source locational data, contact information, potential contaminate inventory system, and county emergency contacts. See <http://www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/swpp>.

- **System Classification Worksheet** - The application produces real time system classifications based on DEQ’s drinking water database (SDWIS) information. Once a public water system’s information has been placed into the drinking water database, system classifications will automatically be generated through this “System Classification Worksheet” application. The System Classification Worksheet application can be found at <http://www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/SystemClassificationWorksheet/>.

Capacity Development Public Outreach

DEQ’s Drinking Water Switchboard - DEQ’s Drinking Water Bureau focuses on web-based resources and training materials. The Bureau is continually adding and updating the information available to public water systems on its website-based Switchboard. The website is available at www.deq.idaho.gov/pws-switchboard. Water systems have an array of information available to them, including the following:

- IDAPA 58.01.08, “Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems”
- 40 CFR 141, Code of Federal Regulations
- Cross-connection control
- Disinfection byproducts
- Lead in drinking water
- Quick reference guides for drinking water rules
- Guidance, fact sheets, and frequently asked questions
- Health advisories
- CCR report tool
- Monitoring schedules for individual water systems
- Source water assessment reports
- Source water planning tool
- Sample results for all water systems in the state
- Lab request forms
- How to sample videos
- A list of certified drinking water labs
- SMART financial tool
- Plan and specifications information
- Public notification templates
- Sanitary survey forms
- Emergency Preparedness/IdWARN
- Monitoring waivers
- Change water system information
- Important dates
- Cyanotoxins
- Real estate transaction information
- Sample site plan templates
- System classifications
- Operator licensing information
- Become an operator for hire
- Search for an operator
- Option to pay fees online
- Grants/Loans
- Sanitary survey continuing education units
- Sanitary survey training
- Training calendar
- Operation & Maintenance training videos
- Drinking water program feedback form

Emergency Preparedness/IdWARN

DEQ’s Drinking Water Bureau initiated IdWARN (Idaho Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network), a mutual aid organization of communities helping communities by allowing owners of water and wastewater utilities to assist each other during emergencies. IdWARN

participants can access specialized resources, including staff, to assist water and wastewater systems until the system can return to normal operating conditions.

The program is administered by an IdWARN statewide committee through the Idaho Rural Water Association and is available to all public and private water and wastewater system owners in Idaho. Participation is voluntary. More information on IdWARN is available at <https://www.idwarn.org/>.

COVID-19 Response – DEQ enhanced the Public Water System Switchboard with highlighted information on emergency preparedness, certified drinking water labs, how to search for an operator and a link to IdWARN. Drinking water operators and owners were also sent a letter outlining how water systems should currently respond to COVID-19, what DEQ is doing, what to do about required sampling and reporting and steps water system can take if a sampling location is closed or not accessible for monitoring.

Earthquake Response – During the reporting period, an area of central Idaho experienced a 6.5 magnitude earthquake. DEQ and Health District staff contacted water systems that were in closer proximity to the earthquake epicenter advising them to take recommended actions due to possible water system infrastructure damage. These recommendations included:

- Inspect infrastructure to identify failures and susceptibility to contamination
- Ensure pressure is maintained in the distribution system
- If power was interrupted, check pumps, chlorinators or chemical feed systems and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) controller
- Collect construction bacteriological samples
- Respond to customer complaints promptly

Public Notification Templates

Public notifications inform customers of any potential adverse health effects related to their drinking water and what steps they can take to minimize the impact. Under the SDWA public water systems are required to inform their customers of any violations of the state’s drinking water standards. To assist water systems with this requirement, DEQ provides direct links to public notification templates for the Revised Total Coliform Rule, Tier 1, 2 and 3 templates for other drinking water standard violations, loss of pressure, lead/copper, cyanotoxins, and manganese. The public notification templates are available at <http://www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/PublicNotificationTemplates/>. A required certification form for public notifications is also located under this application.

Operators are responsible for the day-to-day management of a drinking water system’s operation. Some of the duties and responsibilities of a licensed operator include sampling, calculating and making chemical applications, operating and maintaining system equipment, issuing public notices to users when systems are not in compliance, and recordkeeping.

Goal: Ensure public water systems are operated by qualified personnel by requiring properly licensed operators.

Statewide Operator Training

Operator training events are conducted by private vendors throughout the state. Rural Community Assistance Corporation, the Environmental Finance Center, and Idaho Rural Water Association receive EPA training grant money and provide training to Idaho operators. DEQ provides an online calendar of training events that is populated by vendors as soon as information becomes available. The online calendar is available on DEQ's PWS Switchboard.

