

Notification of Environmental Justice Assessment on Alternative Drinking Water Program

December 2, 2024

WHAT

The DOH is conducting an Environmental Justice Assessment on the Alternative Drinking Water Program (ADWP). This program was created with 2023-2025 funding provided through [ESSB 5187](#).

The goal of the ADWP is to assist with access to safe drinking water if private wells or Group B water supplies are impacted by contamination. Group B systems serve fewer than 15 residential connections and less than 25 people per day.¹ See the [ADWP Flyer](#) and [ADWP Application](#) for more details.

Currently, the ADWP supports activities such as water quality sampling, delivering bottled water, and provisioning water treatment units to allow for drinking and cooking.

- Funding for these activities concludes on June 30, 2025.
- The ADWP may accept more applications in 2025-2027 biennium if additional funding is available and approved by the legislature and the governor.

The purpose of an environmental justice assessment is to identify:

- Who might be most impacted by an agency action.
- Environmental benefits, harms, and health impacts of the action.
- Ways to minimize or eliminate negative environmental impacts.
- How to equitably distribute positive environmental impacts.

Visit our [Environmental Justice webpage](#) to learn more about Environmental Justice Assessments.

WHY

Drinking water contaminants such as Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), nitrate, arsenic, uranium, and other harmful chemicals can be found in large public water supplies, Group B water sources, or private wells. Consuming contaminated water can lead to negative human health outcomes. As examples:

- Elevated levels of some PFAS may lead to increased cholesterol levels, decreased birth weights, decreased immune response to vaccines, changes in liver enzymes that indicate liver damage, increased risk of blood pressure problems during pregnancy, and increased risk of thyroid disease, testicular and kidney cancer.^{2,3}
- Nitrates can make people more susceptible to negative impacts of underlying health conditions.^{4,5}

¹ [Group B Public Water Systems | Washington State Department of Health](#)

² ATSDR PFAS Health effects (2024) - <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/index.html>

³ National Academies Sciences Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) 2022
<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/26156/PFAS%20Guidance%20Highlights.pdf>

⁴ ATSDR 2017- <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts204.pdf>;

⁵ Ward et al. (2018) Drinking Water Nitrate and Human Health: An updated Review. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 15(7): 1557
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30041450/>

- Exposure to elevated uranium levels over time may increase the risk of kidney damage or getting cancer.^{6,7,8}

The ADWP is designed to promote health equity and provide resources to people who may not know they are consuming water from a private or Group B well that has been contaminated or how to access alternative sources of safe drinking water and other supplies.

WHO

The ADWP helps provide resources to consumers of private and Group B water supplies contaminated by regional and specific events. Awards are focused on reducing immediate impacts from unsafe drinking water and improving social and environmental equity for those most at risk of negative outcomes.

For any funding provided in 2025-2027, local health departments/districts, community organizations and tribes who are able and willing to contract and implement the ADWP award are all eligible to apply.

If you identify as a member of one or more of these groups and would like to share your thoughts or connect with one of our staff, please email odw-adwp@doh.wa.gov or see ways to get involved below.

WHEN

See the proposed environmental justice assessment reporting and program timeline below. Community and tribal engagement is expected to begin in Spring 2025.

Date	Milestone
September 2023	ADWP announced
June 10, 2024	Grant announced via Gov Delivery list
July 2024	Begin recipient selection and award process
November 2024	Start EJ Assessment process/ Publish notification
Spring 2025	Announcements of ADWP funding for 2025-2027 biennium and Outreach to Communities, tribes, and other applicants
June 2025	Finalize EJ Assessment report.

These timelines and milestones may change. To stay current, please visit the program website or use the contact information provided below.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Keep up to date with our website [Alternative Drinking Water Program | Washington State Department of Health](#).
- Sign up for electronic notices at odw-adwp@doh.wa.gov.
- For questions about the ADWP or the EJ Assessment, contact us at odw-adwp@doh.wa.gov.



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To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov.

⁶ ATSDR factsheet (2014) <https://www.cdc.gov/TSP/PHS/PHS.aspx?phsid=438&toxid=77>

⁷ EPA- <https://www.epa.gov/navajo-nation-uranium-cleanup/health-effects-uranium>

⁸ Ma et al (2020) Emerging health risks and underlying toxicological mechanisms of uranium contamination: Lessons from the past two decades. Environment International. Volume 145, P 106107 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412020320626>