

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Mississippi State Facts



1,023 community water systems

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

\$3.36 billion estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

53.7% 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 [United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. \(USET\)](#) serve communities in the state of Mississippi.

Examples of RCD's Support in Mississippi

Magnolia, Mississippi

Failing septic systems in Magnolia, Mississippi posed a serious health risk to residents as raw sewage backflowed into yards and streets. With RCD funding, CU helped the town secure funding to update the older wastewater systems. CU provided additional capacity to analyze the financial feasibility of potential solutions. With the support of CU, Magnolia connected 34 homes to its public sanitary sewer system and drastically improved the quality of life for all residents. [Watch the video to learn more!](#)

"Without the support from Communities Unlimited we would still be fighting for resources. Communities Unlimited helped us, bringing a voice to the voiceless."

– Anthony Witherspoon, mayor of Magnolia, Mississippi

Beulah, Mississippi

Beulah, Mississippi maintains a water and wastewater system for 416 people. The town received loans from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support the water and wastewater systems but was struggling to repay them. CU collaborated with the USDA Special Assets Unit to help the town restart payments. To begin, CU collaborated with town officials to organize all financial documents. After analyzing the financial documents, CU sent financial information to USDA that allowed the agency to re-amortize the loan. Then, CU completed a rate analysis to demonstrate the feasibility of a rate increase. The town's board approved a rate increase that would ensure financial sustainability. With the help from CU, the town expects that the loan will be paid off sooner than expected.

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



RCD
Rural Community Development

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](#).