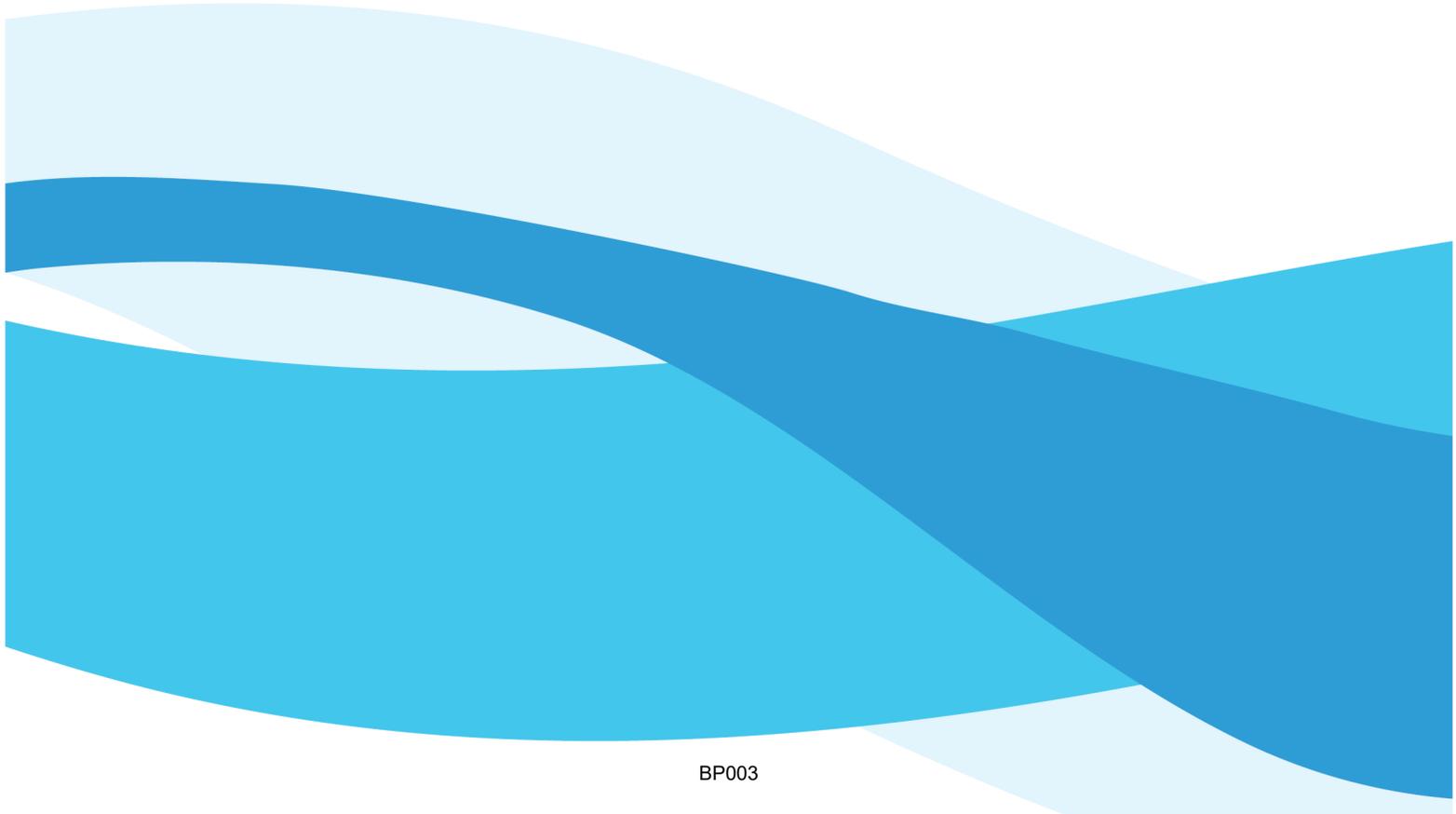


# Tab 1

Water Check 2025 report



# 2025 Water Check Program Report

*Prepared for the Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy*

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## 2025 WATER CHECK PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2025, the Water Check Program supported 5 Water Checkers who conducted residential, commercial, and institutional Checks. There were 2 teams working together most days with 1 Water Checker floating and filling in on large Checks and when time off was taken. We continued to focus on Checking Salt Lake City properties and also began working with the Salt Lake City School District. We started the 2025 season on May 21<sup>st</sup> and ended on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

The early season was focused on contacting all participants who requested Checks following the completion of the 2024 season. These requests were organized by location and date of request and contacted in the order in which they were received. Three means of communication were utilized (phone, text, email) and at least 3 separate contacts were made (very often 9) to ensure that those who still wanted a Water Check received one. This process began in March/April and continued throughout the season as we received more requests.

