

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Florida State Facts



1,606 community water systems

1,222 water systems serve communities with fewer than 3,300 people

\$2.82 billion estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

8.5% 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 [Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. \(SERCAP\)](#) and [United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. \(USET\)](#) serve communities in the state of Florida.

Example of RCD's Support in Florida

Paxton, Florida

Paxton, Florida, a small town tucked into the northwestern corner of the state, is home to 644 people. Paxton's water system is antiquated and deteriorating. The water well, built in 1971, has never been updated and is beginning to show signs of failure. Additionally, most residents still have touch-reach water meters in their homes, meaning that water system staff must enter living spaces to manually read the meters.

Updating the water system is costly and labor intensive. Initial estimates projected that the updates would cost about \$822,050, which is money that the town did not have. With RCD funding, SERCAP helped the town build the financial capacity required to take on this project by assisting town officials with refinancing an existing USDA loan and signing an additional loan agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Funding support from these loans will allow the town to completely upgrade its water entire system.

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](#).