

Oklahoma City reaches 250 miles for water. Your capital plan has to reach just as far ahead.

Long-haul supply from the southeast, a drought-prone climate, hundreds of small rural systems, and a new PFAS rule all land on the same project list. OWRB has one of the country's best-regarded funding pipelines — but dollars are no longer the only constraint. Invizion helps Oklahoma utilities re-sequence a capital portfolio in a click, and defend every decision.

1.5M¹ People served drinking water by Oklahoma City across 17 communities and rural water districts — the state's largest system.	\$5.4B² In OWRB water & wastewater loans and grants approved to date across roughly 2,400 projects.	136K³ Acre-feet of Sardis Lake storage — about 87% of the lake — reserved for Oklahoma City's future supply.	\$100M⁴ One-time ARPA water, wastewater & dam grants OWRB awarded to Oklahoma communities in 2022.
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THE OKLAHOMA LANDSCAPE

Four forces are moving your project list at once

None of these is theoretical, and none of them waits for your next budget cycle. Together they mean the capital plan you approved last year may already be the wrong plan.

SUPPLY — DISTANCE & DROUGHT

Water that travels a quarter of the state

Oklahoma City's supply is drawn from reservoirs spread nearly 250 miles from northwest to southeast Oklahoma — Hefner and Stanley Draper in the metro, Canton to the northwest, and Atoka and McGee Creek in the southeast — then treated at two plants before distribution.¹ Moving water that far is itself a capital program: pipelines, pump stations, and the second Atoka conveyance that underpins the city's long-term supply.

Drought is the reason the reach keeps growing. To secure future supply, the Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust reserved 136,000 acre-feet of Sardis Lake storage — roughly 87% of the lake.³ The state's own long-range plan projects supply shortfalls in basins across Oklahoma through 2060.⁵

COMPLIANCE — AGING SYSTEMS

A renewal backlog spread across hundreds of small systems

EPA's most recent Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey put the national 20-year need at \$625 billion, with more than two-thirds of it in distribution and transmission pipe — the same buried mains that dominate Oklahoma's aging urban and rural systems.⁶

The pressure shows up in the loan pipeline. Recent OWRB awards range from Broken Arrow's \$27.93 million and Blackwell's \$18.84 million to Okmulgee's \$4 million for wastewater — renewal work at every size of system, competing for the same dollars.⁷

COMPLIANCE — PFAS

A new mandate that stacks on top of the backlog

In April 2024 EPA finalized the first national PFAS drinking-water standard: enforceable limits of 4 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, with initial monitoring required within three years and treatment where levels are exceeded within five.⁸

For Oklahoma systems that find a problem, treatment is a new capital line item that didn't exist in last year's plan — and it arrives alongside lead service line inventories and the renewal work already on the list. New obligations don't replace the old backlog; they stack on top of it.

DEMAND — GROWTH & WASTEWATER

Growth on the treatment side, too

Oklahoma City's metro is among the faster-growing in the region, and the utility's wastewater and stormwater side serves more than 230,000 customers — every new connection a capacity commitment on both the water and the sewer ledgers.⁹

Growth-driven capital competes for the same funding as renewal and compliance. The sequencing between them — what accelerates, what stretches, what defers — is exactly what boards and trusts fight over.

WHO RUNS OKLAHOMA'S WATER

Municipal utilities and hundreds of rural water districts

Oklahoma has almost no large investor-owned water utilities. The system is overwhelmingly public: big-city departments and public trusts on one side, and a vast network of rural water districts and authorities on the other — where the funding gaps hit hardest.

Municipal utilities & trusts

Rates set by city councils and public trust authorities

Oklahoma City Utilities / OKC Water Utilities Trust	1.5M+ served across 17 communities & districts
City of Tulsa Water & Sewer	~650,000 served · 220 MGD capacity
Norman, Edmond, Moore	Large Central Oklahoma municipal systems
Lawton, Broken Arrow, Stillwater	Municipal utilities run through public trusts
Enid, Muskogee, Bartlesville	Regional municipal providers

Municipal water and sewer rates in Oklahoma are set locally, by city councils and public trust authorities — not by a statewide rate regulator.

