

Wastewater Infrastructure Needs Survey (WINS)

Instructions and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is WINS?

The Wastewater Infrastructure Needs Survey (WINS) is a survey of the current condition and future needs of Minnesota's publicly owned wastewater treatment and conveyance infrastructure. WINS consists of: (a) A General Community Information Survey, and (b) Project surveys for current and future sewer system and wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) projects.

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1. How to complete the survey electronically

MPCA will send two emails to recipients for the 2025 WINS survey. The first email will contain data about your community and future wastewater needs. The second will contain a link for previously submitted projects. If necessary, you may forward the emails with the survey link on to others to fill out portions of the survey. One email will contain three survey links (see graphic below):

Survey Links

- [General Community Information](#)
- [New Wastewater Treatment Facility Project Survey](#)
- [New Sewer System Project Survey](#)

The second email will contain a link for previously submitted projects from the 2023 WINS survey and will help us understand the status of these projects.

Survey Links

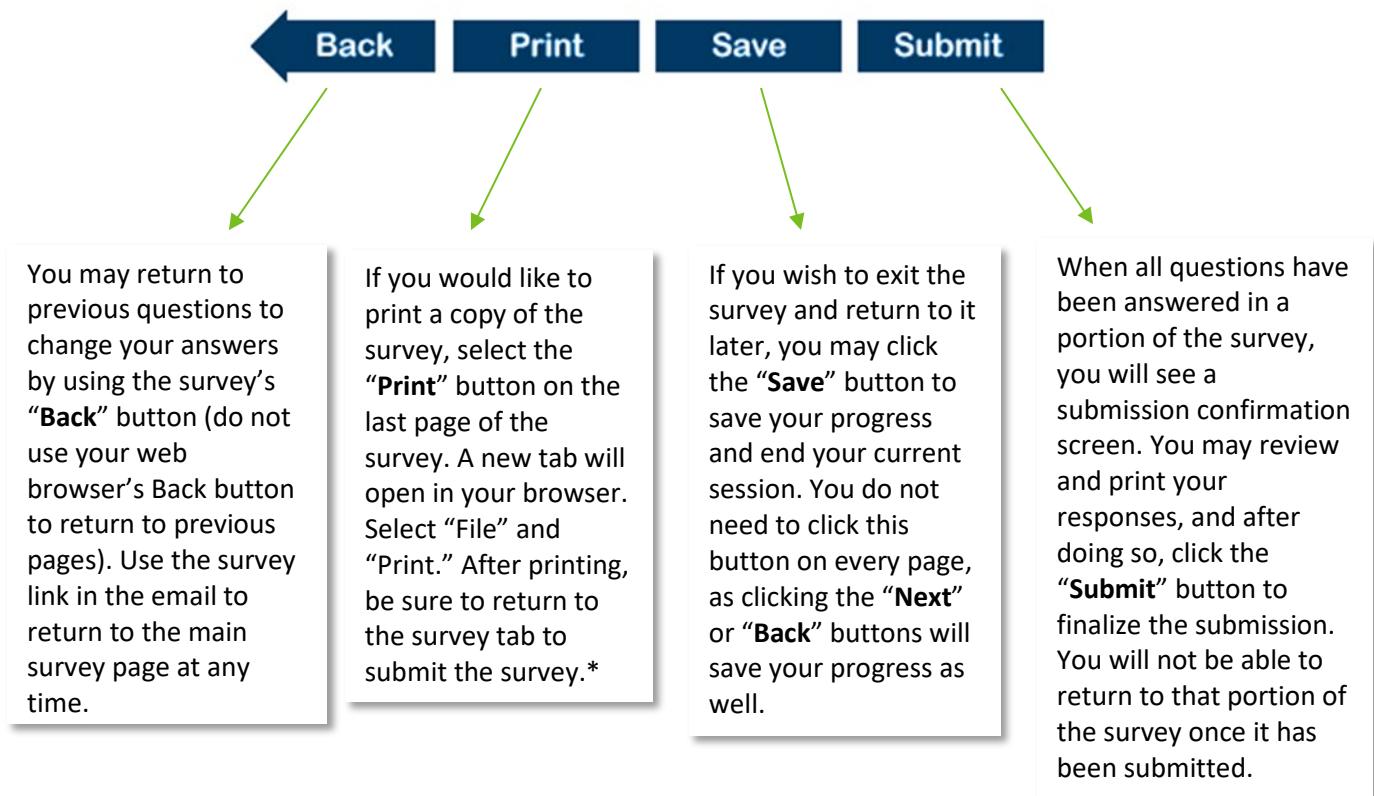
- [Previously Submitted Projects](#)

