3Ts - Training, Testing, and Telling:

Join EPA's effort to help minimize lead levels in school and child care facility drinking water

A Guide for Community Partners

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency
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Help EPA bring this health issue to the forefront

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wants to ensure schools and child care facilities are safe environments for our nation’s children. In response to rising public concern over the health risks posed to young children by lead in the drinking water, EPA is launching a "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" program. This initiative is designed to encourage school officials and child care facility operators to implement a voluntary program that incorporates the following:

**Training** – focuses on alerting school administrators, custodians, utilities and water officials to the risks of lead poisoning and the means of mitigating those risks.

**Testing** – underscores the importance of monitoring lead levels in school and child care facility drinking water to identify and respond to any existing problems.

**Telling** – emphasizes the need to communicate with the public regarding all facets of the issue, from funding and initiating a testing protocol, to reporting results, if needed, and proposing a remediation strategy.

Join EPA’s community call to action. Today, schools, child care facilities, and local government officials have limited budgets with which to address health and safety issues. Recognizing this, EPA’s "3Ts – Training, Testing, and Telling" program is a call for education, collaboration, and partnership-building to find necessary funding and encourage utilities to be more sensitive to public concern about water quality.

Lend your group’s voice, resources and local influence. By lending your organization’s support on a grassroots level, you can help us raise your community’s awareness of the health effects associated with lead exposure, the heightened vulnerability of young children, and the importance of reducing potential sources of contamination from school and child care facilities. By bringing this issue to the forefront, your organization can play a vital role in the promotion of voluntary "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" in your community.

To implement a local program of education and advocacy, this booklet includes the following materials and templates. It is designed for easy adaptation to your organization’s size, resources, and local outreach opportunities.

- Overview of the State of Water in the United States
- Collaboration Opportunities Available to Your Organization
- How to Promote "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" in Your Community
- Incorporating "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" into Local Events and Health Observances
- Community Partnership Proposal
OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE WATER IN THE UNITED STATES

The Drinking Water in the United States

Drinking Water Quick Facts:

Water is the only substance found on earth in three forms, solid, liquid, and gas.

Water covers two-thirds of earth’s surface, but only about 1% of that water is available for drinking water.

A person can live for more than a month without food, but only about a week, depending on conditions, without water.

Americans drink more than 1 billion glasses of tap water a day.

The average cost for water supplied to a home in the US is about $2.00 for 1000 gallons, which equals about 5 gallons for a penny.

Timeline –

Notable dates in the Progress of Providing Safe Drinking Water

1800s – Scientists begin to gain an understanding of the sources and effects of drinking water contaminants, especially those not visible to the naked eye.

1900s – Engineers develop techniques such as filtration and chlorination to prevent waterborne microbes from causing disease.

1914 – Federal Regulation of Drinking Water begins. The U.S. Public Health Service sets standards for some disease causing microbes.

1962 – All 50 states adopt the final U.S Public Health Service standards that began in 1914.

1970 – Founding of the Environmental Protection Agency.


1986 – First Amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act – These Amendments required 83 new primary drinking water standards within three years.

1996 – Second Amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act – These Amendments provided for a balanced, integrated framework
of reform, and represent a major national commitment to:

1. New and stronger approaches to prevent contamination of drinking water;

2. Better information for consumers, (including "right to know");

3. Regulatory improvements, (including better science, prioritization of effort, and risk assessment), and

4. New funding for states and communities through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

National Drinking Water Standards

The Safe Drinking Water Act gives the Environmental Protection Agency responsibility for setting national drinking water standards that protect the health of the 297 million Americans who get their water from public water systems. Since 1974, EPA has been safeguarding our nation’s drinking water by setting national standards for more than 80 possible contaminants, including lead.

While EPA and state governments set and enforce standards, local governments and private water suppliers have direct responsibility for the quality of the water that ultimately flows through the tap into homes, businesses, schools and child care centers.

