

SAFER Advisory Group Special Meeting

Draft FY 2025-26

Fund Expenditure Plan

July 17, 2025
Via Zoom



Meeting Logistics

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement,
Equity, and Tribal Affairs

Ways to Participate

Watch only: Visit video.calepa.ca.gov

Submit a comment:

Email safer@waterboards.ca.gov with subject “AGM Public Comment,” and follow instructions in return email to join the meeting.

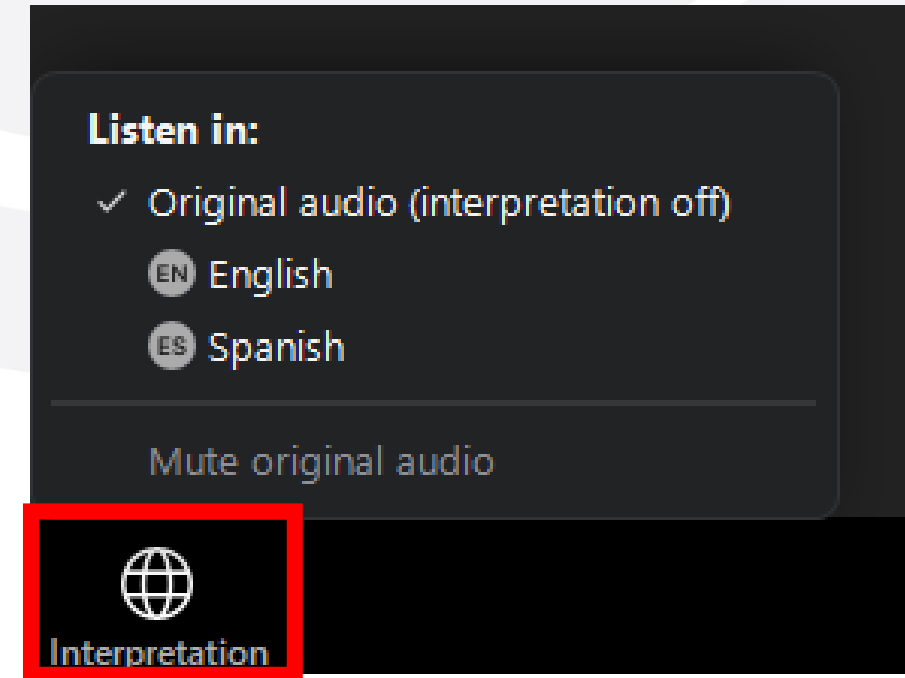
Technical or language interpretation assistance:
safer@waterboards.ca.gov



Language Interpretation through Zoom

Click the **Interpretation** icon

- Navigate to Language Channels
- Everyone must select English or Spanish
- If listening in Spanish, click **Mute Original Audio**

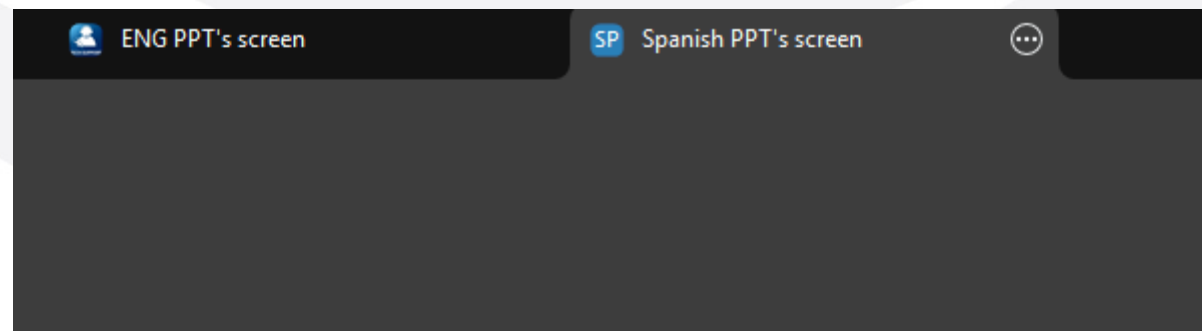


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View Presentation Options

Click on one of the **Tab Options** at the top of your screen:

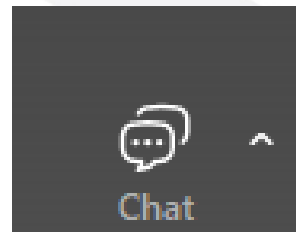
- "Spanish PPT"
- OR
- "ENG PPT"



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Zoom Interactions

Panelists click on **Chat**.



- To send or read a message from participants or staff.
- To communicate with staff a technical issue.

Click on **Raise Hand**



- Raise your hand to ask to speak.

Agenda Overview

- Introductions
- Draft FY 2025-26 Fund Expenditure Plan
- Advisory Group Member Announcements
- Public Comment

Meeting Guidelines

- Mute yourself when not speaking
- Join by video
- Take breaks as needed
- Speak slowly
- Raise your hand for comments or questions
- Keep your comments concise and to the point
- For technical support: **safer@waterboards.ca.gov**





Water Boards' Mission

Preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Introductions

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement,
Equity, and Tribal Affairs



SAFER Advisory Group Introductions

- Your name
- Community/organization you represent
- If you had the ability to allocate funds to a project that would help achieve our SAFER goals, what would the project be?



Opening Remarks

Board Member Laurel Firestone

Draft FY 2025-26 Fund Expenditure Plan for the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund

Division of Financial Assistance



Key Updates Compared to Prior Fund Expenditure Plan



Key Updates Compared to Prior FY 2024-25 FEP



General FEP Organization

Significant re-organization to establish SAFER Program goals and strategy, report back on SAFER Program performance, describe anticipated available funding, FY 2025-26 funding priorities and targets, as well as funding eligibilities by system category and solution type. Simplification by moving certain sections to appendices.



New Domestic Well/ State Small Water System Strategy

Addition of new DW/SSWS strategy to:

- 1) Share data to inform possible solutions
- 2) Fill funding gaps in local and regional programs
- 3) Promote and explore long-term solutions



SAFER Program Performance

Focus on progress related to SAFER Program goals established in prior FY 2024-25 FEP with previously reported on metrics available in Appendix C.

Key Updates Compared to Prior FY 2024-25 FEP, cont.



Comprehensive Funding Eligibilities

Information broken into two main sections by system category (i.e., PWS and DW/SSWS) and discusses eligibilities for each solution type. Key updates:

- **Interim Solutions**
Clarifies durations of SAFER-funded interim solutions, especially in areas where existing local mitigation programs are being implemented.
- **Technical Assistance**
Clarifies decision criteria for each step in moving projects through the planning process via TA.
- **Planning and Construction**
Clearer alignment with DWSRF IUP eligibilities for planning and construction, including consolidations.
- **Long-term Solutions for DW/SSWS**
Clarifies project eligibility for DW/SSWS communities such as consolidation or de-centralized solutions (e.g., point-of-use or point-of-entry treatment or tank installation in hard-rock areas).
- **Construction via Urgent Drinking Water Needs Process**
Increased limit from \$500,000 to \$1 million for relatively simple construction projects meeting certain criteria (e.g., completed planning and environmental documents) that can utilize the Urgent Drinking Water Needs application process.

SAFER Program Goals and Strategy



SAFER Program Goals for Public Water Systems

Goals



People in communities that did not have safe drinking water now have it.



All communities without safe drinking water are on track to get lasting solutions in place as swiftly as possible.



California's most vulnerable communities are transitioning to be resilient and prevent cycles of failures.

