

2026 Virtual Workshop: Ensuring a Stable Revenue Future for Your Utility

May 19 – 20, 2026 | 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM ET | Virtual Event

Current as of March 30, 2026

Tuesday, May 19

1:00 – 1:25 Welcoming & Opening Remarks

The opening session will highlight the landscape that public clean water agencies are facing as the confluence of limits to customer affordability, rapid regulatory and technological change, federal funding uncertainty, and rising customer expectations create unprecedented management challenges and drive change in the public clean water utility sector.

1:25 – 2:40 Evaluating Debt and Mitigating Rate Impacts and Risk During Periods of Instability

Hear from financial experts on the current debt financing landscape and market outlook and how utilities are best mitigating rate impacts and weighing choices between bonds and state and federal financing. Also hear an outlook on federal funding and finance and the state of negotiations in Congress.

The process of financial risk assessment can also help communities manage risk and prioritize needs—but pulling back the curtain can be fraught. Hear how utilities are leaning into the unknown and conducting financial risk assessments to shore up their organizational resilience.

2:40 – 2:50 Break

2:50 – 3:40 Alternatives to Traditional Rate Structures

NACWA's Financial Survey of member utilities finds that around 70 percent of utility revenue is sourced from user charges alone. What about utilities with alternative structures? Hear from two public agencies about their unique rate structures and how they're contributing to revenue stability.

3:40 – 4:00 Tenets of Operational Efficiency – Changing the Unchangeable

Strengthening your utility's financial footing often involves embracing operational change and reallocating resources. Here, we'll provide an introduction to the various aspects of a utility cost profile (people, operations, and capital) that warrant evaluation and seed thoughts for tomorrow's discussion.

4:00 Day 1 Wrap-Up

Wednesday, May 20

1:00 – 1:05 Opening Remarks

1:05 – 2:00 Changing the Unchangeable – Case Studies

Utilities know that strengthening their financial footing often involves embracing operational change and reallocating resources... but "how to" can be the barrier. The struggle to stop doing things is often harder than starting something new. Hear case studies from utilities that have successfully identified and worked through constraints to optimize performance, redeploy resources, and as a result find greater financial flexibility and alignment with strategic organizational priorities.

2:00 – 2:30 **Moving Faster and Smarter 1: Position Evolution in the time of AI**

Like the communities they serve, utilities vary widely in terms of their integration of AI into their operations. Hear from utility leaders leveraging AI to engage their staff in new ways, and how they have evolved their position descriptions to meet the moment.

2:30 – 2:40 **Break**

2:40 – 3:10 **Moving Fast and Smarter 2: Getting Dollars Out the Door**

Capital investment program spending is reaching new heights at many utilities, leading to new challenges in getting dollars out the door. Labor shortages and cost escalations exacerbate the issue. Hear how utilities are finding successes getting dollars out the door to ensure projects stay on track and benefits are maximized.

3:10 – 3:55 **Narrowing the Affordability Gap**

Affordability may suddenly be a buzzword in national politics, but the water sector has been trying to address this pressing concern for decades. As the gap grows between increasing clean water rates and the ability of the poorest households to afford them, utilities are increasingly looking for a solution. This panel will discuss ways clean water agencies are tackling the problem, including through customer assistance programs (CAPs), partnerships with local community service organizations and streamlining ways for eligible customers to gain access to financial support programs.

3:55 – 4:00 **Closing Remarks**