

2026 (CY 2025) Public Water System Award Recipients

Non-Transient Non-Community Systems:

- Boxborough Regency (Boxborough)
- Bright Horizons Daycare (Boxborough)
- CPI Radant Technologies, Inc (Stow)
- John Road Industrial Park (Sutton)

Small Community Systems:

- Benfield Farms (Carlisle)
- Garrison Place (Carlisle)
- Leland Farms (Sherborn)
- Williamsburg Water Department (Williamsburg)
- Woodhaven Elder Housing Committee (Sherborn)

Medium and Large Community Systems:

- Barnstable Fire District
- Buzzards Bay Water District
- Chatham Water Department
- Harwich Water Department
- North Sagamore Water District
- Northampton Water Division
- Seekonk Water District
- Westford Water Department
- Wrentham Water Division

Consecutive Systems:

- Bard College At Simons Rock (Great Barrington)
- Brookline Water and Sewer Division
- Framingham Water Department
- Glen Ridge Residents Trust (Dover)
- Holmes Park Water District (Westminster)
- Lynnfield Water District
- Marblehead Water Department
- Mattapoisett River Valley W.D.
- Meadowbrook Water Trust (Dover)
- Milton Water Department

- Southfield Redevelopment Authority
- Weston Water Department

Consistent Performer Awards (Public Water Systems that have received awards for three consecutive years):

- North Raynham Water District
- Provincetown Water Department
- West Newbury Water Department

Water Conservation Awards:

- Concord Water Department
- Georgetown Water Department

Energy Conservation Award

- **Town of Orleans:** Awarded \$124,876 in Gap Energy Grant funds from MassDEP helped replace the HVAC system at the town's Water Treatment Plant. The project is expected to save the town nearly \$11,000 in electrical costs per year and an additional \$50,000 in operations and maintenance expenses.
- **Town of Essex:** By using funding from a Gap Energy Grant, along with matching incentives from National Grid and a MassSave rebate, the town improved its infrastructure and lowered energy use. At the water treatment plant, the town replaced a 40-year-old boiler with a more efficient condensing boiler and upgraded an original 75kVA transformer. At the wastewater plant, several variable frequency drives were also replaced. Together, these improvements are expected to save the town \$4,806 per year in energy costs and reduce its overall carbon footprint.

STAR L Award (honoring systems taking action to reduce lead within school systems)

- **Amherst Department of Public Works (DPW) Water Division:** Through its participation in the MassDEP and UMass Amherst Water-Smart Pilot Program, the Amherst DPW Water Division has demonstrated a strong commitment to public health by identifying potential lead sources and taking early action toward compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements. Its work serves as a model for protecting vulnerable populations and advancing drinking water quality across the Commonwealth.

School/Day Care Lead-Reduction Advocate

- **Claudia Vega, Malden Seminar:** Claudia Vega is recognized for her longstanding commitment to reducing lead exposure in childcare drinking water. She has been a dedicated advocate for years, supporting childcare providers across Massachusetts. At MassDEP's seminar in Malden, she presented her experience with the Water-Smart program, offering valuable insight and practical guidance to help others take action to protect children's health.
- **Gloria Jackson, Head Start Schools:** Gloria Jackson is recognized for her leadership and dedication to reducing lead exposure in childcare drinking water. Through her participation in the Water-Smart Program, she has led sampling efforts at eight Head Start facilities, playing a key role in identifying potential lead risks and advancing protections for vulnerable populations.

Central Region

Regional Recognition:

- **East Brookfield Water Department:** The East Brookfield Water Department serves about 1,526 residents through 626 connections. For years, it faced issues with high levels of manganese and iron in its drinking water and relied on a single well, with no backup source. After a 2019 order from MassDEP, the department took action. It replaced water meters, improved the distribution system, and built a new water treatment plant to remove manganese and iron. Funding came from a State Revolving Fund loan and grant support. This new facility will greatly improve water quality. At the same time, the department worked to develop a second water source to provide backup in case the main well is unavailable, improving system reliability.

Distinguished Operator Award:

- **Thomas Cutler:** MassDEP's Central Regional Office is pleased to recognize Thomas Cutler as an outstanding operator in the central region.

Northeast Region

Regional Recognition:

- **Bedford Water Department:** In 2025, the Bedford Water Department (BWD) participated in a comprehensive Sanitary Survey and demonstrated exceptional preparedness, with all requested documentation compiled in advance and presented in a clear, thorough, and organized manner. BWD staff are always very responsive in all communications and display professionalism and cooperation

ensuring efficient communication and seamless evaluation for compliance. Their proactive approach to regulatory compliance reflect strong commitment to protecting public health and maintaining the highest standards of drinking water quality.

Distinguished Operator Award:

- **Paul Provost:** MassDEP's Northeast Regional Office is pleased to recognize Paul Provost as an outstanding operator in the northeast region.

Southeast Region

Regional Recognition:

- **Middleborough Water Department:** The Town of Middleborough Water Department provides water to 15,350 people. Like many systems, Middleborough is impacted by PFAS. Middleborough developed a PFAS Treatment Action Plan, which includes source management, treatment design and construction, water bottle filling station installation, and new source development. Construction is under way at the first PFAS treatment plant. Capital committed to the projects will exceed \$80 million. In addition to proactively planning and implementing water improvement projects, Middleborough has proven to be a leader in its local area. When an eastern neighboring small water system's water treatment plant failed, Middleborough activated an existing interconnection and assumed operations of the distribution system. Middleborough continues to provide water and assists the new water operator of the consecutive system with compliance activities. When Middleborough's northerly municipal neighbor faced a water crisis, Middleborough once again stepped up to quickly complete an intermunicipal agreement, then install a hydrant-to-hydrant temporary, yet solidly constructed, interconnection to provide water to another neighbor.

Distinguished Operator Award:

- **Michael and James Poitras:** MassDEP's Southeast Regional Office is pleased to recognize Michael and James Poitras as outstanding operators in the southeast region.

Western Region

Regional Recognition:

- **Springfield Water & Sewer Commission:** The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC) provides drinking water to over 40,000 residential connections

and more than 230,000 people. Operating a system of this magnitude is a challenging task and Springfield has routinely encountered Disinfection Byproduct exceedances since 2018. Springfield has been proactive in their pursuit of upgraded treatment to address the cause of these exceedances. In October 2024, SWSC broke ground for the New West Parish Filtration Plant, a modern upgrade to replace the historic filtration plant at the facility to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water to their customers well into the future.

Distinguished Operator Award:

- **Richard Kilhart:** MassDEP's Western Regional Office is pleased to recognize Richard Kilhart as an outstanding operator in the western region.

Special Recognition Award:

- **Yvette DePeiza:** Yvette DePeiza began her career at MassDEP when Jimmy Carter was still president. Long before becoming Director in 2013, she helped shape the Drinking Water Program into a national model—built over four decades of innovation, collaboration, and practical problem-solving. She led the program through evolving challenges, from stricter contaminant standards to cybersecurity. Massachusetts became a national leader on PFAS, setting standards five years ahead of the EPA—an effort largely driven by Yvette. She balanced protecting public health with helping water systems manage real-world impacts. Yvette also led major initiatives like the Compliance Assurance Initiative and pushed forward critical work on lead in schools through the Water-Smart program—driving statewide testing and putting kids' health first. On cybersecurity, she helped transform the program in just a few years into a nationally recognized leader, strengthening protections for public water systems. Throughout her career, Yvette kept one focus front and center: public health. Her leadership leaves behind stronger water systems, better protections, and a generation of professionals ready to carry the work forward.