Measures

- Projection of systems returned to compliance
- Number of systems returned to compliance by 2030
- Population with safe drinking water by 2030

- Percentage of compliance orders with deadlines less than 5 years
- Percentage of TA planning work plans or planning agreements with less than 2.5 years to a construction application
- Systems with an enforcement action with approved corrective action plans within 6 months of violation
- Reduce time between violation to return to compliance to less than 5 years

- Number of consolidations completed and those in progress
- Reduction in systems with repeat violations
- Reduction in systems that are submitting multiple emergency repair requests

NEW! SAFER Strategy for Domestic Wells/ State Small Water Systems (DW/SSWS)

1

Share Data to Inform Possible Solutions

- Continued annual updates to the DW Needs Assessment
- Guidelines and best practices that can be shared out

2

Fill Funding Gaps Supporting Local/Regional Programs

- Identify where SAFER can be used to fill in local program funding gaps or where no programs exist
- Identify potential innovative interim and long-term solutions to pilot or deploy broadly

3

Promote & Explore Long-Term Solutions

- Continued TA to explore long-term solutions for DW/SSWS communities
- Provide construction funding where feasible
- Update funding guidelines for physical consolidations and regionalizations
- Provide funding or TA for at least one pilot each for regionalization and POU/POE implementation

SAFER Program Performance



SAFER Performance for Public Water System (PWS) Goals



People in communities that did not have safe drinking water now have it.

321

Systems off the Failing list since July 2019.

3.3 M

Population served by the 321 systems that have come back into compliance since July 2019.



Communities are on track to get lasting solutions as swiftly as possible.

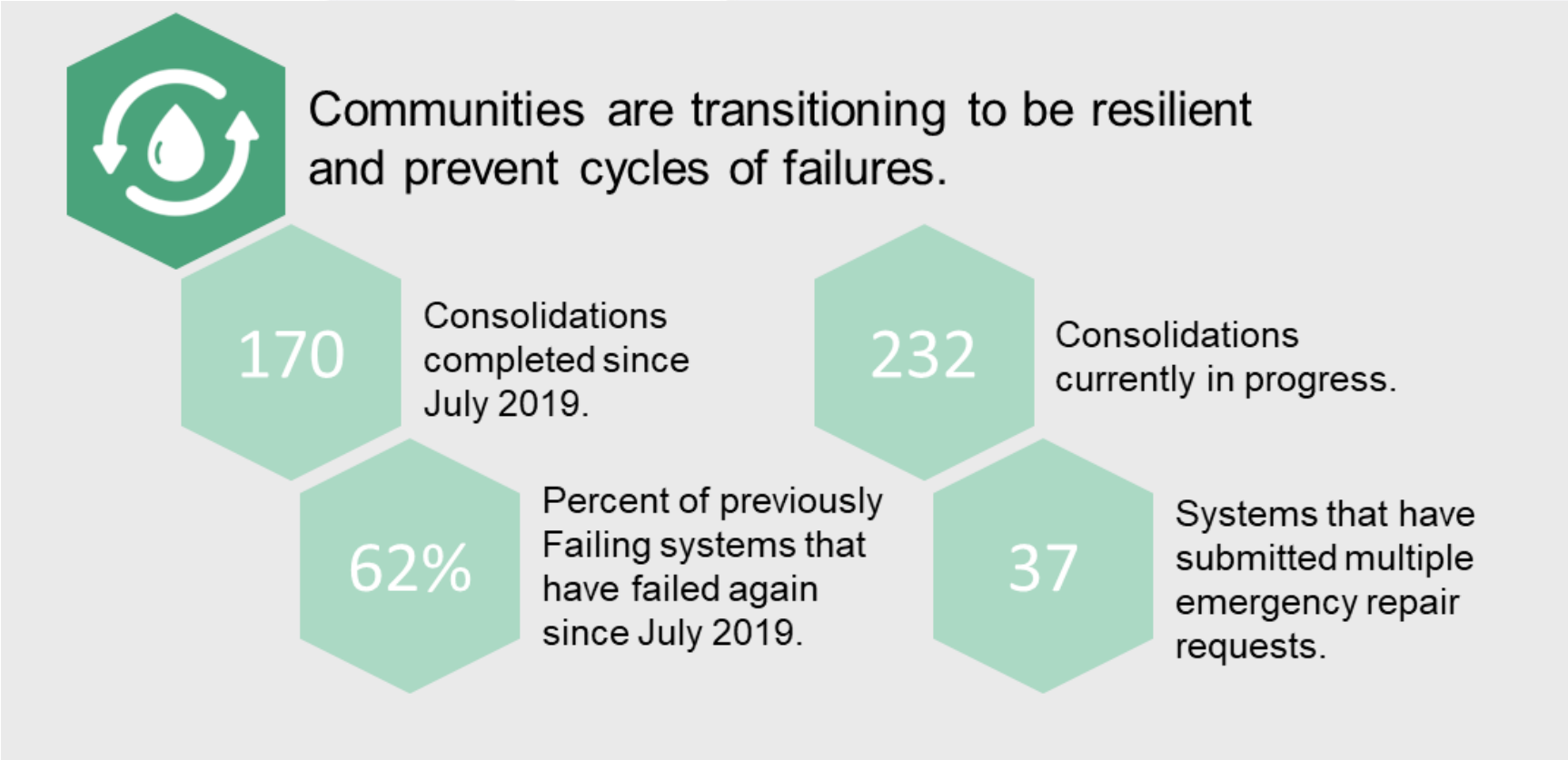
3
yrs

Average time for systems to come off the Failing list since July 2019.

4.1
yrs

Average time for planning work to be completed since July 2019.

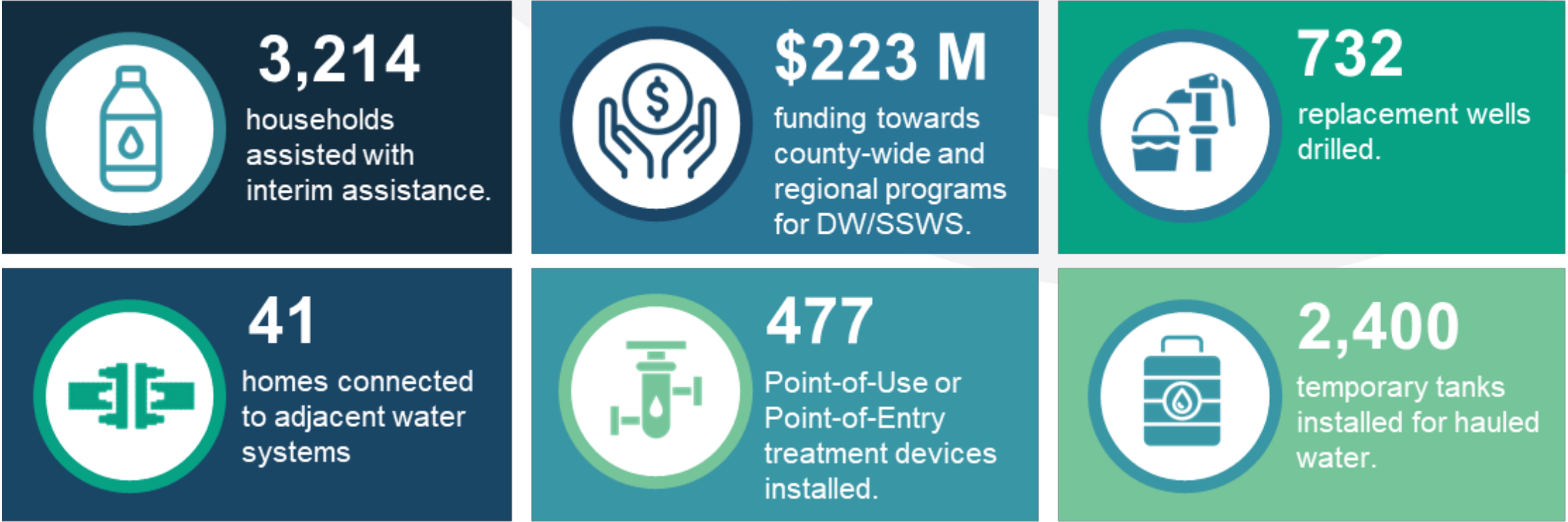
SAFER Performance for PWS Goals, cont.



