

*Helping communities and businesses access compliance, technical
and financial assistance for their environmental needs*

Drinking Water and Wastewater Regionalization - Opportunities and Challenges

Ohio is facing aging environmental infrastructure, rising construction costs, increased focus on asset management, strained local budgets for operations and maintenance, and increasing water and wastewater user charges for residential customers. These factors require communities to evaluate the affordability and sustainability of their water and wastewater systems, especially if there are opportunities for sharing services, interconnecting utilities and full regionalization.

Ohio EPA recognizes that consolidating water and wastewater facilities isn't always possible, as some locations have constraints of distance or steep terrain that make regionalization cost-prohibitive. In those cases, Ohio EPA continues to work with communities and the existing infrastructure. However, where regionalization is possible, and the local entities are voluntarily looking to regionalize or consolidate, Ohio EPA continues to support these efforts and provide financial incentives to help reduce the up-front costs.

Two successful regionalization examples currently underway are West Milton and Aqua Ohio.

West Milton - Ludlow Falls Sanitary Sewer System

As part of Gov. Mike DeWine's **H2Ohio** initiative, Ohio EPA awarded \$500,000 in funding for West Milton's Ludlow Falls sanitary sewer system project which is constructing sanitary sewers in the village of Ludlow Falls. Failing home sewage treatment systems in the village have caused high coliform readings in nearby Ludlow Creek. The project consists of constructing 9,600 feet of sanitary sewers, a pump station, and 7,300 feet of forcemain to capture wastewater from Ludlow Falls and send it to West Milton's existing wastewater treatment plant. West Milton is also receiving \$905,588 in principal forgiveness for this regionalization project from Ohio's wastewater state revolving loan fund program, the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund. The project is also receiving grants from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Community Development Block Grant Program, and the Ohio Water Development Authority. All these entities working together will help the community maximize the resources available to complete this project.

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For more information go to
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Learn the Lingo

Drinking Water and/or Wastewater Regionalization:

At least two independent entities working collaboratively to provide services by physically connecting their water distribution systems and using a centralized water treatment system.

Aqua Ohio - New Franklin Waterline Extension

This waterline regionalization project will eliminate 13 small public water systems, 10 of which had received violations for coliform and manganese. It will add service to residences, commercial lots and a daycare/preschool where per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) had been detected in **Ohio's PFAS Action Plan** sampling program. This \$3.8 million project received \$1.9 million in principal forgiveness and the balance as zero percent interest loan. Meeting with Ohio EPA staff in advance and submitting complete documentation helped this project launch successfully.

If you're interested in learning more about working with Ohio EPA on a regionalization project, please join our **webinar on April 20, 2021** where we will discuss the opportunities and challenges of drinking water and wastewater regionalization. Presenters will examine the concept of regionalization and consolidation for drinking water and wastewater utilities. The presentation will include examples of successful regionalization projects in Ohio and an analysis of the different funding agencies and programs available. Attendees will also be able to ask questions during the webinar.

Questions? Please contact Katie Courtright at kathleen.courtright@epa.ohio.gov.



Community Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) Can Get Free On-Site Help to Maintain Compliance and Save Money

Ohio communities with wastewater treatment plants that have design capacities ranging from 1,000 gallons per day up to five million gallons a day (MGD) can access free on-site assistance to help address problems at their wastewater treatment plants. DEFA's publicly owned treatment works (POTW) Compliance Assistance Unit (CAU) experts work alongside local wastewater treatment staff to help identify factors impacting the plant's ability to operate in compliance with its discharge permits. For more than 25 years, DEFA CAU staff have traveled the state, helping POTWs identify and create cost-effective, affordable solutions to bring them back into compliance. Some of the services provided include:



- conducting plant performance evaluations to identify causes of compliance issues such as problems with plant design, plant operation, and administration;
- troubleshooting complex plant problems;
- creating innovative and cost-effective solutions for improving plant performance;
- offering onsite training of personnel in process control procedures such as nutrient analysis (ammonia, nitrate, orthophosphate), solids inventory and sludge wasting, and clarifier optimization, including return activated sludge (RAS) rates;
- helping improve sludge handling and disposal procedures;
- teaching operators inexpensive, easy and effective methods of process control;
- investigating concerns over industrial dischargers that may be impacting the system;
- determining current plant loadings and capacities;
- performing microscopic evaluations to identify filamentous bacteria and how to select against them;
- helping facilitate inflow and infiltration evaluations of sewer systems;
- reviewing/evaluating new treatment technologies; and
- providing training presentations at wastewater trade seminars and workshops.

