

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: Funding Sources for Community Drinking Water Systems in NM

DRAFT VERSION Updated 20 August 2021 |

Date: _____ 2021 Interview #: _____

Time: _____ Phone # _____ Zoom Teams

Name: _____

Title: _____

Water System Name: _____ Type: _____

NOTES

- **OPEN: 1 Spreadsheet “WaterSystems-Interviews...” with 2 tabs:** Sheet 1 (fill-in when making calls) + Sheet 2 (check contact info from survey calls before making interview call)
- **Set up call recorder, then call people using your own phone number:** if you use Sideline to call it comes up as ‘SCAM LIKELY Aztec, NM’ on their phone.
 - If you leave a VM, leave the Sideline # (505) 333-9667, so that someone else (Tucker/joni) can call the person back.
 - Call someone 2 times before moving on to next contact --> Be sure to note this.
- **Microsoft Forms:** Insert ‘OTHER’ [before your notes] in Microsoft Forms notes when the person you are interviewing goes off topic = for cleaning up responses before analysis.
 - Add on at end “talking points” / MAIN TAKEAWAYS at end of interview = reflect on the interview once you’ve completed the call.

Hello, is _____ available? My name is _____ and I am calling from the Southwest Environmental Finance Center at the University of New Mexico. I am calling because you are listed as a contact for a drinking water system in New Mexico. We are examining drinking water finance and management in New Mexico to understand concerns that drinking water systems may have with this process. We initially sent out a survey to gather information and we are now conducting brief interviews with water utility personnel to get a more in-depth understanding of these topics. Would you be willing to have a conversation with us either now or to be scheduled sometime soon?

IF THE PERSON YOU REACH INDICATES THEY ARE NOT THE RIGHT PERSON TO DO AN INTERVIEW LIKE THIS ASK THE FOLLOWING: If you are not the correct person to participate in an interview on funding, can you let me know the name and contact information of the person who would be in a better position to answer our questions?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me about your water system. The goal of this interview is two-fold: 1) to dig a little deeper into how you choose funding sources for your public water system, and 2) to better understand the positive and negative aspects of applying for funding.

Ok... a few things before we get started:

1. Consent

I need to receive your verbal consent to participate in this research. We will use content and possibly quotes from our conversation in reports and publications, but everything will be anonymous. Nothing will be able to be traced back to you or your drinking water system.

We will be delivering the results of this research to the funder, the Water Foundation, and the New Mexico legislature; we might include quotes from you or others we interview but will not use your name, title, name of the public water system you manage or any other identifying information in order to ensure anonymity. All of the information we gather from both the survey and these interviews will remain anonymous in all reports resulting from this study and will not be shared with anyone outside our organization.

If you would like a copy of the consent form, we can send you the consent form via mail or email.

I will be taking notes, and if it is alright with you, I would like to record our conversation. The recording will not be shared with anyone outside of our organization. If you are not okay with recording the conversation, I will just take notes.

If they agree continue:

IF THIS IS A PHONE CALL:

- If person consents to recording:
 - You need to read the verbal consent form and ask the person to give their verbal consent in place of written consent to participate.
 - Verbal Consent YES
 - Ask the person if they have any questions
 - And, ask if they would like a copy of the consent form.

If you want to record the phone conversation, you have 2 options:

Option 1: On a second device—be it another **iPhone**, an iPad, laptop, or Android **phone**—open a voice-recorder app and hit **record** while you're talking

Option 2: Record phone call on phone while talking.

- If the person does not consent:
 - Verbal Consent NO
 - Ok, I will be taking notes while we talk.

IF THIS IS A ZOOM/TEAMS CALL:

Do you mind if I record this conversation so that I can refer back to the recording for any details I missed in my notetaking? The recording will not be shared with anyone outside of our organization. If you are not okay with recording the conversation, I will just take notes.

- If YES:
 - Verbal Consent YES
 - Ask the person if they have any questions
 - And, ask if they would like a copy of the consent form.
- Thank you, I am going to start the recording, you will be prompted to accept the recording to remain in this session.

