



Partnership for Safe Water Program Fact Sheet

Treatment Plant and Distribution System Optimization

What is The Partnership for Safe Water?

The Partnership is a voluntary effort between six drinking water organizations, and more than **200 water utilities** throughout the United States. The goal of the Partnership is to provide a new measure of safety to millions of Americans by implementing prevention programs where legislation or regulation does not exist. The preventative measures are based around optimizing treatment plant performance and distribution system operation. The result is the production and delivery of superior quality water to all users.

The federal government has proposed stricter performance requirements for filter plants that treat surface water and drinking water distribution systems. Accordingly, the Partnership program provides operators, managers and administrators with the tools to assess treatment plants and distribution systems and improve performance beyond even proposed regulatory levels.

Who Supports The Partnership?

The Partnership for Safe Water is comprised of an unprecedented alliance of the six largest drinking water organizations at the national level. These organizations include:

U.S. EPA – U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
AMWA – Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
AWWA – American Water Works Association
NAWC – National Association of Water Companies
ASDWA – Association of State Drinking Water Administrators

Water Research Foundation

What Are The Benefits?

Customized Performance Enhancement Plans

- To truly optimize performance, the unique characteristics of your plant will be part of the custom designed plan.
- Participating utilities receive procedures, software and manuals to implement and monitor water quality improvements.
- While individual utility data are kept private, Partnership members have access to summary data from other participating utilities that enable comparison with industry benchmarks.
- Employees of Partnership utilities demonstrate a sense of purpose and personal commitment to achieving the highest standards of quality.

Recognition by your Community and Customers

- Participation in the program demonstrates your commitment to quality and safety for consumers. Successful completion of the program earns awards to demonstrate your accomplishments to your community and can be cited in your Consumer Confidence Reports.

Regulator Confidence

- The Partnership's technical materials and software help prepare utilities for more stringent regulatory requirements.
- Utility participation in this unique program assures local, state, and federal regulators that the highest level of operation is achieved by performance optimization.

Who Can Participate?

The utility must be a community water system that provides filtered surface water or manages a water distribution system. Any size utility is eligible. The utility must show that it has not violated any health-based regulations in the six months prior to applying for membership to the Partnership. The program does not cover unfiltered systems or those that do not maintain a disinfectant residual in the distribution system.

How Does The Partnership Work?

There are four phases to the Partnership:

- Phase I – Commitment
- Phase II – Baseline Data Collection
- Phase III – Self-Assessment
- Phase IV – Optimized System(*Optional*)

The first three phases are required; the last is optional.

Phase I: Commitment

Any partnership requires commitment. This partnership requires commitment from operators and upper management if it is to be meaningful. The idea is to change the focus from simply meeting the rules, to evaluating existing deficiencies and correcting them and constantly looking for ways to improve. The result is that the water system creates tenacity for quality that is intrinsic throughout all levels of the organization.

Once the utility has decided to commit to the Partnership program, complete the Membership Application and return to AWWA. Utilities enrolled in the program must be in full compliance with appropriate regulations for at least the preceding six months. When the signed application is received at AWWA, the utility will receive a packet containing the materials needed to begin the program.

Phase II: Baseline Data Collection

After signing the Membership Application, the water system sends a year's worth of performance data to AWWA. Treatment plants provide raw and filtered turbidity data and distribution systems provide disinfectant residual data. This should be accomplished within 180 days of joining the Partnership.

Members are provided a technical manual that describes a systematic approach on assessing operations, design, administration and maintenance practices, as well as software applications that provide trend graphs for data evaluation. This information gathering and analysis cycle is repeated yearly for as long as the utility wishes to participate in the Partnership. By continuing to analyze and submit their data, the utility provides evidence (to themselves and to others) that their active pursuit of improvement is paying off in a safer water supply. Individual utility data is kept confidential.

Once a year, AWWA analyzes the collective national database and produces cumulative national trends. This information is provided to each participating utility. Utilities can then compare their performance with others enrolled in the program.

Phase III: Self-Assessment

The water system then progresses into the self-assessment phase, which is self-paced. This phase allows the utility to examine the capabilities of the existing system's operation and administration and resultant identification of those factors that limit performance. Once the utility has performed this self-examination, it develops a plan for implementation of improvements.

The Phase III Completion Report summarizes the self-assessment results. This report is reviewed by a team from the Partnership Program Effectiveness Assessment Committee (a group of trained utility professional peers) to make sure the process is productive, effective, and unbiased. A template and checklist are provided to all members to help with the reporting process. Upon a successful review, the utility receives the Directors Award from the Partnership.

Phase IV: Optimized System

Participation in Phase IV is voluntary and not required for continuing membership in Phase III of the Partnership program. The objective of Phase IV is to provide recognition to filter plants and distribution systems that have achieved the highest possible levels of performance. Water systems that are considering pursuing Phase IV recognition must understand that they will be assessed against stringent performance goals.

One of the requirements for Phase IV is to be a Directors Award winner in good standing with the Partnership for Safe Water. No additional fee is required for Phase IV. Those utilities that meet Phase IV requirements will receive the "Excellence in Water Treatment or Distribution System Operation" Award. If you are interested in pursuing Phase IV, you must register. The purpose of registration is to document those that are seeking the Phase IV award and to trigger a dialog with the program administration to ensure an understanding all of the requirements. To receive more information, please contact the Partnership for Safe Water at the address below.

How Do I Join?

Utilities may join any time during the year at prorated fees. Annual participation fees are based on utility size. Utilities may join either the treatment plant or distribution system program or both. Fees listed below are for 'each' program and are set as low as possible to make the program self-sustaining and yet provide all the benefits listed.

Annual fees are invoiced in November and due in February to allow budget allocation from either calendar year. Contributions from sponsoring organizations and volunteer support keep the program extremely cost-effective. The membership application can be found on the Partnership website at www.partnershipforsafewater.org.

Utility Population Served	Annual Fee
>700,000	\$3,600
525,001 - 700,000	2,700
350,001 - 525,000	1,800
175,001 - 350,000	1,300
88,001 - 175,000	1,000
35,001 - 88,000	600
18,001 - 35,000	300
<18,001	50

For additional information on **membership fees**, contact the Program Coordinator at partnership@awwa.org or 303-347-6169.