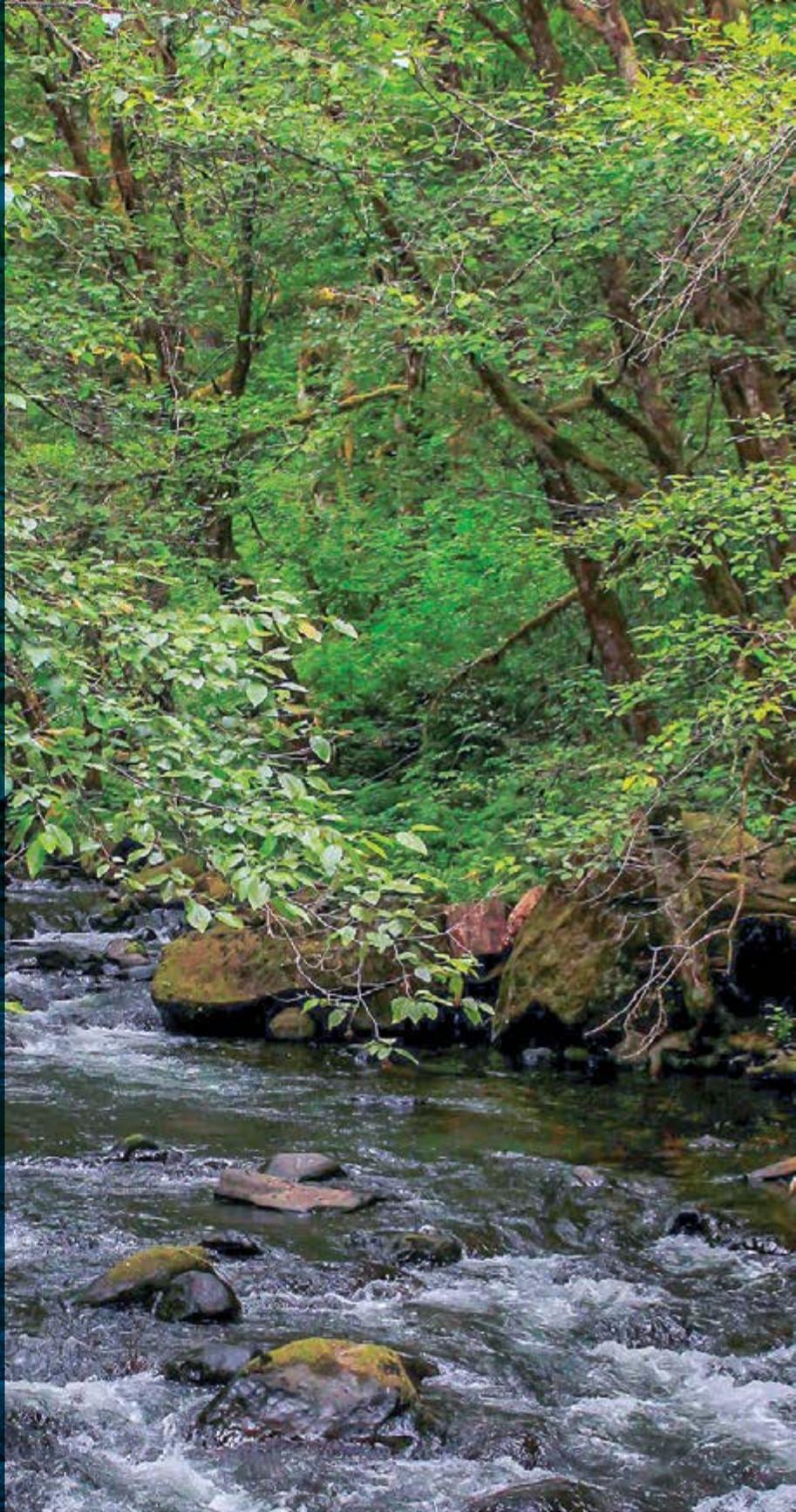


# Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR  
2022-2023



Regional Water Providers Consortium



# Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR  
2022-2023



As we close out Fiscal Year 2022-23, it feels like a new beginning. We have 25 years under our belt and have much more great work to do. A milestone for the Consortium this year was the endorsement of an Equity Commitment by the Consortium Board. This action put into words what the Consortium has been putting into practice. We acknowledge that understanding information about your drinking water is critical for public health, building trust, managing supply, and emergency response. In addition, the more the public understands about their drinking water, the more likely they are to support future investments in water system infrastructure. These are just a few reasons why the Consortium has been focusing on making drinking water information more accessible to everyone. In this year's Annual Report, you will read about the Consortium's successes in translating information about our regional drinking water into multiple languages, improving web content accessibility for those using assistive technologies, and using plain language and simplified graphics.