CAU assistance has helped communities save money, lower operating costs, and return to compliance. DEFA is committed to helping small communities avoid expensive enforcement proceedings and achieve compliance with technical know-how and hands-on experience.

How does the compliance assistance unit (CAU) work?

Example 1: The CAU was contacted by a treatment plant manufacturer about a new wastewater treatment plant that was not meeting its discharge permit. The community was threatening to call in a performance bond due to the noncompliance. The system was supposed to spray irrigate treated wastewater on a dedicated field, but was not meeting the total inorganic nitrogen limit of 10 mg/L required by its permit. The CAU began its troubleshooting process by performing wet chemistry analysis and installing data logging instruments to measure critical chemical parameters. Through this analysis, the performance limiting factors were identified. A process control scheme was created to give the operator a decision-making strategy based on the new process control data collection procedures. The CAU continued to work with the operator until he was comfortable with the new procedures and the wastewater treatment plant was consistently meeting permit limits. Through the cooperation of the operator, the owner, the consulting engineer, and the CAU, litigation and enforcement were avoided, and the wastewater treatment system has maintained long-term compliance.

Example 2: A community constructed a new treatment system to meet a new total phosphorus limit in their NPDES permit. The problem was they only met their phosphorus permit limit nine times in 53 months of testing, despite adding alum to bind with the dissolved phosphorus. The CAU was invited to see if they could help the community. Within a month, the wastewater treatment system was in compliance. The community stopped the chemical feed and cycled mixers on and off. This not only saved them chemical costs but also electrical costs and produced cleaner water that has met their total phosphorus limit most months in the following three years, with only an occasional violation. The CAU trained the operator in appropriate process control methods to keep the wastewater treatment system in compliance to keep the system in compliance.

If you need assistance or have questions regarding what CAU might be able to do for you, please contact Ryan Laake, CAU supervisor at ryan.laake@epa.ohio.gov. Or contact the CAU staff: Jon van Dommelen at jon.vandommelen@epa.ohio.gov, Andy Gall at andrew.gall@epa.ohio.gov, and Nick Hammer at nicholas.hammer@epa.ohio.gov. Also, read our [Wastewater Treatment and Compliance Assistance Brochure](#).

If you're struggling to keep your wastewater treatment plant in compliance, rest assured that it isn't rocket science. Let our experts teach you cheap, easy, and effective process control tools to diagnose treatment problems and then monitor the system to keep it in compliance. Join us April 15, 2021 from 9-10 a.m. EST for our free webinar **Out of Compliance with Your NPDES Permit? Get On-Site Help From the Compliance Assistance Unit**. Presenters: Jon van Dommelen, Nick Hammer, Jon Bernstein, DEFA.

Meet the Staff

How long have you worked for Ohio EPA?

I joined Ohio EPA in January 2021.

What excites you the most about the work that you do or your field of study?

Ohio has always been my home, so I am excited to be working on projects that directly improve the quality of life for fellow Ohioans and protect our natural resources for future generations to enjoy.

Favorite memory or accomplishment with the agency or related to your field?

I went on a two-week trip to Eleuthera Island in the Bahamas during one of my undergraduate winter semesters. This was a botany trip that I spent with several botany professors, fellow peers, and a local specialist. It was my first time learning hands-on about flora vastly different from what I was used to. Being thrown out of my comfort zone was a surprisingly wonderful experience that I learned a lot from.

What are your favorite things to do outside of work?

I love tools! I'm always getting my hands dirty and tinkering on some sort of project during my free time. I've always had an affinity for wood working and the pride and satisfaction of completing a project. I also like to explore new trails, either by foot or by bike, and enjoy nature without the distractions of life.



Brody Betsch

Who inspires you?

I have a wealth of individuals in my life who inspire me. Michael Vincent, Miami University Herbarium curator emeritus and professor, has been and continues to be a major force in my life, pushing me to be the best that I can. Mike is the epitome of a master botanist and has a seemingly limitless knowledge of all things plant related. There was never a question he couldn't answer or a problem he wasn't willing to help me with. I am blessed to have studied under such an amazing professor and to have an amazing friend who inspires me every day.



Jon van Dommelen

How long have you worked for Ohio EPA?

27 years in March 2021.

What excites you the most about the work that you do or your field of study?