Water systems test and treat their water, maintain the distribution systems that deliver water to consumers, and report on their water quality to the state and customers. States and EPA provide technical assistance to water suppliers and can take legal action against systems that fail to provide water that meets state and EPA standards.

Role of the United States Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for ensuring the safety of our nation’s drinking water. EPA enforces federal clean water and safe drinking water laws, provides support for public water systems and municipal waste water treatment plants, and takes part in pollution prevention efforts aimed at protecting watersheds and sources of drinking water.

EPA oversees both regulatory and voluntary programs to fulfill its mission to protect our nation’s waters. As a result of this "multi-barrier" approach to ensuring water quality, in the United States, we enjoy one of the safest water supplies in the world.
COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES
AVAILABLE TO YOUR ORGANIZATION

Collaboration Opportunities

Objective: To underwrite costs, increase volunteer base, add volume to your organization’s collective voice, and strive to forge community partnerships across both private- and public-sector lines. This will heighten both public and media interest in your activities, events and advocacy initiatives.

Pursue partnerships and co-sponsorships with local or national companies that have a stake in and/or wish to give back to the community on issues relating to child welfare, education and learning disabilities, public health and safety, environmentalism, and family values.

Successful collaborations will help underwrite the costs of staging and publicizing your activities. These partnerships will also give your group access to added resources as well as high-traffic venues for displays, signage, information dissemination, news conferences and public gatherings.

Equally important, the name recognition of a local or national co-sponsor will enhance the credibility of your efforts and elevate the news value for local press.

Collaborations give your group and its awareness campaign access to a full range of partner communications, including: print and electronic newsletters, statement stuffers, paycheck stuffers, advertising supplements, customer bags, entrance or check-out areas, parking lots, park areas, public and fleet vehicles, office lobbies, employee cafeterias, training auditoriums, etc.

How to approach prospective collaborators:

- Identify appropriate contact, i.e., public information officer, community relations officer, marketing director, or public relations director.
- Send partnership proposal by mail.
- Follow-up by phone to secure appointment.
- Meet to discuss mutual objectives, underscoring the potential for positive word-of-mouth and media exposure that will:
  - Reinforce name and/or brand awareness
  - Build public trust
  - Enhance community/family-values public image
- Map out a collaborative publicity campaign that capitalizes on the media contacts, expertise, resources and distribution outlets of your partner(s).

Corporate Collaborations:

Your organization can approach companies that cater to child, health, safety, community and family needs to help raise awareness to this issue.

These companies may be able to serve as a funding source for activities, provide a vehicle of disseminating information to the masses, (including their own employees), as well as provide volunteers that can help with this initiative.
Local or National Retailers (children’s apparel, toys, games, electronics, books, learning aids, videos, etc.)
Insurance Companies
Healthcare Providers/Medical Centers
Pediatric Physician Groups
Pediatric Medical Associations
Banks and Financial Institutions
Supermarket Chains
Security Firms
Drug Store Chains
Airlines
Shopping Mall Owners/Managers
Multiplex Owners/Managers
Family Restaurant Chains
Fast Food Chains
Automobile Dealerships
Arena/Stadium Owners/Managers
Phone Companies (local, long-distance, wireless)
Internet Companies
Water Testing Laboratories
Plumbing Contractors
Engineering Firms
Architectural Firms
Plumbing Materials Suppliers (lead-free vendors)
Water Cooler Manufacturers/Distributors (EPA-approved)

Public Collaborations:
These partnerships will garner a level of public attention that maximizes media coverage as well as garner support at the local and state level. Many local governments have established programs that are responsible for a wide variety of public health protection activities. These programs are often the first line of defense when public health risks arise. Lead programs for children are often a high priority for local health offices. Although resources may be limited, the office may be willing to provide assistance in a variety of ways. For example, a representative may be able to attend meetings to discuss potential health effects, as well as to act as a contact with State programs to obtain information and assistance. A representative may even be able to assist in developing the plumbing profile, conducting sampling, or in taking follow-up action.

