Table of Contents

Mission, Vision, Values ......................................................... 1
Director’s Message .............................................................. 2
2017 Accomplishments and Successes ....................................... 3
   Health Advisories and Emergencies ...................................... 3
   Program Plans ...................................................................... 3
   Overview of Systems over Time ......................................... 4
   Rule-Making Activities ...................................................... 5
   Water Use Efficiency Water Audit ...................................... 5
   Workshops and Training by Region ..................................... 6
   Cross-Connection Control .................................................. 6
   Drinking Water Week Awards ............................................ 7
   Newsletters ...................................................................... 8
   TOP Awards .................................................................... 8
Funding ............................................................................... 9
   DWSRF Transition, Funding, and WALT ............................ 9
   Impacts of a Lack of Capital Budget .................................. 9
   Putting Together a 2019 Budget ....................................... 9
Emerging Issues and Challenges ............................................. 10
   Governor’s Directive on Lead ............................................ 10
   Lead in School Drinking Water ......................................... 11
   PFAS ............................................................................ 11
   Continued Work with Legionella, Harmful Algae Blooms .... 12
2018 Focus and Future Visions .............................................. 13
   EPA Needs Assessment Report ........................................ 13
   Water System Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program and Consolidations .................................................. 13
   The Value of Water—What’s Next .................................... 14
Mission
We work with others to protect the health of the people of Washington State by ensuring safe and reliable drinking water.

Vision
The people of Washington State understand the value of safe drinking water to healthy communities and a vibrant economy. As a result, our public water systems have the technical, managerial, and financial capacity they need to provide it, now and for generations to come.

Values
- Collaboration
- Respect
- Accountability
- Learning
- Compassion
- Diversity
- Commitment
- Innovation
- Empowerment

“Safe water is a key indicator of the economic vitality in our communities.”
Greetings,

I am excited to be in my new role as Director for the Office of Drinking Water (ODW)! We have an amazing team of people here and incredible industry professionals and communities that share in our mission. Together, we continue to work with others to ensure safe and reliable water for the people of Washington State!

We experienced many challenges and changes this past year, which include financial, technological, and internal staff changes.

In 2017 we faced budget and fiscal difficulties, particularly in our Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program. The lack of a state capital budget, which passed in early 2018, created unexpected and significant challenges. In addition to having no capital budget, we experienced an uncertain and frozen federal budget. However, we successfully weathered this past year with help from, and collaboration with, our partners, stakeholders, and water systems. While we worked to address our fiscal challenges, we recommitted ourselves to our core work. We:

- Began reviewing and updating our program plans.
- Began implementing several key strategic initiatives that focus on core agency goals for improving public health.
- Prepared to reintegrate priority work through clear planning and continued review and improvement of our program plans and initiatives.

We also worked to address challenges with a number of regulated and unregulated contaminants. We have and will continue to address lead in drinking water. As part of this effort, we are working with and providing assistance to water systems and schools with lead detections. Some unregulated contaminants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and cyanotoxins (blue green algae) have made local headlines. We are working to understand and address the risks from these compounds. We have also supported the assessment and prevention activities for the increases in Legionella cases in the state. As the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues its unregulated contaminant monitoring program, we will continue to learn about and address these and other new and existing contaminants.

Finally, we have experienced many changes in people and positions as staff retired or accepted other new and exciting opportunities. We are adjusting our programs and finding great people as we look to fill critical positions and find ways to work smarter and focus on priority work. Thanks to all of you who work with and support us. I look forward to the future and its possibilities!

Mike Means
Office Director
2017 Accomplishments and Successes

Health Advisories
Total: 132 health advisories

Southwest
57 Total Advisories
- Coliform: 10 advisories/17.5%
- Nitrate: 0 advisories/0%
- Other: 47 advisories/82.5%

Northwest
12 Total Advisories
- Coliform: 1 advisory/8%
- Nitrate: 0 advisories/0%
- Other: 11 advisories/92%

Eastern
63 Total Advisories
- Coliform: 6 advisories/9.5%
- Nitrate: 17 advisories/27%
- Other: 40 advisories/63.5%

Program Plans
ODW embarked on a thorough review of all programs and their activities. Through our program planning strategic initiative, we are building a current, shared understanding of our program goals. We are also developing measures of success and identifying ways to improve health outcomes. We will complete this comprehensive review by December 2019. Once program plans are complete, we will have a tool that will:

- Improve organizational health by empowering staff to confidently make implementation decisions, facilitate training, and support program continuity.
- Implement continuous improvement by establishing a plan-do-check-act process, promoting effective use of public health resources.
- Document the actual cost of our public health services.
**Rule-Making Activities**

**Waterworks Operator Certification Rule—Operator-In-Training and Cross-Connection Control Specialist, Chapter 246-292 WAC**

This rule change added an Operator-In-Training designation for each level of Water Treatment Plant Operator and Water Distribution Manager. The adopted rule also expands experience requirements for a Cross-Connection Control Specialist from a more stringent “operating experience” to a broader “water-related” experience. These rule changes:

- Increase public health protection by expanding the number of qualified staff available for hire.
- Allow flexibility in filling utility vacancies.
- Provide water sector professionals more opportunities to develop skills and grow professionally.

The updated rule became effective December 18, 2017.

**Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program (DWSRF) Rule—Tribal Eligibility, Chapter 246-296 WAC**

The Department of Health (DOH) adopted a change to the DWSRF rule concerning eligibility requirements to align state rule with federal rule. The state’s rule included a prohibition for public water systems that are federally regulated (tribal water systems) to receive DWSRF loans. The adopted rule removed this prohibition so tribal governments are eligible as allowed under federal rule. The updated state rule became effective September 22, 2017.

**Water Use Efficiency Water Audit**

For over a decade, we have required drinking water purveyors to report Distribution System Leakage (DSL). In addition, we require purveyors to maintain a DSL of less than 10 percent. However, our DSL reporting requirements are dated. Recently, the American Water Works Association (AWWA) established an industry standard with a new method. The new method distinguishes *apparent loss* (not actual leaks, but customer meter inaccuracy or billing errors) from *real loss* (leakage). This method also quantifies both forms of water loss in volumetric terms.

To evaluate this new method, we conducted a pilot water audit program from late 2017 through early 2018. The program supported four goals:

1. Improved technical, financial, and managerial capacity.
2. Water distribution infrastructure maintenance.
4. Ten percent DSL requirement compliance.

As part of a pilot program, ten utilities estimated less leakage when using the AWWA method. The DSL calculations typically capture both apparent loss and real loss as leakage. By using the new method and validating customer meter accuracy, water systems will more effectively manage and solve leakage problems.

Survey results were overwhelmingly positive. Results indicated the AWWA method provides more insight into leakage management and data sources and should be taught to all Washington utilities. Because of these results—and because some other states abandoned percentage-based performance indicators to evaluate leakage—we recommend the state:

1. Adopt AWWA methodology for leakage estimation.
2. Provide AWWA methodology training and technical assistance to all utilities.
3. Validate all water audits prior to submission.
4. Migrate from leakage percent to leakage volume.

To successfully implement this program, Washington must amend Chapter 246-290 WAC through the rule-making process. You can read the full report on our Water Use Efficiency page.
Workshops and Training by Region

Statewide
We held the 2017 Annual Statewide Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) Sanitary Surveyor Training. The training consisted of three two-day trainings (one for each region) for our LHJ and new ODW surveyors. It offered separate tracks for new and experienced surveyors.

The introductory track provided a foundation to build or improve survey competency and confidence. Attendees gained a basic understanding of how public water system components work together and what our survey program expects.

Experienced surveyors attended sessions building on their knowledge and competencies. They gained technical knowledge in areas such as chlorination, coliform monitoring, and capacity development.

Eastern Regional Office (ERO)
In September 2017, ERO met with east side LHJ surveyors. Discussion topics included Group B design review, emerging contaminants, and tips for success in conducting and processing sanitary surveys of small water systems on our behalf.

Northwest Regional Office (NWRO)
In March 2017, NWRO staff partnered with local AWWA subsections to create interactive workshops with utility operators and managers. Topics included a regulation update, E. coli response planning, creating success with ODW/certified operators/governing bodies, chlorine residual challenge, and treatment performance partnerships. Our strong existing relationships between ODW staff, operators, and managers helped make this workshop a success. In addition, the facilitated "panel format" created an engaging environment for attendees to participate. Feedback highlighted appreciation for how we articulate and value the shared mission of safe drinking water with our partners. Attendees also expressed their thankfulness for our technical expertise.