a. Main survey page

When opening the “General Community Information,” “New Wastewater Treatment Facility Project Survey,” and “New Sewer System Project Survey” links, you will be taken to the main survey page (see graphic below). There is a column on the right with a completion status for each portion of the survey (i.e. “Completed,” “Started,” or “Not Started”). The survey will not be considered complete until each portion is marked as “Completed.” See the *Completing the General Community Information and Previously Submitted Projects survey* section below for more detail on completing this section.

Survey buttons

Begin the survey by selecting one of the General Community Information or Project links. When the survey is open, you will see buttons at the bottom of the screen. See the graphic below for an explanation of the button functions:



*If issues occur when attempting to print the survey, try turning off the pop-up blocker or open the survey in a new browser (i.e. Firefox or Chrome).

b. Completing the New Wastewater Treatment Facility and New Sewer System Project Surveys

Please note: if there are no new projects to enter, you do not need to complete these surveys.

If your community has any additional or new projects planned for which construction will begin sometime after January 1 of next year, select either "New Wastewater Treatment Facility Survey" or "New Sewer System Project Survey" under the Survey Links portion of the WINS email. If you have multiple new projects to submit, go back to the WINS email and continue to select "New Wastewater Treatment Facility" or "New Sewer System Project Survey" for each new project.

To save a project and come back to it later, select "Save" at any point. You will be taken to a screen that you can either bookmark or enter your email address (see the following graphic):

Your responses have been saved but not submitted.

The URL to complete this survey is:

<http://survey.mn.gov/surveyresume.asp?aun=10yq5ncw&k=155681294748>

You can bookmark the current page to return and complete the survey.

Alternatively you can enter your email address below and this link will be sent to you.

(Your email will not be stored on the system)

Email address:

Confirm email address:

If you choose to enter your email, select "Send" and you will receive the following email with a link to that specific survey (see graphic below):

The link for you to resume your survey is:

<http://survey.mn.gov/surveyresume.asp?aun=10yq5ncw&k=155681294748>

If your email program has split the url over multiple lines you may need to copy and paste the entire url into your browser.

Thank You.

When you are ready to continue the survey, click on the link and you will be brought back to the screen where the survey was saved. The survey will not be submitted until the "Submit" button is selected on the last page of the survey.

2. Who needs to fill out the WINS survey?

Municipalities, other communities, sanitary districts, etc., that own or operate wastewater sewer systems and/or wastewater treatment facilities are required to complete this survey to fulfill Minn. Stat. § 115.03, subd. 9.

3. What is the purpose of WINS?

WINS provides the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Minnesota Legislature with essential information on the condition and future needs of Minnesota's wastewater infrastructure. This information will help determine what it will take for Minnesota's communities to address existing and future wastewater needs and what role the State of Minnesota will play in providing financial and technical assistance to address the wastewater needs of local communities. Survey information is also used to complete the wastewater sections of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Watershed Needs Survey (CWNS). The purpose of the CWNS is to help determine how EPA's financial assistance for wastewater will be distributed among the states.

4. Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you need help or have questions about WINS, please contact Joel Peck at 651-757-2202 or joel.peck@state.mn.us.

5. Deadline for completing the survey

WINS will be emailed to communities in July via Snap Surveys. All components of the survey must be completed by the deadline specified in the WINS email you receive.

6. Financial assistance programs and the Project Priority List (PPL)

Other funding agencies consider project rankings on the PPL when making their project funding decisions. Projects are ranked based on a variety of priority public health and environmental conditions that exist on site or are included in the construction project.

Submitting a PPL request is voluntary, and takes very little time. Consider submitting a PPL request if you anticipate seeking state funding assistance for projects. To submit a PPL request and for more information contact Pam Foster at 218-302-6619 or pamela.foster@state.mn.us. The PPL webpage can be accessed at www.pca.state.mn.us/ppl.

7. Where can we view the results of WINS?

The WINS survey is conducted every other year. The results of the last WINS survey are currently available on the MPCA website: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/legislative-reports-and-fact-sheets>.

