



Technical Assistance (TA) Program



With the passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have been formed and tasked with developing and implementing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) that serves as a roadmap for how groundwater basins will reach groundwater sustainability. Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) has established a multi-disciplinary technical assistance (TA) program to assist Severely Disadvantaged Communities (SDACs) to participate in groundwater sustainability planning and become viable partners in projects that enhance groundwater quality and quantity.

Technical Assistance activities include, but are not limited to:

- Community Outreach & Education
- Direct Community Assistance
- Groundwater Sustainability Plan Development
- Identification of Management Actions & Projects
- Procurement of Professional Services

Further details for each activity are provided below.

The Technical Assistance program currently serves SDACs located within the boundaries of the following Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs):

- Kern Groundwater Authority GSA
- Kern River GSA
- Greater Kaweah GSA
- Mid-Kaweah GSA
- Eastern Kaweah GSA
- Madera County GSA
- Merced Irrigation-Urban GSA
- Turner Island Water District GSA
- North Fork Kings GSA
- Kings River East GSA
- Westlands Water District GSA
- Alpaugh Irrigation District GSA
- Mid-Kings River GSA
- Eastern Tule GSA Joint Powers Authority

SDACs or GSAs seeking to serve SDACs within their boundaries, may request technical assistance by completing the attached technical assistance request form. The form is also available online at <http://bit.ly/SGMAprogram>.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Communication & Outreach Materials: Develop or enhance (English & Spanish) communication materials necessary with groundwater sustainability planning.

Conducting Community Outreach: Community outreach and education activities serve to engage SDAC's, build long-term capacity and enable SDACs to participate in groundwater sustainability planning. Outreach methods include, but are not limited to:

- Disseminating bilingual educational materials
- Distributing advisory/GSA applications, as needed
- Door-to-door outreach
- Attending water board and/or community meetings
- Media interviews
- Promoting events on SHE social media platforms
- Developing & maintaining an SDACs stakeholders list

Educating Community Residents: Education activities assist and educate community residents, water board members, and local schools about groundwater sustainability planning and improve understanding on working relationships between different groundwater users. Education methods include, but are not limited to, conducting community meetings, workshops, board trainings, roundtable discussions, and water tours. This includes the Water Managers Training Program, which will build long-term capacity in SDAC representatives engaged or seeking to engage in groundwater management activities.

Establishing Partnerships & Developing Cooperation Agreements: SHE will assist groups of communities to establish partnerships and/or consolidated representation on GSA governance structures and/or on advisory committees.

DIRECT COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

Coordination & Facilitation of Meetings: The TA program assists with the coordination and facilitation of meetings, translation services, development and implementation of SGMA fees and other eligible assistance requested by SDACs.

Translation Services: SHE assists in developing bilingual (English and Spanish) communication materials. Oral and/or written translation services are provided for key public meetings and/or workshops.

Groundwater Management Fees: Provides assistance to SDACs participating in the development and implementation of local groundwater fee structures. This includes reviewing and understanding proposed groundwater fees and funding mechanisms and supporting the development of groundwater-related rate studies and implementation of new rate structures, if necessary. Related activities may include developing notices/sample ballots, coordinating and facilitating community meetings and/or workshops, and supporting rate studies and providing findings of rate studies and possible options.

GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The TA program assists SDACs in participating in the development of local GSPs, and in reviewing and providing input on key components of their GSP. GSP development activities include but are not limited to:

- Reviewing and providing comments on draft Communication and Engagement Plans
- Providing information on community water needs, projects, or contact information
- Reviewing & providing input on key components of the GSP
- Developing & distributing communication materials that summarize findings of final GSP

IDENTIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS & PROJECTS

SHE will work with GSAs and SDACs to evaluate community groundwater conditions and potential management actions and projects with the potential to improve water quality, reduce or prevent subsidence, and/or the lowering of groundwater levels. This includes assistance in responding to GSA project solicitations through activities such as completing project information forms, identifying project development needs, and selecting projects that will obtain project development assistance. Project development assistance will depend on the needs of the project but may include, but not limited to preparing project descriptions, conducting environmental assessments, and preparing feasibility studies/preliminary engineering reports and preliminary design as needed. Funding for this activity is limited.

PROCUREMENT OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

SHE will help identify professional service needs and establish sub-agreements with suitable consultants. The professional services will assist SDACs with services such as technical and/or legal consultants with the expertise to review groundwater models, water budgets, draft GSPs, proposed groundwater fees/financial mechanisms, and if necessary, help update current operating budgets and adopt new water rates.

If you have any questions, please contact Maria Herrera at SGMA@selfhelpenterprises.org or (559) 802-1676.