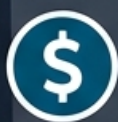


FREE PLAYBOOK

THE WQA CERTIFICATION ROI PLAYBOOK

**Why Water Treatment Is the
Fastest-Growing Segment
for Service Contractors**



**Revenue Benchmarks, Certification
Steps & Lead Generation Strategy**

WellWaterTrust.com

The WQA Certification ROI Playbook

Why water treatment is the most profitable growth segment for plumbing and water service contractors in 2026.

PFAS contamination is front-page news. The EPA has finalized its first national drinking water limits for “forever chemicals.” Roughly 15 million U.S. households rely on private wells with zero regulatory oversight. And a 2023 USGS study found PFAS in at least 45% of the nation’s tap water. The result: homeowners are scared, confused, and actively looking for someone they can trust to test their water and install the right filtration system. This playbook shows you how to be that someone.

1. The Water Quality Market Opportunity

The residential water treatment market is being driven by three converging forces:

- EPA PFAS regulation: The EPA has set MCLs of 4 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, with public water system compliance deadlines now proposed for 2031. Homeowners on private wells are realizing they must test and treat on their own.
- Aging infrastructure: Lead service lines and corroding pipes are driving demand for point-of-use and point-of-entry filtration in older homes across the country.
- Consumer awareness: Media coverage of PFAS, lead crises, and nitrate contamination has made water quality a top-of-mind concern for homeowners.

The Private Well Opportunity

Approximately 15 million U.S. households rely on private wells. These wells are not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act, so testing and treatment are entirely the owner’s responsibility. The CDC recommends annual testing at minimum. Most well owners have never tested for PFAS.

2. What WQA Certification Covers

The Water Quality Association (WQA) offers professional certifications that demonstrate expertise in water treatment. The core certifications are:

- Certified Water Specialist (CWS): For professionals who configure and sell residential treatment systems for problem water. The most widely recognized credential.
- Certified Installer (CI): For technicians who install point-of-use (POU) and point-of-entry (POE) water treatment equipment.

- Certified Service Technician (CST): For field professionals who troubleshoot and service existing systems.
- Master Water Specialist (MWS): An advanced-level certification for experienced professionals with at least 5 years of experience.

What the Training Covers

- Water chemistry fundamentals and contaminant identification.
- Treatment technologies: activated carbon, reverse osmosis, ion exchange, UV disinfection.
- NSF/ANSI certification standards (53, 58, 401) and how to match the right system to the contaminant.
- System sizing, installation best practices, and maintenance scheduling.
- Relevant regulations: Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA MCLs, state-specific requirements.

3. Revenue & Margin Benchmarks

Water treatment installations deliver strong unit economics, especially for PFAS and multi-contaminant systems:

| Metric | Typical Range |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Whole-house carbon system | \$1,500 – \$4,000 installed |
| Under-sink RO system | \$500 – \$1,500 installed |
| Comprehensive water test | \$200 – \$400 |
| Annual filter replacement | \$150 – \$400/year |
| Gross margin (equipment + install) | 45% – 60% |
| Close rate (qualified lead) | 45% – 60% |

The recurring revenue from filter replacements and annual maintenance is a significant advantage. A single whole-house system generates \$150–\$400 in annual maintenance revenue for the life of the system (typically 10–15 years).

The Testing-to-Treatment Pipeline

When you perform the initial water test, you're the first professional the homeowner trusts. If the results show contamination, the treatment sale is a natural next step—not a cold pitch. Testing is the entry point; treatment is the business.

4. How to Get WQA Certified

The certification process is designed for working professionals. Here's how it works:

1. Choose your certification level. CWS (Certified Water Specialist) is the most common starting point for sales and system design professionals. CI (Certified Installer) is ideal for field technicians.
2. Meet the experience requirement. Most certifications require a minimum of 6 months to 1 year of relevant field experience. Candidates with 2+ years may qualify for an accelerated pathway.
3. Complete the prerequisite coursework through WQA's online training portal.
4. Pass the proctored online exam. Exam fee: \$319 for WQA members, \$639 for non-members.
5. Maintain your certification with continuing education. Certifications are valid for three years.

Cost-Benefit

At \$319–\$639 for the exam, the credential pays for itself with a single additional closed job. Many WQA-certified professionals report that the certification increased their close rate by 10–20 percentage points because homeowners trust the credential.

5. Marketing Your WQA Credential

A WQA certification differentiates you from uncredentialed competitors. Here's how to make it work for you:

- Display the WQA certification badge on your website, truck wraps, and business cards.
- Add "WQA Certified Water Specialist" (or CI/CST) to your Google Business Profile.
- Include it in every proposal: "Our technicians hold WQA certification, the industry standard for water treatment professionals."
- Create content around water quality topics: PFAS explainers, well water testing guides, filtration comparison posts.
- Encourage reviews that mention water testing, PFAS, or filtration work specifically.
- Partner with local real estate agents—they need water test results for home sales, especially in well-water areas.

Homeowners searching for "water testing near me" or "PFAS water filter installer" are high-intent buyers. If you're the only WQA-certified option in your area, you own that search.

6. Getting Matched via WellWaterTrust

WellWaterTrust is a nationwide matching network that connects WQA-credentialed water professionals with pre-qualified homeowner leads. Here's how it works:

1. A homeowner visits wellwatertrust.com and submits their ZIP code, water source, and concern.
2. We match them with a single vetted water pro in our network who serves their area.
3. You contact the homeowner to schedule testing or a consultation and provide a free quote.
4. If you win the job, you pay a referral fee. If you don't, you pay nothing.

Why Water Pros Choose WellWaterTrust

- Leads are exclusive—one homeowner, one matched pro. No bid wars.
- You only pay when you close. Zero upfront cost, zero monthly fees.
- Homeowners are pre-qualified: they've confirmed their water source, home type, and concern.
- You control your service area and availability—we match based on your preferences.

No Risk, No Commitment

There is no subscription, no monthly fee, and no contract. You pay a referral fee only when a matched homeowner hires you. If the lead doesn't convert, it costs you nothing.

Join the WellWaterTrust Network

We're building a nationwide network of WQA-credentialed water testing labs and filtration installers. If you hold the credential and want exclusive, pre-qualified homeowner leads in your area, we want to hear from you.

wellwatertrust.com/contractors

Free for homeowners. No obligation.