

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Delaware State Facts



205 community water systems

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

\$424 million estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

17.4% 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 [Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. \(SERCAP\)](#) and [United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. \(USET\)](#) serve communities in the state of Delaware.

Example of RCD's Support in Delaware

Ellendale, Delaware

Residents living on the outskirts of Ellendale, Delaware had been dealing with poor water quality for decades. Many of these residents living outside of town limits obtained their water through shallow wells that drew dirty water. One resident described the water as being yellow in color, having an odd and unpleasant odor, and attracting rust. The quality of the water was so bad that residents were forced to wash their clothes at laundromats in town.

To improve living conditions, residents founded the Ellendale Community Civic Improvement Association (ECCIA) made up of resident volunteers. ECCIA devoted an extraordinary amount of time and energy toward improving the water quality in Ellendale. With RCD funding, SERCAP helped ECCIA volunteers navigate the political, financial, and regulatory landscape involved with improving water quality. With SERCAP's help, ECCIA volunteers held a referendum focused on providing residents living on the outskirts of town with a reliable and safe source of drinking water. The referendum passed, and SERCAP helped the county and ECCIA ensure that all residents could connect to the clean water without having to pay any fees. Residents now can drink water straight from their faucet without fearing for their health. [View the story map to learn more!](#)

"Without the funding, we would be lost really.... A lot of us would not be able to afford what we got done."

—Raymond White, ECCIA board member

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](#).