



NET BLUE

An Initiative to Support Water-Neutral Growth

A collaborative initiative of the Alliance for Water Efficiency,
the Environmental Law Institute,
and River Network
www.net-blue.org



Why Net Blue?

As communities grow, many services must be provided to new neighborhoods, businesses and people. These services include additional roads, police officers and fire fighters, schools, stormwater and wastewater treatment facilities, and drinking water. Providing these additional services may stress a community's finances as well as the natural environment, but there are opportunities to meet their new residents' and business' needs in a way that is sustainable, limits the impacts on local natural resources and saves taxpayer dollars.

When it comes to water, a few communities are pioneers in "water-neutral growth." By requiring new residential and commercial developments to offset their water use through water-efficient retrofits of existing development, communities have continued to grow without increasing their overall water use or requiring new water withdrawals from rivers and aquifers. By addressing water management and community planning together, new development can help create new water supply capacity to meet increasing water demands.

By choosing to adopt an ordinance that requires or incentivizes this approach, communities can stretch their water supplies, decrease the need for new infrastructure, and better protect the local environment and recreational opportunities.





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What is Net Blue?

The Net Blue initiative attempts to make water-neutral growth more accessible, as water-related restrictions on growth become a reality to more communities. To help communities build the framework for water-neutral growth, the Alliance for Water Efficiency, the Environmental Law Institute and River Network developed a **Net Blue Ordinance Toolkit**, which includes a **Model Ordinance Worksheet** and **User's Guide**, **Three Net Blue Ordinance Examples**, an **Offset Methodology Workbook** and **User's Guide**, and **Three Net Blue Water Demand Offset Strategy Examples**.

- ▶ **The Model Ordinance Worksheet** leads a user through the tailoring of a water-offset ordinance to the political climate, legal framework, and environmental conditions of the community.
- ▶ **The Model Ordinance User's Guide** details how the worksheet functions, explains the various cues, and provides tips for maximizing the potential of the worksheet.
- ▶ **Three Net Blue Ordinance Examples** demonstrate the diverse outputs of the worksheet and some of the many problems and constraints that it can accommodate.
- ▶ **The Offset Methodology Workbook** provides a user-friendly structure for calculating offsets from off-site water conservation retrofits, rainwater harvesting, and stormwater capture.
- ▶ **The Offset Methodology User Guide** details how the workbook functions, explains the various offset calculations and worksheets, and how to use the offset strategies calculator to prepare offsets for a new development.
- ▶ **Three Water Demand Offset Strategy Examples** demonstrate how offsets can be calculated for the three prepared ordinance examples.

The Net Blue Ordinance Toolkit was created with the input of our Project Advisory Committee, including experts in water resources, water law, and planning and zoning, as well as input from partner communities and organizations across the country representing diverse conditions and circumstances. Partner communities include: Acton, MA; San Francisco, CA; Albuquerque, NM; Austin, TX; Cobb County, GA; Madison, WI; and Bozeman, MT.

Is Your Community Ready?

We are seeking communities to pilot the ordinance. If you are interested in learning more about developing a water-neutral growth policy for your community, contact us at www.net-blue.org.