

Position Description: Technical Specialist

Organization	National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association
Funding Source	USDA Rural Development Grant (one year with an extension subject to continued funding)
Term	October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027 (one year with an extension subject to continued grant funding)
Location	Remote with required travel for selected training and technical assistance events
Position Type	Part-time
Reports To	NOWRA Grants Director

Job Background

NOWRA's Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) program is dedicated to addressing sanitation challenges in rural communities that rely on onsite and decentralized wastewater infrastructure. The project's primary purpose is to identify, diagnose, and resolve waste disposal problems in rural areas where centralized sewer systems are unavailable or financially unfeasible. Through expert technical guidance and training, NOWRA aims to help communities move from regulatory non-compliance or system failure toward long-term sustainability and sanitation security.

Using a Hub-and-Spoke model, NOWRA will issue sub-awards to 10 State Affiliates. Each affiliate will employ one full-time equivalent (FTE) Technical Assistance (TA) Professional to deliver services directly to eligible communities in their state or region.

Job Summary

The Technical Specialist will provide technical expertise and support to NOWRA affiliates assisting small, unsewered, and underserved rural communities across the United States. Funded through NOWRA's USDA Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Grant initiative, this role will help target communities evaluate, plan, upgrade, and sustain decentralized, onsite, and cluster wastewater management infrastructure.

The Specialist serves as a resource for the affiliate staff working on both Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects as described below:

- Tier 1 (long-term, project-based) technical assistance to a minimum of 4 qualified communities per affiliate.
- Tier 2 (rapid-response) technical assistance to a minimum of 12 additional qualified communities per affiliate.

Key Responsibilities

1. Serve as a Technical Resource for Small Community Assessments (Tier 1):
 - Wastewater Assessment and Problem Identification: Provide assistance with site evaluations, desktop studies, and technical reviews to help rural communities identify the causes of failing onsite and decentralized wastewater systems.

- Feasibility and Options Analysis: Provide assistance with evaluating technical, managerial and financial treatment alternatives, including individual onsite wastewater treatment systems, advanced treatment units, and community cluster systems.
 - Engineering and Design Liaison: Provide expertise to help communities define project scopes of work, draft RFQs and RFPs for professional engineering services, and evaluate technical proposals.
 - System Funding: Extend guidance relating to funding for small community wastewater treatment solutions.
 - System Management Planning: Provide expertise to help small communities establish management entities, such as Responsible Management Entities (RMEs) or sewer districts, and develop long-term operation and maintenance plans.
2. Serve as a Technical Resource for Rapid Response Technical Assistance
- Wastewater Assessment and Problem Identification: Aid with troubleshooting technical wastewater treatment challenges in small communities.
3. Oversight of Projects
- Affiliate Partnerships: Communicate on a regular basis with assigned affiliates serving as a resource as needed.
4. Training
- Participate in and lead training events at the affiliate and national level as needed and time allows.

Qualifications - Education & Experience

Education: Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Biosystems/Agricultural Engineering, Soil Science, Environmental Science, or a closely related field. *MS or PhD preferred. Experience may substitute for a degree.*

Required Experience and Skills

- Minimum 10+ years of direct, professional experience in decentralized, onsite, or cluster wastewater system design, evaluation, or regulatory management.
- Demonstrated experience working with rural, small, or economically disadvantaged communities on infrastructure challenges.
- Working knowledge of federal, state, and local regulatory frameworks governing decentralized wastewater.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, with a proven ability to translate complex engineering/technical concepts into clear guidance for laypersons and elected officials.
- Ability to manage multiple community technical assistance projects independently in a remote environment.

Preferred Qualifications

- Active participation or familiarity with NOWRA training programs, state affiliate networks, or credentialing processes.
- Prior experience working under federal grant awards (USDA, EPA, or HUD) with direct responsibility for technical assistance deliverables.
- Knowledge of community structure and funding options for small community wastewater systems.

Compensation and Contact Information

NOWRA offers competitive compensation.

For more information on this position please contact Sara Heger at sfheger@gmail.com.

Tom Groves - tgroves@nowra.org
Vern Steel - vernsteel@gmail.com