

# ILLINOIS WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION 2025 INTELLIGENT WATER SYSTEMS CHALLENGE

## FAQs

### The Challenge

#### **What is the overall goal of this Challenge?**

The purpose of the challenge is to encourage college students (both undergraduate and graduate) to develop solutions for real-world environmental problems with the use of advanced data analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). The goal of this challenge is to promote the use of advanced tools and predictive analytics for common problems in the water and environmental sector

### Teams

#### **What is a Team?**

A Team consists of anywhere between 2 to 6 individual members who will work together to develop a solution to the challenge topics submitted.

#### **Who can be on a Team?**

Teams can consist of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 people. Members water/wastewater professionals or college students (undergraduate and graduate) at the time of registration. Each team shall include at least one member meeting the following criteria: (1) Student from Illinois but attending university in another state, (2) Student attending a university in Illinois, (3) water/wastewater professional involved with a utility in Illinois.

#### **Can an individual participate on more than one Team?**

An individual can be on multiple teams. If an individual is on multiple teams, they must disclose to all teams their participation and role in each team for transparency and to clarify participation expectations.

#### **Can teams add members?**

Teams may freely add members prior to the challenge plan submission deadline. Between the challenge plan submission deadline and the final solution submission, the team must request permission to add members by transmitting a written request to the Steering Committee that includes an explanation of the reasons for the request. The Steering Committee will approve or deny the request within one week.

#### **How can a team keep its intellectual property confidential?**

The IWS Challenge is not responsible for protecting Teams' intellectual property rights. If confidential aspects of a proprietary technology or software are presented as part of a Team's solution, it is the Team's responsibility to indicate this in their submittal and to request appropriate non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) from Steering Committee members and judges.

## Solutions

### **What can I do if I have a great solution already in place?**

Problems with previously completed solutions are not eligible for prize consideration but may be submitted for recognition as advancing the concept of Intelligent Water Systems. Recognition may include opportunities to showcase the completed solution and acknowledgement at the IWS Challenge finals at IWPC 2023.

### **What should I do if I have already worked towards a solution?**

Opportunities and problems with solutions already begun are eligible for prize consideration, but the submittal must clearly describe previously accomplished work, including existing IWS components.

### **Can proprietary technology be used in a solution?**

Proprietary technology (e.g., custom analytics tools, as contrasted with open-source software) can be used in a solution. The Challenge criteria are intended to give judges flexibility in evaluating the value of a solution. For example, a portable and scalable solution implemented with proprietary tools may provide an alternative contribution worthy of consideration.

***The Steering Committee is responsible for all determinations of eligibility with respect to teams, and solutions. All decisions by the judges and steering committee are final and binding.***