

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Capacity Development Strategic Plan FY 2008-2012

Mission:

To improve and maintain the technical, managerial, and financial capacity of public water systems to help assure they provide sufficient amounts of continuously safe drinking water to their consumers.

Introduction

Colorado's Capacity Development Program was developed by the Colorado Drinking Water Program in partnership with a stakeholder group that includes drinking water systems, technical assistance partners, and staff of the Water Quality Control Division. The Capacity Development strategic plan is based on seven Guiding Principles, three Key Focus Areas and nine Strategic Goals that reflect the mission of the program. All nine Strategic Goals work together to complete the mission; although the program will necessarily concentrate on one or another Key Focus Area more heavily than others from time to time, they are all important in completing the mission.

The strategic plan is designed to outline the Capacity Development strategy as required by the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Amendments and to give the program broad structure. Detailed projects and activities are described in the work plans related to the program, including the Capacity Development Set-Aside Work Plan, the 10% Program Management Set-Aside Work Plan, and the Small Systems Training and Technical Assistance Set-Aside Work Plan. These work plans are developed on a rolling three to five year basis, and are revised regularly to meet the changing needs of the program and the drinking water systems.

This is the first strategic plan for the program, and the format this year differs from previous documentation of the Capacity Development strategy. The intent of the redesign is to distinguish between strategic planning and implementation and to improve and streamline the program's guiding documents. Implementation and project details will continue to be documented in companion work plans. The historical basis of the Capacity Development Program and strategy can be reviewed in previous years' Capacity Development strategies, including the most recently published version from June 2004. Beginning with the FY 2008-2012 planning period, this new format will be used to document the Capacity Development strategy.

Guiding Principles

The strategic plan is guided by many of the goals of the Water Quality Control Division and the strategic goals of the Department of Public Health and Environment, as described in the Department Strategic Plan, as well as the goals and objectives of the USEPA Strategic Plan. The Guiding Principles for the Capacity Development Program are as follows:

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- ◆ Commitment to public health through continuously safe drinking water for all Colorado residents and visitors,
- ◆ Commitment to customer focus by providing quality information to the citizens of Colorado,
- ◆ Commitment to excellence by maintaining a skilled, team-oriented professional staff dedicated to continuous improvement, quality work products, and measurable results,
- ◆ Commitment to assist in the prevention of the spread of diseases or illnesses that may be waterborne,
- ◆ Commitment to work in partnership with local agencies, other state agencies, and technical assistance providers to improve the efficient delivery of services,
- ◆ Commitment to use available information and science to make sound decisions, and
- ◆ Commitment to identify and disseminate best practices throughout the drinking water community.

Key Focus Areas

The Capacity Development Program will direct resources to three Key Focus Areas:

- Program Administration
- New Water Systems
- Existing Water Systems

The intent is to spend most of the resources on water system issues. However, program administration is an essential part of any effort, and will ensure that resources are spent wisely and on the highest priorities.

New water systems require special attention, since they are often managed and operated by personnel new to the water industry, they have limited understanding of the requirements of developing and maintaining a sustainable water system, and they frequently do not understand the regulatory requirements of the department. However, new systems are a small fraction of the total number of systems, so the level of effort directed toward these systems is also a small portion of the total Capacity Development Program.

All efforts directed toward existing water systems are also made available to new water systems, in order to keep these systems on the course of maintaining full technical, managerial, and financial capacity. These efforts include a full spectrum of training, technical assistance, compliance assistance, and financial management assistance.

Strategic Goals

Each of the following nine Strategic Goals ties to one or more Key Focus Areas and one or more requirements of a Capacity Development strategy as established in the 1997 SDWA Amendments. These relationships are identified by the following annotation:

Key Focus Areas:

- KFA 1: Program Administration
- KFA 2: New Water Systems
- KFA 3: Existing Water Systems

SDWA Amendment Requirements:

- SDWA 1: The methods or criteria that the State will use to identify and prioritize the public water systems most in need of improving technical, managerial, and financial capacity
- SDWA 2: A description of the institutional, regulatory, financial, tax, or legal factors at the Federal, State, or local level that encourage or impair capacity development
- SDWA 3: A description of how the State will use the authorities and resources of this title or other means to assist public water systems in complying with national primary drinking water regulations; encourage the development of partnerships between public water systems to enhance the technical, managerial, and financial capacity of the systems; and assist public water systems in the training and certification of operators
- SDWA 4: A description of how the State will establish a baseline and measure improvements in capacity with respect to national primary drinking water regulations and State drinking water law
- SDWA 5: An identification of the persons that have an interest in or are involved in the development and implementation of the capacity development strategy (including all appropriate agencies of Federal, State, and local governments, private and nonprofit public water systems, and public water system customers).

