

2022 U.S.WASH CONVENING



CONCEPT NOTE

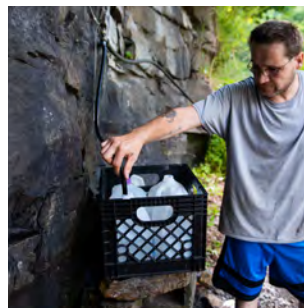
March 2022

The United States needs its own WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) sector.

More than 2.2 million people across the country lack access to running water and basic plumbing, and no single organization can rectify this injustice on its own. Closing America's Water Gap will only be possible through the work of a dedicated community of practice—working alongside impacted communities—to lead this charge.

As a model, the global WASH sector is a well-structured coalition of implementers, funders, community champions, and government agencies working collaboratively towards shared goals, like **UN Sustainable Development Goal 6**. The sector drives collective action by setting regional priorities, sharing technical knowledge, and coordinating responses to new or existing challenges. In leveraging combined resources, the sector secures funding, aligns policy advocacy, and holds governments accountable to impacted communities. As a community of practice, experiences are shared—both successes and failures—through regular, in-person convenings. A U.S.-specific WASH sector will mirror these global WASH learning groups, and become a powerful engine driving universal access to clean, running water and sanitation nationwide.

DigDeep, the first domestic WASH organization in the United States, along with a leading international WASH organization, **Water For People**, believe that this



unprecedented moment of national concern for marginalized communities, Federal infrastructure investment, and acute need (all heightened by the realities of Covid-19 and climate change) is the perfect time for the emergence of a robust US WASH sector that can secure reliable and quality water service for every American.

As co-conveners of the first U.S. WASH Conference, we seek to build the foundation for this sector by first gathering a small number of key water and wastewater leaders. This small, direction-setting coalition of powerful and diverse advocates will meet in 2022 to build momentum for a nationwide sector. Our team of leaders will set the tone, parameters, and norms for a larger convening in 2023, ensuring it is open to every player in the space. We will develop a roadmap to guide the trajectory of the larger sector, which may grow to encompass **hundreds of organizations**.

DigDeep, Water for People, and IRC believe the initial 2022 convening will be a key, direction-setting moment on the road to universal water access and sanitation for all those residing in the United States, U.S. territories, and Tribal Nations.

Desired Outcomes:

- Provide direction and momentum for the development of a US WASH sector that brings together communities, NGOs, academics, the public and private sectors, and others into a structured coalition for collective action.
- Build the groundwork for an annual US WASH conference (to begin in 2023), including the development of critical themes, experiences, and content.
- Define a space to identify needs, share data and practices, and set ambitious goals.
- Develop a conduit to amplify the urgency of the challenge in the US among stakeholders and the general public.
- Create and evaluate effective interventions, research questions, technologies, and funding approaches.
- Coordinate policy advocacy efforts to remove barriers to WASH access and improve government funding and regulation.