Southwest Regional Office (SWRO)
In April 2017, SWRO held their annual LHJ Workshop. Topics included Cross Connection Control in the field, Level 1 and Level 2 assessments and coliform monitoring plans under the Revised Total Coliform Rule, disinfection, water use efficiency, and pre-sanitary survey packets. There was also an interactive round table discussion for LHJ staff to discuss a variety of topics and ask questions.

Cross-Connection Control
For the last 11 years, we have required our largest water systems to report their Cross-Connection Control (CCC) activities through our online Annual Summary Report (ASR) application. In 2014, we added limited compliance, a strong technical assistance program, and increased training opportunities for DOH staff, operators, and decision makers.

We developed a program plan to include:
- Expanding the number of public water systems required to submit an ASR.
- Implementing our CCC Specialist certification requirement for systems submitting an ASR.
- Expanding our CCC compliance activities for High Hazard connections.
- Increasing education and training opportunities for Washington operators.

Over the last four years, we have seen water systems validate data they are reporting and improved protection rates for high hazard connections by nearly 10 percent.

Cross-Connection Control Trends
Drinking Water Week Awards

We celebrate Drinking Water Week every year during the first full week of May, by recognizing individual water systems and operators who do an outstanding job providing safe and reliable drinking water. Award winners are nominated by their peers, stakeholders, or others in the industry. We gave out six awards in 2017.

- **Grace Under Pressure**: Mike LaScuola, Spokane Regional Health District.
- **Above and Beyond**: Jennifer McDonell-Evans, Curlew Kai Home Owners Association Water System.
- **Lifetime Achievement**: Martin Sebren, Kitsap Public Utilities District.
- **Commitment to Excellence**: Carol Schlender, Washington Water Service.
- **Lifetime Achievement**: Mark Weeks, City of Everett.
- **Commitment to Excellence**: Doug Quinn, Clark Public Utilities.
Newsletters

H₂Ops is a quarterly technical newsletter for water system owners and operators. Each issue focuses on a topic relevant to water system operations. In 2017, H₂Ops featured issues on training, Cross Connection Control, emergencies, and distribution system health. We continually receive positive feedback on the content and ideas for new topics of interest. We also recruit and encourage water system operators to contribute their own stories of successes and challenges.

Our other newsletter, Water Tap, focuses on more general, high-level information for decision makers and anyone interested in drinking water. We produce this publication twice a year. Sign up to receive both newsletters via email.

TOP Awards

In Washington, many surface water systems using conventional or direct filtration consistently provide higher quality water than simply meeting regulatory standards. They also provide better public health protection. We award certificates to systems the first time they meet or exceed our Treatment Optimization Program (TOP) goals for three years (bronze), five years (silver), and ten years (gold).

TOP encourages conventional and direct filtration surface water treatment plants to achieve optimal water quality using existing facilities. We present TOP awards to systems achieving TOP turbidity goal milestones for the first time. In 2017, we presented TOP awards to four systems. They include silver certificates to three systems achieving five years of continuously optimized performance, and a bronze certificate to one system that achieved three years of continuously optimized performance.

In total, four systems have maintained 16 years of optimization, one has maintained ten to 14 years, 12 have maintained five to nine years, and eight have maintained three to four years. In addition to meeting the optimization goals, these systems had to remain free of any drinking water violations during the evaluation period.

The award program began in 2009. Since then, we have awarded four platinum, seven gold, 28 silver, and 40 bronze certificates.
Funding

DWSRF Transition, Funding, and WALT
The transition of DWSRF contracts from Department of Commerce to Department of Health is underway. We received all contracts from Commerce, except open construction projects, which will transfer in June 2018. We hired Innovative Network to construct a new online DWSRF application and Washington Loan Tracking (WALT) database to manage contract information. We will migrate all historic information from Commerce and place it in the new database.

For the construction loan cycle, we received 35 applications requesting $53 million and funded 22 projects. Of the 22 funded projects, 16 applicants accepted the loan offer for a total funded amount of $26.9 million in projects. Five of the funded projects are consolidation projects. 2017 was our first year to execute loans as part of the transition of contract administration from Commerce to Health. However, since the capital budget did not pass, we were unable to issue contracts in 2017 for these projects. The legislature passed the 2017 capital budget in late January 2018, and we will execute the contracts in 2018.