Public Library System
Parks and Recreation Department
EPA Regional Offices
Local Utility/Water Supplier
Local Office of State Department of Health
Local Office of State Department of Education
Local Housing and Urban Development Office
Local Office of State Department of Environmental Protection
Local County/Municipal Department of Environmental Resource Management

Civic/Community Collaborations:
Your organization may want to partner with other civic and community groups to multiply your numbers, presence, resources and impact.

Chambers of Commerce
Service Groups (Lions Club, Rotary, Kiwanis, JCCs)
Youth Groups (Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Little League, etc.)
Board of Realtors
Downtown Merchant Associations
Homeowners Associations
Community Centers
Faith-based Groups
Local Environmental/Conservation Advocacy Groups
Local Child Welfare and Safety Advocacy Groups
Tie-in with National Environmental Events and Health Observances

Objective: As public-interest advocates, your goal is to educate your community regarding:

- The health risks posed to young children by lead in drinking water
- The potential for elevated levels of lead in school and child care drinking water
- The means to minimize this risk and safeguard the health of your community’s children

The most effective way to lend significance and credibility to your awareness event or campaign is by tying it to a national observance. Doing so positions your activities within a national framework while allowing you to localize the issues.

Calendar of Events

Based on your group’s resources, the following is a list of nationally recognized health and environmental observances around which to base your awareness initiative. Localizing a national observance is an effective way to heighten both public and media interest.

**JANUARY**

National Birth Defects Prevention Month
(www.cdc.gov/ncbddd)
March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605
(888) MODİMES (663-4637)
www.marchofdimes.com
Contact:
Pregnancy and Newborn Health Education Center

**APRIL**

National Public Health Week-
American Public Health Association
800 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3710
(202) 777-APHA (2742)
www.apha.org

Earth Day
(www.earthday.gov)
**MAY**

National Drinking Water Week
American Water Works Association  
6666 W. Quincy Avenue  
Denver, CO 80235  
(303) 794-7711 or  
800-926-7337  
www.awwa.org/Advocacy/dww

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**SEPTEMBER**

National Food Safety Education Month
(www.foodsafety.gov)
International Food Safety Council
National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation  
175 West Jackson Blvd, Suite 1500  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(800) 765-2122  
www.nraef.org/index.asp

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**OCTOBER**

Children's Health Month

Lead Poison Prevention Week
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Children's Health Protection  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,  
Mail Code 1107A  
Room 2512 Ariel Rios North  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 564-2188  
www.childrenshealth.gov

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Source: 2005 National Health Observances, National Health Information Center, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC.
Incorporating "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" into Local Events and Health Observances

Local Events and Health Observances

**Objective:** To create youth fairs, state fairs, local festivals, commemorations and other annual community events. These events have an established local following that provides an ideal opportunity to put your "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" initiative before the public eye. To further heighten public and media interest, tie in with a national event or health observance. Designed to generate grassroots support, your initiative can be a single event or series of events as time, personnel and resources allow. The key is to get your organization involved for the sake of a healthier, safer community.

Here are some options. Select what works best for your organization and feel free to pick and choose to create your own observance.

**Option #1: Earth Day (April 22)**

"Earth Day: Nothing’s More Natural than Water"

- Find out what celebrations are already scheduled in your community. Offer your organization’s support in exchange for the opportunity to tie in your "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" campaign with a staffed information display.

- Create an "Earth Day: Nothing’s More Natural than Water" information center to staff at one or more established community Earth Day events.

- Create "Earth Day: Nothing’s More Natural than Water" flyers with your "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" message. Distribute leading up to Earth Day ceremonies throughout your community, including malls, public libraries, downtown commercial districts and transportation hubs.

- Announce that your organization will be presenting its Earth Day Drinking Water Awards to those five individuals whose efforts, in the past year, have had the greatest positive impact on the quality of drinking water in local schools and child care facilities.

