

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Arkansas State Facts



- 672** community water systems
- 508** water systems serve communities with fewer than 3,300 people
- \$1.88 billion** estimated water infrastructure need for small systems
- 44.5%** 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 [Communities Unlimited, Inc. \(CU\)](#) and [Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. \(ITCA\)](#) serve communities in the state of Arkansas.

Example of RCD's Support in Arkansas

Carthage, Arkansas

In 2019, the water well supplying Carthage, Arkansas collapsed. The town, as well as its largest employer, the Idaho Timber sawmill, needed to temporarily rely on water tanks provided by the Arkansas National Guard. Since the well collapsed, the town has struggled to obtain funding to conduct repairs.

With RCD funding, the CU Lending Team provided financing and helped the town access emergency funding from the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission to purchase the necessary land and build a new well and treatment site. Additionally, with the newly developed rate structure, CU helped the town monitor its monthly income from water dues and developed a Water System Policies and Procedures document to comply with Arkansas Department of Health standards. All of this led to an increase in administrative capacity.

CU continues to help the town build water resilience and supply 222 residents with clean drinking water.

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](#).