Impacts of a Lack of Capital Budget
Due to extenuating circumstances, the 2017 Legislature did not pass the capital budget. This had significant, unanticipated impacts on ODW’s capital and operating budgets. Ultimately, to ensure our basic program functions were met, we could not fully implement our DWSRF loans and grants programs.

Capital Budget. Program areas most impacted were construction loans, preconstruction loans and grants, and consolidation feasibility grants. We were required to suspend all project funding, even with contract agreements in place. We also had to refrain from entering into any new agreements with applicants already awarded for funding. We also made the difficult decision to not run a 2017 application cycle for new preconstruction and consolidation loans and grants.

The Capital budget passed in the 2018 Legislature and we moved forward with current and future infrastructure projects. We worked to ensure that already impacted projects received necessary funding for completion. This included holding a reserve amount of funding to cover increased costs from delayed projects.

Operating Budget. The operating budget was also impacted because the state match for our federal DWSRF capitalization grant came from the capital budget. This caused us to re-examine operating budget revenue and expenditures. We addressed some fiscal management challenges and pursued several opportunities to enhance projected revenues for the future.

Putting Together the 2019 Budget
With a clear path forward for both our capital and operational budgets, we now look to build the 2019 budget and beyond.

DWSRF Grant. In May 2018, we received anticipated news of a slight increase in our Year 22 DWSRF Capitalization Grant. This was supported by a significant effort by our staff and stakeholders, working with our consultant back on the 2015 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment. See the EPA Needs Assessment Report section on page 13 for more information.

DWSRF Capital Loan Fund. We engaged the services of a private financial firm, specializing in revolving loan programs, to assist us in long-term planning for the DWSRF capital fund. Our goal is to look for ways to maximize the potential of this fund.

Federal Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) Grant. With a reduction to this grant in the last cycle, we are working with other states and the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators to reestablish our contribution from the PWSS.

Evaluating our Fees. Our current operating permit and document review fee structures have been in place for several years. We are now evaluating how future business needs can be met with modifications to some of our available sources of revenue. Our operator certification and systems certification fees are currently meeting our business needs and are not up for review.

Group B. We were fortunate enough to have group B program implementation funding covered by a direct appropriation from the 2018 Legislature. We were asked to administer funding of $360,000 to our local health partners around the state. This was a one-time appropriation, and we intend to introduce another spending proposal in the 2019 Legislature for future funding of this program.
Budget Reductions. Due to projected reductions in revenue, we realize the need to carry out our business through reductions in staffing and third party contracting. This will take place as we move to the end of the current biennium and into the next. **We look to accomplish this through the normal attrition of retirements and other position vacancies.** We are working to revitalize our core priority program areas to re-focus our contracting dollars. For example, we want to implement our pre-construction loans and consolidation feasibility grants programs.

Emerging Issues and Challenges

Governor’s Directive on Lead

In May 2016, Governor Inslee issued [Directive 16-06](#) because of increased public concern about lead in drinking water. This directive instructed state agencies to work with partners to address potential sources of lead exposure and ways to minimize its impact. One aspect of this directive was that *Department of Health (DOH) shall work with each Group A public water system to identify all lead service lines and lead components within two years.*

In October 2016, we surveyed the state’s public water systems about the occurrence of lead service lines and lead components in their system. More than 680 water systems responded, which serve more than 90 percent of the connections in the state.

Based on information gathered, here is how Washington measures up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead Component</th>
<th>Percent of Connections Served by Responding Utilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead service lines in service</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead goosenecks in service</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will continue to provide technical assistance to water systems as they identify and replace lead service lines and/or lead components. As part of [Directive 16-06](#), we are moving toward our goal of removing all lead service lines and lead components within 15 years. We are also expanding access to our drinking water state revolving fund loans for lead replacement. By 2020, we expect the number of lead service lines in service will decrease to 0.01 percent.
Lead Testing in Schools

In 2017, the legislature directed DOH to test for lead in drinking water in public schools. This is an effort to reduce children's overall exposure to lead in the environment. Young children, ages six years old and younger, are the most susceptible to the effects of lead. Even at very low levels of exposure to lead, children may experience effects including:

- Lower IQ levels.
- Reduced attention span.
- Hyperactivity.
- Poor classroom performance.
- Other harmful physical and behavioral effects.

