



LIFT Scholarship Exchange Experience for Innovation & Technology (SEE IT)

Sponsored by: WRF, WEF and NACWA

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION FORM

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

Water Resource Recovery Facilities (WRRFs) are transforming themselves into [Utilities of the Future](#) and becoming drivers of resource recovery, economic growth, and improved environmental performance. The implementation of innovative technologies, processes, and approaches is paving the way for this transformation. An effective way for utilities to learn about, gain confidence in, and adopt new technologies and approaches more quickly is to be able to visit and see them in action at peer facilities. However, many utilities, especially smaller ones, have limited travel budgets and/or travel restrictions, thus resulting in a reduced ability to visit facilities nationally or internationally. This impedes the ability to learn best practices and adopt new technologies.

The LIFT SEE IT (Scholarship Exchange Experience for Innovation & Technology) Program - an initiative spearheaded by [WRF](#), [WEF](#), and [NACWA](#) - provides scholarships for utility personnel to visit other utilities with innovations of interest and to share experiences with their peers. Innovations may include new technologies and processes, but also novel approaches to service, operations, and finance. LIFT has identified 13 Technology [Focus Areas](#) as priorities, although applications are not necessarily limited to these topics. LIFT SEE IT is intended to provide hands-on interaction with innovative technologies and approaches and in-person communication with representatives that are implementing them to provide program participants with the needed perspective and information to accelerate adoption at their own facilities. LIFT SEE IT is part of a broader water sector effort to help provide the tools and resources necessary to help utilities transform their facilities into leading actors in the world of wastewater, stormwater, drinking water, and water reuse.

Utility representatives interested in investigating a new technology or learning about an innovative approach at another facility are encouraged to submit the application form below for review. An independent committee will select SEE IT participants, and the sponsoring organizations will provide travel support for the personnel to visit the utility that is implementing the technology or innovation of interest. LIFT SEE IT awardees will be required to record and share their experiences with peer utilities and others.

COVID-19:

Due to the ongoing concern about COVID-19, any trip that was awarded in 2020 was not able to occur. While those trips have been postponed, they have not been cancelled. Should travel restrictions in 2021 be like 2020, any trip that is awarded should occur when it is safe to do so. Proposals that include options for “virtual visits”, video recording and interview of utility operators and their facilities will be highly regarded.

ELGIBILITY:

To be considered for the SEE IT Program you must meet the following criteria:

- Be employed by a wastewater, stormwater, drinking water, or water reuse public utility.
- Be a member of WEF or work for an agency that is a WRF subscriber or NACWA member.
- Have a need to investigate a specific new technology or innovation program or activity that a peer utility is implementing to learn more about it for potential adoption at your own facility.

RESOURCES:

Utilities seeking suggestions for site visits are expected to discuss ideas with their consultant(s), technology provider(s), and/or other utilities. The resources noted below may also be useful for ideas:

- [LIFT Web Pages](#): Includes LIFT [Featured Facility](#) and [Technology Spotlight](#)
- [LIFT Link](#): LIFT has a database of over 120 technologies that have successfully gone through the LIFT Technology Scan process which is accessible to WRF Subscribers.
- [EPA's Water Innovation and Technology Web Page](#): Includes "Water Technology Innovation Blueprint – Version 2" and "Promoting Innovation for a Sustainable Water Future – A Progress Report"
- [LIFT Visualization Tool](#): LIFT collected information from over 100 utilities about the types of technologies they have implemented or plan to implement in the near future. The results are available in a data visualization tool that helps utilities learn about technologies that are installed or will be installed at different utilities, as well as to assess how innovative they are compared to their counterparts. The information is accessible to all WRF subscribing utilities.

Applicants must contact a site of interest before applying to ensure the site would be willing and able to host a visit.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

- All applications must be typed on the specified form and signed by the applicant to be valid. Digital signatures are accepted.
- The application form must be filled out completely, submitted by email, and have the latest resume of the applicant(s) attached.

Please email your completed application form to David Morroni at dmorroni@waterrf.org.

APPLICATION DUE DATES:

First Round applications are due by 5:00 pm ET on Friday, March 12, 2021. Letters of notification to applicants are anticipated to be issued mid-April. Trips would take place between May – November 2021, travel permitting due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Second Round applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the available program funding of \$30,000 is exhausted.