I really like puzzles and solving noncompliance at all sizes of wastewater treatment plants is all about solving individual puzzles. Each treatment plant and every influent is unique. Using (usually) simple process control methods we can typically figure out the noncompliance quickly. For more difficult noncompliance, we have advanced tools to help to solve those issues as well, thanks to the management that continues to support us so well.

Favorite memory or accomplishment with the agency or related to your field?

There are many. Working with Keith Kroeger for 15 years was great. His background was operations and mine was engineering. Together we could pretty much solve any issue that we came across. He made me a better operator and I made him a better engineer. The other favorite memory is the appreciation and gratitude that is expressed by the operators that we have helped return to compliance. They get frustrated by their noncompliance and when we go in and show them how to collect cheap, easy, and effective data, and how to interpret that data to make the proper process control decisions, I can almost see the lightbulb turn on when they take those methods and use them.

What are your favorite things to do outside of work?

I run, I cook, I make bread, cakes and pies (it is a good thing that I run, eh?)

Who inspires you?

Really, my wife and kids. They are all absolutely awesome.

New Publications

- *2020 Annual Report Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance*

Training Opportunities

- Apr. 15, 2021, *Out of Compliance with Your NPDES Permit? Get On-Site Help From the Compliance Assistance Unit*
- Apr. 20, 2021, *Opportunities and Challenges of Drinking Water and Wastewater Regionalization*

Preparing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)

The **Industrial Stormwater General Permit** covers new and existing point source discharges of stormwater associated with industrial activity to surface waters of the State. The permit requires developing and implementing a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP). The purpose of implementing an SWPPP is to minimize or eliminate the potential for contamination of stormwater by industrial activities.

What is stormwater runoff and what are its impacts?

Stormwater runoff is water from rain or snowmelt that doesn't quickly infiltrate into the ground and flows over or through natural or man-made storage or conveyance systems. When areas are developed with impervious surfaces like buildings, parking lots, and roads; this can result in increased surface runoff rates, volumes, and pollutant loads. Stormwater runoff can pick up industrial pollutants and discharge them into nearby waterbodies or indirectly via storm sewer systems. Runoff from areas where industrial activities occur can contain pollutants from material storage, loading and unloading operations, outdoor process activities, illicit connections, and poor waste management practices.

What is a SWPPP?

- A SWPPP is a site-specific, written document that:
- identifies potential sources of stormwater pollution at the industrial facility;
 - describes stormwater control measures that are used to reduce or eliminate pollutants in stormwater discharges from the industrial facility; and
 - identifies procedures the operator will use to comply with the terms and conditions of the permit.

What are common SWPPP violations?

You are required to develop your SWPPP to address the specific conditions at your site and keep it up-to-date to reflect changes at your site both for your use and for review by the regulatory agencies responsible for overseeing your permit compliance. Here are some of the more common violations we see.

- Not having a written SWPPP document.
- Failing to review and modify SWPPP as needed.
- Insufficient facility and drainage maps.
- Not keeping documentation with SWPPP.

Questions?

Ohio EPA recently hosted a Preparing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) webinar. This webinar discusses preparing a SWPPP, tips on writing the SWPPP, common mistakes, common violations, and resources available to help you write your SWPPP. Visit our YouTube Channel to **listen to the recording** and download the pdf of the PowerPoint.

If you have more questions, please contact Ohio EPA's Central Office Division of Surface Water (DSW) stormwater permitting staff: Michael Joseph at Michael.Joseph@epa.ohio.gov, Anthony Robinson at Anthony.Robinson@epa.ohio.gov, or Jason Fyffe at Jason.Fyffe@epa.ohio.gov.



Resources to Help You Write Your SWPPP

- [U.S. EPA Developing Your Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan: A Guide for Industrial Operators](#)
- [U.S. EPA Industrial Sector Fact Sheets: Sample SWPPP Template](#)
- [U.S. EPA Stormwater Discharges from Industrial Activities web page](#)
- Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water [Industrial Stormwater General Permit web page](#) has many resources linking you to permit guidance and compliance resources.

Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Program - Recognizing Organizations Committed to Environmental Excellence

Ohio EPA's Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Program recognizes an organization's exceptional achievements in environmental stewardship. Any business, industry, trade association, professional organization, or local government of Ohio can be recognized for their commitment to environmental excellence. All applications are now accepted on a continual basis throughout the year. Applications must be filled out online at <https://ohioepa.custhelp.com/app/apply>.