In response to this effort, DOH is offering a voluntary sampling program for Washington State elementary schools. Participating schools will test their drinking water for lead. All elementary schools are eligible for testing, but we are giving priority to schools with:

- The youngest children.
- The oldest buildings.
- Those that have not tested for lead comprehensively in the last three years.

Trained staff take water samples based on EPA's 3Ts for Reducing the Lead in Drinking Water in Schools. So far, 246 schools signed up for testing, and, at the time of this publication, all have been tested, and 180 have received results. To see testing results, please visit our Test Results page.

PFAS

About PFAS

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are an unregulated contaminant. PFAS are a family of chemicals used since the 1950s. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctyl sulfonate (PFOS), part of the PFAS family, are most commonly found in people and the environment.

PFAS chemicals make some products stain-resistant, water-resistant, grease proof, and non-stick. PFAS are widely used in common consumer products as coatings on food packaging, outdoor clothing, carpets, leather goods, ski and snowboard waxes, and more. In addition, certain types of firefighting foam—historically used by the U.S. military, local fire departments, and airports—may contain PFAS.

PFAS remain in the environment for a long time and do not break down easily. Once in groundwater, PFAS may remain for many years. Exposure can occur when someone uses certain products that contain PFAS, eats PFAS-contaminated food, or drinks PFAS-contaminated water. When ingested, some PFAS can accumulate in the body. Over time, these PFAS may increase to a level where health effects could occur.

There is no national drinking water standard for PFAS. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established a lifetime Health Advisory Level (HAL) for PFOA and PFOS at 70 parts per trillion.

PFAS in Washington State

As of April 2018, PFAS have been detected in drinking water above EPA's HAL at or near these locations:

- City of Issaquah.
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord.
- Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.
- Fairchild Air Force Base, City of Airway Heights, and an outlying field near Coupeville.

We believe the primary source of groundwater contamination was historical use of PFAS-based firefighting foam. Over time, foam ingredients seeped into the soil and contaminated the groundwater.
**ODW’s PFAS Sampling Project**
We are concerned about PFAS in Washington and want to learn more to protect and improve public health. This year, we are offering to pay for PFAS testing for certain public water systems. Under this voluntary sampling project, participating water systems will test their drinking water for PFAS. Results will determine if PFAS are present and if they are at levels of public health concern.

We are initially focusing on potentially at-risk water systems at this time. A drinking water source—where water comes from—may be at risk for PFAS contamination if near a:

- Known PFAS-contaminated site or drinking water source.
- Fire training facility, military area, or airport that used PFAS-based firefighting foam.

Water systems will begin testing in summer 2018. Testing results will help us understand PFAS occurrence in our state and learn more about this unregulated contaminant. With this information, we can make informed decisions about PFAS. Data received may also help with PFAS rule-making efforts currently underway.

**Other PFAS Activities**
The Washington State Board of Health began rule-making for PFAS in drinking water in late 2017. The process takes about two years to complete. In addition, we are helping Department of Ecology on their Chemical Action Plan, which identifies possible health and environmental impacts of PFAS.

Earlier this year, the Washington State Legislature passed two bills to reduce PFAS in food and water.

- **Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2658**: Prohibits PFAS in food contact paper starting in 2022, if Ecology identifies safer alternatives.
- **Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6413**: Prohibits firefighter training with PFAS foams starting in 2018. Prohibits sale of firefighting foam containing PFAS in 2020 except at military sites, airports, oil refineries, and chemical plants.

---

**Continued Work with Legionella, Harmful Algae Blooms**

**Legionella**
Legionella bacteria can cause Legionnaire’s Disease (LD), which is a type of severe pneumonia often requiring hospitalization. It can affect anyone, but some people are at greater risk—particularly the elderly, smokers, those with compromised immune systems, hospital patients, and long-term care facility residents.

Legionella bacteria can multiply within a building’s plumbing and mechanical systems at warm water temperatures (77–108°F). If it becomes aerosolized, people can breathe in small droplets of water containing bacteria, which can cause LD. There is no state or national drinking water regulation specific to the monitoring and control of Legionella.

DOH’s Environmental Public Health and Disease Control and Health Statistics divisions play lead roles in monitoring for and responding to outbreaks of LD. ODW is primarily responsible for ensuring coordination between an impacted facility and their water system supplier. In addition, if a building owner installs treatment to control Legionella, the building becomes a public water system. The system is then subject to the state’s drinking water rules. We have a handful of these facilities operating building water treatment facilities, which are subject to all appropriate drinking water regulations.

