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THE WATER RESEARCH FOUNDATION Participating Utilities – Information Sheet

The Water Research Foundation (WRF) places high value on utility participation and active involvement in our research projects. Utility participation helps to ensure that WRF-sponsored research is directly responsive to current industry needs and provides the opportunity for utilities to participate as an integral part of a research team.

The WRF research portfolio covers a wide range of research topics and provides utilities with diverse opportunities within topics that are of interest to the specific entity. Because WRF projects are diverse in nature, scope, and scale, what it means to be a participating utility can vary from project to project. Depending on the project requirements, participating utilities have the opportunity to serve as a test facility, provide water utility data, provide water samples, respond to surveys, loan equipment, serve as a case study, participate in a workshop, or share staff expertise. Participating utilities are involved in projects at varying levels of commitment as appropriate for each organization. These utilities gain firsthand information on the study and benefit from working with researchers and other members of the water community.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Participating utilities work directly with the project research team and principal investigator. Responsibilities for these utilities will vary based on the project scope of work as set forth in the team's proposal and agreed to by the utility in the utility's participation commitment letter.

The amount of time committed by the participating utility depends on the project and on the commitment made during the project proposal phase. However, the participating utility can commit as much or as little time to a project based on their interest and available resources.

The primary functions and responsibilities of participating utilities are listed below:

Research Planning and Request for Proposal (RFP) Phase

- There are two ways to sign-up to be a participating utility on a WRF project. Utilities can volunteer to participate in a specific project of interest by going to WRF's website under the funding/volunteer section at: <http://www.waterrf.org/funding/rfps/Pages/Volunteer.aspx> and completing a Utility Participation in Research (UPIR) form. The utility's information will be included on the last page of the RFP. Researchers interested in responding to the RFP will contact the utility directly to discuss participation in their proposal.
- The second way for a utility to volunteer to participate in a project is by a research team directly contacting a utility to include them in their proposal for the RFP. In this scenario, the utility's information is not included on the RFP and they are included only on proposals where the research team has contacted them.

Proposal Phase – Letter of Commitment

- Provide a letter of commitment using the utility’s letterhead for the research team to include in their proposal that is submitted to the WRF.
- In-kind contributions to be provided by the participating should be estimated by the utility and shown on the letter of commitment, as well as the type of work that they agree to do for the project.
- Typically, the research team will provide the utility with a form “participating utility commitment letter.” Utilities should use the template and outline specifically what will be contributed to the project.
- Utilities who provide a commitment letter to a proposal will be notified of the acceptance or rejection of a proposal.

Involvement During the Project

- Utilities will work directly with the research team throughout the project to perform the work as outlined in the proposal scope of work and letter of commitment.
- The research team will ensure that participating utilities provide support to the project as set forth in the project scope of work.
- The research team keeps participating utilities apprised of status throughout the course of the project, by providing them with copies of research periodic reports or by convening conference calls to report on the status of the research.

Review Draft of Final Work Product

- In accordance with WRF’s standard contractual agreement, each participating utility must be given an opportunity to review the project’s use of their data and conclusions regarding these data, and must be provided with reasonable opportunity to correct and/or respond to any problems or difficulties uncovered by the data and/or test results prior to their publication or use.
- Submit the “participating utility confirmation letter” to the Principal Investigator (research team) after reviewing the draft work product for publication.
- The participating utility confirmation letter is required prior to publication of any WRF work product.
- The participating utilities are acknowledged in the published report

Report Publication

- Upon publication of the final report, WRF sends an email to the utility representative named in the proposal commitment letter to inform them that the report has been published; the participating utility is also provided a copy of the report.