Other PWS Highlights

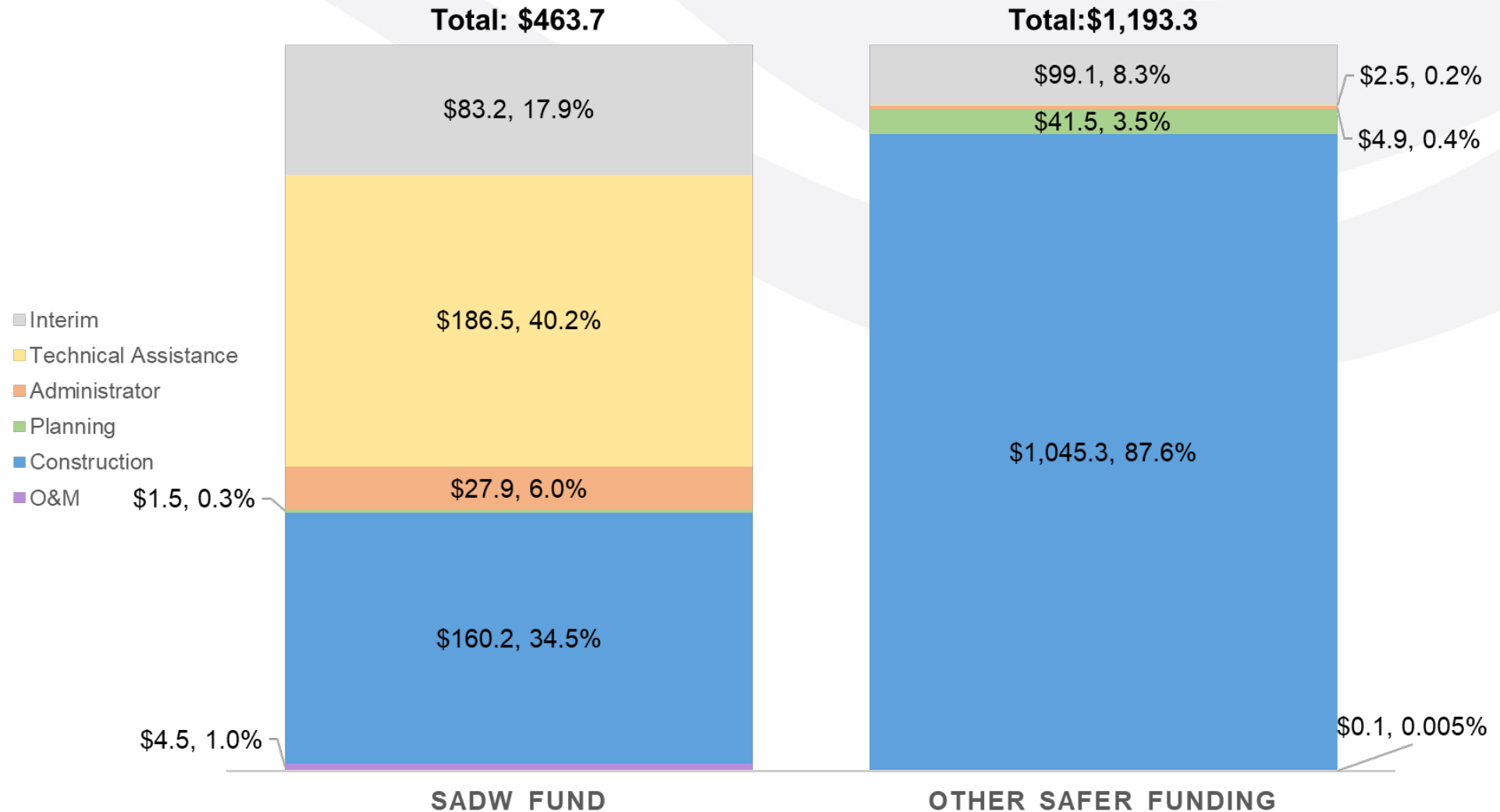


Domestic Well & State Small Water System Highlights



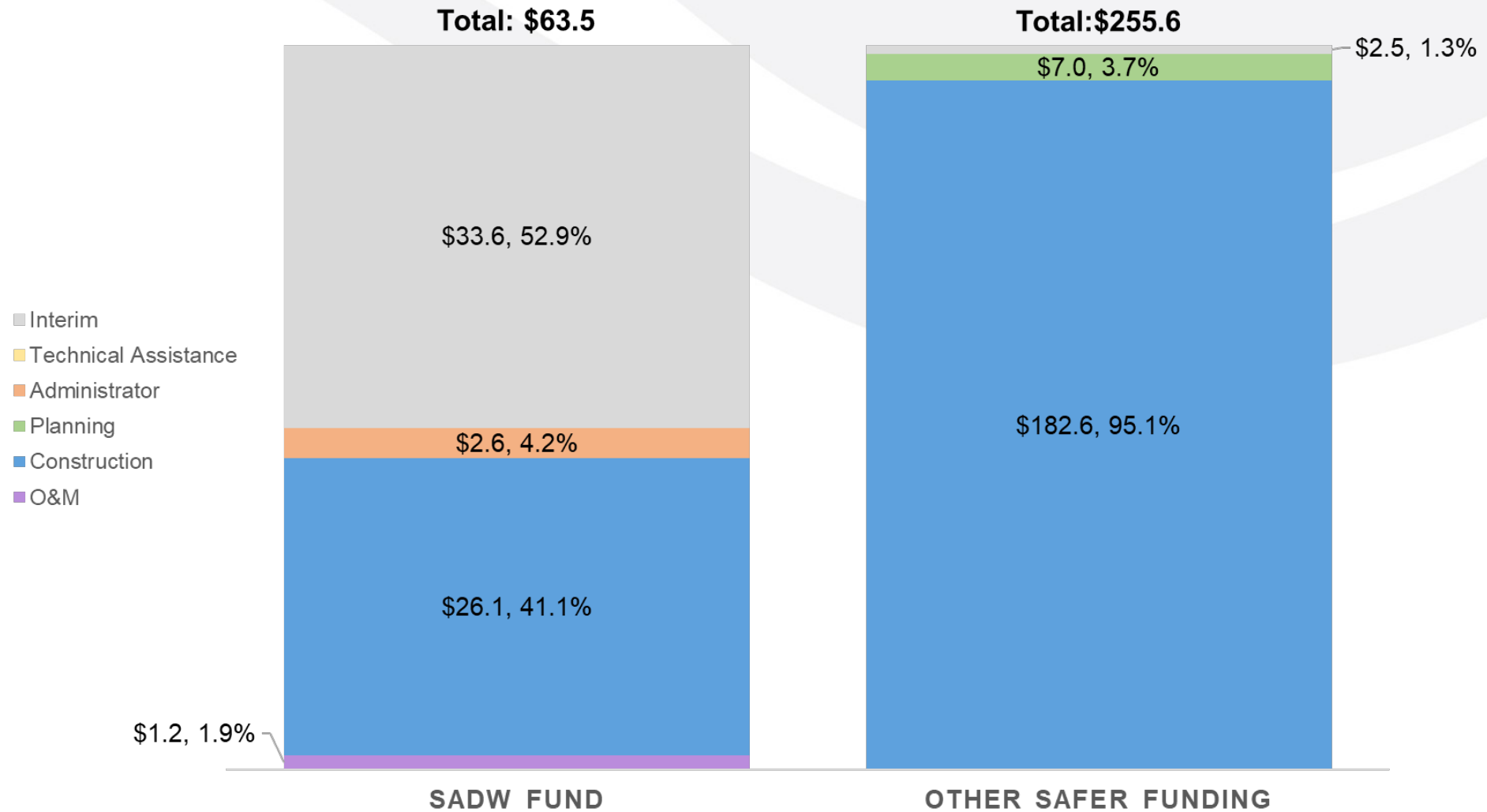
SAFER Program Funding Commitments

Cumulative (FY 19/20 – FY 24/25 (through 3/31/25))(in millions)