- When presenting your Earth Day Drinking Water Awards, take photographs of the presentation to distribute with a press release to local papers as well as each honoree’s employee newsletter.
Option #2: National Drinking Water Week (May)
"Drinking Water: The Best Way to Wet Your Whistle"

- In conjunction with National Drinking Water Week, create a week-long local celebration of clean drinking water.

- Secure retail co-sponsorship to underwrite and hand out "Wet Your Whistle: 3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling" water bottles at staffed checkout displays, with other EPA information and pamphlets available.

- Collaborate with local water utility/supplier to promote free family and school tours of the water treatment facility throughout the week. Secure a free tour listing in local newspaper and TV calendars of events.

- Collaborate with other school districts and child care facilities to conduct a student art, photography or essay contest (depending on age group) revolving around the theme: "Drinking Water: Why it's the Best Way to Wet Your Whistle."

- Declare a "Wet Your Whistle Day" in your community in conjunction with National Drinking Water Week and have the mayor issue a proclamation making it official.

- Create a photo opportunity with the mayor flanked by your representatives and those of your campaign’s community and corporate co-sponsors.

- Send an advisory of the proclamation presentation and follow-up by releasing the story with photo to your local papers as well as the employee and community newsletters of all interested groups.

- Honor a "Drinking Water Week Worker of the Year" by identifying that individual who has done the most over the past year to promote the health and safety of drinking water in your community’s schools and child care facilities.

- Announce the finalists and judging of student art/photography/essay contest to create additional publicity.

- Hold a judging and awards event. Send an announcement and group photo of the winners to your local community papers and schools for inclusion in their school papers and parent-teacher newsletters.

- Take advantage of all events throughout the week to create photo opportunities, invite the press, and send out follow-up photos and releases to community newspapers.

- Distribute educational pamphlets and literature at all venues throughout your National Drinking Water Week celebration.

- Invite a water utility public information officer to speak to your students or client base about water quality in your community.
Option #3: Children’s Health Month (October)
"Healthy Children Need Healthy Drinking Water"

- Secure newspaper, TV and radio co-sponsorships, working with each outlet’s community relations director.

- Seek out co-sponsorships and collaborations with your local healthcare community (public health department, healthcare providers, healthcare insurers, medical centers, pediatrician groups, etc.) offering promotional consideration in exchange for sponsorship dollars.

- Release to the media a month-long schedule of events with interview and photo opportunities.

- Set up downtown, regional mall and library information displays to disseminate information on child and family health, the issue of lead in drinking water, the importance of school and child care facility testing, and a schedule of local Children's Health Month events.

- Organize a public "Healthy Children Need Healthy Drinking Water" roundtable discussion moderated by your media sponsor’s health reporter. Roundtable participants can include community leaders from a full range of relevant areas of expertise (healthcare, education, childhood mental health and learning disabilities, special education, pre-natal care, construction/engineering, water treatment and delivery, water testing, etc.)

- As a follow-up to your roundtable, arrange for TV and radio interviews of your roundtable experts on local news/talk and public service programming.

- Hold a series of readings/book-signings in conjunction with a bookstore chain, featuring family/children’s health authors.

- Announce and create an annual awards luncheon honoring 5 – 10 local members of the community who have made the greatest contribution to child health through their professional and/or volunteer efforts.

- Set up and promote through local calendars a workshop on lead in drinking water.

- Create and distribute bumper stickers and merchant decals:
  "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling"
  Healthy Children Need Healthy Drinking Water

- Create a "Kids Get Out and Play Day" in collaboration with the local parks and recreation department. Arrange for an onsite live weather broadcast in front of your information display, reinforcing the message: "3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling"
  Healthy Children Need Healthy Drinking Water

- Initiate a letter-writing campaign to editors and reporters urging them to focus on the issue of lead in drinking water and the special risks it poses to fetuses, infants and young children.

- Create media advisories to alert the press of all events.