## THE WATER CHECK PROCEDURE

The Water Check process consists of five steps:

- Conducting a site walk-through;
- Conducting catch cup, water pressure, soil/root depth tests;
- Analyzing site information and test data using the tablet-based Water Check application;
- Preparing a customized watering schedule;
- Explaining and summarizing Water Check results with the participant, and;
- Answering questions related to the Water Check as well as other landscape issues.

## WATER CHECK PROGRAM DATA

Data collected in the program included, but was not limited to:

- Participant information (i.e. own vs. rent, number of individuals in household);
- Landscape and parcel information (i.e. square footage of parcel, turf, hardscape);
- Irrigation system information (i.e. existing irrigation schedule, location of breaks, leaks, misaligned sprinkler heads, runoff);
- Landscape issues (i.e. mixed plant materials, dry areas, mulch needed, thatch, compaction), and;
- Program marketing data (i.e. how did participants learn about the program).

## PARTICIPATION DATA

The number of residential Checks completed in Salt Lake City in 2025 was 143, while the number of residential Checks completed in Sandy City was 77. In addition, 14 CII Checks were completed in Salt Lake City for schools (6), parks (2), and homeowners' associations (HOAs, 6). Numbers in parentheses in CII columns indicate the total number of HOA units evaluated. While residential numbers were somewhat lower this year, the time spent Checking schools and parks is equivalent to the time it would have taken to conduct 80 residential Checks, for perspective.

Since 2005, 4188 residential Water Checks have been conducted in MWDSLS service area, along with 225 CII Checks representing 928 individual units (Table 1).

*Table 1. Number of residential and CII Water Checks for the MWDSLS service area, 2005-2025. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of HOA units represented (participant numbers for previous years may be found in previous year's reports).*

|              | SLCDPU             |                  | Sandy City         |                | MWDSLS             |                  |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
|              | <i>Residential</i> | <i>CII</i>       | <i>Residential</i> | <i>CII</i>     | <i>Residential</i> | <i>CII</i>       |
| 2005         | 50                 | 0                | 34                 | 2              | 84                 | 2                |
| 2006         | 62                 | 7                | 29                 | 1              | 91                 | 8                |
| 2007         | 58                 | 13               | 29                 | 0              | 87                 | 13               |
| 2008         | 170                | 2                | 52                 | 1              | 222                | 3                |
| 2009         | 158                | 5                | 76                 | 1              | 234                | 6                |
| 2010         | 203                | 14               | 50                 | 1              | 253                | 15               |
| 2011         | 104                | 6                | 38                 | 0              | 142                | 6                |
| 2012         | 104                | 0                | 45                 | 0              | 149                | 0                |
| 2013         | 185                | 4                | 52                 | 2              | 237                | 6                |
| 2014         | 206                | 1                | 44                 | 0              | 250                | 1                |
| 2015         | 141                | 8                | 46                 | 0              | 187                | 8                |
| 2016         | 104                | 2                | 53                 | 0              | 157                | 2                |
| 2017         | 64                 | 0                | 121                | 1              | 185                | 1                |
| 2018         | 79                 | 1                | 53                 | 14             | 132                | 15               |
| 2019         | 43                 | 1                | 25                 | 0              | 68                 | 1                |
| 2020         | 67                 | 34               | 54                 | 5              | 121                | 39               |
| 2021         | 166                | 26               | 51                 | 1              | 217                | 27               |
| 2022         | 421                | 14 (199)         | 233                | 3 (36)         | 654                | 17 (235)         |
| 2023         | 157                | 22 (251)         | 74                 | 0              | 231                | 22 (251)         |
| 2024         | 162                | 11 (258)         | 104                | 8              | 266                | 19 (258)         |
| 2025         | 143                | 14 (184)         | 77                 | 0              | 221                | 14 (184)         |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>2847</i>        | <i>185 (892)</i> | <i>1340</i>        | <i>40 (36)</i> | <i>4188</i>        | <i>225 (928)</i> |

## LANDSCAPE AND PARCEL DATA

Parcel size data as it relates to landscaped and irrigated area are essential for detailed analyses of water use on a per-parcel basis. Among 143 residential participants within the SLCDPU service area, average parcel size was 9733 ft<sup>2</sup>, and irrigated landscape area as a percentage of lot size was 48% (Table 2). These numbers reflect a decrease from the average size of landscapes evaluated in 2024 (12,544 ft<sup>2</sup>), and a similar percentage of irrigated landscape area (49%).

