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# municipalities

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## Working with Water

Municipalities improve and plan

Focus:

**Water  
Management**



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# Sustainable Water Management

Program rundown of municipal options

Michael Atkins, *Communications Director, NJ Future*

**T**he future of New Jersey's water relies on commitment to equitable decision-making to solve legacy water infrastructure issues like lead service line replacement, combined sewer overflows, coastal and riverine flooding, and upgrading water infrastructure. By working together to address the growing needs of our water systems, we can properly mitigate the stress they will face with growing and more frequent storms fueled by climate change, and ensure that natural and tap waters are free from contaminants to support healthy and resilient communities across the state. Learn more about the programs and resources available to assist municipal leaders in addressing these issues within their communities.

**MS4 Primer** Over 90% of New Jersey's waterways are considered impaired, and over 60% can be attributed to pollutants from stormwater runoff. In January 2023, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) issued an updated Tier A Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit to address these water quality impairments and flooding issues.

The updated permit reflects a shift toward watershed-level planning with the inclusion of a mandatory Watershed Improvement Plan requirement. For a highly developed state with large quantities of impervious cover, it is more important than ever to plan ahead to improve our water and protect all New Jerseyans from flooding events worsened by climate change.

New Jersey Future and One Water Consulting, LLC created an MS4 Primer to help municipalities understand the recent changes to the MS4 Permit and improve their municipal stormwater programs. The MS4 Permit and this primer provide a framework for water quality improvements and a regional approach to stormwater management in New Jersey. Contact our Mainstreaming Green Infrastructure Program Manager Lindsey Sigmund at [lsigmund@njfuture.org](mailto:lsigmund@njfuture.org) to get your copy of the MS4 Primer.

Looking for funding to get started on permit compliance? Apply for NJDEP's Tier A MS4 Stormwater Assistance Grants. There is funding allocated for every municipality in New Jersey. Rolling deadline is December 31.





### Funding Navigator

Water utilities around the state need funds, either low interest loans or grants for capital improvement projects to repair or enhance their systems. To help the most underserved water systems identify and navigate agency application processes to secure government funding, New Jersey Future has created its new and innovative Funding Navigator program.

Launched in April of this year, the Funding Navigator program specializes in offering meaningful community engagement and access to free professional technical assistance services to small-to-medium sized under-resourced public water utilities and municipalities. This is the first nonprofit statewide program committed to helping localities access funding for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater needs.

By coordinating with other providers such as New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Environmental Policy Innovation Center (EPIC), Syracuse University, and Moonshot Missions, NJF leverages a wide range of resources to help tailor unique funding application consultation to unique water infrastructure problems.

The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law allocates approximately \$900



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## Sustainable Water Management

million over 5 years for water infrastructure improvements in New Jersey. The Governor and the Legislature also allocated nearly \$300 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding for water infrastructure. New Jersey Future's Funding Navigator program is designed to steer these funds, along with other state funding, to those water systems and municipalities that need it most. These funds are time limited, so it is crucial for municipalities to begin applying for funding. The Funding Navigator helps eligible municipalities and water systems by aiding with upfront application costs for engineering design and legal fees, community and stakeholder outreach, gap analysis report/presentation of water utility systems, and funding application review and consultation.

Pursuing financial infrastructure support does not have to be a complicated and arduous journey. Navigating these streams of funding with the New Jersey Future Funding Navigator staff and partners can make for a smoother process. To learn more about our Funding Navigator program and step by step process working with municipalities and water utilities, please visit us at [www.njfuture.org/new-jersey-funding-navigator/](http://www.njfuture.org/new-jersey-funding-navigator/) or contact our Program Manager, Lee M. Clark at [lclark@njfuture.org](mailto:lclark@njfuture.org)



### Lead-Free New Jersey

Every water system in New Jersey must identify and replace all lead service lines by 2031. Jersey Water Works and Lead-Free NJ have resources for elected and municipal leaders to achieve this goal, thanks in part to the collaborative efforts of our diverse members.

Two resources of note include the Primer for Mayors, produced by the

## Jersey Water Check



JERSEY  
WaterCheck

This data dashboard connects water consumers, utilities, and decision-makers with easy-to-understand information on drinking water and wastewater systems in New Jersey. This tool tracks progress of local water/sewer utility and showcases success stories in infrastructure improvements.

The dashboard was created to serve Jersey Water Works, a statewide collaborative working on New Jersey's water infrastructure challenges. Metrics on both the Shared Goals, and Benchmark Hub pages are categorized according to Jersey Water Works' goals and subgoals, such as Effective and Financially Sustainable Systems, Wise Management and Spending, and Transparent Water Systems. Each metric on Jersey WaterCheck has a description that explains the information being shown, and things to keep in mind when reading it. From the home page of Jersey WaterCheck, you can learn about an individual water or wastewater system using the System Finder.

On a particular water or wastewater system page, metrics are displayed on cards that are organized based on "Communication Categories," which were created specifically for this dashboard. Jersey WaterCheck provides granular utility level and state level actionable information that can help generate community support for decision making on water infrastructure needs.

@ Visit [www.njwatercheck.org](http://www.njwatercheck.org)

## SRF Equity Report

New Jersey Future recently published a report examining how funding reaches water systems of all sizes throughout the state, *Improving a Program that Works: Prioritizing New Jersey Water Bank Projects in Disadvantaged Communities*. The New Jersey Water Bank (NJWB), which finances water infrastructure projects, is a successful program that has provided over \$9 billion in low-cost financing for water and wastewater projects. New Jersey Future partnered with the national Environmental Policy Innovation Center in producing the report, which analyzes NJWB awards and provides 10 recommendations to increase equity and effectiveness of the NJWB.

@ Visit [njfuture.org/research-reports/srfequity](http://njfuture.org/research-reports/srfequity)







## Sustainable Water Management

Lead in Drinking Water Task Force, and our Community Hubs, operated by Lead-Free NJ.

The Lead in Drinking Water Task Force, which provides policy recommendations to Lead-Free NJ and assists Jersey Water Works in supporting a community of state water leaders, advances statewide policy while empowering municipal and local leaders with the necessary information to ensure equitable, cost-effective, and efficient lead service line replacement through resources like the 2023 Primer for Mayors – Let's Get the Lead Out of Our Drinking Water: Lead Service Line Efficiency Measures. This most recent edition includes 10 recommended efficiency measures to assist municipalities and water agencies to better inform and collaborate with their communities. 🇯🇵



For more information, visit [www.leadfreenj.org/community-work](http://www.leadfreenj.org/community-work)



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