



Enfield Water Needs Assessment Survey Results

**Prepared for:
Town of Enfield**

By: Becky Sims, MPA
NY State Manager
RCAP Solutions

September 15, 2025

Background, Purpose, and Methodology

The Town of Enfield is located in western Tompkins County, New York and does not have municipal water or sewer services. The population was 3,362 at the 2020 Census, with residents living in mostly rural areas, mobile home parks, and some moderately dense residential neighborhoods. In response to community and board interest in potential municipal water service in certain areas of the Town, a Needs Assessment survey was conducted with technical assistance from RCAP Solutions.

The Enfield Water Protection Committee worked with RCAP Solutions to identify targeted areas of the Town that would be surveyed for interest in municipal water, using lot size, density, and available local data from a 2021 private well survey conducted with NY Rural Water, and a USGS aquifer study to identify these areas. Twenty-five questions were developed to understand existing water supply conditions and costs, and interest in future municipal services. A survey form was created in the online platform Survey123. Postcards with an online survey link and QR code were mailed to 368 households and the online survey link was shared in the Town e-newsletter, online community forums and announced at public meetings. Paper forms were available at the Town Hall and upon request. Respondents were required to enter an address for the survey to provide geospatial information and assist with future consideration of potential water district boundaries. The survey collected 93 responses regarding water supply, quality, cost and interest in potential municipal water and sewer services.

Summary of Key Results (For complete results, see Appendix A)

Current Water Supply and Use

- Nearly everyone - 91% rely on drilled wells; remainder use dug wells or springs.
- About 75% drink tap water (treated or untreated); while ~25% purchase drinking water.
- Most never run out of water, though 17% reported running out of water at least once.
- 60 households have recently tested water; none reported water-related illness.
- 83% report at least one water quality problem, primarily hardness, staining, and sulfur water.
- About 2/3 of households have at least one treatment device, most commonly water softeners.

Municipal Water Service

- 40% responded positively (very + somewhat interested)
- 55% responded negatively (very + somewhat disinterested)
- 5% responded neutral

Willingness to Pay for Municipal Water

- Unwilling to pay : 43 households (46%) of these, 37 responded with negative interest in municipal water service
- <\$500/year: 31 households (33%)
- \$500+/year: 14 households (15%)

Municipal Sewer Service

- 35% responded positively (very + somewhat interested)
- 57% responded negatively (very + somewhat disinterested)
- 8% responded neutral
- Willingness to pay mirrors water results: nearly half unwilling, most others <\$500/year.

Concerns

- 42% reported no current or future concerns about contamination of their water supply
- Manure spreading, agricultural runoff, road salt, and residential development were identified as concerns by at least 20% of respondents, each.
- 40% reported being concerned (somewhat or very) about stormwater or runoff management, while 38% reported being somewhat unconcerned or not at all concerned.

Discussion

The Town of Enfield residents rely exclusively on private wells and springs for water supply, with most households experiencing water quality issues and using treatment systems. Opinions on municipal water and sewer services are polarized, and willingness to pay is limited, posing challenges for affordable development of a municipal water supply. Concerns related to water quality and stormwater runoff are also polarized, with similar numbers of respondents having concerns and not.

Conclusions

Despite strong disinterest from 45% of respondents, strong interest in municipal services exists in 25% of responding properties, with another 15% expressing some interest. Exploring this interest further could be worthwhile if the Town wishes to continue pursuing municipal water service options. Two of the five geographic priority areas emerged as having more positive response than negative response: along Enfield Main Road/SR327 between the Town Highway Barn and Rt. 79/Halseyville Road intersection, and along Hayts Road between Halseyville Road and Sheffield Road. Responses from non-residential properties was limited to 2 responses. Any further exploration of interest should include business owners, school representatives that may wish to consolidate their small regulated water systems to a municipal supply.

Regardless of whether a future municipal supply will be developed, the majority of Enfield residents are likely to remain reliant on private water supplies. The Town can continue to build on its work protecting local water quality by remaining a source of education and resources for people who are seeking assistance in safely maintaining a private water supply.