The program has a four-level approach to provide recognition to Ohio organizations completing environmentally beneficial activities. The goal of environmental stewardship is to reduce the impact of business or organizational activities on the environment beyond measures required by any permit or rule, producing a better environment, conserving natural resources and resulting in long-term economic benefits.

Applications are evaluated using environmental stewardship criteria developed by Ohio EPA. Applicants must be in compliance with environmental laws and regulations. To date, our E3 program has recognized 12 platinum level recipients, 49 gold level recipients, 38 silver level recipients, and 80 achievement level recipients. More details about the applications, criteria, and benefits can be found on our website.

- **The Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Achievement Award** recognizes any applicants completing environmentally beneficial activities.
- **The Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Silver Level** recognizes an organization's outstanding achievements in environmental stewardship.
- **The Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Gold Level** recognizes organizations that have comprehensive environmental stewardship programs.
- **The Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Platinum Level** recognizes organizations that demonstrate how their environmental stewardship efforts improve the social well-being of the local community, region and/or a larger geographic area, and how these efforts result in long-term societal benefits.

Two of our newer recognition programs are:

- **The Encouraging Environmental Excellence in Education Program (E4)**, recognizes any K – 12 public or private school for their achievements in environmental stewardship and their efforts to educate their students on environmental topics.
- **The Encouraging Environmental Excellence for Communities (E3C)**, recognizes a community's exceptional achievements in environmental stewardship. Any local government of Ohio can be recognized for its commitment to environmental excellence. Applications are evaluated using environmental stewardship and related activities developed by Ohio EPA.

The goal of environmental stewardship is to reduce the impact of business or organizational activities on the environment beyond measures required by any permit or rule, producing a better environment, conserving natural resources and resulting in long-term economic benefits. For more information, contact the Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance's Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention at 1-800-329-7518 or Bill Narotski at (614) 728-1264, (william.narotski@epa.ohio.gov).



To learn more, listen to these recorded webinars on our **YouTube Channel**:

- Nov. 12, 2020, **Ohio EPA's Encouraging Environmental Excellence E3 Recognition Program** - Gold and Platinum Level Application Process.
- Dec. 9, 2020, **Encouraging Environmental Excellence E3C for Communities**.

What is universal waste? How do I manage it properly?



Universal wastes are specific hazardous waste streams that a generator can choose to manage in an alternative manner in place of the more complex hazardous waste requirements. These wastes are typically generated by numerous businesses, ordinarily in small quantities, and they present low hazards. Currently, Ohio has four categories of universal wastes recognized nation-wide, and three additional types that are Ohio-specific universal wastes that may be managed under these reduced requirements. Lamps, suspended or recalled pesticides, mercury-containing devices, and batteries are **recognized nationwide**. Antifreeze, aerosol containers, and paint and paint-related wastes are the Ohio-specific universal wastes. The Ohio-specific universal wastes also do not require the use of a hazardous waste manifest while in Ohio. If these wastes leave the state of Ohio, the generator needs to comply with the manifesting requirements for all states these wastes would travel within.

The universal waste rules are intended to promote recycling as well as proper disposal by easing certain regulatory requirements such as waste evaluation and manifesting. When managing these wastes under the universal waste rules, a generator does not need to evaluate them, and they are not counted when determining the quantity of hazardous waste generated for the purposes of determining generator status. Furthermore, the nationally recognized universal wastes do not need to be transported on a hazardous waste manifest.

Below, you will find some Ohio EPA **online resources** to help you properly manage your universal waste.

- Guidance Documents: epa.ohio.gov/derr/hazwaste/universalwaste#177125224-guidance
- Checklists: epa.ohio.gov/derr/hazwaste/universalwaste#177125225-checklist
- List of Contacts: epa.ohio.gov/derr/hazwaste/universalwaste#177125106-contacts
- Ohio EPA publications: **Ohio-Specific Universal Waste, Universal Waste**



To learn more about universal waste, listen to our Feb. 23, 2021 webinar, ***A Deeper Dive into the Universal Waste Rules.***

Questions? Call the Hazardous Waste Compliance Assurance Section at (614) 644-2924.



Help Ohio Recycle Shrink Wrap

Each spring, all over Ohio, boats come out of their plastic-wrapped winter hibernation for another season on Lake Erie and other waterways. In the fall, those boats get a new coating of shrink-wrap to weather for the Ohio winter.

To help prevent all that plastic from going in the landfill, the **Ohio Clean Marinas Program** started the Shrink-Wrap Recycling Program in 2006. Ohio marinas have now recycled more than 2.3 million pounds of shrink-wrap. Watch the **video** by Ohio Department of Natural Resources.



Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA) 2020 Annual Report Highlights

2020 marked another successful year of enhanced services to Ohio's businesses and communities through Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA). Through our team's efforts, we surpassed prior years of assistance and service to our customers. DEFA serves as a one-stop shop for customers seeking technical and financial resources to help them achieve compliance.

In 2020, we reached out to thousands of businesses and communities throughout Ohio to increase the awareness of services and resources available through DEFA, and we look forward to even greater technical and financial assistance in the coming year. Below are some highlights from 2020.

Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF)

In 2020, Ohio EPA awarded WPCLF loans totaling more than \$577 million to Ohio communities. Principal forgiveness (grant-like) funding totaling nearly \$11 million was made available to help communities address failing household sewage treatment systems (HSTS). In addition, close to \$28 million in principal forgiveness was made available to provide collection capacity in unsewered areas and address other infrastructure priorities, particularly in economically disadvantaged and small communities.

Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) Program

In 2020, Ohio EPA awarded WSRLA loans totaling more than \$300 million to help communities address drinking water infrastructure needs. In addition, about \$15 million in principal forgiveness funding was made available to help small, disadvantaged communities.

Addressing Statewide Priorities through Ohio's SRF Programs

Ohio EPA leverages financial resources through our SRF and grant programs to address some of the state's most significant water quality challenges, including harmful algal blooms (HABs), failing household septic systems, lead, and combined sewer overflows. Working in partnership with other public funding partners, providing incentives for innovative approaches, and offering flexible financing terms have been effective strategies to help our communities in addressing these challenges.

H2Ohio: Long-Term, Cost-Effective Water Quality Solutions

H2Ohio is Governor Mike DeWine's comprehensive, data-driven water quality initiative to reduce harmful algal blooms, improve wastewater infrastructure, and prevent lead contamination. In state fiscal year 2020, Ohio EPA received \$8.675 million in H2Ohio funds to make available to projects supporting focus areas of the H2Ohio Initiative. DEFA awarded a total of \$1.75 million to seven local health districts in the western Lake Erie basin.

Some of the DEFA resources and services available are:

- Providing environmental and financial assistance to support H2Ohio, Governor Mike DeWine's comprehensive, data-driven water quality initiative to reduce harmful algal blooms (HABs), improve wastewater infrastructure, and prevent lead contamination.
- State revolving fund (SRF) loan programs helping communities construct and maintain wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.
- Funding to help communities address water quality issues from combined sewer overflows, failing home sewage treatment systems, nutrients, and lead.
- Technical assistance helping small community wastewater treatment plants improve operations and efficiency.
- A compliance assistance program helping small businesses with environmental regulations through on-site visits, help completing applications and forms, training, and plain-English publications.
- Funding supporting recycling, litter cleanup, scrap tire management, and market development for recyclables such as glass, plastics, rubber, and construction and demolition debris.
- The Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) program, recognizing the outstanding efforts of businesses, communities, and other entities making a commitment to environmental stewardship.
- The Ohio Materials Marketplace, an online tool facilitating the reuse of materials through a collaborative network of businesses, organizations, and entrepreneurs.

Health districts in Erie, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Williams, and Wood counties each received \$250,000 to help low-income homeowners address failing septic systems. Seven communities or service providers received a total of \$4.21 million to address inadequate or unsafe drinking water and to extend sewer service to unsewered areas. The Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) received \$725,000 to remove lead service lines serving childcare facilities. It is expected that the funding will allow GCWW to offer complete lead service line replacement for 185 childcare facilities.

Helping Businesses with Environmental Regulations and Permitting

DEFA's Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention (OCAPP) provides free and confidential assistance to help businesses comply with environmental requirements. OCAPP responded to more than 13,000 environmental assistance requests from Ohio businesses, communities, and other organizations during 2020. This included assistance completing 2,603 forms, including permit applications and other Ohio EPA paperwork. OCAPP staff participated in 40 presentations and training events, reaching more than 1,100 people with information on a variety of environmental compliance topics. DEFA hosted 17 webinars covering a variety of topics, including environmental compliance, funding, and reporting. More than 5,400 people participated in DEFA's webinars or viewed our archived library of training materials during 2020. Popular webinar topics included:

- Virtual Assistance and Resources from Ohio EPA and Ohio BWC
- Open Dumping of Solid Waste and Scrap Tires
- Recycling and Litter Prevention Grant Application Process
- Lead Service Line Replacement Funding

DEFA also launched a new In Your Community webinar series focusing on environmental issues impacting the local area. These webinars occur throughout the year, covering a wide range of topics. They include how Ohio EPA regulates sources of air pollution, waste management, wastewater and stormwater discharges, to ways communities can promote environmental stewardship and improve the environment in the local area.

