

# CIVICWELL

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## Supporting the Underrepresented Communities Technical Assistance Program

July 29, 2023



CivicWell has helped kick off the Underrepresented Communities Technical Assistance (URC TA) Program. The URC TA Program is a collaboration of the Water Foundation, CivicWell, Community Water Center, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, Self-Help Enterprises, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, the Nature Conservancy, and the National Audubon Society to increase underrepresented community engagement and capacity in local Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) planning processes. In 2021, the program partners started working with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to create formal avenues to address communities' needs as the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) began their basin management planning efforts. Now in 2023, DWR has increased NGO partner funding from \$2.5 million to \$9 million in order to expand its Technical Assistance offerings.

Over the next two years, the partners will work on well mitigation, provide ecological data, and increase communities' and small farmers' participation in GSA management efforts.

“The URC TA Program is an opportunity to help communities overcome the structural barriers around decision-making related to their groundwater basins, and the TA efforts will contribute to GSAs becoming more responsive to the community needs. Ultimately the goal is to see changes in access to safe drinking water.”

Justine Massey, Policy Director and Attorney, Community Water Center

### **Program Goals**

The goal is to identify and address community needs, risks, and vulnerabilities related to the implementation of groundwater sustainability plans in the Sacramento Valley and San Joaquin

Valley. A central objective is to see communities' input and needs included in groundwater sustainability decisions.

### **Benefits**

The URC TA program will increase equitable involvement, highlight groundwater as a critical piece of a resilient California water portfolio, and address the broader climate impacts on communities and their ecosystems.

“When it comes to sustainably managing our groundwater basins, our conversations about underserved community needs are pivotal in helping to keep local communities engaged and able to participate in groundwater sustainability planning. We are thrilled to provide local assistance funding provided by the Budget Acts of 2021 and 2022 to the URC TA Program to help our partners bring more residents and farmers into GSA decision-making process.”

Kelley List, manager for DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program

### **CivicWell's Role**

CivicWell will coordinate the program partners, support updating and sharing tools and materials, and showcase community success stories to amplify community needs and lessons learned across SGMA basins.