

EPA Public Water System Service Areas (Version 3)

Introduction to Service Area

A drinking water service area describes the extent of a geographic area that receives drinking water from a public water system. The EPA developed a national dataset of drinking water service areas that includes over 44,000 community water systems (CWS) that cover roughly 99% of the reported population served by a CWS, and more than 78,000 non-community water systems (NCWS) covering about 81% of the reported population served by a NCWS in the United States.¹ This dataset extends to all 50 states and Washington, DC as well as tribal and US territory systems. More detailed information including a map viewer, data downloads, data standards, frequently asked questions, and other resources and tools can be found on the EPA Public Water System Service Area Boundary webpages.

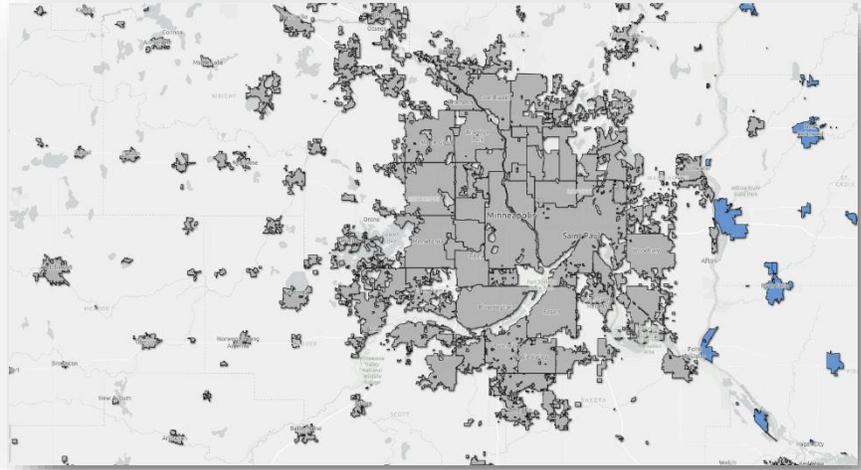


Figure 1: Example of community water system service areas in the Twin Cities, MN region. Metro areas often have a complex interplay of multiple water systems serving municipalities, homeowner associations, mobile home parks, and residential areas. The blue polygons represent modeled boundaries, and gray represents system sourced boundaries

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- ¹ EPA [defines a public water system](#) as one that provides water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances to at least 15 service connections or serves an average of at least 25 people for at least 60 days a year. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) defines three types of public water systems:
 - **Community Water System**— A public water system that has at least 15 service connections that serve year-round residents or that regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents.
 - **Non-Transient Non-Community Water System**—A public water system that regularly supplies water to at least 25 of the same people at least six months per year. Some examples are schools, factories, office buildings, and hospitals which have their own water systems.
 - **Transient Non-Community Water System**—A public water system that provides water in a place such as a gas station or campground where people do not remain for long periods of time.

Significance of the Dataset

Knowing the service area that a system serves enables you to connect the water system to the customers it serves. Service areas can be helpful in:

- Easily identifying safe drinking water act violation for a particular water utility.
- Informing public health and emergency response efforts to protect the public and critical infrastructure during emergencies.
- Supporting populations that face higher health risks to drinking water contaminants.
- Planning and affordability analyses of drinking water investments.
- Identification of systems and areas in need of greater support.

How Was This Dataset Developed?

The service area dataset is a combination of publicly available state datasets, data directly from water systems, and EPA-modeled service areas.

Community Water Systems

Approximately 60% of the CWS service area are from system sources such as water utilities or state agencies (or over 80% of the total population using public water). The remaining 40% of CWS service areas were modeled by the EPA using a variety of inputs, such as, building footprints and service connections. In a few cases (less than 10%), boundaries were supplied to EPA directly from water systems. The EPA reviewed state published service area boundary datasets and completed a [State Summary](#) review to inform whether the boundaries were of sufficient quality to include in the national dataset, or whether EPA-modeled boundaries would provide a more accurate representation of the service area boundary. For more detailed information, see the [Water System Service Area Technical Documentation](#).

Non-Community Water Systems

Approximately 84% of all active NCWS have a corresponding service area, covering all US states and territories except for Guam. EPA developed the NCWS service areas using a data reported to the EPA to locate the area served. Future updates will aim to improve existing service area boundaries and add water system service area that are not currently in the dataset. For detailed information on the NCWS dataset, see the [Transient and Non-Transient Non-Community Water System Service Areas Methods Document](#).

Dataset Limitations

The modeled water system service areas in this map are estimates and should not be treated as exact reflections of true service areas. While the EPA has reviewed the modeled data and the data provided by the state or by the system itself, it cannot guarantee the accuracy of these service areas. Additionally, people can be served by multiple types of water systems that are not shown on the map. Thus, these service areas should be used as a first step in learning more about the systems that serve your area. If you cannot identify a water system that serves you, it could be for the following reasons:

- You are on a [private well](#), which the Safe Drinking Water Act does not regulate. You can explore private well data in more detail by visiting the EPA-developed [nationwide map of private domestic wells](#).

- Your water comes from a public water system that is not mapped due to model input limitations that did not produce reliable/accurate boundaries. For example, many tribal and territorial public water systems are not mapped for this reason.

Future updates will aim to capture public water systems not currently mapped.

Questions

If you have questions that are not answered by this fact sheet or the [EPA Public Water System Service Area Boundary](#) webpages, or if you would like to correct an error you see on the map, please [contact us](#).

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