Rural districts & authorities

Districts, conservancy districts, and state raw-water authorities

Rural water districts (600+ statewide)	Small systems where funding & renewal gaps hit hardest
Central Oklahoma Master Conservancy District	Lake Thunderbird raw water for Norman, Midwest City, Del City
Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA)	State raw-water & power authority, NE Oklahoma
Municipal authorities & public trusts	The financing vehicle behind most OWRB borrowing

Every capital dollar has to be defensible

Oklahoma has no statewide utility commission setting municipal water rates. Accountability runs to local boards, to state regulators on water quality and supply, and increasingly to the tribal nations whose settlements shape supply.

City councils & public trusts set water and sewer rates locally and approve capital plans in public, in front of ratepayers — there is no statewide rate regulator for municipal water.

Oklahoma DEQ holds Safe Drinking Water Act primacy and co-administers the Drinking Water SRF — lead service line inventories, PFAS monitoring under EPA's 2024 rule, and the compliance capital that follows.⁸

Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) appropriates water rights, oversees dam safety, maintains the Comprehensive Water Plan, and runs the state's loan and grant programs⁵

Tribal water settlements shape supply and allocation — the 2016 Choctaw & Chickasaw Nations settlement (WINN Act) resolved the Sardis Lake dispute and set the terms for Oklahoma City's future supply.³

One of the country's most-used SRF pipelines

Oklahoma's OWRB is widely regarded for the scale and low cost of its financing. The constraint is no longer only dollars — it's readiness: which projects are shovel-ready, which qualify, and how the timing lines up with everything else on the list.

~\$5.4B in OWRB loans & grants approved to date across roughly 2,400 projects, saving communities an estimated \$1.3B versus conventional financing. Clean Water SRF rates run near 60% of the AAA market rate; Drinking Water SRF near 70%.²

Active SRF & FAP awards keep flowing — recent examples include Broken Arrow (\$27.93M), Blackwell (\$18.84M), and Okmulgee (\$4M for wastewater).⁷

\$100M one-time ARPA grants awarded in 2022 — \$50M reserved for smaller systems, \$40M for larger communities, and \$10M for dam rehabilitation.⁴

\$1B in federal PFAS funding was made available nationally through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to help states test for and treat PFAS — delivered to Oklahoma systems through the SRFs.⁸

WIFIA & USDA Rural Development round out the stack: EPA's WIFIA offers low-cost loans for larger projects (no Oklahoma loan has closed yet — a readiness opportunity), and USDA RD funds water and wastewater for rural communities of 10,000 or fewer.¹¹¹²

OKLAHOMA WATER, IN BRIEF

Questions Oklahoma utility leaders are asking

Short, sourced answers — the same facts we'll dig into on a call, in the context of your system.

Where does Oklahoma City get its water?

From reservoirs spread nearly 250 miles across the state — Hefner and Stanley Draper in the metro, Canton to the northwest, and Atoka and McGee Creek in the southeast — serving more than 1.5 million people in 17 communities and rural water districts. To secure future supply, the city's water trust reserved about 136,000 acre-feet of Sardis Lake storage, roughly 87% of the lake's

Who sets water rates in Oklahoma?

Municipal water and sewer rates are set locally by city councils and public trust authorities — Oklahoma has no statewide commission regulating municipal water rates. Water quality is regulated by DEQ under Safe Drinking Water Act primacy, and water rights and dam safety fall to the OWRB.

How big is OWRB's financing program?

OWRB has approved roughly \$5.4 billion in water and wastewater loans and grants across about 2,400 projects, saving communities an estimated \$1.3 billion versus conventional financing. Clean Water SRF loans price near 60% of the AAA market rate and Drinking Water SRF loans near 70%. Recent awards include Broken Arrow (\$27.93M) and Blackwell (\$18.84M).