I am proud of the work that Consortium staff has done to ensure that the really important information we have developed over the years can be seen, read, and heard by a greater portion of our community. We know there is much more to do and learn. This important work was supported by federal grants, community organizations, and Consortium leadership. By doing this work as a region, we provide more value to our members and collectively better serve all who rely on us for their drinking water.

Our Annual Report highlights many of the projects we have completed over the year. I invite you to read about our work and share in our accomplishments.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Geisen

JANUARY 2024

## OUR EQUITY COMMITMENT

The Regional Water Providers Consortium is dedicated to incorporating equity in our planning, budgeting, programming, outreach, and workplace culture. We are able to better serve our water provider members' customers when we lead with equity, and we are committed to engaging with historically underserved and under-resourced populations in the greater Portland, Oregon metropolitan region.



# Summary of Accomplishments

- Produced 20 how-to videos in seven languages with step-by-step instructions on how to store, access, and treat water for emergencies (detailed on page 10)
- Conducted multimedia campaigns that included messaging in eight languages and focused on emergency preparedness, water conservation, source water protection, and the value of water
- Created communication tools that included graphics, print materials, web pages, a presentation slide deck, and social media messaging in multiple languages
- Improved accessibility of Consortium resources in collaboration with members, community partners, and contractors
- Engaged Consortium members in updating the Consortium's Five-Year Strategic Plan





## Collaboration and Partnerships

The Consortium is built on partnerships: together we support and learn from each other. We partner with agencies and organizations to highlight the importance of drinking water, share resources, and foster stewardship of our region's drinking water.

### Share information and resources

**PRESENTATIONS:** Staff shared information about the Consortium's core work with diverse audiences at nationally-attended events:

- Pacific Northwest AWWA Section Conference and Water Works School: "Curtail Your Enthusiasm" and "Evolving Approaches to Public Outreach"
- AWWA Utility Management Conference and Annual Conference and Expo (ACE): "Regional Collaboration Model – 25 Years of Value and Shared Successes"

### Collaborate with regional, state, and national partners

#### **REGIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ORGANIZATION**

**(RDPO):** Engaged in several RDPO work groups including the Equity Subcommittee to develop an Equity Framework and the Disaster Messaging Work Group which completed several communication and community engagement projects.

**STATE AGENCIES AND GROUPS:** Staff maintained relationships with state agencies with a focus on supporting emergency drinking water projects.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** Staff created new "Careers in Water" web page highlighting jobs in water treatment operations. Staff connected with BayWork, a California-based organization, to discuss workforce development and share successes in managing regional organizations.

**CONSORTIUM MEMBER SUPPORT:** Staff provided programming, resources, support, onboarding, orientation, and training to members.

**ALLIANCE FOR WATER EFFICIENCY:** Staff contributed to the Education Working Committee and attended regional and annual meetings.

## Public Outreach and Education

A large part of the Consortium’s budget, staff time, and programming is focused on conducting media campaigns and coordinating other public outreach-focused programming. This work supports member goals to speak with a regional voice and maximize limited resources.

Over the last year, much of the Consortium’s work focused on creating a suite of water-focused emergency preparedness resources in 13 languages. This project came about in response to requests from community partners to create these resources to serve community members with limited or no English proficiency. Since underserved populations are disproportionately affected by disasters, having these resources available in multiple languages is crucial to ensuring that our community members have the resources they need to store, access, and treat water in an emergency.

### Multimedia campaigns

*“Use water wisely. It’s just the right thing to do.”*

The water conservation campaign ran in English and Spanish from June through mid-September. Campaigns ran on television, radio, social media, and several other online platforms. Messaging focused on seasonal irrigation tips, ways for kids to save water, and tips for protecting local waterways.





***“Before there’s an emergency: Get ready. Get water.”***

The emergency preparedness campaign ran in seven languages from March to June on social media and in September on television (English and Spanish), TriMet buses, social media, and several other online platforms. Messaging focused on storing, treating, and accessing water in emergencies and what water providers are doing to make their systems and operations more resilient.

***“Clean Water. It’s Our Future.”***

This year-round television campaign focused on everyday activities that impact local waterways and provided viewers with tips for water-safe alternatives. The Consortium is one of many regional partners supporting this campaign.

A separate media campaign report is available upon request.



