

MONTANA W²ASACT - 2017 REPORT

WATER, WASTEWATER AND SOLID WASTE ACTION TEAM

Purpose

Help Montana communities fund successful water and sewer improvement projects. Funding authorities in WASACT help close the gap between what systems cost and what their users can afford.

Accomplishments - helping Montana Communities for 35 years

W²ASACT ASSISTS COMMUNITIES WITH FUNDING AND TECHNICAL NEEDS

- Brings regulators, program managers, and technical assistance providers together to troubleshoot funding and streamline the application process for community projects
- Holds Montana-wide infrastructure funding seminars every year
- Helps communities to be more self-reliant by funding capital improvements plans to avoid crisis-based infrastructure management
- Produces educational materials such as the *How to Hire an Engineer Handbook* and *Planning and Financing Community Systems in Montana*
- Maintains a website <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/caridd/wasact> with funding and project management guidance

W²ASACT SIMPLIFIES & COORDINATES FUNDING APPLICATIONS AND PROJECT REPORTING

- Uses a shared uniform application for public facility projects seeking multiple funders
- Developed a standardized financial tracking form used by all funders
- Publishes an annual summary of state and federal funding programs in Montana

W²ASACT DEVELOPS DECISION-MAKING TOOLS

- Developed financial indicators to identify funding needs and keep projects affordable
- Promotes water metering and other conservation measures in grant applications
- Regularly publishes statewide water and wastewater rates for all Montana communities

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W²ASACT Members & Participants

State Agencies and Programs

Renewable Resources Grant and Loan Program (Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation)
Treasure State Endowment Program (Department of Commerce)
INTERCAP Program (Montana Board of Investments)
Public Water Supply Program (Department of Environmental Quality)
Municipal Wastewater Assistance Program (Department of Environmental Quality)
State Drinking Water Revolving Fund and State Wastewater Revolving Fund
(Departments of Environmental Quality and Natural Resources and Conservation)

Federal Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Agriculture Rural Development
Housing and Urban Development

Associations and Non Profits

Midwest Assistance Program
Montana Association of County Water and Sewer Systems
Montana Association of Counties
Montana League of Cities and Towns
Montana Rural Water Systems, Inc.
Rural and Tribal Environmental Solutions

Other Stakeholders

Infrastructure Engineering and Consulting Firms
Infrastructure Funding Grant Writers
Congressional and Legislative Representatives

2017 Initiatives

Establish an outreach committee to improve WASACT coordination with Montana community groups such as the Montana Association of Counties and water quality enforcement agencies (EPA and DEQ) to better identify impending community infrastructure needs.

Extend the use of WASACT's uniform application to online procedures to further streamline the process for communities seeking funding from multiple agencies.