

Small Water Systems Workshops

More than 160 water system owners, managers, board members, and operators attended the Small Water Systems Workshops this spring. The workshops were designed to help water systems with fewer than 500 connections learn how to manage their system like a business.

Decision-makers were the target audience for this workshop. We were happy that close to half of the participants at the three statewide workshops were those exact people. "This would be a good place for new board members to come as it answered a lot of my questions," commented one decision-maker. Another participant described the workshop as, "Overall, the best, most informative class ever!"

The morning session started with information sharing and questions around:

- Why is it worth my time to be here today?
- What do I need to know about today's regulatory environment?
- What kind of help is available to me and my water system?
- What are some of my options for doing business differently?

After lunch, an "information marketplace" gave participants an opportunity to ask subject experts their most pressing questions. "It was wonderful having all these folks available in one room," said one participant. Each workshop included local presenters and experts.

Also in the afternoon, a mock board meeting was an interactive way to find out, "What do I need to know to avoid legal hot water?" One participant says it was a "very fun way to find out how not to run a water district meeting," and another decision-maker said it was a "great presentation with real life scenarios."

In the final part of the workshop, participants broke into small groups to discuss and report on two topics:

- What struck a chord for you today; and what action might you take as a result?
- How can you get people in your community engaged in your issues?

Sharing information with other water systems helped the participants realize others have the same problems they do. Many established relationships with neighboring systems and local experts.

Stay tuned for more workshop dates.



It was a full house! About half the people at workshops designed to help small water systems run like a business were our target audience—decision makers.

Collaborative workshops sponsors:

- Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts
- Washington Public Utility Districts Association
- Washington State Office of Drinking Water
- Evergreen Rural Water of Washington
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation
- Washington State Auditor's Office
- Washington State Department of Commerce