

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Colorado State Facts



947 community water systems

774 water systems serve communities with fewer than 3,300 people

\$1.72 billion estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

14% 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, Inc. \(ITCA\)](#) serve communities in the state of Colorado.

Examples of RCD's Support in Colorado

Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's Public Works Department faced challenges ensuring its water systems were resilient, supported, and met regulations. With RCD funding, ITCA helped the department develop an emergency response plan, risk resilience assessment, drought contingency plan, and customer service plan. ITCA also provided staff training, recommendations, and assessments to enhance operational resiliency, stakeholder support, water resource adequacy, and customer service. ITCA helped establish drought stage trigger criteria, demand reduction goals, and preparedness improvement recommendations, all of which helped the department improve its water systems and operations to better meet the needs of the community it serves.

Somerset, Colorado

Somerset, Colorado was heavily impacted by the shutdown of the Oxbow mine, which owned and operated the water system. The community lacked the capacity to manage a complex treatment facility with significant source water quality challenges. Over 20 stakeholders came together to assist, but communication, managerial, and financial challenges hindered solutions. With RCD funding, RCAC helped the community agree to implement a granular activated carbon filter to remove bromide from the water. Additionally, RCAC helped Somerset conduct a financial analysis to identify issues in billing and set new rates. As a result, the system improvements were completed in December 2023.

"Thank you so much for your presence in our ongoing funding and enforcement conundrum. I feel like ever since you came on board, my understanding of timelines, action items, and everything else has gotten so much clearer."

— Manager, Somerset Domestic Water District

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](#).