DOH’s Health Systems Quality Assurance (HSQA) division plays a supporting role. They conduct building plan review and perform routine inspections. They also ensure licensed hospitals and long-term care facilities implement water management programs that reduce Legionella amplification in plumbing. HSQA notifies ODW when building treatment occurs or when a building owner is considering installing a treatment system.

*National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System*  
*Source: cdc.gov/legionella/about/history.html*
Harmful Algal Blooms
Harmful algal blooms contain cyanobacteria that produce cyanotoxins. Consuming certain levels of cyanotoxins may result in many harmful health effects. The following people may be more susceptible to cyanotoxin exposure:

- Children younger than six years old.
- Pregnant women.
- Nursing mothers.
- The elderly.
- Immune-compromised individuals.
- Those with pre-existing liver conditions.
- Those receiving dialysis treatment.

Like Legionella, there is no state or national regulation for monitoring and control of cyanotoxins in drinking water. EPA has non-regulatory health advisory levels for the most common cyanotoxins.

Over the next two years, EPA will work with about 70 public water systems in Washington. These systems will collect data from their sources and distribution systems as part of the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 4. This is part of EPA’s effort to determine whether developing a national drinking water standard for cyanotoxins is warranted.

We are considering whether to adopt EPA’s cyanotoxin health advisory or establish our own. Establishing our own state standard would:

- Enforce affected water systems in issuing public notice to its customers immediately.
- Allow us to implement operational changes to reduce cyanotoxins in the distribution system.

2018 Focus—Future Visions

EPA Needs Assessment Report
In March 2018, EPA published the 2015 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment. They estimate the total national 20-year infrastructure capital improvement need at $473 billion. EPA estimates Washington’s 20-year need at $11.7 billion. The estimates cover infrastructure needs eligible for (but not necessarily financed by) DWSRF funding. This includes installing new drinking water infrastructure and the rehabilitation, expansion, or replacement of existing infrastructure.

EPA uses the results of their Needs Assessment to allocate the DWSRF capitalization grants to states’ DWSRF programs. Only 12 percent of the total national estimated need is for addressing a regulatory requirement. Two-thirds of the total national estimated need is for replacing buried pipelines that have reached the end of their useful service life.

Over $3 billion—equal to about 25 percent of Washington’s estimated need—is for small systems (fewer than 3,300 people). Considering current state population and state drinking water capital improvement need, Washington has a high funding liability for small systems. Currently, Washington’s DWSRF fund supports about $25 million in drinking water loans per year. Of 17 construction loan projects funded last year, six were awarded to small systems, which represents approximately 35 percent.

Water System Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program and Consolidations

Funding for Preconstruction and Consolidation
We offered DWSRF Consolidation Grant Funding in 2017. Consolidation grants fund up to $30,000 of consolidation project activities, including feasibility studies, legal costs, preliminary engineering costs, and system development costs for connections. These very effective grants result in DWSRF consolidation construction projects. In 2014 and 2015, we funded 11 DWSRF consolidation construction projects. Eight of the projects received consolidation grant funding.

In 2017, we received 17 consolidation grant applications and awarded five projects for a total of $150,000. The lack of a capital budget resulted in
suspension of these grants. We intend to offer consolidation grants in 2019. We are also modifying use of DWSRF construction loan fees to be used for consolidation grants. In addition, we are working with stakeholders on obtaining legislative appropriations to fund consolidation projects.

The Value of Water—What’s Next

One of our strategic initiatives is to build and sustain a campaign on the value of safe and reliable drinking water. We want to ensure health equity and improve public health. We also want the people of Washington to understand the value of their tap water and support investments in water systems. The Value of Water is a nationwide effort that raises awareness about the importance of water and infrastructure.

In 2015, we began participating in this effort using billboard and bus advertisements, bill stuffers, and social media messages. We want to build on our great start and make this campaign even stronger. This year, we are focusing on creating a strategic foundation for the Value of Water campaign. In June 2018, we met with Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts, Washington Public Utility Districts Associations, and others to strategize on messaging and campaign direction.

From this collaborative effort, we hope to launch some communication products people can share and use, such as a video or social media campaign. The Value of Water is our opportunity to educate the public about a resource people often take for granted: safe and reliable drinking water.