**New States/Staff Session Q&A**

**AWOP National Meeting**

**July 19 – 21, 2021**

1. **What should the first steps be to get started in AWOP? How should the program progress over the years?**

* From Rick Lieberman: At NOLT we suggest reviewing the AWOP goals to see which ones you want to adopt for your state program, then find a strategy to communicate those goals to water systems. The first component of the AWOP model that we would promote is the Status Component. It involves trying to collect performance data, but, if the task is large, a state could start with just a smaller area within the state. The data would answer the ques­tion, “What is the status of performance among these systems compared to the AWOP goals?”

1. **What should an AWOP team look like?**

* Rick referred anyone with this question to the state background documents to review how many core team members they have, who is included, etc. New state training stresses hav­ing at least two people participating. States have implemented this differently, but the goal is to build the team. Regional engineers are usual participants, but it is a good idea to include data management personnel, capacity development and operator certification staff, training experts, and others.

1. **Do we need to have CPE capability to have an AWOP?**

* Rick replied that CPEs are a great tool, and the demonstration of this tool is included in the new state training. He emphasized that CPEs are not the only tool used in AWOP, however, and states do not need to establish this capability to have a sustainable AWOP.

1. **How would a state work to get water system buy-in?**

* Rick suggested that states utilize the “Why Optimize?” presentations related to turbidity optimization and distribution system optimization to gain buy-in with water systems. Right now, the industry is concerned with acquiring new staff as older employees leave, and it is an opportune time for optimization training as utilities look to engage these new employees.

1. **How does a state establish goals and metrics? What about systems that are already in compliance?**

* Compliance data and optimization data tell two different stories. Metrics are available, and many states can help share their stories about adopting goals. Starting out, states should go at their own pace and use the resources they have available to determine what they can implement. There is a network that will help facilitate states through the model and answer questions.