

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Utah State Facts



505 community water systems

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

\$949 million estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

10.2% 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 [Rural Community Assistance Corporation \(RCAC\)](#) and [Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. \(ITCA\)](#) serve communities in the state of Utah.

Examples of RCD's Support in Utah

Westwater Diné

The Westwater Diné community outside of Blanding, Utah has not had community water, sewer, or electrical service since the land was purchased by the Navajo Nation in 1986. Residents rely on a nearby spring to haul water to their homes and individual septic systems. With RCD funding, RCAC is working with the Westwater Diné community to develop a system that serves the immediate and long-term needs of residents. Capacity support to the Utah Navajo Trust Fund (UNTF) has resulted in several projects, including implementing a safe way to haul drinking water from a newly built intermediate access point to residents' homes. RCAC is also assisting partners and coordinating with the City of Blanding on water infrastructure updates that will make piped water possible for the Westwater Diné by 2026.

Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's Public Works Department faced challenges ensuring its water systems were resilient, supported, and met regulations. With RCD funding, ITCA helped the department develop an emergency response plan, risk resilience assessment, drought contingency plan, and customer service plan. ITCA also provided staff training, recommendations, and assessments to enhance operational resiliency, stakeholder support, water resource adequacy, and customer service. ITCA helped establish drought stage trigger criteria, demand reduction goals, and preparedness improvement recommendations, all of which helped the department improve its water systems and operations better meet the needs of the community it serves.

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](#).