DEQ staff, in collaboration with the Idaho Rural Water Association, conducted training to operators over the past three years during their fall and spring operator conferences. Presentations have been made on a variety of subjects including, the Public Water System Switchboard, emerging contaminants in drinking water, risk and resilience assessments and emergency response plans, funding opportunities, SMART management financial tool, and proposed lead and copper rule changes. Available classes and schedules are displayed on the DEQ training calendar at:

www.deq.idaho.gov/water/TrainingEventCalendar/DisplayEvents/InitEventCalendar.

The Southwest Environmental Finance Center out of the University of New Mexico conducted training in Idaho to water system personnel over the past three years. Four source water protection workshops were conducted throughout the state with a focus on asset management and source water protection. A one day workshop was conducted titled "Asset Management for Water Systems: Optimizing Asset Life for Sustained Operations." "Water Loss" training was originally scheduled for spring of 2020 but has been postponed until later due to COVID-19 concerns.

Additionally, DEQ provides training credit in the form of continuing education units for operators who participate in the sanitary survey process.

Drinking Water Operator Licensing

In Idaho, DEQ and the Idaho Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals oversee the licensing of drinking water operators. DEQ determines which PWSs must be operated by licensed drinking water operators and requires that the PWS owners (with the exception of non-community transient ground water systems) place the supervision and operation of their systems under a properly licensed operator.

The Idaho Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals establishes requirements for operator licenses, sets fees, reviews applications, issues and renews licenses, and determines continuing education requirements. The Idaho Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals contracts with the Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses for day-to-day operations. More information on the Idaho Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals can be found at <https://ibol.idaho.gov/IBOL/BoardPage.aspx?Bureau=WWP>.

The Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems require that DEQ classify all community, non-transient non-community, and surface water public drinking water systems with a treatment and/or distribution classification based on indicators of potential health risk. Criteria used to

determine the potential health risks include the system's complexity, size, and source water for treatment facilities; complexity and size of distribution systems; and other criteria deemed appropriate. Systems are classified by type (treatment or distribution) and class. Classifications range from Very Small to Class I, II, III, or IV. The rules also require that public drinking water systems be staffed by licensed operators based on the system classification.

Public water system owners or operators are required to fill out and submit the classification worksheet to DEQ every five years (IDAPA 58.01.08.553). The Drinking Water Bureau built an application that produces real time system classifications based on DEQ's drinking water database (SDWIS) information. Once a public water system's information has been placed into the drinking water database, system classifications will automatically be generated through this "System Classification Worksheet" application. The worksheet is available on the DEQ Public Water System Classifications webpage at www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/drinking-water/pws-classification-licensure/system-classifications.

Various resources are available to help find licensed operators or obtain a license:

- Licensed operators who are interested in providing professional services to other drinking water systems can register their information online. The application "Become an Operator for Hire" is available at <http://www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/OpForHire/>
- To assist owners in finding a licensed operator, DEQ maintains a web-based application called Search for an Operator. The application is available at <https://www2.deq.idaho.gov/water/OpForHire/Search>.
- DEQ maintains a document titled "Recommendations for Hiring a Contract Operator." This document is available online for owners of public drinking water systems at http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/758473-recommendations_for_hiring_a_contract_operator.pdf.
- For operators needing licenses, the Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses provides online applications and the required qualifications necessary to obtain a license at <https://ibol.idaho.gov/IBOL/BoardPage.aspx?Bureau=WWP>.

5 Summary

Idaho's capacity development program focuses resources on the areas of highest public health benefits and promotes voluntary compliance with drinking water standards. The program emphasizes prevention of drinking water contamination by ensuring system owners and operators are equipped with the necessary TFM capabilities to succeed. The program also provides technical assistance to PWS owners and promotes water system operator training and licensing.

The capacity development program, along with other state resources, continues to help PWS owners and operators acquire or maintain the TFM abilities needed to properly design, operate, finance, and manage their systems. DEQ's goal is to continue to improve the ability of Idaho's PWS owners to provide safe and reliable drinking water.

DEQ continues to support the capacity development program because maintaining overall public drinking water system capabilities is essential to operating a safe and reliable public drinking

water supply. The capacity development program will continue to evolve as the program evaluates its successes and as small drinking water system owners face future challenges in complying with new and revised regulations.

This report is available to the public on the Idaho DEQ website at <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/drinking-water/capacity-development/>.