

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Illinois State Facts



1,771 community water systems

1,324 water systems serve communities with fewer than 3,300 people

\$4.94 billion estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

13.1% 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 [Great Lakes Community Action Partnership \(GLCAP\)](#) and [Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. \(ITCA\)](#) serve communities in the state of Illinois.

Examples of RCD's Support in Illinois

Brookport, Illinois

Leaders in the city of Brookport, Illinois knew that the community's water and wastewater systems needed improvements but had challenges identifying specific problems and solutions. With RCD funds, GLCAP helped Brookport conduct an analysis of the current water and sewer rates and create a purchase agreement with a neighboring community to be able to buy water in emergency situations. GLCAP also helped Brookport secure additional funding and provided training for water operators so that the city was prepared to address additional issues as they arose.

Saunemin, Illinois

The village of Saunemin, Illinois had aging wastewater infrastructure that was creating health concerns for its 404 residents. Once the village decided that it was imperative to construct a wastewater treatment plant, it struggled to determine the best approach for designing a system. With RCD funding, GLCAP staff members presented the community with several potential solutions and reached out to several companies to investigate the possibility of implementing a decentralized water system. GLCAP helped the community find an engineer for the project, informed the village of funding opportunities from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA's) Unsewered Community Funding program, and assisted with applying for these grant funds. As a result, Saunemin was awarded a \$30,000 planning grant from IEPA to determine the feasibility and type of treatment needed, with hopes of moving toward construction of a wastewater treatment plant. GLCAP continues to assist the village with obtaining necessary construction funding and progressing the project through development.

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](#).