SAFER Program Funding Commitments

FY 2024-25 (through 3/31/25)(in millions)

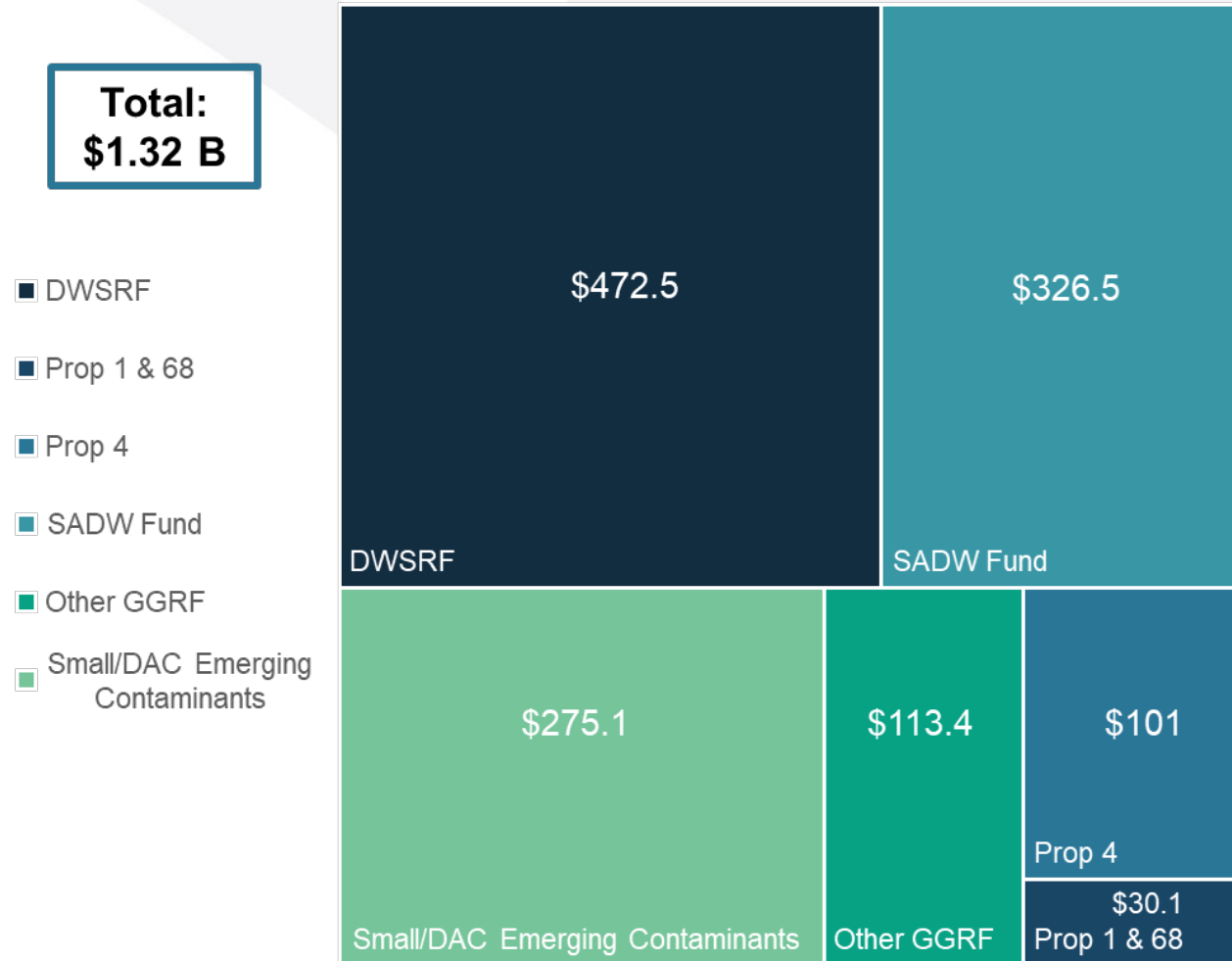


Anticipated Available Funding, Demand, and Priorities

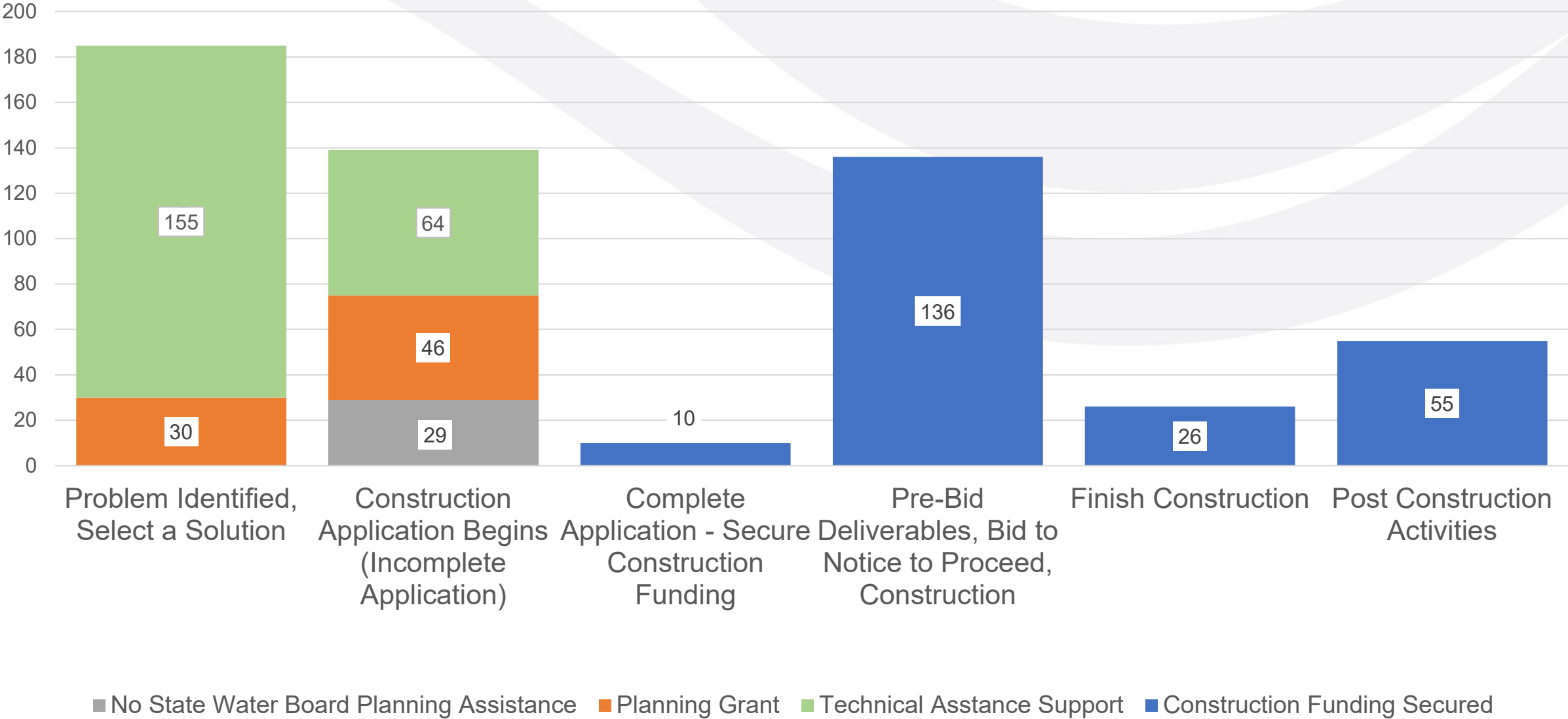


Anticipated Available Funding

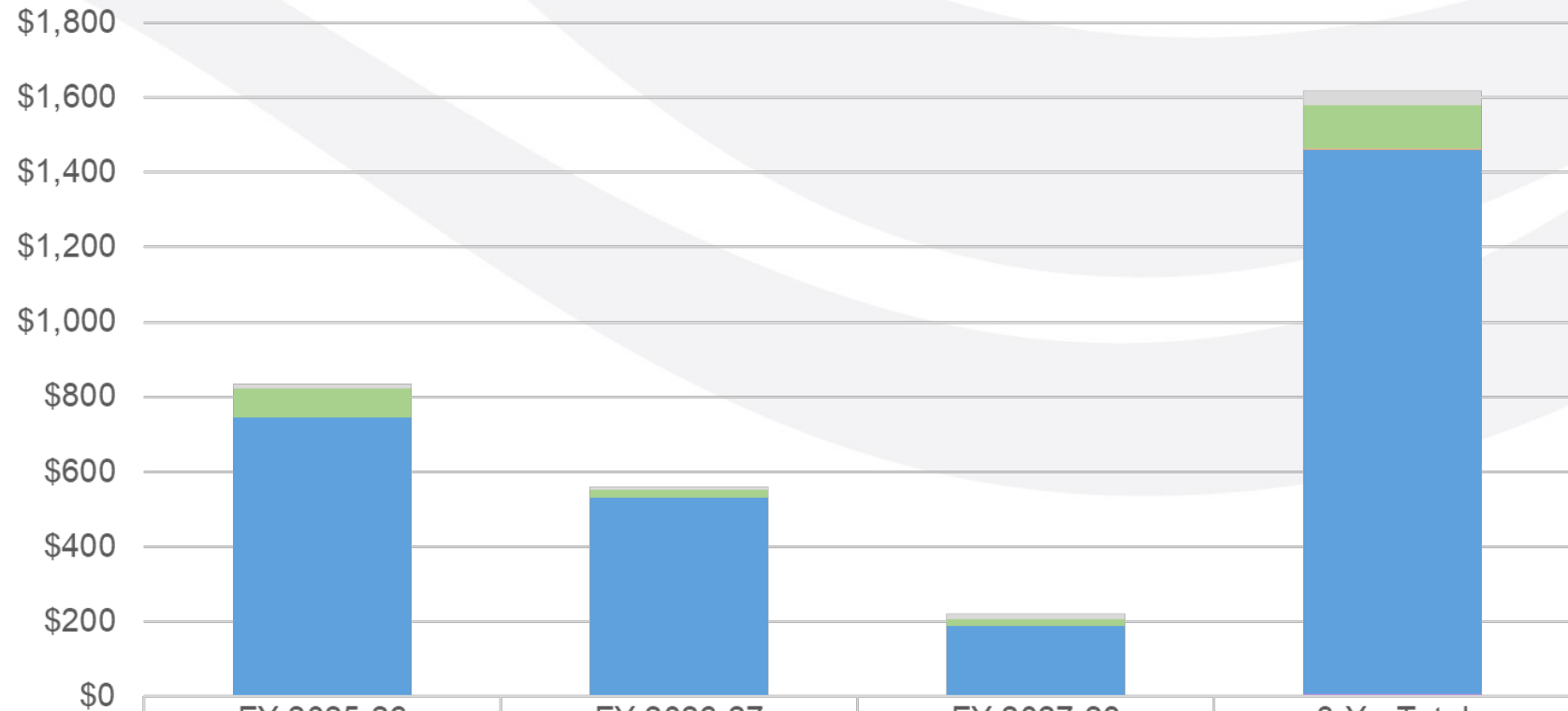
FY 2025-26 Anticipated Available Funding (in millions)



All “Active” and “Potential” SAFER Projects

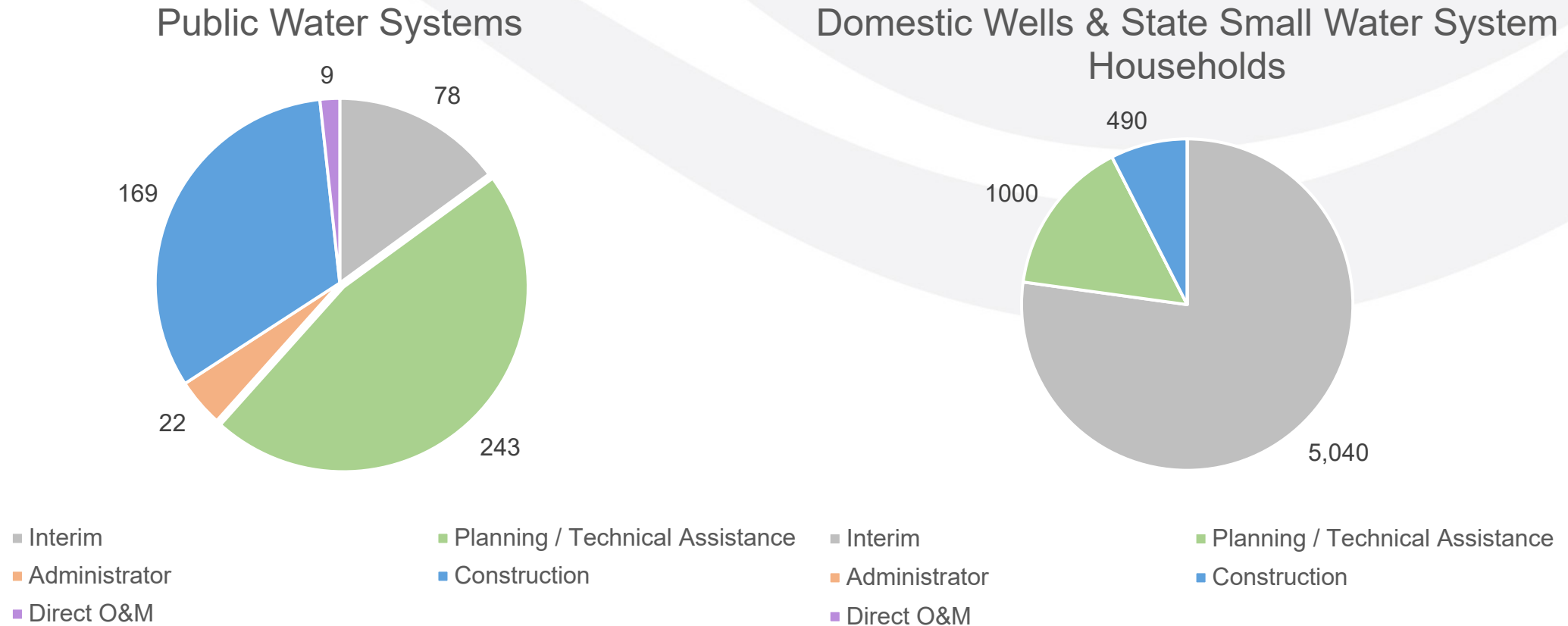


Projected SAFER 3-Yr. Program Demand



Interim	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	3-Yr. Total
Planning/ Technical Assistance	\$12.7	\$9.8	\$14.6	\$37.1
Administrator	\$76.6	\$22.6	\$18.6	\$117.8
Construction	\$0	\$0.2	\$0.7	\$0.9
Direct O&M	\$743.6	\$527.5	\$186.1	\$1,457.2
	\$1.5	\$1.5	\$1.5	\$4.5

Projected Drinking Water 3-Yr. Grant/PF Demand by System Type



FY 2025-26 SAFER Funding Priorities



Address community and school water systems that were failing in 2019.