Among Sandy City's 77 residential participants in 2025, average parcel size was 10,391 ft<sup>2</sup>, and irrigated landscape area as a percentage of lot size was 49% (Table 2). These numbers reflect a decrease from the average size of landscapes evaluated in 2024 (11,930 ft<sup>2</sup>), and a decrease in the percentage of irrigated landscape area (54%).

Across the MWDSLS service area, average parcel size was 10,062 ft<sup>2</sup>, and irrigated area as a percent of lot size was 49% (Table 2). These numbers reflect a decrease from the average size of landscapes evaluated in 2024 (12,237 ft<sup>2</sup>) and a decrease in the average percentage of irrigated landscape area (51%).

For landscapes in Salt Lake City, the average percentage of turfgrass decreased from 31% to 28% in 2025. For landscapes in Sandy City, the percentage of turfgrass decreased to 38% from 34% in 2025.

*Table 2. Average residential parcel and landscaped areas in the MWDSLS service area (2025).*

|                           | SLCDPU          |             | Sandy City      |             | MWDSLS          |             |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                           | ft <sup>2</sup> | % of Parcel | ft <sup>2</sup> | % of Parcel | ft <sup>2</sup> | % of Parcel |
| Avg. Parcel Area          | 9733            |             | 10,391          |             | 10,062          |             |
| Avg. Hardscape Area       | 4344            | 45%         | 4748            | 46%         | 4546            | 45%         |
| Avg. Turfgrass Area       | 2764            | 28%         | 3537            | 34%         | 3150            | 31%         |
| Avg. Other Irrigated Area | 1946            | 20%         | 1555            | 15%         | 1750            | 17%         |
| Avg. Total Irrigated Area | 4710            | 48%         | 5092            | 49%         | 4901            | 49%         |

## IRRIGATION SYSTEM DATA

Water Check Program employees tested the precipitation rates, distribution uniformities and dynamic pressures of “testable” zones for each irrigation system evaluated. Precipitation rate is the rate at which irrigation water is applied per unit of time measured in inches per hour (in/hr). Distribution uniformity (DU) refers to how evenly the irrigation system applies water to a given area and is often expressed as a percentage or a decimal. Dynamic pressure is defined as a property of a moving flow of liquid expressed as pounds per square inch (psi).

Overhead spray irrigation heads are designed to apply a continuous stream of water and are fitted with nozzles. These heads are generally designed to cover relatively small areas with spray radii between 3 and 15 feet, and a specified operating pressure between 15 and 30 psi. Spray head precipitation rates generally vary from 1 to 2.5 inches per hour.

Rotor heads provide single or multiple streams of water to the landscape and distribute water in an arc pattern, typically ranging from 40 to 360 degrees. The spray radius for most rotor heads is 20 to 150 feet with a precipitation rate between 1 to 1.5 inches per hour. Additionally, rotor heads operate under a wide range of dynamic pressures, ranging from 20 and 100 psi.



*Figure 1. Examples of a rotor sprinkler head (L) and an overhead spray sprinkler head (R).*

Average sprinkler precipitation rates were variable across the SLCDPU and Sandy City service areas, with spray heads applying higher precipitation rates than rotor heads or MSMT heads. In the SLCDPU service area, average precipitation rate for residential properties was 1.15 in/hr and average DU was 49%. In the Sandy City service area, average precipitation rate for residential properties was 1.01 in/hr and average DU was 48%. Distribution uniformities in both service areas were less than what is achievable according to manufacturer’s specifications, regardless of head type (65% and 75% DU are considered achievable for spray and rotor heads, respectively).

The highest DU observed in the SLCDPU service area was 80% (a residential property) and the highest DU observed in the Sandy City service area was 72% (also a residential property). The lowest DU observed in SLCDPU service area was 11% (a residential property) and the lowest DU observed in the Sandy City service area was 13% (also a residential property).

Considering other property types in the SLCDPU service area, the average DU was 47% for schools that participated, 53% for parks that participated, and 47% for HOAs that participated. Average precipitation rates were 0.93 in/hr for schools, 0.8 in/hr for parks, and 1.23 for HOAs that participated.

