



Words that Work

Affordable Water, Resilient Communities™

How to share the *Affordable Water, Resilient Communities* Campaign with ratepayers, media and other stakeholders.

With a new Administration and Congress, it is time for America's public water sector to make our voice heard and raise the profile of our urgent funding needs for infrastructure investment, low-income water customer assistance, and increased COVID-19 relief. Our joint campaign, *Affordable Water, Resilient Communities*, aims to do just that.

To this end, NACWA and AMWA have compiled a list of talking points, or "Words that Work," for use by public water utilities when discussing this campaign. We urge you to help raise the national profile of this campaign by utilizing these talking points when meeting with press, ratepayers, local governments, and other stakeholders.



- Declining federal investment in America's water infrastructure while costs of compliance have grown has allowed the federal cost-share to dip below 5% nationwide – while water rates have become unaffordable for many Americans.
- Greater federal investment in America's infrastructure will have a direct positive impact on American households' ability to access affordable water – especially the most vulnerable low-income households.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in billions of dollars in lost revenues for America's public water utilities. By providing direct financial relief to these utilities, Congress can ensure that America's water utilities are able to continue protecting public health and the environment, address environmental justice issues, and confront the challenge of climate change.
- Increasing costs for infrastructure maintenance, personnel, operations, and capital investments place utilities between a rock and a hard place, balancing rising costs while trying to keep rates affordable. Providing greater assistance to water utilities will ease the burden on individual households substantially.
- For the first time in history, Congress has appropriated funds for a one-time federal low-income customer water assistance program. There are currently permanent programs that exist to provide federal assistance for food and energy. A permanent and reliable low-income water assistance program will help deliver water security for all Americans.
- COVID-19 has shed a light on the essential need for clean and safe water services to aid in sanitation efforts to combat the spread of the virus. While the pandemic may pass, the critical role of water services will not, and there must be commensurate federal investment in this cornerstone of America's infrastructure that protects both the public health and environment.
- When the Clean Water Act was first signed into law in 1972, federal grants contributed 75% of construction costs. Today, the federal cost-share of water services is less than 5% nationwide. If Congress truly cares about protecting America's waterways, the public health, and the environment and maintaining access we need a strong federal partner once again.
- The costs of maintaining and investing in infrastructure have risen substantially over the past few decades and the rising costs have been overwhelmingly borne by local customers.
- Resilient communities require clean, safe and affordable water access.

