

University of North Carolina School of Government

2026 Water and Wastewater Finance Strategies Workshop

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

9:00-9:30 am: **Water and Wastewater Utilities: Core Concepts and Financial Foundations**

Hope Thomson, Senior Project Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

9:30-11:45 pm: **Setting Legal Rates that Work: Costs, Revenue, and Financial Stability**

Kara Millonzi, Professor, UNC School of Government

Hope Thomson, Senior Project Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

Dr. Ahmed Rachid El-Khattabi, Research Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

11:45-12:30 pm: **Lunch**

12:30-3:30 pm: **Setting Legal Rates that Work: Costs, Revenue, and Financial Stability (cont.)**

Kara Millonzi, Professor, UNC School of Government

Hope Thomson, Senior Project Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

Dr. Ahmed Rachid El-Khattabi, Research Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

9:00-10:00 am: **Breakout Session 1**

A. System Development Fees: Legal Requirements and Practical Applications

Kara Millonzi, Professor, UNC School of Government

B. Tackling Workforce Challenges: Quick Win Strategies

Christy Ihlo, Deputy Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

C. PFAS: Regulatory Context, Data, and Funding

Hope Thomson, Senior Project Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

Dr. Ahmed Rachid El-Khattabi, Research Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

10:15-11:15 am: **Breakout Session 2**

A. System Development Fees: Legal Requirements and Practical Applications

Kara Millonzi, Professor, UNC School of Government

B. Tackling Workforce Challenges: Quick Win Strategies

Christy Ihlo, Deputy Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

C. PFAS: Regulatory Context, Data, and Funding

Hope Thomson, Senior Project Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

Dr. Ahmed Rachid El-Khattabi, Research Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

11:30 am-12:30 pm: **Using Data to Support Utility Planning and Financial Decisions**

Dr. Ahmed Rachid El-Khattabi, Research Director, UNC School of Government Environmental Finance Center

12:30-1:15 pm: **Lunch**

1:15 – 2:00: **Utility Customer Communications in NC and Beyond**

Mary Tiger, OWASA

2:15-3:30 pm: **State Funding Opportunities and the Viable Utility Program: What Utilities Need to Know**

Shadi Eskaf, Director, NC Division of Water Infrastructure