

# The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



## Wisconsin State Facts



**1,029** community water systems

**845** water systems serve communities with fewer than 3,300 people

**\$2.4 billion** estimated water infrastructure need for small systems

**32.9%** 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 [Great Lakes Community Action Partnership \(GLCAP\)](#) and [Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. \(ITCA\)](#) serve communities in the state of Wisconsin.

## Examples of RCD's Support in Wisconsin

### Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin

The publicly owned water facility in Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin lacked written guidance that outlined safety and emergency protocols. The city also struggled to train and certify operators to ensure they were equipped to run systems independently and make operational decisions. With RCD funding, GLCAP worked with water operators to create a safety manual and emergency response plan for use in dealing with natural and man-made emergency situations. GLCAP helped train and educate Lac du Flambeau's water operators to help them pass their operator certification tests. This included partnering new operators with seasoned operators to get live, hands-on experience. As a result, water operators in Lac du Flambeau now have the training they need, and the water systems and facilities are guided by written protocols that ensure the safety of waterworks personnel and the entire community.

### Menominee Tribal Utilities Department

The Menominee Tribal Utilities Department (MTUD) water and wastewater facilities needed additional support to ensure worker safety. The water and wastewater facilities system also did not have an emergency response plan in place, which affects MTUD personnel in the field. To help the MTUD strengthen the resiliency of its water utility services as well as the operations and maintenance technical capacity of its utility personnel, ITCA provided ongoing technical assistance with RCD grant funding. ITCA assisted the Menominee Nation with three technical assistance projects: Emergency Response Plan and Risk Resilience Assessment, Fall Protection Safety Training, and Confined Space Safety Training. The result of these projects was improved worker safety and emergency response planning for MTUD personnel, and strengthened resiliency of water utility services.

## 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](#).