APPLICATION PANEL & SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA:

A joint volunteer committee formed by WRF, WEF and NACWA will screen applicants. Reviewers will strive to achieve geographic diversity as well as utility size diversity. Selection Criteria include:

- **Merit:** Technical or innovation merit of site visit (e.g., Is the technology or innovation truly new and not already an established or conventional approach? Is it a significant priority to the water industry? How impactful would further adoption of the technology or innovation be?).
- **Importance to Utility:** Trip's importance to the utility learning about the technology or innovation for potential pilot or implementation (e.g., How does the innovation fit into the goals or future plans of the utility? Is the utility considering adopting this technology or innovation in the future? Is a change required to meet a new/upcoming regulatory requirement? Is the change planned for the immediate future or 5-10 years out? Is the innovation compatible with current or future facility design?).
- **Relevance to Staff:** Relevance of the technology or innovation to the particular staff member(s) participating in the visit (e.g., Is the staff member(s) applying a good representative to participate in the site visit based on their job duties/responsibilities?).
- **Implementation Potential:** Reasonable chance of implementation at applicant's facility in the future (e.g., Does the utility have the financial capability to implement the innovation? Is there sufficient physical space available for the innovation?). Is this technology budgeted in their CIP Program? Has a Business Case Evaluation been completed for this project/technology? Estimated Cost, Financing, etc.?
- **Cost and Value:** A reasonable budget that provides good value (e.g., Is the budget reasonable? Is significant cost share provided? Is the cost/benefit of the visit a good value?).
- **Application Completion:** Did the applicant fill out the application completely and follow all of the instructions? Are all of the necessary resumes included? Is the application signed?

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS:

The scholarship will cover economy travel, lodging, meals, and ground trip expenses. The scholarship committee is striving to award as many scholarships as possible and the ability of applicants to assume a portion of the cost (for example, a third of the cost) will enable us to support more participants. More than one staff member from a given utility may participate in a site visit, but additional cost share is encouraged in these cases. Also, personnel from different utilities are welcome to organize a small group visit (e.g., 2-5 people) to a utility in order to benefit from group interaction and information sharing. Visits to several sites/facilities in relative close proximity is also allowed, or even encouraged, if it optimizes use of travel funds.

INFORMATION:

Got questions about the application? We've got answers. Send an e-mail to David Morrone, LIFT Program Coordinator, at dmorrone@waterrf.org.

To learn more about LIFT SEE IT, please visit [LIFT SEE IT](#).



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PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

Name:

Title:

Utility Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Country:

Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

I am/My utility is a member of (please select all that apply):

- NACWA
- WEF
- WRF

- 1. Name and location of utility(s) to be visited (Domestic or International):**
- 2. Technology(s) or innovation(s) of interest:**
- 3. Description of your utility's customer base, service area, and current facility design (attach diagram(s)):**
- 4. Timing for potential implementation of innovation:**
- 5. Name(s) and title(s) of any co-applicants from your organization (if applicable):**
- 6. Estimated Date/Timeframe for the Trip and Total Number of Days (Including Travel):**
- 7. Motivation for applying/anticipated use of information gained. Include description of any potential benefit to other utilities (500 to 1000 words):**

8. Is this technology budgeted in your CIP Program? Has a Business Case Evaluation been completed for this project/technology? Estimated Cost, Financing, etc.?

- Yes
 No

9. Necessary resumes attached?

10. Estimated trip budget for applicant(s):

Item	Amount
Airfare/Train	
Rental Car	
Auto Expense (\$0.58/mile)	
Parking/Tolls/Gas	
Taxi/Shuttle	
Meals	
Hotel	
Miscellaneous	
Total	
(Minus Your Utility's Cost Share Contribution)	
= Total Funding Requested	

11. SEE IT Reporting

I understand that my acceptance into the program requires me to share my trip experience with others. As part of this sharing, I am willing at a minimum, to:

- Provide a well-written, 2-3 page trip report, which will be published wholly or in part on the LIFT web pages and/or in WRF, WEF, or NACWA newsletters or publications.
- Provide good quality (digital) pictures and/or videos to accompany and supplement the trip report.
- Present as part of a WRF, WEF, and/or NACWA forum(s) if requested (e.g., web seminar, conference, etc.).

Additional outreach beyond the above items, for example an article in a newsletter or magazine, is encouraged, but not required.

Signature: _____

Date: _____