# Decentralized Wastewater Technical Assistance Program

*An overview for state, federal, regional, and local partners working with small rural communities*

NOWRA and its State Affiliates, with support from USDA Rural Development, are delivering free, hands-on technical assistance to small rural communities working through onsite and decentralized wastewater challenges. Over the coming year, a Technical Assistance Professional based with FOWA will work directly with communities across Florida — on site, in person, and at no cost to the community. Assistance is scaled to the need: sometimes that's a quick response to solve one problem; sometimes it's a full community assessment and plan.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

- Many small communities rely on aging or failing septic systems, and a conventional sewer project is out of reach financially or technically.
- Local officials often lack the staff, time, or engineering support to evaluate options, and residents don't know where to turn.
- Properly designed and managed decentralized systems are a proven, affordable path to protecting public health and water quality.

## WHAT COMMUNITIES RECEIVE

- **Quick help with a single problem.** A failing system, a compliance notice, a permitting or design question — a call or a site visit to troubleshoot it and get it resolved.
- **In-depth help for bigger challenges.** For communities facing a broader wastewater problem, an on-site assessment and a plain-language plan of realistic options they can act on.
- **Help finding funding.** Guidance connecting communities to state and federal programs that fund wastewater improvements.
- **Education.** Local workshops and a national webinar series on sustainable wastewater management.

## WHAT WE'RE ASKING OF OUR PARTNERS

Our goal is to complement — not duplicate — the work you already do. We'd like your help to **identify and refer communities** that could benefit, **share what you know** about local conditions and existing programs, and **coordinate** so communities hear one consistent message about their options and available funding.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MEETING

As part of the program, FOWA will be convening a stakeholder engagement meeting to coordinate efforts across the agencies and organizations that serve small communities. Partners we hope to see there include:

- State drinking water / wastewater primacy agency (environmental quality, health)
- USDA Rural Development — state office staff
- EPA regional office
- State Clean Water SRF and other infrastructure funding programs
- Regional planning commissions / councils of governments
- County and local health / environmental health departments
- Tribal governments and tribal environmental programs
- Local elected officials and onsite wastewater professionals

### MEETING DETAILS

**Date:** ***Friday, November 20, 2026***
**Time:** ***9:00AM EST***
**Location / link:** ***Teams Meeting Invitation***
**RSVP by:** ***Friday, November 13, 2026***

### PROGRAM CONTACT

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