Resources

Private Well Class – A free, online, self-paced class with 10 modules for well users to learn how to care for a private well, ensure a safe water supply and plan for affordable maintenance:

<https://privatewellclass.org/>

Water Well Trust – Nonprofit providing funding for wells for low-income families without access to safe drinking water due to contamination or supply: <https://www.waterwelltrust.org/>

RCAP/SERCAP Individual Household Well & Septic Loan – RCAP's southeastern provider, SERCAP, administers low-interest (1%) loans to low and moderate-income homeowners for repair or replacement of private well or septic system <https://www.rcapsolutions.org/private-wells-assistance/>

USDA Rural Development – Also known as the Section 504 Home Repair program, loans and grants for very low-income homeowners to mitigate health and safety hazards, such as a private water supply: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants>

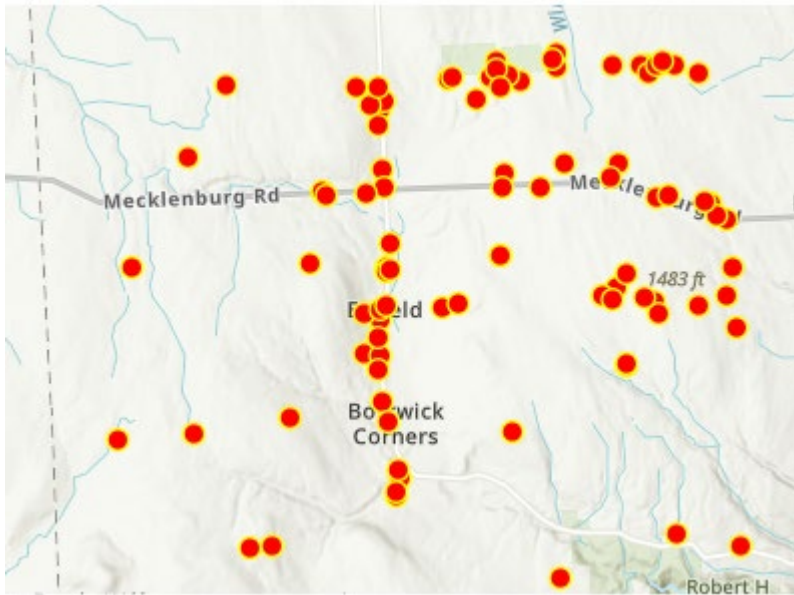
Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services (INHS) – Local nonprofit administering grant funds for major home repairs, including health and safety hazards related to water supply or septic systems: <https://www.ithacanhs.org/homerepairs>

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to the Town of Enfield Water Protection Committee and its members, without whom this project would not be possible: Chair Nancy Spero, Town Supervisor Stephanie Redmond, Planning Board Chair Dan Walker, Julie Schroeder, Tom Joyce, Peter Penniman, Harry Stewart, and Town Clerk Mary Cornell. RCAP Solutions GIS staff Madden Bremer and Adam Bourque also contributed to this project.

Appendix A - Complete Results

1. What is your street address?



2. What is the primary source of water serving your property?

Response	Count	Percent
Drilled well	85	91.4%
Dug well	5	5.4%
Driven point well	1	1.1%
Other	1	1.1%
Spring	1	1.1%

3. If you have a well, how deep is it?

Response	Count	Percent
51-100 feet	31	33.3%
100 - 200 feet	21	22.6%
Unknown	21	22.6%
26 - 50 feet	8	8.6%
0-25 feet	6	6.5%
200+ feet	5	5.4%

4. Do you drink your tap water?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes, untreated	41	44.1%
Yes, with treatment	28	30.1%
No - purchase drinking water	22	23.7%
other	2	2.2%

5. How do you use the water at your property? (Select all that apply)

Response	Count	Percent
Residential	91	97.8%
Domestic use	91	97.8%
Watering garden	56	60.2%
Agricultural use - livestock	14	15.1%
Watering lawn	6	6.5%
Commercial use	4	4.3%
Agricultural use - crops	3	3.2%
other	3	3.2%

6. Does your untreated water have any of the following quality problems? (Select all that apply)

Response	Count	Percent
Hardness	65	69.9%
Orange/Red Staining	33	35.5%
Sulfur (Hydrogen sulfide)	26	28.0%
Bad odor	19	20.4%
Bad taste	18	19.4%
Cloudiness (turbidity)	11	11.8%
Black staining	8	8.6%
Bacterial contamination	7	7.5%
other	6	6.5%
Salty	2	2.2%
Methane	1	1.1%
natural gas	1	1.1%

7. Do you ever run out of water?

Response	Count	Percent
No	78	83.9%
Yes, only during dry spells	9	9.7%
Yes, throughout the year	3	3.2%
Yes, but only once	2	2.2%
Yes, during summer months	1	1.1%

9. Has anyone in your household had any recent illnesses like diarrhea or other GI disorders, which you believe may be related to your water supply?