There are many reasons that DU may not reach the achievable levels mentioned above. The most common irrigation problems we observed were tilted heads, overspray, sunken and broken heads. These were followed at lower numbers by problems like mismatched head types, clogged nozzles, wrong spray patterns, misaligned heads and other issues (Figure 2).

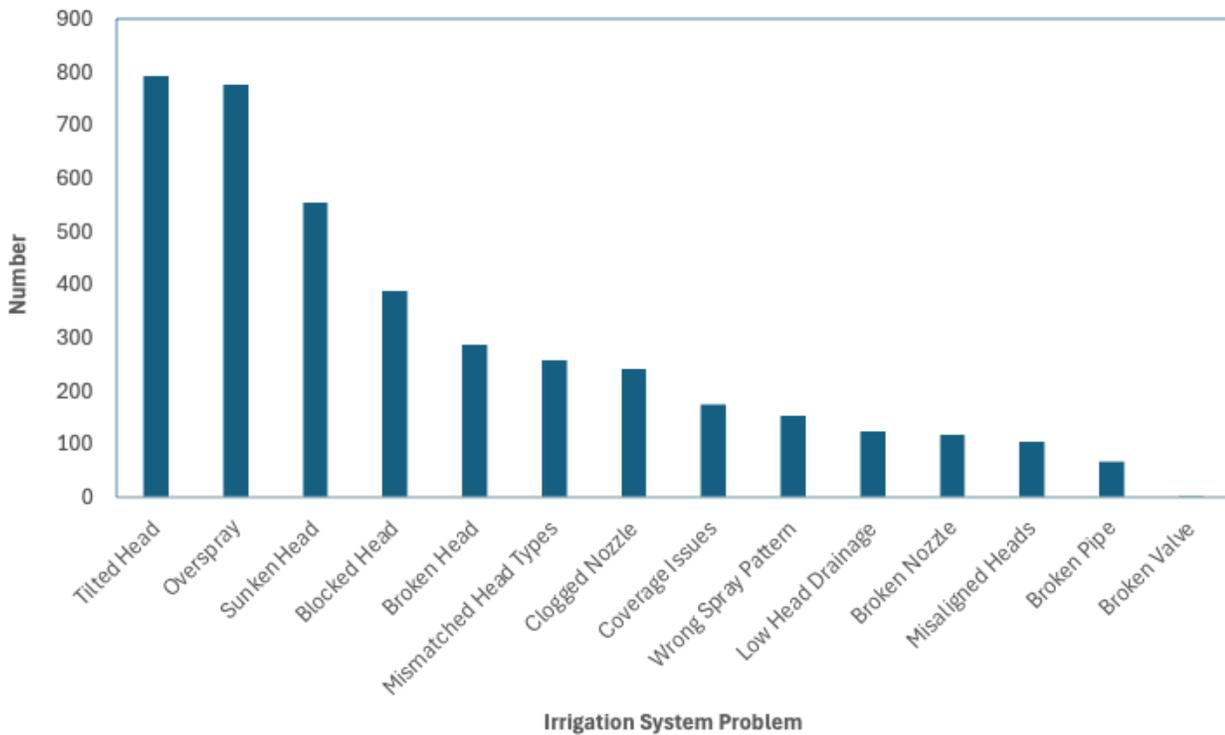


Figure 2. Irrigation system problems observed in the field and number of occurrences (2025).

**PROGRAM MARKETING DATA**

Each year, we ask program participants how they learned about the program and why they participated. In 2025, 17% of participants had participated previously and requested additional assistance, 16% learned of the program through their water provider, 14% learned of the program through television, radio, or other news sources, and 14% learned of the program through a website. Other responses included social media, word of mouth, Chat GPT, and participation in the Turf Trade Program (Figure 3).