8. What if we have a sewer system but do not have a WWTF?

If you have a sewer system but you **do not** have a treatment facility because your wastewater is treated by another community, sanitary district, etc., (e.g., Metropolitan Council Environmental Services [MCES], Western Lake Superior Sanitary District [WLSSD]) you will still need to complete the General Community Information survey.

You will also need to provide information on projects involving your sewer system that you reported in the last WINS by updating project surveys in the Previously Submitted Projects link (separate email) and/or completing a new project survey for sewer system projects that have emerged or developed in the New Sewer System Project Survey link.

9. What if we don't currently have a sewer system?

If you do not currently have a sewer system and are not planning publicly owned wastewater sewer or treatment improvements, complete the General Community Information Survey. If you are planning improvements, see #10 below.

10. What if we don't currently have a sewer system but plan to construct:

- a. **A sewer system that will connect to an existing wastewater treatment facility**, for example, the facility of a neighboring community – Please complete the General Community Information Survey and a New Sewer System Project Survey.
- b. **A sewer system and a wastewater treatment facility** – Please complete the General Community Information Survey and both a New Sewer System Project Survey and a New Wastewater Treatment Facility Project Survey.

11. What if we are uncertain that we will be able to finance/afford needed projects?

Even if you are concerned about being able to finance and afford a project, you should still fill out a Project survey and submit it through WINS. The purpose of WINS is to identify actual “on-the-ground” current and future sewer system and wastewater treatment system needs. Such needs exist whether or

not the community involved has the capability to undertake the project out of its own financial resources. Financial assistance is available to local communities through a variety of state and federal programs. Contact Pam Foster of the MPCA at 218-302-6619 or pamela.foster@state.mn.us. As noted above, a full assessment of the State's current and future wastewater infrastructure needs as provided by WINS informs what role the State of Minnesota might play in providing financial and technical assistance to address the wastewater needs of local communities.

12. “Splitting” combination sewer system and WWTF Projects

If your Project is organized as a combination sewer system and wastewater treatment facilities project, please complete a New Sewer System Project Survey and a New Wastewater Treatment Facility Project Survey and distribute the estimated costs of the overall project between the two worksheets according to the corresponding costs of sewer and treatment. This is helpful and necessary for us to report summary information on wastewater treatment and sewer system costs respectively.

13. Ongoing annual and multi-year programs and projects

Occasionally, communities or sanitary districts set up ongoing annual/multi-year programs (for example, a five-year or ten-year Capital Improvement Plan [CIP] to replace lift stations or manhole covers). The following table is an example of what such a program may look like in the community's CIP budget:

Here is how this ongoing CIP program should be entered into WINS:

Q23 Enter the year the project is expected to begin as a four-digit number (ex. 2041)	Estimated YEAR construction will begin. (NOTE: For ONGOING ANNUAL & MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMS & PROJECTS please see Instructions #13) <input type="text" value="2041"/>	Total estimated cost of project: <small>(Please enter the exact dollar amount rounded to the nearest dollar, and do not include the '\$' symbol, commas, or decimal places.)</small> Estimated cost: <input type="text" value="1460000"/> Date of cost estimate: <input type="text" value="1/1/2040"/>	Enter the total cost for the overall program (2041 thru 2045) as the Estimated Cost (in dollars)
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14. Combination “street” projects

For projects that, in addition to sanitary sewer work, involve combinations of water, storm sewers, street lighting, repaving, curb & gutter, etc., **do not list the entire cost of the project as a sewer need**. Instead determine a cost that can be directly allocated to the sewer lines by prorating the cost of pavement, curb & gutter (the “remove and replace” costs) between the sewer piping, water piping, and streetlights and add to the sewer piping direct cost an appropriately prorated cost.

15. Completing the Previously Submitted Projects survey

The “Previously Submitted Project” link will open a list of projects your community previously identified on prior WINS surveys. Click on each project and select from the options provided to update the status of each project. There will be a link for each individual project submitted as new or ongoing in the last WINS. Projects may be Sewer System or Wastewater Treatment Facility projects. Each project link will have the name provided on the last WINS Survey. A separate electronic survey must be completed for each project. If the listed project has been completed, discontinued, merged, or is still a current or future need, please indicate this in the survey.

Please indicate what percentage of a project are related to inflow and infiltration, sewer replacement/rehabilitation, etc. The total must equal 100. If it does not, you will not be able to advance the survey.

Finally, adding an electronic signature will help us identify the person most able to answer questions about your community's CIP. Clicking submit will bring you back to the list of previously submitted project.