2. Logistics of the interview

This interview will last approximately 30-40 minutes. The questions I'll be asking will include a mix of open-ended and closed questions (questions that are yes or no, or ranking of your level of agreement) that will help me to better understand how you/your system applies for funding to support your water system.

We would like to offer you a gift card as a token of our appreciation for you taking time to talk with us.

- We are offering 3 options for the gift card, which gift card would you like?
 - Home Depot
 - Amazon
 - Walmart
- How would you like to receive this gift card?
 - e-card: email address _____
 - card: mailing address
 - Street _____
 - City _____
 - Zip _____

The questions for this interview are organized into 4 sections:

1. Your system characteristics
2. Selecting funding sources
3. The positive and negative aspects of applying for funding
4. Recommended improvements and advice for the state to improve funding and for other water systems who might be seeking funding

Before we proceed: Do you have any questions about the project? If you don't have any questions right now there will be time for questions/comments at the end of the interview.

SECTION 1: Characterizing your system

- 1.1 Before we talk about funding for your water system, for context, can you tell me a bit about you?
- (15) Your title/role (please provide all the roles you serve if it is more than one)
 - (16) How long have you been involved with or worked for this system? Have you ever worked for any other water system?
 - (17) How many hours per week do you work at the water utility?
 - (18) Do you live within the boundaries of the water system?
 - (19) What is your background related to water utilities (i.e., water training/experience)? If water is not your primary job, do you mind sharing what your main job is?

- 1.2 (20) Please characterize your system in terms of the age of the infrastructure, the number of people who work or volunteer for the system, and its organizational structure.

SECTION 2. Choose funding sources for your public water system

Now we're going to move on to funding for your water system.

- 2.1 (21) Has your water system applied for funding, such as grants or loans, since you've been involved with the system? If so, what funding sources did you apply to and did you receive the funding?
- (22) Follow-up: What was the purpose of the funding you applied for?
- How did you choose those particular funding sources to apply to? Why did you choose these sources over other sources?
- (23) Follow-up: Did the funding sufficiently cover the project costs? If not, how did you handle the shortfall in funds?
- (24) Follow-up: Are the funding cycles a challenge for you when you are applying for funding a project?
- (25) Follow-up: Are there other funding sources you would like to apply for in the future? If so, how will you choose which funding source to use?
- (26) Follow-up: Do you use any particular resources or technologies to help you find funding sources?
- 2.2 (27) Have you had assistance in completing the grant/funding applications?
- (28) If yes: Who (individuals, organizations, etc.) helps you complete applications?
- (29) If no: Is this something you would find useful? Are there any specific types of help you would want?
- 2.3 (30) Have you ever been encouraged to apply for specific resources? For example, did someone from a state agency or an engineer or assistance provider tell you to apply for one particular source or another?
- (31) If yes, can you indicate which entities provided this information and anything about the context in which this took place? (e.g., during a meeting or an engineer offered to help fill out an application)
- 2.4 (32) Do you have concerns about how the drought might affect your water system? If so, how are you managing those concerns or what types of actions will you have to take?
- (33) Follow-up: Do any of them involve funding? Do you think there are sufficient funding sources to address drought issues at your system?

Section 3. The positive and negative aspects of applying for funding

- 3.1 (34) In your experience, what parts of the funding process worked well? Were there any parts of the process you found helpful, informative, or otherwise positive? In what ways were they

helpful. Were particular individuals or organizations helpful to you? In what ways were they helpful

3.2 (35) In your experience, what parts of the funding process were difficult or challenging for you?

(36) Can you talk specifically about any challenges with choosing which funding sources to apply to?

(37) What about challenges related to the application process, including any forms you had to fill out or reports or documentation you needed to provide? Or any other part of the application process

(38) If you received funding, did you have any challenges related to managing the money, including any reports or information you were required to provide to the funding agency?

(39) How much help did you receive from the funding agency during this process? Was that assistance sufficient?

(40) Which part of the funding process was most difficult:

- the initial selection of a funding source
- the application process
- receiving the award
- fund management following receipt of the award
- Any other part (please specify)

(41) Follow-up: Which specific activity within these parts of the process did you find the most challenging?

