

The community service representatives don't just serve a neighborhood; they are members of it as well and reach out to neighbors to inform and educate about their public utility services.



## What is the FGUA?

The Florida Governmental Utility Authority (FGUA) is a special purpose government that acquires, owns, improves and operates water and wastewater utilities.

## Who are the decision-makers at the FGUA?

The FGUA's Board of Directors is comprised of representatives appointed from "host" communities. They meet monthly and set policies, service standards and strategic direction. The FGUA System Manager is responsible for executing the direction and objectives of the board. These goals and objectives include maintaining financially sound utilities with excellent customer service.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED

*Questions*





## How does a local government partner with the FGUA?

A local government in whose jurisdiction an FGUA utility system is located must consent to an FGUA presence there. This consent forms the partnership. Further, certain local governments become a member of the FGUA simply by execution of an interlocal agreement. This interlocal agreement essentially becomes the “constitution” of how the utility will operate in partnership with its member governments. Florida Statutes grant the FGUA the authority to set utility rates and charges, levy special assessments and issue debt to finance the acquisition and improvements of utility systems. The FGUA enjoys the same benefit of low cost public financing that cities and counties enjoy, including eligibility for state and federal grants. Each member government is also granted the right to acquire the utility system in their jurisdiction from the FGUA for only the amount of outstanding debt.

The FGUA can provide a vital transitional step for local governments to acquire, interconnect, or consolidate their local utilities. This is particularly helpful in moving problematic private systems with less local control to public ownership. This step relieves the local government of time and resources, allowing substantial improvements to be made to the system if necessary, until they are prepared or desire to assume direct ownership. It also provides local governments a supplemental technical assistance resource.

The FGUA has managed \$500 million in financial transactions and more than \$220 million in capital improvement projects over the past 10 years. Further, the financial resources of the local governments are not tied up in the utility system after the FGUA's acquisition.

## What are the customer's benefits if their utility is owned and operated by the FGUA?

Public customers can expect facility improvements, more reliable, efficient utility services with excellent customer service. System acquisition and improvements can be financed on a public tax-exempt basis, minimizing the capital cost to customers. Additionally, the FGUA's centralized management, operations, and planning leverage economies of scale allowing for a more streamlined, efficient approach to utility management. This results in more effective, lower cost service and greater responsiveness.

## What type of experience does the FGUA have with water & wastewater management?

The FGUA has been in existence since 1999 and has representatives with hundreds of collective years managing and operating these services. These include

Since acquiring its first utility, the FGUA has invested more than \$220 million in capital improvement projects resulting in superior utility service and efficiency.

former city/county managers, certified plant operators, engineers, contractors, accountants and customer service professionals. The utility currently services 120,000 customer connections in 14 cities and counties throughout Florida. The FGUA delivers more than 10 million gallons per day of drinking water and treats more than 7 million gallons of wastewater every day.

The FGUA recognizes that each utility system and community is different and tailors its services to meet its needs and requirements. The FGUA's award-winning system improvements in the (formerly private) Aloha system, in Pasco County were responsible for reducing customer complaints about their water from 55 per month to 10 per month in one year.

## Who provides the customer service after the FGUA acquisition?

The FGUA has a customer service center in each of its five major service areas – Golden Gate, Lady Lake, Lehigh Acres, Pasco County, and North Ft. Myers. These centers offer a full range of services, including account set up, bill pay, complaint resolution and even the meeting place for customer utility advisory committees.

Customers can also access and manage their accounts through a web-based service or by phone. Payments can also be made by debit or credit card online, over the phone or in person at any Amscot or Western Union location.

Over the past five years, FGUA representatives have participated in more than 1,600 community events and meetings where they obtain feedback to better serve customers.

The FGUA regularly performs an independent, statistically valid customer service survey. In 2011, 92 percent of the FGUA customers said they didn't have any trouble reaching an FGUA representative regarding their issue or problem. Customers also reported that the FGUA customer service representatives are courteous, knowledgeable, and provide overall satisfaction.