



# Water Equity Network



February 2023

**Water is a force for equity and opportunity.** Black, Indigenous, Communities of Color, and low-income communities face an array of equity challenges: affordability, water quality concerns, flooding, and more. At the same time, water can be an essential part of building thriving, healthy communities for all. Water utilities can lead the way: they are anchor institutions that safeguard public health, protect the environment, and create economic opportunity. With the collaboration of cross-sector partners like community organizations, environmental groups, and local government, utilities can build more equitable water systems.

## About the Water Equity Network

The Water Equity Network aligns the resources and capacities of diverse partners to advance equitable water management. The Network is composed of City Learning Teams, with representatives from local water and wastewater utilities, organizations serving historically marginalized communities, environmental groups, philanthropy, and more. It is a nationwide community of practice in which participating water agencies and City Learning Teams collaborate to advance equitable water management practices at the local, state, and national levels. Learning Teams receive coaching and support from the US Water Alliance to guide them through identifying local challenges and developing policies and programs to advance water equity.

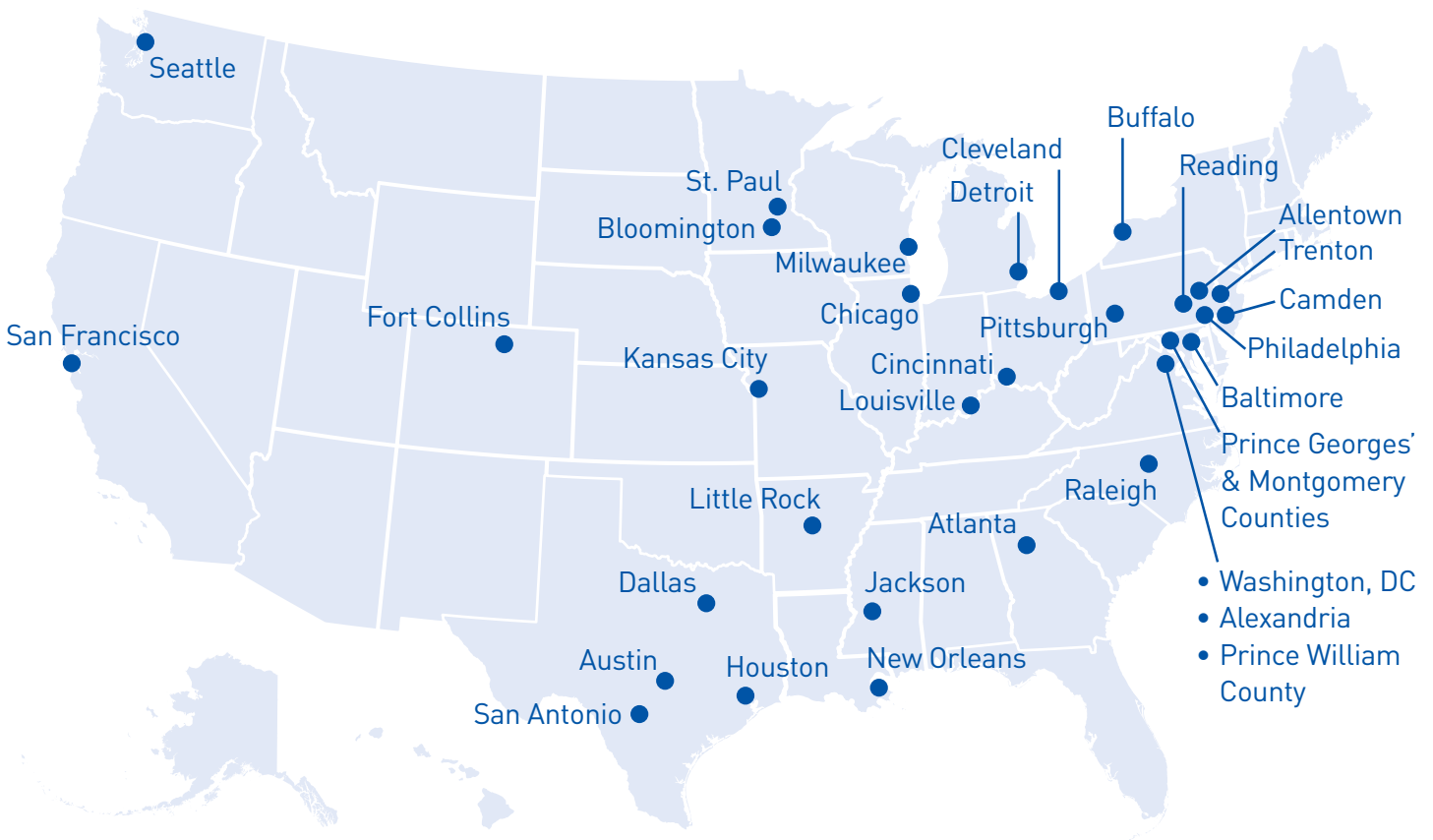
Water Equity Network participants are engaged in implementing a range of equitable policies, such as affordability programs, climate resilience plans, workforce development strategies, community benefits policies, community engagement, internal racial equity programs, and more. The US Water Alliance provides tools, resources, and strategic guidance to Water Equity Network participants, including:

- **Water Equity Orientation and Onboarding Resources.** The US Water Alliance provides an initial orientation to Water Equity, followed by six months of introductory trainings, peer exchanges, and resource sharing. These resources are tailored to meet the needs of all types of organizations who choose to participate in the network—from utilities to community partners and non-profit organizations.
- **Water Equity Challenges and Opportunities Analysis.** The US Water Alliance staff then provide support and facilitation to Network members so that they can assess challenges, identify opportunities, and develop priorities and goals to advance water equity in their cities.
- **Office Hours.** US Water Alliance staff, as well as guest facilitators from Network cities, provide consultation and real-world problem solving on specific water equity challenges through monthly Office Hours.
- **Ongoing Knowledge Building.** The Network offers institutes, boot camps, and forums focused on a range of water equity topics, including racial equity training, authentic community engagement, and affordability.
- **Network Events.** The Network will hold a network-wide event alongside the US Water Alliance's One Water Summit and will host regional meet-ups at other national and regional conferences.
- **Matchmaking and Mentoring.** Alliance staff will assist in connecting network teams and organizations to "sister" teams for mentorship and peer exchange based on similar challenges and opportunities.

- **Staying Connected.** Network participants receive exclusive communications about water equity news, opportunities, and webinars on a regular basis from the US Water Alliance.
- **Regional Cohorts.** In addition to national opportunities for engagement, Network members also benefit from regional coordination and knowledge sharing through regular cohort convenings.

The water challenges facing historically marginalized populations are complex, and every partner has a role to play in solving them. Together, the Water Equity Network can build thriving communities and water systems that work for all people.

## Network Members



## **About the US Water Alliance and *An Equitable Water Future***

The US Water Alliance advances policies and programs to secure a sustainable water future for all. Our membership includes water providers, public officials, business leaders, environmental organizations, community leaders, policy organizations, and more. A nationally recognized nonprofit organization, the US Water Alliance brings together diverse interests to identify and advance common ground, achievable solutions to our nation's most pressing water challenges.

In 2017, the Alliance released [\*An Equitable Water Future\*](#), a definitive report on the water challenges facing historically marginalized communities and the opportunities to leverage water investment to create social, economic, and environmental benefits for all people.

The Water Equity Network builds on a two-year effort, the [\*Water Equity Taskforce\*](#), which brought together seven cities working to implement equitable water management practices. The Taskforce cities—Atlanta, Buffalo, Camden, Cleveland, Louisville, Milwaukee, and Pittsburgh—forged trusting partnerships among local collaborators and nationally. They have launched new programs to make water services affordable and accessible, to promote dialogue and understanding, and to create economic opportunities for all.

<http://uswateralliance.org/waterequitynetwork>

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