Expedite planning through use of technical assistance for failing systems and communities served by failing domestic wells.



Accelerate technically and financially feasible long-term solutions, like consolidations, for failing systems and communities served by failing domestic wells.



Continue existing programs to support communities served by domestic wells and state small water systems where responsible entity assistance is not available.



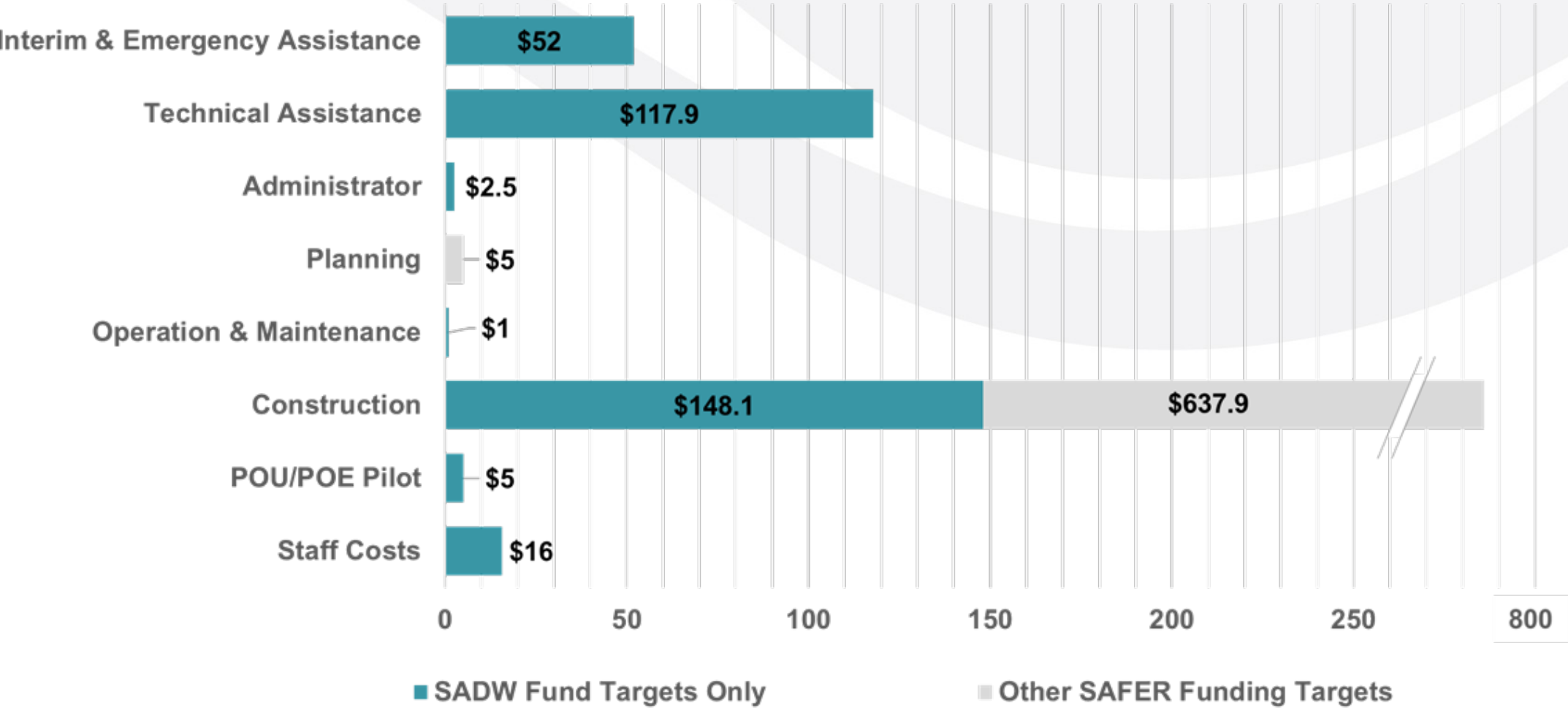
Ensure assistance is distributed consistent with the goals and direction provided in the State Water Board's Racial Equity Resolution and associated Racial Equity Action Plan.

FY 2025-26 SADW Fund Targets

Water System Category	Interim and Emergency Assistance	Technical Assistance (includes Planning)	Administrator	Planning	Direct O&M Support	Construction	SUBTOTAL BY SYSTEM CATEGORY
Failing PWS	\$6	\$101.8	\$2.5	\$0	\$0.2	\$78.1	\$188.6
Non-Failing PWS	\$0	\$1.7	\$0	\$0	\$0.8	\$0	\$2.5
DW/SSWS	\$46	\$14.4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$70	\$130.4
SUBTOTAL BY SOLUTION TYPE	\$52	\$117.9	\$2.5	\$0	\$1	\$148.1	
						PROJECT TOTAL	\$321.5
Other Program Needs	POU/POE Pilot ¹	Staff Costs					
	\$5	\$15.7					
						GRAND TOTAL	\$342.2

¹ POU/POE Pilot included in the Failing PWS system category and TA solution type.

FY 2025-26 SAFER + SADW Funding Targets



Funding Eligibilities

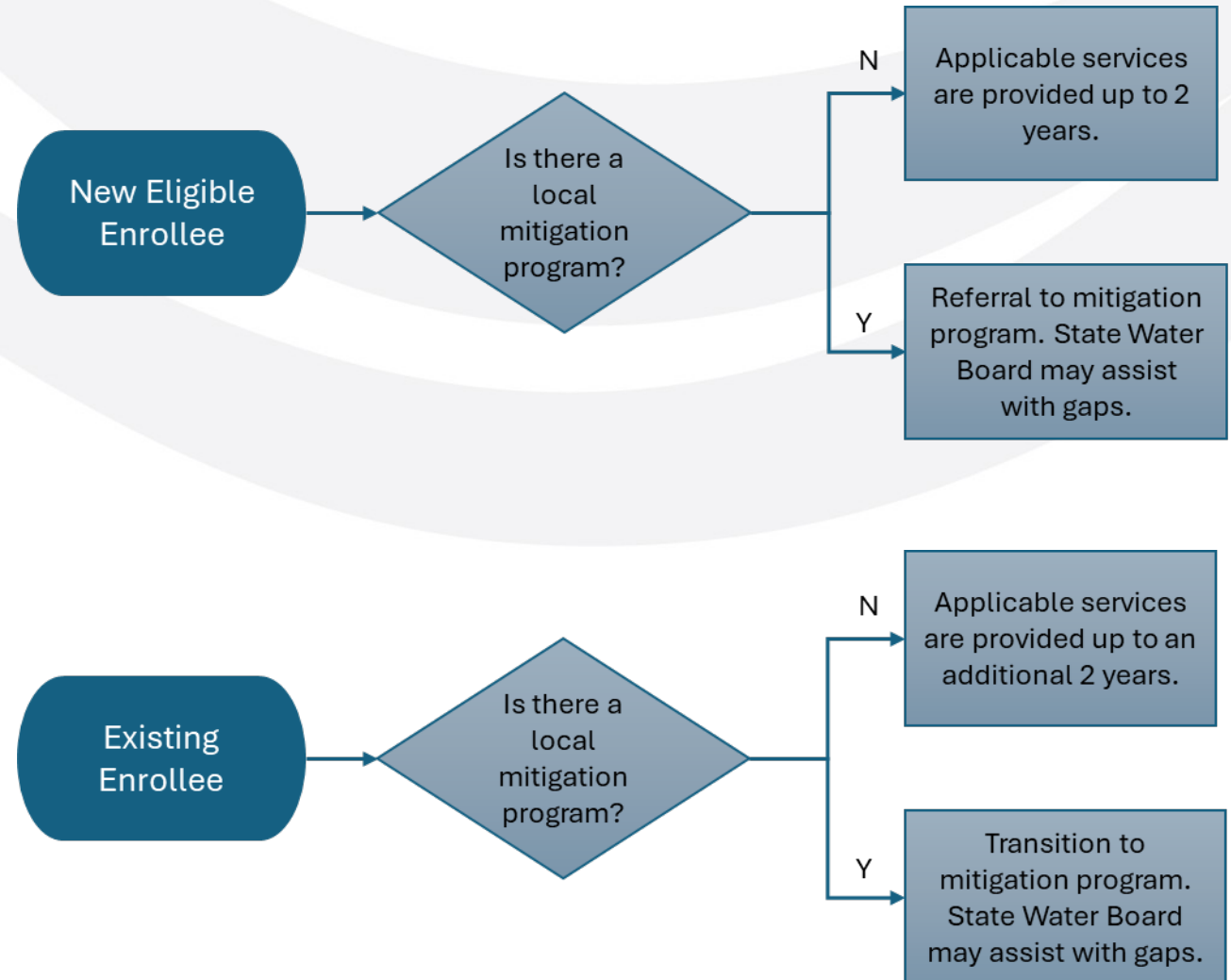


Interim Assistance – Existing Programs for DW/SSWS

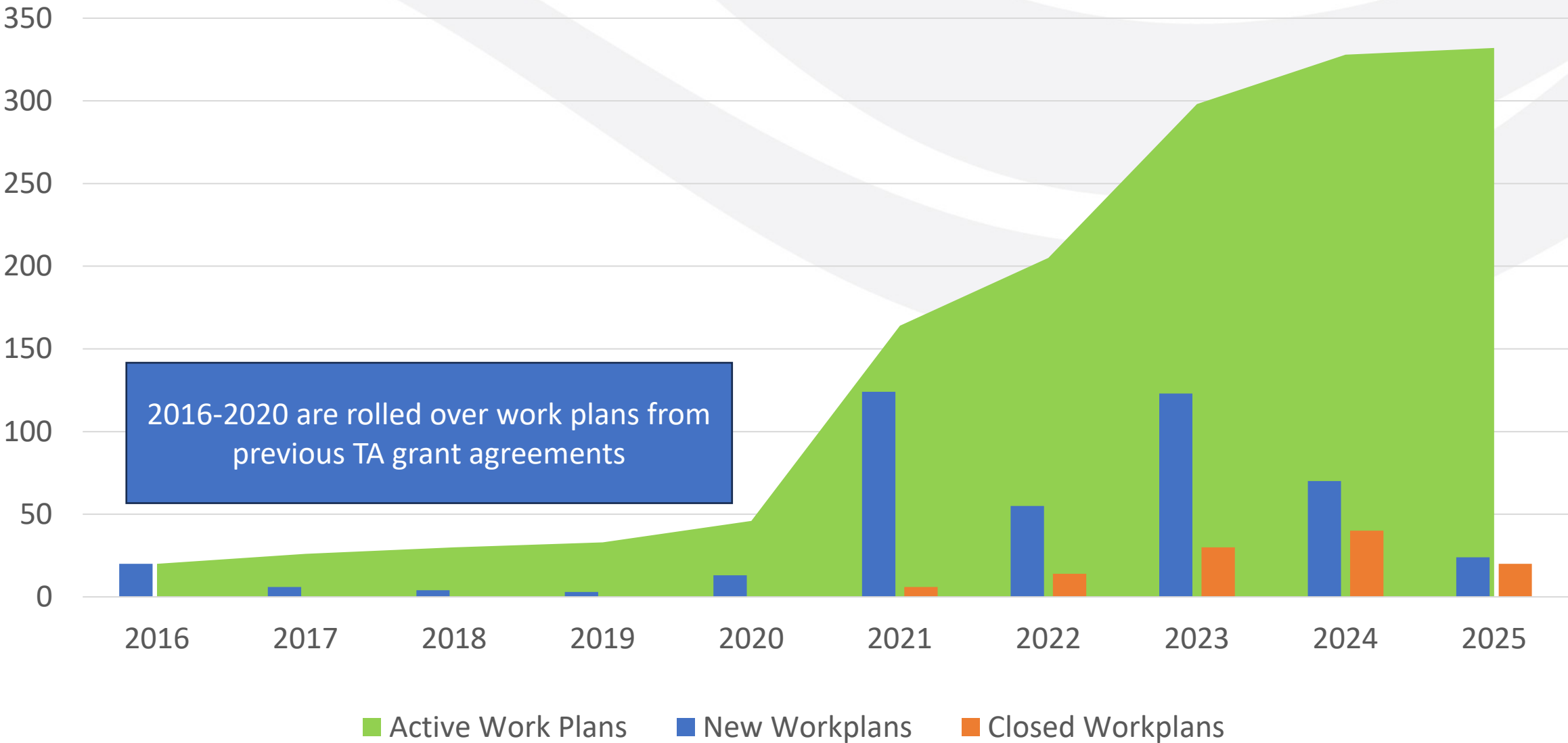
Funded Partner	Location	Well Testing	Bottled Water	Hauled Water	POE/ POU
County of Butte	County-wide	X	X	X	
County of Shasta	County-wide	X	X	X	
County of Santa Cruz	County-wide	X		X	X
Community Water Center	Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey counties	X	X		X
Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District	Kaweah groundwater basin	X	X		
Imperial County	County-wide	X			X
Pueblo Unido Community Development	For households located within Polanco Parks in unincorporated communities of the Eastern Coachella Valley.	X			X
Self Help Enterprises	San Joaquin Valley (Kern, Kings, Tulare, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Mariposa, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus counties)	X	X	X	X
Tule Basin Water Foundation	Tule groundwater basin	X	X		
Valley Water Collaborative	Modesto and Turlock groundwater basins	X	X		X

