

GUIDELINES FOR FORMING A RURAL WATER SYSTEM

- I. Before forming a rural water system the following criteria should be considered:**
 1. That the rural residents within the proposed system do not have an adequate water supply to meet their needs.
 2. That the rural water system is necessary to provide an adequate water supply to the rural residents.
 3. That the system will be conducive to and promote the health, convenience and welfare of its residents.
 4. That there is sufficient water available for purchase or available for appropriation by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to serve the needs of the system.

- II. Preparing for organizational meeting:**
 1. Contact the following lending institutions;
 - a. Area office of USDA Rural Development, Rural Utilities Service
Woodward: 580/256-3375
Stillwater: 405/624-0144
Hobart: 580/726-5625
Atoka: 580/889-6668
State Office: 405/742-1060
 - b. Oklahoma Water Resources Board
405/530-8800
 - c. Oklahoma Department of Commerce
405/815-5356
 - d. Indian Health Service
405/915-3800
 - e. Indian Tribes
 - f. Others
 2. Contact the local Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality representative.
 3. Have all key people involved in organizing the system attend this meeting.

- III. Organizational meeting:**
 1. Get key people in the area to be served involved.
 2. Elect a steering committee.
 3. Appoint a spokesperson or chairperson.
 4. Decide on the area to canvass for service.
 5. Determine, as closely as possible, the number on people who will need water service.
 6. Make arrangements to get all interested residents to the next meeting.
 - a. Individual contact
 - b. Newspaper
 - c. Telephone
 7. Select an engineer. It is preferable to hire an engineer with experience in rural water system design. If you don't know one, contact the Oklahoma Rural Water Association.

IV. Second Meeting:

1. Spokesperson or chairperson presiding.
2. Have all prospective members attend this meeting, if possible.
3. Explain the need for water users survey form.
 - a. Pass out survey forms.
 - b. Have those present complete the forms.
 - c. Take up the forms.
 - d. Make arrangements to get water users survey forms to those not present.
 - e. Set deadline for survey forms to be returned.
 - f. Have users sign an easement. Include the easement on the survey form.
 - g. Invite the engineer to this meeting.

V. Preparation of Preliminary Engineering Report:

1. Collect all water users survey forms and give to the engineer.
2. Determine the number of users.
3. The engineer will prepare a cost estimate.
4. The engineer will prepare a map with the location of all users.
5. Select an attorney. It is preferable to hire an attorney with experience in rural water districts.

VI. Third Meeting:

1. Spokesperson or chairperson presiding.
2. Have the attorney and engineer attend this meeting.
3. Check with the engineer and attorney to ensure that they have all information needed.
4. Explain the need for and collect membership fees.
5. Prepare pre-application for loan.

VII. Incorporating the System:

1. Determine the type of system (rural water district, non-profit corporation, trust, authority, etc.).
2. Petition the county clerk, addressed to the Board of County Commissioners, requesting incorporation of the system (rural water district or public trust or authority).
3. Must be determined from the Oklahoma Water Resources Board whether or not adequate water is available to serve the proposed system.
4. The Board of County Commissioners sets a public hearing of all landowners and residents within the proposed district.

VIII. Organizing the System:

1. Elect a board of directors.
2. Articles of Incorporation (non –profit corporation).
3. Adopt Bylaws.
4. Adopt Rules and Regulations.
5. Declare availability of benefit units.
6. Lending institution and Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality approval of plans and specifications.
7. Department of Environmental Quality permit.
8. File water purchase contract or application for appropriation of water with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.