

RCD Program Spotlight Ellendale, DE

Training & Technical Assistance
to Support Safe, Affordable Water
& Wastewater Systems



About Ellendale

Ellendale, Delaware is a rural, small community with a median household income (MHI) that is 25% lower than the MHI of the surrounding Sussex County, as well as a 42% lower per capita income. The rural area surrounding Ellendale is comprised of almost entirely families with low incomes.

Ellendale's shallow wells made the town's water vulnerable to contamination. High levels of sulfur, iron, and nitrates left the water with a disagreeable smell and taste, and it was not suitable for drinking, showering, or laundry. Buying bottled water was a financial burden for residents. In 2009, the Town of Ellendale initiated an effort to establish a community water system for the town itself, and the surrounding rural area.

RCD Impact

[Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.](#) (SERCAP), a Rural Community Development (RCD) grant recipient, connected with the Town of Ellendale to address their water quality conditions. Using RCD funds, SERCAP has assisted the community in establishing a new water system.

RCD funds are used to provide training and technical assistance to:

- Increase access for families with low incomes to water supply and waste disposal services;
- Preserve affordable water and waste disposal services in low-income rural communities;

- Increase local capacity and expertise to establish and maintain needed community facilities;
- Increase economic opportunities for low-income rural communities by ensuring they have basic water and sanitation;
- Utilize technical assistance to leverage additional public and private resources; and
- Promote improved coordination of federal, state, and local agencies and financing programs to benefit low-income communities.

SERCAP provided the following assistance in Ellendale:

- Assisted the Ellendale Civic and Community Association in gathering petitions to create a county water district to alleviate the shallow well problems;
- Created informational materials for distribution to the residents to increase awareness of the efforts and outcomes;
- Sponsored several community clean up days using another program's funding (USDA Solid Waste) in an effort to promote neighborhood pride and recognize those who are trying;
- Supported Ellendale in leveraging over \$1 million for community facility needs;
- Facilitated bottled water and PPE distribution to residents while the new water system was nonoperational, including distributing 5-gallon jugs and hand pumps (for a water supply source); and
- Supported connecting about half of the population to the water system once it was installed.

For more information, visit the [RCD program webpage](#).



Rural Community
Development

ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES