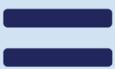


Water Equity

everyone should have access to water that is safe, reliable, and affordable.

NAWC members are committed to achieving water equity and working to advance these goals by upholding Five Principles of Water Equity.



Principle 1 - Everyone should have access to water that is safe, reliable and affordable.

- As a nation, we must advance water equity to ensure customers of all income levels have access to high-quality water.
- In order to truly benefit customers, we need water service to meet all three components of water equity – safety, reliability and affordability.



Principle 2 - Focus on the customer.

- For NAWC's water utilities, the customer is the top priority.
- NAWC members demonstrate their customer-first mentality in many ways, from making bill paying easy, to early and often communication about service issues, to sharing conservation tips and tricks to reduce water usage.
- At the onset of the COVID pandemic, NAWC members renewed their focus on customers by voluntarily suspending all disconnections for nonpayment.
- Many NAWC members responded to the pandemic by creating new Customer Assistance Programs and/or augmenting existing programs to help struggling customers.



Principle 3 - Never compromise on providing safe and reliable water.

- Providing safe, reliable, and affordable water can be challenging given the obstacles many water systems face, including:
 - Rising infrastructure costs;
 - Water quality concerns (emerging contaminants and lead service lines);
 - Extreme weather events;
 - Threat of cyberattacks.
- NAWC's utilities maintain safe and reliable water by proactively meeting these challenges in the following ways:
 - Investing in experienced employees who are able to meet complex and frequently changing environmental and safe drinking water standards;
 - Creating sustainable and long-term infrastructure replacement plans to ensure a continued commitment to addressing aging infrastructure;
 - Developing security plans and engaging in "black sky" planning to guard against and respond to cyber and physical attacks;
 - Undertaking infrastructure hardening and emergency planning to prepare for extreme weather conditions;
 - Pricing water service at a level that is affordable, but that also accurately represents the cost of treating and delivering the water, so that utilities have access to capital to maintain high-quality service.



Principle 4 - Invest in communities.

- Many of the pipes and water mains in this country are reaching the end of their useful lives and need to be replaced.
- Incremental and consistent investment in infrastructure allows those costs to be incurred gradually, meaning they are more easily budgeted-for by both the utility and its customers.
- The 10 largest NAWC companies invested nearly \$3.7 billion in their water systems.
- These investments keep rates stable and quality high.
- NAWC's utilities strive to lift up communities where we live, work and serve, while creating long-lasting positive change and promoting public health.



Principle 5 - Develop partnerships and encourage water system consolidation.

- Partnerships and system consolidation are a critical means of expanding access to safe and reliable water across the nation.
- There are approximately 50,000 water systems across the country. More than half serve fewer than 500 customers and more than 90% serve fewer than 10,000 customers.
- Without economies of scale, many small systems are unable to invest in infrastructure, deploy new technology, address affordability issues and treat emerging contaminants.
- Water system fragmentation increases costs and often decreases water quality, perpetuating environmental injustice and causing disproportionate harm to low-income communities.
- Partnering with a larger, more experienced utility is a proven way for smaller or struggling systems to obtain the resources necessary to maintain a healthy system and provide customers with safe and reliable water at stable prices.



“NAWC and its members firmly believe that safe drinking water is a moral imperative and there is no room for cutting corners on investment. While water service is affordable to the majority of customers, there are still some who struggle and NAWC is committed to being a part of the solution.”

With that in mind, NAWC developed five principles for water equity to formalize the core beliefs and priorities driving our industry's efforts to expand access to safe, reliable and affordable water. These principles are just one piece of the industry's broader effort to better diagnose the challenges of customers and water providers and articulate solutions at the state and federal level.”

Robert F. Powelson
President & CEO of NAWC

Realizing water equity for all customers is not something NAWC's utilities can accomplish alone. Creating long-term solutions to water equity, including ensuring affordability for all customers, will take the combined initiatives of utilities, regulators, policy leaders, and communities. To join NAWC in its efforts towards water equity, or for more information, please visit www.nawc.org.

The National Association of Water Companies' (NAWC) members safeguard public health and promote environmental stewardship as they serve the water and wastewater needs of nearly 73 million Americans every day. NAWC members have an exceptional record of compliance with federal and state health and environmental regulations. Ensuring this high standard of quality requires extraordinary amounts of capital investment.