- Release photos of all events with press releases for follow-up coverage and newsletter placement.
Pamphlets and Information for Distribution

Order these publications from the EPA National Safe Drinking Water Hotline, (800) 426-4791:


Visit this one-stop EPA site that provides information about drinking water quality in schools and child care facilities, as well as relevant articles and publications, including the following:


*Decision Tree for Pre-Sampling*. Web site article. US EPA. http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead/safedecisiontree.htm

*3Ts Guidance and Toolkit*. US EPA. http://www.epa.gov/safewater/schools/guidance.html#3ts

*Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities*. Web site article. US EPA. http://www.epa.gov/safewater/schools


*Solicit relevant brochures and educational handouts from the following local sources:*
  - Local water utility
  - State and local health agencies
  - Certified local water testing laboratories
  - State drinking water program
  - State and local environmental groups

*Other Resources and Information*

*Local Resources*
Secure the following information from these local sources:

*Local Water Supplier*
  - Annual water quality report
  - Details about how your water is treated

*State Department of Health/Environmental Protection*
  - Lead and drinking water public health information
  - State lead-in-drinking-water regulatory guidelines
  - Testing children for blood lead levels

*National Toll-Free Hotlines*  
Call to locate the appropriate agencies and secure drinking water information.

*EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline*  
(800) 426-4791

*Community Right-to-Know Hotline*  
(800) 424-9346

*Lead Hotline*  
(800) 424-LEAD (5323)

*Government, Professional Organization and Advocacy Websites*

United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water  
http://www.epa.gov/safewater/

Clean Water Fund  
www.cleanwaterfund.org/

United States Department of Education  
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools  
www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/?src=oc

National Head Start Association  
www.nhsa.org/

Healthy Schools Network  
www.healthySchools.org/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Lead Poison Prevention Program  
www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/lead.htm

American Water Works Association (AWWA)  
www.awwa.org/

Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water  
www.safe-drinking-water.org/
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL
Together we can raise lead awareness and help minimize lead levels in school and child care facility drinking water

From: <Your Organization>
To: <Corporation, Public Authority, Civic/Community Organization, Media Outlet>
Date: <XXXX>
Contact: <Name, Phone Number, Email Address of Your Organization’s Contact>

We are responding to the Environmental Protection Agency’s community call to action.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is focusing on rising public concern over the health risks posed by lead in school and child care facility drinking water. In response to this concern, EPA is rolling out a “3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling” campaign nationwide with the objective of promoting public awareness, advocacy, and a proactive approach to voluntary onsite water testing. EPA’s “3Ts” refer to the need for the following in schools and child care facilities:

- **Training** — to alert stakeholders to the risks of lead poisoning and the means of mitigating those risks.
- **Testing** — to encourage voluntary lead-level monitoring in order to identify and respond to any existing problems.
- **Telling** — to communicate with the public regarding all facets of the issue, from funding needs to the reporting of test results and proposed remediation.

We support EPA’s community call to action.

EPA’s “3Ts—Training, Testing, and Telling” initiative is a call for civic groups, corporations, public authorities and the media to join forces in bringing this critical health issue to the forefront. Only through education, collaboration, and partnership-building can the necessary funding be found to ensure the quality of our community’s school and child care drinking water.

EPA has reached out to us because of our history of <community service and child welfare advocacy>. We, in turn, are reaching out to you as a partner with the resources and family-values commitment to help us broaden and strengthen the impact of our own locally launched, lead-awareness campaign.

**<Name of Your Organization> Background Information**
- Provide a brief overview of your organization’s mission, history, leadership and track record of community involvement.
- Underscore what your organization brings to the table in terms of credibility, influence, membership, following, and success related to the promotion of healthcare, child welfare, education and family values.
- Include any awards or official recognition your organization and/or leadership has garnered.
- Indicate that further information is attached or available at your organization’s website.