Strategic Goal 1 – Provide a system of education, training, and technical assistance that provides assurance to the public that the drinking water provided to them by their public drinking water system is consistently safe. (KFA 2, 3; SDWA 3, 5)

- ♦ Assess the existing education and training available to operators, managers and leaders of drinking water systems, including the quality of the available offerings,
- ♦ Define needs for additional training and technical service through effective needs assessments, based on audiences, delivery mechanisms,

- ◆ In partnership with technical assistance providers, develop cost effective comprehensive training programs that address the priority needs of the professionals in Colorado drinking water systems.

Strategic Goal 2 – Develop and apply a measurement system for all Capacity

Development Projects to ensure the program has a measurable and documented beneficial impact on public health, compliance rates, and public trust in the state drinking water program and in their own public water supplier. (KFA 1; SDWA 4)

- ◆ Focus measurement on outcomes of improvement to public health.
- ◆ Develop procedures and processes to translate project efforts and accomplishments into measurable outcomes.

Strategic Goal 3 – Apply a proactive approach to systems of concern, so these systems are provided the tools and resources needed to regain compliance and full capacity. (KFA 1, 3; SDWA 1, 3, 4, 5)

- ◆ Systems of concern should be defined as those systems that continue to struggle to meet all applicable drinking water regulations, or have significant technical, managerial or financial capacity issues, or have significant deficiencies in capital facilities when inspected by a site visit
- ◆ Use staff team approach to integrate all drinking water program efforts toward achieving compliance and capacity with these systems.
- ◆ Integrate partnerships with drinking water technical assistance providers, associations, and other non-profit organizations to apply their resources toward assisting these systems.

Strategic Goal 4 – Develop a program that will support collaboration among all drinking water systems, assist those smaller systems understand their problems and potential solutions, and use performance based approaches to developing training. (KFA 3; SDWA 3, 5)

- ◆ Develop a program of excellence for surface water systems, modeled after Partnership for Safe Water, EPA’s AWOP or other efforts that will assist systems reach beyond regulatory compliance to continual high performance in treatment
- ◆ Expand excellence program to source protection, distribution systems and other operations and management areas.
- ◆ Expand excellence program to ground water systems to enable all systems to strive for excellence.

Strategic Goal 5 – Use available resources in an efficient and timely manner, with a focus on continuous improvement of the program. (KFA 1, SDWA 4)

- ◆ Use organizational improvement models, like those based on the Baldrige approach, to enhance the effectiveness of effort for Capacity Development.
- ◆ Ensure Capacity Development is integrated into all processes and procedures of the Drinking Water Program.

Strategic Goal 6 – Develop and distribute an effective needs assessment to drinking water systems of Colorado, evaluating the technical, managerial and financial needs, capital needs, and impact of shortfalls on system performance on the health of the populations served. (KFA 1, 2, 3; SDWA 2)

- ◆ Follow leads developed by other states in assessing needs of drinking water systems, and develop an assessment tool for Colorado that measures needs as well as program effectiveness.
- ◆ Develop and distribute assessment tool, and analyze results. Incorporate ideas and suggestions into strategic and work plans of the program.

Strategic Goal 7 – Integrate sustainability into program projects wherever possible, to ensure that resource expenditures develop ongoing programs that provide measurable impacts, and do not result in short-term, single project. (KFA 1; SDWA 3, 5)

- ◆ Provide cross-media cooperation in inspections, enforcement, compliance assistance where possible, and utilize conservation of resources where practical.
- ◆ Examine self-certification as a tool for capacity development and compliance assurance.
- ◆ Coordinate programs with the sustainability program of the Department in order to optimize cross media cooperation and resource utilization

Strategic Goal 8 – Ensure all new and proposed new systems are developed with adequate technical, managerial, and financial capacity to remain a viable and sustainable drinking water system into the foreseeable future. (KFA 2, SDWA 1, 3, 4)

- ◆ Ensure all new systems follow the New Water System Capacity Planning Manual
- ◆ Provide TMF Capacity Review on all new systems prior to approval to deliver water
- ◆ Track compliance status of all new systems for three years following start-up, and intervene at any point the system appears to lack adequate capacity, providing technical assistance and training to ensure continued compliance.

Strategic Goal 9 –Establish and foster partnerships with other federal, state, and local drinking water organizations. (KFA 1; SDWA 3, 5)

- ◆ Participate in activities of the Rocky Mountain Section AWWA and the Colorado Rural Water Association
- ◆ Participate in and give presentations at national and regional EPA sponsored Capacity Development Workshops and Conferences
- ◆ Work with Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, and other state agencies to coordinate training partnerships