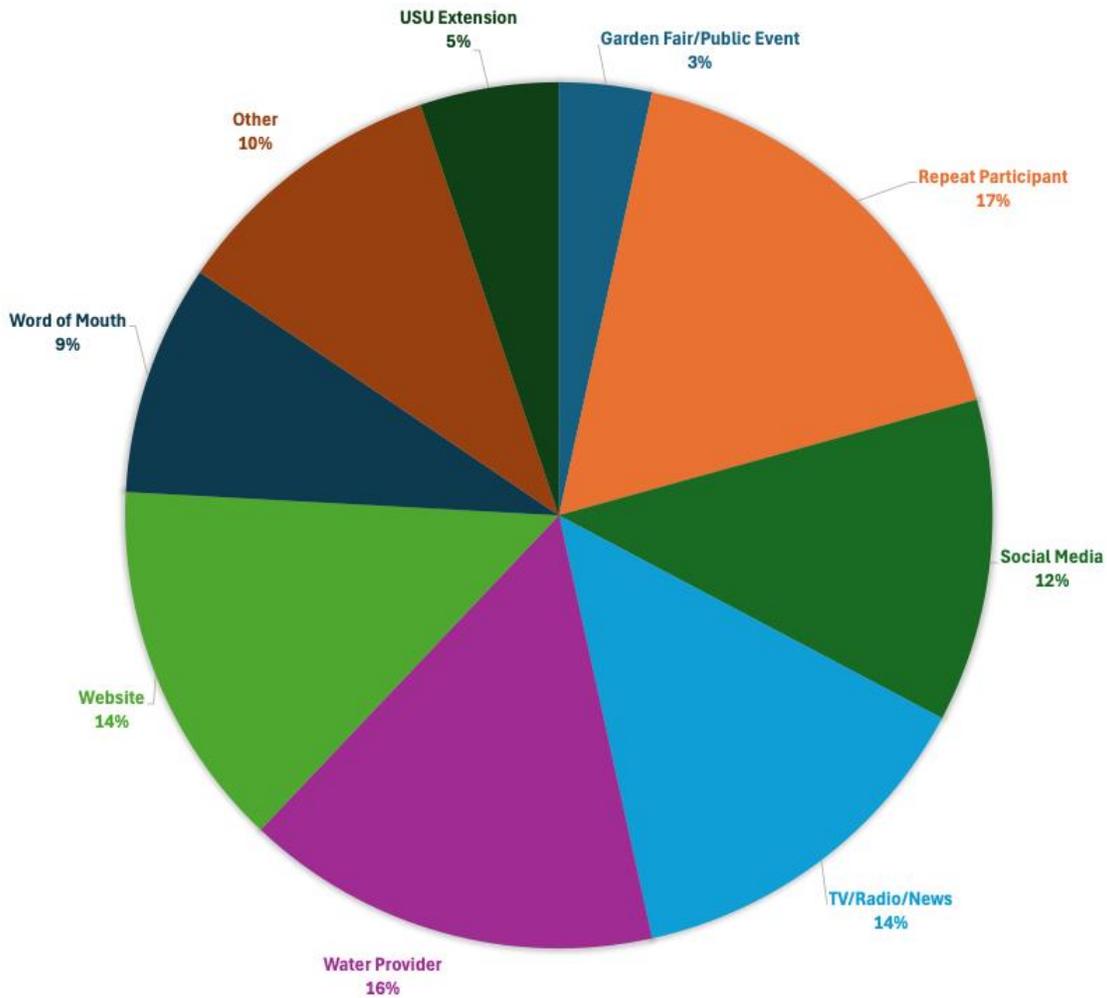


Figure 3. How participants learned about the program in the MWDSLS service area (2025).

In 2025, participants participated to save water (19%), followed by interest in saving money (17%) gaining knowledge/education (14%) or addressing landscape problems (14%), having a new home

(14%), or other reasons such as wanting to make changes or updates to their irrigation systems (Figure 4).