Response	Count	Percent
No	93	100.0%

10. What water quality treatment devices do you use in your home? (Select all that apply)

Response	Count	Percent
Water softener	33	35.5%
Chlorination	13	14.0%
Sediment filter	13	14.0%
Activated carbon filter	10	10.8%
other	9	9.7%
Iron bacteria filter	8	8.6%
Single tap filter (such as Brita)	7	7.5%
Reverse osmosis	6	6.5%
UV Light	4	4.3%
Hydrogen peroxide	2	2.2%

11. If you have water treatment devices in the home, how effective are these treatments?

Response	Count	Percent
Somewhat effective	25	26.9%
Very effective	25	26.9%
Not effective	4	4.3%

12. Approximately how much are you paying annually to maintain your water supply?

Range	Count	Percent
\$0 – 225	43	63%
\$226 – 780	14	20.5%
\$781 – 1,500	5	7.3%
\$1,500 – 2,880	3	4.4%
\$2,880 – 3,600	3	4.4%

13. How interested are you in changing to a municipal water source, if it were available?

Response	Count	Percent
Very disinterested	42	45.2%
Very interested	23	24.7%
Somewhat interested	14	15.1%
Somewhat disinterested	9	9.7%
Neutral	5	5.4%

14. How much would you be willing to pay per year for municipal water service, if it were available?

Response	Count	Percent
Unwilling to pay	42	45.2%
<\$500/year	31	33.3%
\$501 - \$1,000	8	8.6%
Unable to pay	5	5.4%
\$1,001 - \$1,500	4	4.3%
\$1,501 - \$2,000	2	2.2%

15. Do you think there are septic disposal problems in your neighborhood?

Response	Count	Percent
No	58	62.4%
Unsure	29	31.2%
Yes	6	6.5%

16. What is the age of your septic system, if known?

Response	Count	Percent
26-40 years old	26	28.0%
0-15 years old	24	25.8%
Unknown	15	16.1%
16-25 years old	14	15.1%
More than 40 years old	12	12.9%

17. How interested are you in changing to a municipal sewer source, if it were available?

Response	Count	Percent
Very disinterested	40	43.0%
Very interested	20	21.5%
Somewhat disinterested	13	14.0%
Somewhat interested	12	12.9%
Neutral	7	7.5%

18. How much would you be willing to pay per year for municipal sewer service, if it were available?

Response	Count	Percent
Unwilling to pay	42	45.2%
<\$500/year	31	33.3%
Unable to pay	6	6.5%
\$501 - \$1,000	5	5.4%
\$1,001 - \$1,500	5	5.4%
\$1,501 - \$2,000	2	2.2%

19. I am concerned about the following sources of current or future contamination of my water supply:

Response	Count	Percent
Manure spreading	25	26.9%
Agricultural runoff (other than manure spreading)	22	23.7%
Residential development	21	22.6%
Road salt	21	22.6%
Industrial	15	16.1%
commercial Development	15	16.1%
Gas drilling	13	14.0%
Onsite septic systems	10	10.8%
Other	6	6.5%

20. How concerned are you about stormwater or runoff management?

Response	Count	Percent
Somewhat concerned	31	33.3%
Not concerned at all	25	26.9%
Neutral	19	20.4%
Somewhat unconcerned	10	10.8%
Strongly disagree	6	6.5%

21. How many people including yourself, live in your household?

Range	Count	Percent
0 -1	16	18.2%
2	43	48.8%
3	12	13.6%
4	7	4.5%
5	5	5.7%
6 or more	5	5.7%

22. Do you own or rent?

Response	Count	Percent
Own	91	97.6%
Non-residential property	2	2.4%