WHY INNOVATE?
Innovation is essential to meet increasingly stringent regulatory requirements, improve efficiency and effectiveness, reduce costs, meet the needs of the workforce, and attract future talent.

The American Water Works Association's mission helps ensure the long-term reliability and resiliency of water delivery, along with protecting public health and the environment. AWWA's Innovation Initiative encourages utilities to pursue and implement solutions to mitigate and adapt to future risks.

Definition of Innovation
The adoption of sustainable methods, ideas, and products that increase value to utility customers and/or increase utility productivity.

TYPES OF INNOVATORS
What kind of innovator is your utility? An innovative organization creates organizational capabilities and a collaborative culture to foster strategic innovation. Effective innovation requires creativity by all staff, and a flexible organization that embraces change while guarding public health and safety. Where does your utility fall on the innovation spectrum?

Beginning Innovator
• No support for strategic innovation
• Innovation is ad-hoc

Aspiring Innovator
• Some innovation exists
• Focus on incremental improvement

Inspired Innovator
• Work on many innovations concurrently
• Focus on some target areas

Strategic Innovator
• Identify and develop disruptive innovations
• Innovation is part of the culture

DEVELOPING AN INNOVATION ROADMAP
This guidance document will help your utility develop or improve an innovation program and focus your innovation efforts on your utility's challenges. It provides easy to use tools to help you develop your Innovation Roadmap.

There are three steps to developing an Innovation Roadmap - identifying where you are, deciding where you want to go, and determining how to get there. The first two steps represent your utility's Needs Assessment. The last step represents your Innovation Program. To be successful, identify a project lead or team to help develop your innovation program. Start wherever is comfortable for your utility.
Step 1: Identify Where You Are
Understanding where to start is critical to determining the best path towards developing your Innovation Program and ensuring resources are used efficiently to meet your utility's greatest needs. Use readily available documents and resources (e.g., mission or vision statement, strategic plan, and capital and operating budget program documents).

- Gather background information
- Summarize vision/mission statement and strategic goals
- Review and summarize budget priorities
- Identify and summarize performance measures

Step 2: Decide Where You Want to Go
Get feedback from stakeholders and your utility's staff. Review your utility's priorities and performance against select metrics to show areas for improvement. Identify challenges, threats, and risks to your utility. Then identify innovation drivers and needs and conduct a gap analysis to finalize your Needs Assessment.

- Gather feedback from staff and stakeholders
- Identify challenges and threats
- Summarize Innovation Drivers and identify needs
- Perform a Gap Analysis and finalize Needs Assessment

Step 3: Determine How to Get There
The last step will help you identify and prioritize your needs; and create a culture of innovation and an action plan to support your final Innovation Program.

- Create Innovation Structure
- Prioritize needs and identify resources
- Develop Action Plan
- Finalize Innovation Program