NEW: Interim Assistance and Local Mitigation Programs

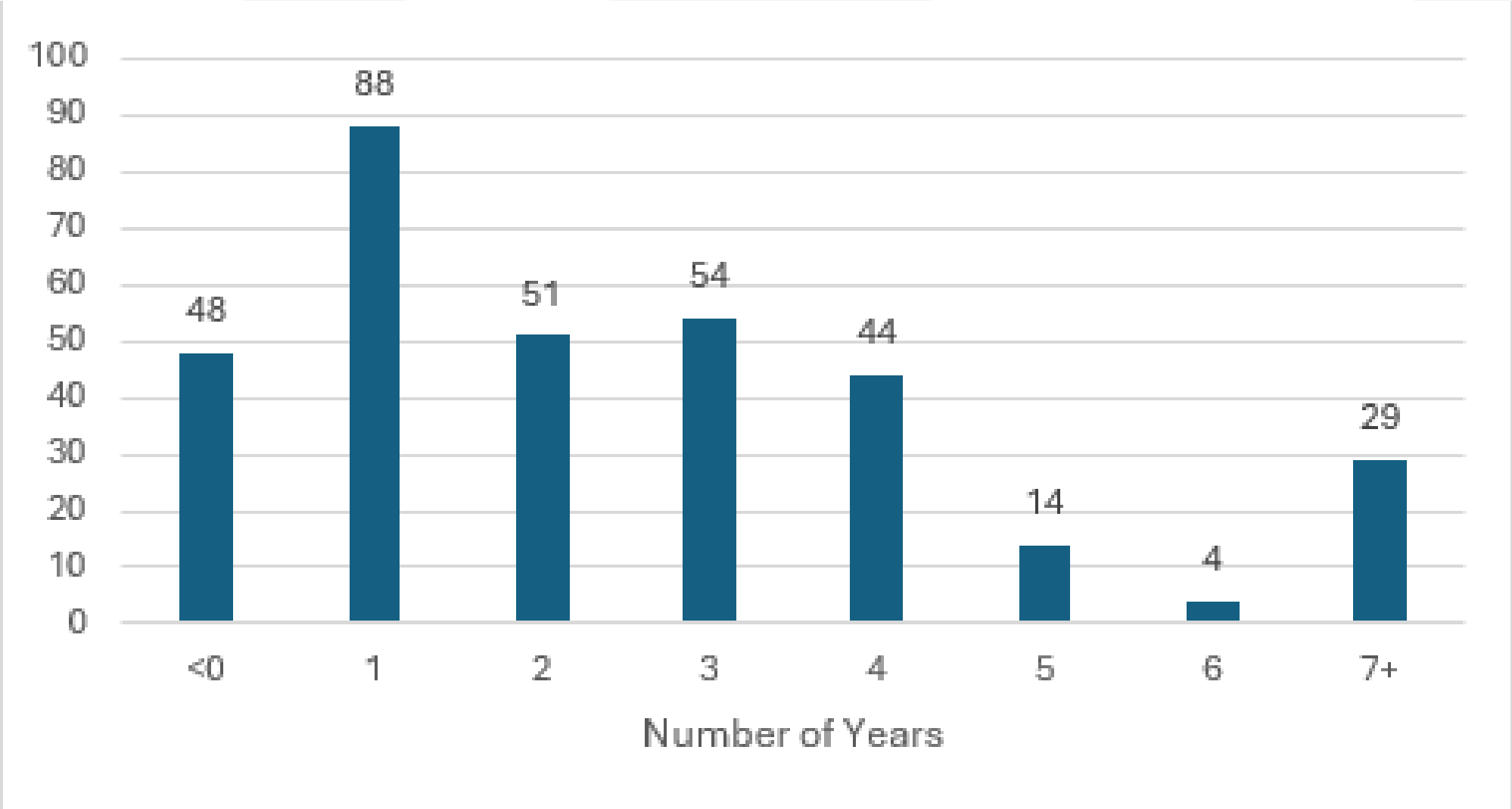
- In general, interim assistance is limited to 2-years.
- Interim assistance is available to eligible households where no local mitigation program exists or is operational.
- Maximize local mitigation programs where they exist and help fill-in funding gaps for eligible households.
- Transition current, State Water Board funded, enrolled households to local mitigation programs as they become available.



Current Technical Assistance (TA) Planning Work Plans: 442 Total

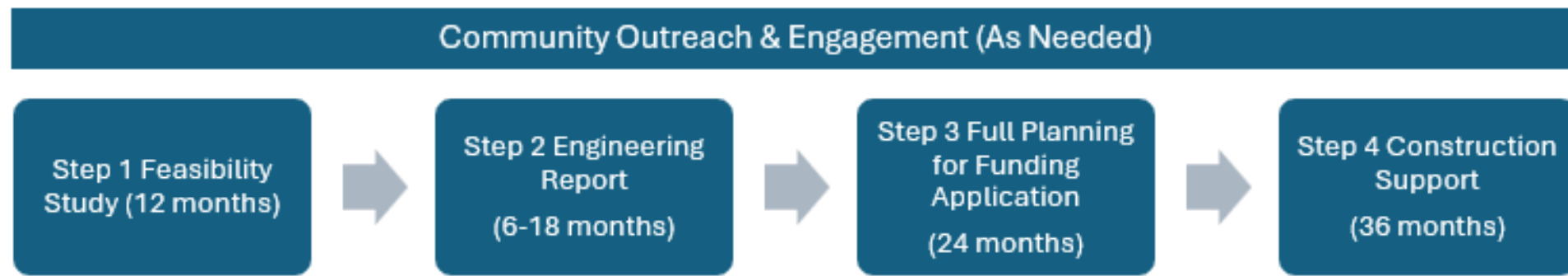


Age of Current TA Planning Work Plans



NEW: TA Milestones

Public Water Systems



Non Public Systems



NEW: TA Clarifying Decision Criteria

PWSs:

- Project is technically feasible - Division of Drinking Water indicates the project is on track to be permitted and will address the system's challenges.
- Project is on track to be funded – anticipated to be within the State Water Board's funding thresholds.
- Project is affordable.

DW/SSWS:

- Decision criteria mirror the PWS criteria above - project should be on track to be both technically and financially feasible, as well as affordable, to move towards full planning and the development of a construction application.
- Program also requires that property owner letters of interest and letter of intent from associated PWS(s) are needed to progress through the TA planning project.

Planning Grant/PF Eligibility Criteria

- Up to 100% grant/PF planning assistance is available to **Small** or **Expanded Small**
 - Failing Systems and DAC At-Risk Systems
- Systems with hexavalent chromium maximum contaminant level (MCL) exceedances are considered eligible for funding similar to Failing systems, even if they are not on the Failing list.
- Non-Failing or At-Risk systems are eligible for up to 100% grant/PF planning assistance for consolidation and emerging contaminant projects.

Maximum Grant/Principal Forgiveness and Cost Per Connection Construction Limits

Connections	Maximum Cost per Connection	Maximum Grant/PF
1 - 20	N/A	\$3,000,000
21 - 50	N/A	\$7,000,000
51 - 100	N/A	\$10,000,000
101 - 200	N/A	\$14,000,000
≥ 201	\$70,000	\$50,000,000

Construction Grant/PF Eligibility Criteria (Non EC-Funded Project)

Available to **Small, Expanded Small, or Medium DACs or Small Moderate-Income Communities¹ (MICs)**

- Up to 100% grant/PF construction assistance (tiered project funding thresholds apply) is available to **Small, Expanded Small, and Medium DACs or Small Moderate-Income Communities¹ (MICs)**
- Projects addressing a system's Failing or At-Risk SAFER Status are prioritized for grant/PF.
- Systems with hexavalent chromium maximum contaminant level (MCL) exceedances are considered eligible for funding similar to Failing systems, even if they are not on the Failing list.
- Non-Failing or At-Risk systems are eligible for up to 100% grant/PF planning assistance for consolidation and emerging contaminant projects.

¹ MHI is greater than 80% of the statewide MHI, but less than 150% of statewide MHI.

Next Steps



FY 2025-26 FEP Timeline



Questions and Answers



- Raise your hand to ask questions
- Wait for your turn
- Turn on microphone
- Speak slowly
- Limit your questions to 3 minutes
- Turn off microphone

Public comment or technical assistance? Please email:
safer@waterboards.ca.gov

BREAK



Advisory Group Member Announcements

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement,
Equity, and Tribal Affairs



SAFER Advisory Group Members Announcements

- Project/Event title
- Timeline/Event date
- Purpose/Objective
- Next steps
- Please limit 3 minutes per announcement



Public Comments

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement, Equity,
and Tribal Affairs



Public Comments Guidelines



In-person

1. Raise your hand
2. Wait to be called on
3. Speak slowly
4. Limit comments to 3 minutes



Remote

1. Email comment to: safer@waterboards.ca.gov.
2. Follow instructions in the return email to join Zoom.
3. Wait to be called on. Speaking time is limited to 3 minutes
4. For technical or language assistance, email: safer@waterboards.ca.gov.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Alma López

Office of Public Engagement, Equity,
and Tribal Affairs



Adjourn

Thank you!

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