## Accessible Communications

- **MULTILINGUAL MESSAGING ASSETS:** Staff worked with Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) to create and translate social media messaging, graphics, print materials, and web pages in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Khmer/ Cambodian, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Staff also worked with community partners to create or update translated print materials in 13 languages.
- **REGIONALH2O.ORG:** Staff edited key web pages to use plain language and addressed accessibility barriers to meet or exceed Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) level AA. Read the Consortium's Accessibility Statement at the bottom of regionalH2O.org.
- **DRINKING WATER ADVISORY (DWA) TOOL:** Staff updated tool capabilities to publish alerts in five languages (more detail on page 9).
- **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PRESENTATION:** Translated 20 slides and speaker notes into Spanish and partnered with Voz, an organization connecting Spanish-speaking communities to resources, to pilot the presentation.

**علقه على سخان المياه لديك!**

**كيف تصل إلى الماء من سخان المياه لديك عند الطوارئ**

عند الطوارئ، مثل العاصفة الشتوية الشديدة أو الزلزال، قد لا تتوفر مؤقتاً خدمة المياه في منزلك.

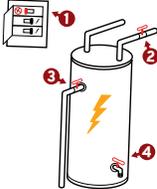
في حال حدوث ذلك، يمكن لسخان المياه لديك أن يزودك بـ 30 - 80 غالون من المياه للشرب والطبخ والنظافة الشخصية. (السخانات التي لا تحتوي على خزان لا توفر لك هذا الخيار).

**قبل استخدام المياه من سخانك:**

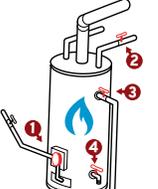
- ابحث عن السخان: عادة يوضع سخان المياه في القبو أو المرآب في المنازل المنفصلة، وفي خزانات الشقق والمنازل الجاهزة.
- أقلل مصدر المياه في منزلك: باتخاذك هذه الخطوة، وخاصة بعد حصول زلزال كبير، يمكنها أن تساعدك في ضمان بقاء الماء في خزائك، وإلا تتعرض جودته للخطر أو يكون غير آمن للاستخدام. عادة ما تتواجد صمامات إقفال الماء للطوارئ في القبو، أو تحت المنزل، أو المرآب في أغلب المنازل، أو خارجاً قرب أساسات المنزل. استخدم هذا الصمام لإقفال مصدر المياه في منزلك.

**تعليمات الحصول على الماء من سخانك:**

- 1 أطفئ مصدر طاقة السخان. هذه الخطوة ضرورية للغاية لضمان سلامتك. قد ترغب بالاحتفاظ بمصباح يدوي، ونظارات سلامة، وقفازات، ومفك في مكان يسهل الوصول إليه.

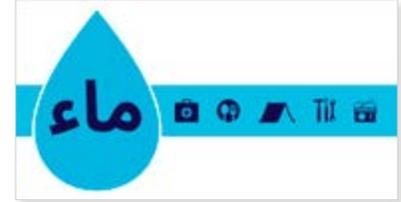
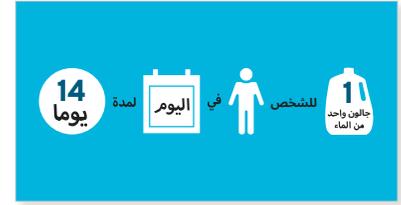


**السخانات الكهربائية:**  
أطفئ مصدر الطاقة القادمة إلى السخان عبر غلق المفتاح الصحيح في لوحة قواطع الدورة. (يوصى بأخذ وقتك في إيجاد قاطع الدورة الصحيح قبل فترة من الوقت).



**سخانات الغاز الطبيعي:**  
جد مفتاح التشغيل / إطفاء على السخان وأدر العتلة نحو الضبط ل التجريري - لا تقفل الغاز تماماً.

→ الخطوتان 3 و 4 على الجانب الآخر



## Education

- **CHILDREN'S CLEAN WATER FESTIVAL:** Co-sponsored the half-day festival for approximately 1,000 fourth graders that included stage shows, classroom presentations, and an exhibit hall at the Portland Community College Sylvania campus.



## Building Resiliency

Water providers are more resilient by working together. The Consortium provides a forum for communication, collaboration, support, and learning. This year, the Consortium completed Phase I of the Emergency Drinking Water Framework and advanced this work by sharing with partner agencies and inviting them to participate.

### Accessing and developing resources

- **GRANT FUNDING:** Consortium staff hosted grants workshop with water providers from the RDPO region to coordinate and discuss grant opportunities, projects, and priorities.
- **LUNCH AND LEARN:** The Consortium hosted “Mobile Water Treatment Systems – What to Know” which included four presenters from around Oregon. Presenters provided practical information on owning and maintaining emergency drinking water equipment.
- **EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST:** Consortium staff maintained a water provider and emergency manager contact list so water providers can easily reach out to regional and county partners in case of emergency. The list also includes a regional equipment inventory and mutual aid affiliations; all information is updated annually.

