

March 13, 2023

EPA Municipal Ombudsman is a resource for AMWA utilities

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Last week at AMWA's Water Policy Conference, EPA Municipal Ombudsman, Jamie Piziali, joined AMWA members to talk briefly about how utilities may work with her office when they have EPA concerns and questions. The [Municipal Ombudsman](https://www.epa.gov/ocir/municipal-ombudsman) (<https://www.epa.gov/ocir/municipal-ombudsman>) serves as a resource for communities seeking to comply with the Clean Water Act and works directly with Agency leadership and appropriate offices at headquarters and regional offices.

Consistent with the [Water Infrastructure Improvement Act](https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ436/PLAW-115publ436.pdf) (<https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ436/PLAW-115publ436.pdf>), which established the position, the Municipal Ombudsman coordinates with appropriate EPA offices to assist communities in navigating EPA resources, including:

- [Federal assistance opportunities](https://www.epa.gov/waterfinancecenter/water-finance-clearinghouse) (<https://www.epa.gov/waterfinancecenter/water-finance-clearinghouse>),

including those beyond the scope of the Clean Water Act;

- Technical assistance;
- Flexibility available under the Clean Water Act; and
- Information on [integrated planning](https://www.epa.gov/npdes/integrated-planning-municipal-stormwater-and-wastewater) (<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/integrated-planning-municipal-stormwater-and-wastewater>) and example [municipal integrated plans](https://www.epa.gov/npdes/integrated-planning-state-integrated-plans) (<https://www.epa.gov/npdes/integrated-planning-state-integrated-plans>).

The Municipal Ombudsman also advocates for fair processes and uniform application of Clean Water Act policies. In general, the Ombudsman listens and learns about all perspectives on a process issue and can speak with municipalities and stakeholders involved in an issue and coordinate with EPA officials if necessary.

The Ombudsman also works to understand all federal financing resources available to water utilities. To subscribe to a weekly list of federal water resources with a municipal focus, send an email with “subscribe” in the subject line to municipalombudsman@epa.gov (<mailto:municipalombudsman@epa.gov>). The newsletter includes many funding opportunities from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

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