Lead in school and child care facility drinking water puts our children at risk. Lead is a toxic metal that can be harmful to human health when ingested or inhaled. Furthermore, unlike most other contaminants, lead is stored in our bones and can be released later into the bloodstream, which means even small doses can accumulate and become significant.

Unfortunately, those most at risk from lead exposure are the most defenseless — fetuses, infants and young children — whose rapidly growing bodies tend to absorb more lead than the average adult. Childhood lead exposure can impair development of the brain and central nervous system. Even at low levels, the adverse effects may include lowered IQ, impaired hearing, reduced attention span, and poor classroom performance. At higher levels, lead can cause even more serious brain damage. Of equal concern, accumulated lead stored in a mother’s blood may damage a child before it is born, lowering the newborn’s birth weight and retarding normal physical and mental development.

The level of risk does, indeed, depend upon a child’s total exposure to lead from all sources in the environment — air, soil, dust, food and water. Nevertheless, lead in drinking water can be a significant contributor to overall exposure, particularly for children and infants whose diets consist of liquids made with water.

This makes lead and water awareness vital to the maintenance of a healthy environment for our community’s children. Education is our method, and action — in the form of voluntary testing and monitoring by schools and child care facilities — is our ultimate goal. Why? Because schools and child care facilities are where children are most vulnerable due to the amount of time spent and water consumed there, compounded by the age of the plumbing, and the on-again/off-again water-use patterns that promote corrosion.

Your partnership and underwriting assistance is vital to our effort. We need your help. What’s more, we’re confident we can count on your support. As a partner and co-sponsor of our campaign, we are asking you for the following:
Funds to help underwrite the costs of staging and publicizing our events and activities
Volunteers and speakers to participate in workshops, forums, press conferences and media events
High-traffic venues for displays, signage, information dissemination, news conferences and public gatherings, including: entrance or check-out areas, parking lots, park areas, public and fleet vehicle promotion, office lobbies, employee cafeterias and training auditoriums > (Tailor this to your partner.)
Access to your mailing lists, media contacts, public relations expertise, and both employee and customer communications, including: print and electronic newsletters, statement stuffers, paycheck stuffers, advertising supplements and customer bags > (Tailor this to your partner.)
Your name recognition as a co-sponsor throughout the campaign, which will greatly enhance the credibility of our efforts and significantly elevate the news value for local press

**Here are our proposed activities and initiatives.**
- Provide a brief overview of the campaign, special events and/or advocacy initiatives your organization is planning.
- List other partners who are lending their resources and expertise to your awareness effort.
- Enlist your collaborator’s input and suggestions, including possible opportunities to tie in with partner initiatives that are already in the planning stages or in place.

**For <Name of Solicited Collaborator>, the benefits of our proposed partnership are significant, including:**
- High profile media exposure and positive word-of-mouth that will reinforce your <name and/or brand> awareness and build public trust
- Inclusion in all marketing, collateral, public relations and communications materials to exponentially multiply the impact of your partnership support
- Reinforcement of your stated mission to give back to the community
- Enhancement of your community/family-values public image
- Public recognition opportunities for your employees, from staff to management and president/CEO

**Let’s take the next step.** In light of what is at stake, I’m confident of your support. To solidify our collaboration, I’ll be following up by phone in the next few days. On behalf of <Your Organization> I would only add that we are very excited about the impact <Solicited Collaborator> would bring to our efforts. We look forward to meeting with you, and are eager to discuss how we can most effectively achieve our shared objective of ensuring that the health of our community’s children is safeguarded.

For further information about lead in drinking water and the health risks to children as well as adults, we encourage you to visit the following websites:
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
http://www.epa.gov/safewater/

Clean Water Fund
www.cleanwaterfund.org/

United States Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/?src=oc

National Head Start Association
www.nhsa.org/

Healthy Schools Network
www.healthyschools.org/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Lead Poison Prevention Program
www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/lead.htm

American Water Works Association (AWWA)
www.awwa.org/

Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water
www.safe-drinking-water.org/