### Sharing resources

Consortium staff promoted the Emergency Drinking Water Framework by presenting information about the project and its goals to the following partner organizations:

- Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization
- Northwest Health Preparedness Organization
- Washington County Emergency Management
- Oregon Department of Human Service’s Office of Resilience and Emergency Management
- Environmental Protection Agency at West Coast Earthquake Resilience Workshop
- Oregon Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (ORWARN) at Continuity of Operations Webinar

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

# Drinking Water Advisory Tool

### Drinking Water Advisory Tool



English

#### Who is my water provider?

Type your address here to check



This lookup tool only works for customers whose water providers are members of the [Regional Water Providers Consortium](#).

## GOALS

- Provide drinking water advisories in Arabic, English, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese so more community members can access the same information as English speakers.
- Develop a process so that Consortium members can easily and accurately translate their advisory messaging into other languages.
- Provide tool administrators with updated instructions, best management practices, and frequently asked questions documents that are easy to understand and follow.

## BACKGROUND

Water providers are required to alert their customers when there are issues with their water supply or quality, so the Consortium developed the Drinking Water Advisory (DWA) Tool in 2016 as a regional tool.

The DWA Tool serves Consortium members in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties.

The DWA Tool is hosted on PublicAlerts.org and embedded on regionalH2O.org.

When an advisory is issued, community members can enter an address into the tool to find out if they are affected by the advisory.

Each advisory includes the type of alert, the affected area, and a description of the issue.

The DWA Tool provides community members with consistent and reliable information across the region.

In addition to English, the DWA Tool is now available in Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

## MILESTONES

- 1 Identified that existing tool could present content in multiple languages
- 2 Integrated Google Translate to give all Consortium members the ability to publish alerts in multiple languages
- 3 Tested the tool's new capabilities with Consortium and member staff
- 4 Published updated tool on PublicAlerts.org, embedded on regionalH2O.org, and provided members with updated HTML code to add language-specific widgets to their websites
- 5 Created updated instructions, best management practices, and frequently asked questions documents

## NEXT STEPS

Compare embedded auto-translation function against content translated by native speakers

Perform accessibility audit of the tool and alerts using Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to reach or exceed AA standards

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

# Emergency Drinking Water How-to Videos Project



### GOALS

- Help traditionally underserved community members prepare for emergencies.
- Gather community input on how to communicate in a culturally competent way.
- Work with community partners and local, minority-owned businesses whenever possible.
- Develop resources that are easy for the public to access and for regional partners to promote.
- Provide cost-efficient, high-quality products that are equally well done in all languages.

### LANGUAGES

Arabic, Chinese, Khmer/  
Cambodian, Korean, Hindi,  
Spanish, and Vietnamese

### PROJECT FUNDING

\$184,000 in UASI grants  
\$15,000 in Consortium funds  
with project management by  
Consortium staff

### BACKGROUND

The Regional Water Providers Consortium secured an Urban Area Security Initiative grant through the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization to complete Phase I of this project. Project partners included Community Engagement Liaisons, Multnomah County, Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization, and TZOM Films.

### MILESTONES

**LANGUAGE SELECTION:** Used Metro's Title VI Factor 1 analysis and community partner recommendations

**SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT:** Created 20 culturally-competent scripts

**COACHING:** Supported community members to become comfortable and capable video spokespeople

**PRODUCTION:** Completed 48 hours of filming and audio recording

**POSTPRODUCTION:** Coordinated drafting and revision process for videos and short-form ads

**ASSET DEVELOPMENT:** Created translated content and graphics for regionalH2O.org, print materials, a presentation slide deck, and social media messaging; created a partner outreach toolkit

**OUTREACH CAMPAIGN:** Conducted language-specific outreach to cultural organizations throughout the region via email, messaging apps, event tabling, and social media; ran ads on YouTube and social media in seven languages

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community members played a vital role in the multilingual how-to video project. They shared information about their community's knowledge on these topics, translated scripts, appeared in the videos, and gave outreach recommendations.

### NEXT STEPS

Phase II: Create videos, ads, and other assets in Farsi, Lao, Somali, and Russian by fall 2024. \$77,000 in UASI funding was awarded for this phase of the project.



