

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Montana State Facts



773 community water systems

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

\$1.12 billion estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

46.6% 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 [Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. \(MAP\)](#) and [Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. \(ITCA\)](#) serve communities in the state of Montana.

Examples of RCD's Support in Montana

Great Falls, Montana

Residents of the Trailer Terrace Mobile Home Park near Great Falls, Montana were experiencing high levels of contamination in the water supply and weakened sewer infrastructure. With RCD funding, MAP staff worked with a group in the community to create a water and sewer district. MAP trained community members in the formation and operation of utility districts, worked with the newly formed district board to draft its bylaws and ordinances, and assisted in the hiring of a new district operator. As the project evolved, MAP continued to help address policy issues, facilitate communication between those involved in the project, and monitor the progress of each phase of infrastructure construction. The formation of the district increased the managerial capacity of the community, enabling residents to resolve environmental and public health issues.

Northern Cheyenne Utilities Commission

The Northern Cheyenne Utilities Commission (NCUC) was out of compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Clean Water Act because its wastewater treatment facility was discharging improperly treated wastewater into a creek. In addition, sanitary surveys revealed that the commission lacked certified operators and standard operating procedures. With RCD funding, ITCA provided technical assistance to the NCUC by developing a four-volume operations and maintenance manual, an initial rates study, a comprehensive risk assessment, an emergency response plan, a workforce development plan, and various standardized operating procedures.

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](#).