

# The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

Helping Alaska's rural and tribal communities build and maintain safe water and wastewater systems



## Alaska State Facts



**408** community water systems

**384** water systems serve communities with fewer than 3,300 people

**\$510 million** estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

**35.1%** of the population lives in a rural area

Sources: EPA, Census

## About the RCD Program

The [Rural Community Development \(RCD\)](#) grant program builds capacity to create, expand, and maintain safe, affordable water and wastewater systems in rural areas. RCD serves very small communities in sparsely populated areas made up predominately of residents with low income who lack safe water and wastewater treatment services and sometimes even indoor plumbing. RCD tailors its support based on community need. It helps communities assess water and wastewater infrastructure and accessibility needs, helps identify and secure funding for water facility upgrades, builds capacity through local experts to establish and maintain water facilities, and trains water operators to ensure water systems are functional and compliant. There are currently [eight RCD grant recipients](#) — six regional organizations and two organizations that support tribal communities. RCD grant recipients [Rural Community Assistance Corporation \(RCAC\)](#) and [Inter Tribal Council of Arizona \(ITCA\)](#) serve communities in the state of Alaska.

## Examples of RCD's Support in Alaska

### Hooper Bay, Alaska

The town of Hooper Bay, Alaska had limited capacity to maintain its water system, making it difficult to keep up with federal and state regulatory requirements. With RCD funding, RCAC helped the town comply with state sampling regulations by working with the town to develop and submit a site sampling plan, which serves as a guide for operators to adhere to sampling regulations. In addition, RCAC provided training sessions on requirements for monthly sampling and the importance of following the plan to protect public health. This work ensured that the manager, operator, and backup operators had the information necessary to conduct regulatory sampling and that the water system was constantly monitored for safe public use.

### Metlakatla Indian Community

The Metlakatla Indian Community water system was discovered to be out of compliance, and the lack of a certified operator was identified as a significant deficiency in an Indian Health Service sanitary survey. With RCD funding, ITCA provided technical assistance, including water operator certification and drought contingency planning. ITCA arranged customized preparatory training for the Metlakatla Indian Community Public Works Department (MIC-PWD) personnel and contracted a subject-matter expert to assist the MIC-PWD with the development of a drought contingency plan. These technical assistance projects supported the MIC-PWD's goals for financial viability, infrastructure stability, and operational optimization, improving the community's water system and ensuring safe drinking water for individuals, families, and the community.

## National Outcomes\*

With the help of RCD:



**\$742 million**

in additional funding secured for communities



**83,000 residents** have gained access to safe drinking water



**49,000 residents** have gained access to sanitary sewer systems



**2,100 communities** served by RCD projects

\*Outcomes for RCD grant recipients' work across the country since FY21



For more information about the Rural Community Development (RCD) Program, [visit the RCD website](#) and the [RCD Information and Data Dashboard](#).

For more information about OCS's other anti-poverty programs, [visit the OCS website](#).