

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



Vermont State Facts



410 community water systems

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

\$771 million estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

64.9% 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 [RCAP Solutions, Inc. \(RSOL\)](#) and [United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. \(USET\)](#) serve communities in the state of Vermont.

Examples of RCD's Support in Vermont

Wells River Village, Vermont

Wells River Village, Vermont is a small community of 400 people. The village recently completed a major water infrastructure project, which doubled customer rates. However, the project only upgraded a portion of the 100-plus-year-old distribution piping and did not address compliance issues raised by the Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division (DWGPD).

With RCD funding, RSOL helped the village develop a prioritized action plan and budget to address compliance issues, update the system's regulatory plans, and initiate a source exploration phase to identify a future supplemental water source. RSOL also helped the village apply for funding to conduct the needed improvements. With RSOL's help, the village applied for and was awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. Improving the system will not only help residents remain safe and healthy with access to clean drinking water, but it will also help the town financially by ensuring that the water system remains in compliance with all applicable regulations and does not incur noncompliance fees.

"The village doesn't have the funds to make the repairs needed for water system to be successful. It is vital that we have assistance in determining ways to find grants and funding to help us fix these issues."

—Mary Schilke, clerk, Wells River Village, Vermont

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](#).