Ohio EPA's Virtual Compliance Assistance Conference

Ohio EPA's first free virtual compliance assistance conference was held over three weeks Sept. 21 through Oct. 8, 2020, with 7,630 people logging on to 20 different sessions and interacting virtually. Sessions had polling to engage the participants and opportunities to ask questions. Certificates for continuing education credits were included for each session and all sessions were recorded for those who could not attend or who wanted to review a session more closely.

Ohio's Materials Marketplace: Year Three Accomplishments

The Ohio Materials Marketplace (OMM), launched in 2017, is a free online platform connecting businesses to recycling and reuse solutions for their waste and by-product challenges. Ohio businesses, not-for-profits, and government organizations can list available products and materials that would otherwise be destined for the landfill. Ohio EPA manages and markets OMM with help from the United States Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Ohio By-Product Synergy Network, and Ohio's solid waste management districts. To date, more than 1,100 members have joined OMM and 3.8 million pounds of materials have been exchanged for reuse and diverted from landfills, saving members more than \$230,000.

Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Program

Ohio EPA's E3 Program recognizes businesses, organizations, and government entities for achievements in environmental stewardship. During 2020, Ohio EPA acknowledged eight Gold Level, and seven Silver Level E3 recipients. This was the fourth year Ohio EPA recognized organizations at the Platinum Level for their efforts to expand their environmental sustainability programs beyond their own facility to make a positive impact on their surrounding community with four organizations recognized at the E3 Platinum Level.

Encouraging Environmental Excellence in Education (E4) Program

This program recognizes any K-12 public or private school for its achievements in environmental stewardship and efforts to educate students on environmental topics. In 2020, nine schools were recognized for their environmental stewardship, including Magnificat High School in Rocky River. Magnificat was one of two schools to receive Leaf Class recognition in 2020, the highest level in the E4 program. Director Stevenson hosted the first virtual E4 recognition ceremony with Magnificat in May 2020.

Encouraging Environmental Excellence in Communities (E3C)

Recognizing local government and community achievements in environmental stewardship, this program launched in late 2020. The E3C Program has three levels of recognition that recognize communities in different stages of implementing environmental stewardship initiatives through environmental, economic and social programs and activities: Implementation, Stewardship, and Sustainable. Communities and local governments can apply at any time through a simple online application.

Recycling and Litter Prevention Grant Program

The recycling and litter prevention grant program was established in 1981 and has helped support the 50-year journey of Earth Day. In the 39 years since the program's inception, more than \$240 million has been awarded to more than 4,400 projects.

Improving Curbside Recycling

Ohio EPA continues to tackle the issue of contamination in curbside recycling by investing in education and outreach pilot projects around the state. DEFA's Recycling and Litter Prevention Grant Program awarded five grants to a strategically and geographically diverse group of communities to work with The Recycling Partnership creating a toolkit and best management practices for replicable success statewide.

Reaching Our Customers Electronically

DEFA's outreach efforts include monthly eBlasts, a quarterly newsletter, and blog posts. Our eBlasts contain information on upcoming regulatory changes, funding opportunities, training, and other resources. DEFA's quarterly newsletters contain more detailed updates and a range of articles related to environmental compliance, water, and wastewater infrastructure development, and sustainability efforts. Our 2020 eBlasts and newsletters reached an audience of more than 16,000 subscribers. We distributed 12 monthly DEFA eBlast updates and 70 special eBlasts for DEFA totaling 807,918 in 2020.

Looking forward, in 2021, DEFA will continue to focus on proactive outreach efforts to ensure Ohio's businesses and communities are aware of the many resources available to help meet their environmental and financial assistance-related goals.

We appreciate the support from all our stakeholders and look forward to another busy and productive year in 2021. If you have any questions or need more information about our services, contact us at (614) 644-3469 or visit our website at epa.ohio.gov/defa. You can access our DEFA 2020 Annual Report at epa.ohio.gov/Portals/29/documents/2020AnnualReport.pdf.

Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA)

Helping communities and businesses
access technical and financial assistance
for their environmental needs.

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