



Water Access for Growers: Frequently Asked Questions



Resilience +
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CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Last revised December 2025

I DON'T HAVE WATER ON MY SITE. WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS FOR IRRIGATING MY GARDEN/FARM?

RAIN BARRELS: average cost is \$100 - 200 or you can get on Green Light New Orleans' waitlist for a low-cost barrel.

- **Pros:** low cost, no monthly bill
- **Cons:** inconsistent especially with more frequent droughts, more labor intensive

INSTALLING WATER METER: average cost is \$2,000 - \$5,000 (depending on if your lot ever had a meter or not) with a low monthly water bill (depends on lot size but often \$20 - \$50).

- **Pros:** consistent water source, can install irrigation system (such as drip or sprinklers)
- **Cons:** high up-front cost, monthly bill

HOW LONG IS THE PROCESS TO GET A WATER METER (RE)-INSTALLED?

It depends on a lot of factors so there's no certain timeline. If your lot had a meter on it at some point, it could average about 2 months. If it never had a meter on it, it would likely take a little longer.

I'M A RENTER. HOW DOES THIS PROCESS WORK FOR ME?

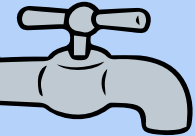
If you already have water on your lot, you can have the account changed to Irrigation Only without involvement of your landlord. If you're getting a new water meter installed, you'll need to provide a lease and written letter of support from your landlord.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT COSTS?

Property owners/tenants are responsible for installing any water lines within the private property's boundaries using a licensed master plumber. If there has never been a meter on the site, property owners/tenants will likely have to pay a utility contractor to connect a new line to the SWBNO main water line.

HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT SIZE TAP/METER TO INSTALL?

For most gardens and small farms, a $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 inch tap size will be the ideal size. If you are a larger farm, you may want to invest in a 1.5 - 2 inch tap size.





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WHAT IS A BACKFLOW PREVENTER AND DO I NEED ONE?

A backflow preventer is an attachment that prevents potentially contaminated water from flowing backwards into the main water supply from your lot.

They are required for all underground sprinkler systems or any system where the outlets are less than 12 inches above the ground (such as soaker hoses, etc.).

Drip systems usually don't require a backflow preventer, just a hose bib vacuum breaker. For questions about backflow preventers, call 504-380-6505 or email backflow@swbno.org.

CAN I GET TRASH PICK UP AND IRRIGATION, BUT NOT SEWERAGE SERVICES?

Yes! If your garden/farm would like to get sanitation services along with your water, here are the steps to follow:

- Start by establishing your irrigation-only account.
- Once you have an account number, request the opt-in sanitation charges with SWBNO's Customer Service department.
- Finally, reach out to the disposal company to request a garbage can.

WHERE CAN I FIND APPROVED PLUMBERS AND UTILITY CONTRACTORS?

SWBNO has a list of on their website:

<https://www.swbno.org/DrinkingWater/ApprovedPlumbers>

I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS AND NEED SOME HELP DECIDING HOW TO GET WATER FOR MY GARDEN/FARM. WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR SUPPORT?

For technical assistance and help identifying plumbers: Reach out to Sprout (info@sproutnola.org or 504-512-6646)

Looking for more resources on urban agriculture practices in New Orleans?

Visit <https://nola.gov/urbanag> for more information