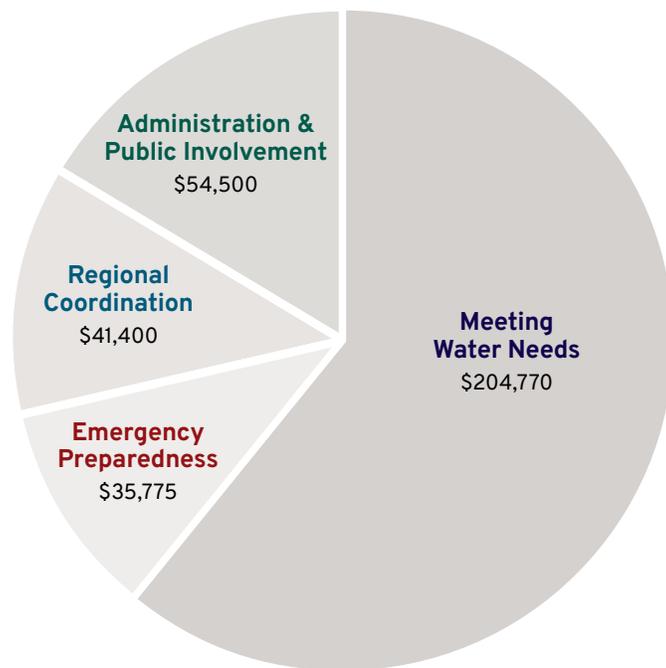
## FY 2022 – 2023 Budget and Expenses

The Consortium’s budget is supported through the membership dues of its 25 water provider members. Dues are based on the number of connections and quantity of water served by each member organization. Each voting member has an equal voice in the Consortium’s work regardless of the amount it contributes to the Consortium’s budget.

This year, the Consortium’s budget was \$1,136,599 and 89% of it was expended. Unspent contingency, personnel, loss of the Mad Science contract (fewer school assembly shows), fewer events and printing, and no large emergency exercise or other events contributed to the under-expenditure.

Consortium members were provided with bi-monthly expense reports throughout the year and can find the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Consortium Work Plan and Budget and final expense report on the Consortium’s website at [regionalH2O.org/member-page](http://regionalH2O.org/member-page).

### CONSORTIUM BUDGET ALLOCATION BY PROGRAM AREA



The Consortium budget also includes \$784,154 for personnel/overhead, \$6,000 for training/travel, and \$10,000 for contingency.

# Leading with Equity

We are able to better serve our members’ customers when we lead with equity. As a member-driven organization, we strive to create programming that is both useful to and representative of our member entities and the communities they serve.

A large portion of the Consortium’s work and budget is devoted to outreach and education. The table below shows how the Consortium prioritized improving access to its public outreach programming by developing culturally competent resources in 13 languages.

This work is an important part of our organization’s goals because it ensures that more of the region’s immigrant, refugee, and community members with limited English proficiency can get crucial emergency preparedness information in their native languages.

## CREATING EFFECTIVE PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMMING BY INCORPORATING LANGUAGE ACCESS

	USAI Grant Funds	RWPC budget
Multilingual How-To Video Project	\$133,000	\$12,500
Multilingual Public Outreach	\$22,000	
Spanish Public Outreach		\$41,500
Drinking Water Advisory Tool – addition of multilingual function		\$1,000
Translation Services		\$1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$155,000</b>	<b>\$56,500</b>

## How we work

The Consortium is governed by its Board and works with its committees to complete the annual work plan. Consortium staff provide program management and support in addition to administrative, technical, and financial services through an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the City of Portland.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CONSORTIUM BOARD AND COMMITTEES



## REGIONAL WATER PROVIDER CONSORTIUM MEMBERS AND REGIONAL WATER SOURCES

Beaverton, *City of*  
 Clackamas River Water  
 Cornelius, *City of*  
 Forest Grove, *City of*  
 Gladstone, *City of*  
 Gresham, *City of*  
 Hillsboro, *City of*  
 Lake Oswego, *City of*  
 Milwaukie, *City of*  
 Newberg, *City of*  
 Oak Lodge Water Services  
 Portland, *City of*  
 Raleigh Water District

Rockwood Water PUD  
 Sandy, *City of*  
 Scappoose, *City of*  
 Sherwood, *City of*  
 South Fork Water Board  
 Sunrise Water Authority  
 Tigard, *City of*  
 Troutdale, *City of*  
 Tualatin, *City of*  
 Tualatin Valley Water District  
 West Slope Water District  
 Wilsonville, *City of*

## CONSORTIUM STAFF

### Managing Director

Rebecca Geisen

### Management Assistant

Patty Burk

### Program Manager

Bonny Cushman

### Program Specialist

Riley Berger





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