How will the EPA PFAS rule affect Oklahoma systems?

EPA's April 2024 rule sets enforceable limits of 4 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS. Systems must complete initial monitoring within three years and install treatment where levels are exceeded within five. For any Oklahoma system that finds a problem, that treatment is a new capital line item — and \$1 billion in federal IIJA funding was made available to help states test and treat.

What funding is available for small rural Oklahoma systems?

Several channels: OWRB's Drinking Water and Clean Water SRFs, its Financial Assistance Program, one-time ARPA grants (\$50M of the \$100M reserved for smaller systems), and Emergency and REAP grant programs; plus USDA Rural Development for communities of 10,000 or fewer.

How does Invizion help Oklahoma water utilities plan capital?

Invizion is scenario-based capital portfolio optimization for water utilities. It lets you model how a drought year, a delayed SRF loan, a PFAS deadline, or a growth surge reshuffles your whole project list, re-sequence the portfolio automatically against the constraints you set, and keep a defensible record of every decision for your council, trust, or ratepayers. The best next step is a short first meeting to look at it against your own program.

REFERENCES

Sources

Every figure in this briefing is tied to a primary or authoritative source.

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2. Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Financial Assistance Program — \$5.37B in approved loans/grants across 2,386 projects, ~\$1.3B in community savings (as of Nov. 2, 2021); CWSRF ~60% and DWSRF ~70% of AAA market rate. [owrb.ok.gov](#)
3. Sardis Lake (Oklahoma) — OKC Water Utilities Trust reserved 136,000 acre-feet (86.7% of storage); \$27M paid to USACE (2010); Choctaw & Chickasaw Nations litigation (2011) resolved by the 2016 water settlement (WINN Act, PL 114-322). [en.wikipedia.org](#)
4. Oklahoma Water Resources Board, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grants — \$100M one-time program (\$10M dams, \$40M larger communities, \$50M smaller communities), applications 2022, funds expended by 2026. [oklahoma.gov](#)
5. Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (2012 update) — 50-year horizon to 2060, 82 stream basins, "Oklahoma H2O" tool identifying projected supply shortfalls. [owrb.ok.gov](#)
6. U.S. EPA, 7th Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey & Assessment — \$625B national 20-year need (\$422.9B distribution/transmission, \$107B treatment, \$56.1B storage, \$25.2B source), 2021. [epa.gov](#)
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8. U.S. EPA, final PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation — 4 ppt MCLs for PFOA/PFOS (April 10, 2024), monitoring within 3 years, treatment within 5; ~100M people protected; \$1B made available via IJA for PFAS. [epa.gov](#)
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10. City of Tulsa Water & Sewer — ~650,000 served; sources Spavinaw/Eucha, Oologah, Hudson (backup); 220 MGD treatment capacity; Mohawk & A.B. Jewell WTPs plus four wastewater plants, 2025. [cityoftulsa.org](#)
11. U.S. EPA, WIFIA Closed Loans — national list of closed WIFIA loans; no Oklahoma borrower listed as of 2026 (a readiness opportunity for larger Oklahoma projects). [epa.gov](#)
12. USDA Rural Development, Water & Environmental Programs — loans and grants for water and wastewater infrastructure in rural communities of 10,000 or fewer. [rd.usda.gov](#)
13. Oklahoma Water Resources Board, financing & grant programs overview — Clean Water SRF, Drinking Water SRF, Financial Assistance Program, Emergency Grants, and REAP grants for eligible Oklahoma systems, 2025. [oklahoma.gov](#)

ABOUT INVIZION

Capital program optimization for utilities

Invizion is a purpose-built capital lifecycle management platform for water and wastewater utilities. It integrates budgeting, CIP, scenario analysis, and funding-source tracking in one system — so utilities can re-sequence a capital portfolio in a click and demonstrate audit-ready, defensible decisions to regulators, boards, and rating agencies.

See what a defensible Oklahoma capital plan looks like — book a 20-minute first meeting.

Book your first meeting →