SECTION 4. Improvements, suggestions, advice for other water systems, and any other final thoughts

4.1 (42) Considering all we have talked about, what are your recommendations for improving the funding process in New Mexico?

If they are having difficulty answering the question, consider restating in the following way: If you could tell the state one thing that would make things better for you what would it be?

4.2 (43) What advice would you give to other water systems, as they consider funding opportunities?

4.3 (44) Any other final thoughts or questions?

At the end/bottom of the Microsoft Forms sheet, be sure to fill in the following:

Key Takeaways (3-5)

--> Based on what you believe are the main takeaways from the interview

Is this person/system a candidate for Funding Navigator: Yes/No

--> Do NOT ask them = this is based on your observation

--> Include any notes about why this person would be a good candidate.

Thank you for your time.... You've given me a great deal to think about – thanks for participating in this research.

I will be in touch if I need to clarify anything you've said. Please be in touch if you have any questions: you have my email and cell, so don't hesitate to be in touch.

Also, we will be sending the \$20 gift cards to interview participants at the end of August. If you have not received the gift card by the beginning of September, please contact us at:

(505) 333-9667 or swefc@unm.edu.

Thanks, again, for taking the time to talk with me.

New Mexico Drinking Water Finance and Management Study

Consent to Participate in Research

Purpose of the research: You are being asked to participate in a research project that is being done by Southwest Environmental Finance Center and conducted by Dr. Benjamin Warner, Tucker Colvin, and Joni Palmer. You are being asked to join because you play a managerial role in your community drinking water system that has been selected to be part of this research.

This consent form contains important information about this project and what to expect if you decide to participate. Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. Your participation in this research is voluntary.

Key information for you to consider:

- This project will attempt to determine how drinking water systems in New Mexico interact with funding mechanisms.
- For this research you will be asked to partake in a semi-structured interview with the researchers. This interview will be anonymous and will be recorded and transcribed.
- There are no foreseen risks in partaking in this research. There are also no immediate benefits. The only benefit will be to help further the study of water systems.
- The interviews will take time out of your day. The interviews are estimated to last one hour, but you should account for the possibility that the entire process may take up to two hours.

What you will do in the project: For this project, you will be interviewed by researcher Tucker Colvin or Joni Palmer. These interviews will be anonymous. The format will be semi-structured. There will be a number of specific questions that deal with the organizational structure of your system, the source water, how you protect source water, and what your perceived risk are. You can decide to not answer any question and can stop the interview at any time. The interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed.

Risks: The only risk for your participation in this study is the inconvenience of taking time out of your day to participate.

Benefits: There will be no immediate benefits to you. The overall research will hopefully help water systems in general.

Confidentiality of your information: Everything discussed in the interview will be anonymous and we will take steps to ensure your confidentiality and privacy. Once the interviews are

transcribed, the audio files will be destroyed. If the interview takes place using Zoom or another platform that includes video, the video file will be immediately deleted and not stored on any device, only the audio will be saved. The transcriptions will be de-identified from your personal information and stored on a password protected hard drive. Only the research team will have access to the data. Any works published using this research will be anonymous and not contain any identifiable information.

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all research data. Your name will not be used in any published reports about this research.

Use of your information for future research: Your information collected for this project will NOT be used or shared for future research, even if we remove the identifiable information like your name or date of birth.

Payment: You will not be paid for participating in this project, but for your participation you will be given a \$20 gift card to either Amazon, Walmart, or Home Depot.

Right to withdraw from the research: Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. If you decide to withdraw from participation, all data obtained from the interview will be destroyed.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please contact:

Tucker Colvin, Southwest Environmental Finance Center, tcolvin@unm.edu, 505-333-9667

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or about what you should do in case of any research-related harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input, please contact the IRB. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving people:

UNM Office of the IRB, (505) 277-2644, irbmaincampus@unm.edu. Website: <http://irb.unm.edu/>

CONSENT

You are making a decision whether to participate in this research. Your verbal confirmation indicates that you have read this form or the form was read to you and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By consenting to participate in this research, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant. A copy of this consent form will be emailed or mailed to you.

Do you agree to participate in this research?