

Department of Water Resources (DWR) Facilitation Support Services (FSS) Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated June 2025

What types of support can my subbasin receive through the FSS Program?

Services offered through DWR-funded professional facilitators include:

- Stakeholder assessments – includes an internal and/or external scan of the situation or context in which an issue is occurring to identify priorities and potential heated topics, evaluate conditions for collaboration, clarify non-technical risks, and establish an appropriate plan of work. Assessments may also include surveys and interviews with key impacted parties.
- Governance development or restructuring – includes support for GSA meetings convened to prepare or update coordination agreements and/or GSA formation documents; support with managing committees, ad hocs, and advisory bodies; and support for GSA strategic and long-term funding planning.
- Stakeholder communication and engagement planning and support – includes engagement and outreach planning for GSP implementation activities and development of Communications & Engagement Plan Updates.
- Public outreach – includes development of website guidance and informational materials such as newsletters and factsheets.
- Targeted outreach to underrepresented groundwater users – includes identification of and outreach to underrepresented groundwater users (e.g., domestic well owners and users, small-scale farmers, communities who prefer to communicate in a language other than English, etc.), development of outreach for domestic well mitigation programs, and support for multi-lingual outreach and engagement. Note: Written Translation Services and Verbal Interpretive Services are available to GSAs to support material development and meetings. See more in the responses to questions below.
- Tribal Government outreach and engagement – includes facilitation, outreach, and planning support for engagement with Tribal Governments, Tribal staff, and other Tribal groups.
- Identification and engagement of interested parties – includes support for developing and managing an interested parties database and support for GSAs to conduct public noticing in compliance with SGMA regulations.
- Meeting facilitation – includes facilitation, outreach, and planning support for committees or working groups that coordinate with the GSA to support SGMA implementation.

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- Intra-basin and inter-basin coordination support – includes facilitation of inter- and intra-basin coordination meetings and development of inter-basin coordination work plans that outline expectations/protocols for communication and priority topics for discussion.
- Interest-based negotiation/consensus building – includes shuttle diplomacy with GSA managers and key basin contributors and development of an issue resolution process.

The FSS program **cannot** support:

- Proposition 218 / Proposition 26 hearings
- Formal mediation

Is the applicant responsible for any administrative costs?

- The applicant is not responsible for any financial commitment or program administration. Facilitators bill DWR directly.

How does the application process work?

- A GSA submits an [application](#) on the [DWR Assistance and Engagement page](#).
- DWR reviews the application and approves the requested activities.
 - DWR staff may provide comments on the application as part of the review process.
- Facilitators and the applicant work together to develop an implementation service plan (ISP) for the requested activities.
- DWR reviews and approves the ISP. Once approved, the facilitator begins work.

Who is eligible to apply?

GSAs developing or implementing GSPs, other groups coordinating with the GSAs in developing and implementing GSPs, and agencies implementing approved Alternatives to GSPs are eligible to apply for this service. Entities that have previously received FSS may reapply for additional support. Entities that request these services must meet all of the following obligations:

- Agree to work in an open, inclusive, and collaborative manner to implement SGMA.

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- Support an inclusive process that seeks, promotes, encourages, and welcomes the involvement of all interested parties.
- Commit to meet regularly and work diligently toward a clear and defined goal.
- Commit to providing a meeting space that is suitably located and sized.

How long after submitting an application will I receive facilitation services?

The following describes the approximate timeline to receive FSS after an application is submitted.

- DWR confirms receipt of application (a few business days)
- DWR team review of application (2-3 weeks)
 - DWR may reach out with questions regarding the application before scope drafting begins.
- Local Agency is contacted by a facilitator. The facilitator drafts a scope of work. (2-3 weeks)
- Facilitator works with local agency to refine and finalize the scope of work. DWR reviews the scope of work and once approved, the facilitator can begin implementing the FSS Plan. (4-6 weeks)

Who directs and oversees the facilitator's activities?

Once an approved implementation service plan is in place, facilitators work at the direction of the agency applicant. Facilitators provide monthly progress reports to DWR on the status of FSS activities.

How long will I receive support for?

The applicant may indicate a desired timeline for the requested FSS support in the application. FSS ISPs typically support facilitation activities for 6-12 months.

Can I amend my FSS request after work has already started? How?

Once an approved ISP is in place, GSAs may request an amendment to the plan by sending an email to sgmp_rc@water.ca.gov. If the amendment request aligns with the approved scope of work, an amendment to the ISP can be processed. If the requested amendment includes new activities or support, DWR may determine that a new FSS application is needed.

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How do I request written translation or verbal interpretive services?

Written Translation Services (WTS) and Verbal Interpretation Services (VIS) are available by request from local agencies and do not require the use of FSS.

- A local agency submits an [application for WTS](#) or an [application for VIS](#) on the [DWR Assistance and Engagement page](#) under the Written Translation Services or Verbal Interpretation Services tabs.
- DWR reviews the application and approves the requested activities.
- WTS turnaround is around 2 weeks for regular service but may be expedited for urgent requests.
- VIS requests need at least a 3-week lead-time. VIS requests should be accompanied by WTS requests for the meeting notice and materials to best support language users. When inviting attendees to an interpreted event, it is best practice to extend invitations to the event well ahead of the meeting. Local agencies can consider inviting attendees to request interpretation in the language interpretation is going to be provided in.