

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



North Dakota State Facts



- 306** community water systems
- 272** water systems serve communities with fewer than 3,300 people
- \$641 million** estimated water infrastructure need for small systems
- 39%** 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 North Dakota.

Examples of RCD's Support in North Dakota

Mercer, North Dakota

The city of Mercer, North Dakota needed additional support with water operator certifications, emergency planning, financial reports, and bookkeeping. With RCD funding, MAP built municipal governance capacity through training and helping carry out tasks such as water sampling, measuring chlorine levels, handling paperwork, preparing the annual budget, and fulfilling the required financial reporting for USDA Rural Development (RD). MAP also helped the city develop an emergency response plan and vulnerability assessment, equipping staff to promptly address any potential threats to the water system. Furthermore, the city administration now possesses the capability to generate financial reports and reconcile bank accounts.

Fort Berthold Rural Water System

The Fort Berthold Reservation communities of Four Bears Village, Mandaree, Twin Buttes, and White Shield, North Dakota share the Fort Berthold Rural Water (FBRW) system. The system consists of four water treatment plants that all use a nearby lake for source water. Emergency response planning is crucial, as the source water from Lake Sakakawea is at risk for contamination from oil production activities. Past oil spills have contaminated streams and rivers that feed into the lake. With RCD funding, MAP conducted vulnerability assessments on each treatment plant to identify dangers that should be accounted for in an emergency response plan (ERP). MAP then coordinated an effort between stakeholders to collect information, which was used to write ERPs for each treatment plant. The plans are now on file in electronic and physical form at each treatment plant, which allows the operators to access the documents in case of an emergency.

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](#).