FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPATING WATER SYSTEMS

Fortifying the nation's rural water systems against cyber threats.

The Water Watch Center is an initiative to pair water utilities with partner Managed Security Service Providers to work collaboratively to improve security against advanced threats. It serves small and rural drinking water and wastewater systems across the U.S. and Puerto Rico — continuous monitoring across both your business IT and your SCADA/OT environment.

90%+
of U.S. water systems are small or rural

70%
of inspected systems failed basic cyber standards (EPA, 2024)

31,000+
NRWA member systems in all 50 states + Puerto Rico

What a participating utility gets

01 **Continuous vigilance**
24/7/365 monitoring by vetted Managed Security Service Providers, for utilities that will always have competing operational priorities.

02 **Coordinated Volunteer Support**
Under the overwatch of NRWA and the Water Watch Center, vetted technology experts will assist in closing the gaps identified through continuous monitoring and help participating water systems build a strategic plan to continue to improve security over time.

03 **IT and OT together**
A first-of-its-kind national solution covering the office network and the control-system network as one picture.

04 **Sector threat intelligence**
Visibility into what is actually being seen across the water sector right now, not a generic IT threat feed.

Who is eligible

Small and rural drinking water and wastewater systems in the U.S. and Puerto Rico (serving a population of 10,000 or less) — the utilities least likely to have dedicated in-house cybersecurity staff and most likely to be under-resourced relative to the threat they face.

What it costs

The Water Watch Center is built on philanthropic and founding-partner support, not a fee charged to the utilities it protects. Specifics for your utility are worked out during onboarding.

Delivered through people you already know

The Water Watch Center reaches utilities through NRWA's affiliated State Rural Water Associations, with over 31,000 members in 50 states and Puerto Rico — existing, trusted relationships, not a cold introduction from an unfamiliar company.

Water is critical infrastructure. It deserves a national defense.

The Water Watch Center connects federal, state, philanthropic, academic, and private capabilities around the utilities that need them most.

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One hub. Every stakeholder. A defensible Water Sector.

The Water Watch Center is a centralized, not-for-profit hub that connects six stakeholder communities around a single mission. It does not replace any partner. It is the connective tissue that lets federal agencies, states, cybersecurity vendors, philanthropies, and universities deliver real capability into water systems through the operators' existing trusted relationships.

Federal Government	State & Local Government	Cybersecurity & Tech Firms
Philanthropic Organizations	Academic Institutions	Water System Owners and Operators

How to apply

01 **Submit the utility interest form**

Apply for your own utility, or nominate another. You will be asked for the utility's name and, if known, its PWSID or town and state, plus contact information for the utility's admin contact.

02 **Meet for intake**

Scheduled as a direct result of your application. Your existing IT or MDR relationships and the specifics of your environment get worked out here, along with which enrollment phase makes the most sense.

03 **Track your status**

Once you have applied, the applicant portal shows exactly where your application stands at all times, and is where you communicate with us.

Enrollment happens in phases based on available capacity, so applications are not necessarily onboarded immediately. Apply regardless of phase or capacity concerns — it gives us visibility into what the utility community needs, and the intake meeting is where we evaluate what phase makes the most sense for all involved.

BACKED BY

NRWA

National Rural Water Association

Founding organization. Decades of trusted, on-the-ground relationships with the rural water systems it serves.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO HARRIS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy

Development partner.

William + Flora Hewlett Foundation

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Philanthropic funder.

Craig Newmark Philanthropies

Philanthropic funder.

NEXT STEP

Apply through the utility sign-up page.

waterwatchcenter.org/signup

Questions before applying? Reach us anytime through the contact form at waterwatchcenter.org/contact.

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