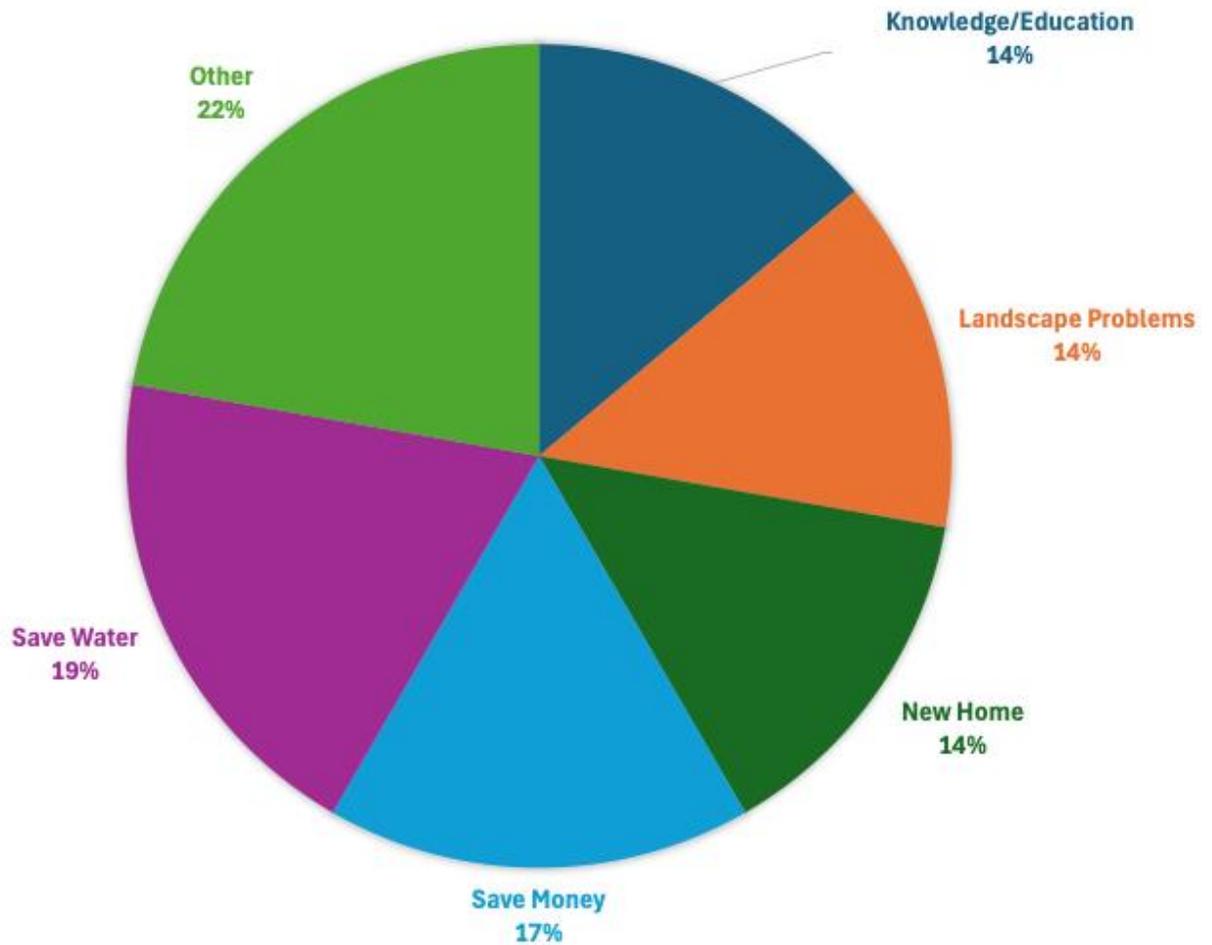


Figure 4. Why participants chose to participate in the program in the MWDSLs service area (2025).

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2025, online program sign-ups continued through USU CWEL's website ([cwel.usu.edu/watercheck](http://cwel.usu.edu/watercheck)) and the program was also promoted through the Utah Water Savers website ([utahwatersavers.com](http://utahwatersavers.com)). We also learned that the Slow the Flow media campaign is being managed by a different public relations firm this year, so it remains to be seen how or if that may affect this program.

Voice messaging to the main CWEL phone number has continued for individuals wishing to receive a Water Check, although we receive far fewer phone requests than online requests. We continued with our revamped scheduling process this year to meet the goal of accommodating every request we received and were able to do so until our season ended. Individuals signing up later in the season who could not be accommodated this year will be contacted first next year. At the time of this report, we have 25 requests to follow up on from the 2025 season and 32 new requests received after the season ended.

Related, this year we began working with the Salt Lake City School District. There are 42 schools in the district, and we worked with them to identify their top priority schools, evaluating five of these during one week toward the end of the season. The district would like our assistance to evaluate all their schools as time and scheduling allow and will be using the information we share with them to justify hiring additional irrigation technicians (surprisingly, they have only one irrigation technician on staff at this time).

We continued to have challenges with employee scheduling this year due to requests for time off during the season but were able to address this by having a "floating" employee who could fill in when others were taking time off. Another employee development this year was the retirement of our long-time scheduler, Susan Buffler. We will be working to replace her soon.

Lastly, we had 2 program-related media opportunities this year. At the beginning of the season, I did an interview with Brek Bolton of Fox 13 News at the station about the program. Later in the season, I did an interview with Deanie Wimmer of KSL for her documentary on higher education in Utah, [A Higher Purpose](#), which "explores how Utah's academic community is not only generating solutions—but transforming lives—through projects that reflect a deep commitment to improving the human condition, both locally and globally". There were only three programs chosen to represent USU, and the Water Check Program was one of them.

*Your support of this program is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to sharing more information during the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.*