

The Rural Community Development (RCD) Program

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



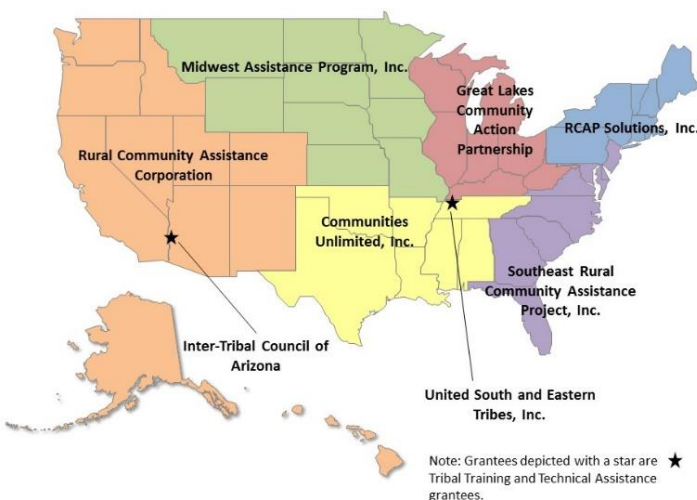
About RCD

The Rural Community Development (RCD) program, within the Office of Community Services (OCS), is dedicated to reducing the causes and consequences of poverty, increasing opportunity and economic security of individuals and families, and revitalizing communities.

RCD builds community capacity—through Regional Training and Technical Assistance grants and Tribal Training and Technical Assistance grants—for creating and maintaining safe and affordable water and wastewater systems for the nation’s unincorporated areas and lowest income communities, including tribal and persistent poverty 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 often even indoor plumbing. Many of these communities have populations at or below 2,500 with no clean water systems and/or no access to existing water systems.

There are currently eight active RCD grantees—six regional organization and two organizations that specifically support tribal communities—which collectively serve all regions of the country.



Program Objectives

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

- Increase access to safe water and waste disposal services in low-income communities;
- Manage safe water systems in rural and tribal communities;
- Preserve affordable community water and wastewater facilities;
- Ensure the safety and security of water systems;
- Improve local capacity and leadership to support water systems and service; and
- Train water operators.

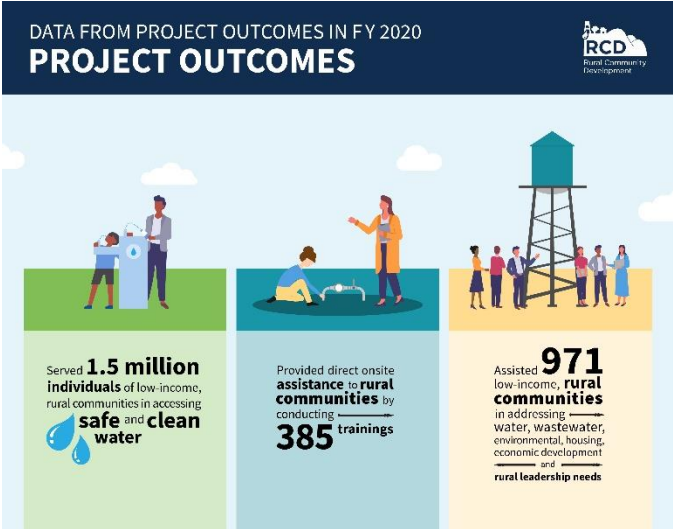
A Snapshot of Program Outcomes

In FY 2020, RCD grantees:

- Helped **1.5 million** individuals who live below the poverty line in rural communities access safe and clean water;
- Provided **385** onsite trainings on maintaining water systems in rural communities;
- Helped to secure nearly **\$254 million** in loans and grants to support water and wastewater system improvements;
- Assisted **971** communities in addressing water, wastewater, environmental, housing, economic development and rural leadership needs.

Highlights from individual grantees in FY 2021 include:

- Extended service to **686** new connections, resulting in new access to safe drinking water to approximately 2,058 people;
- Helped **26** community water and wastewater systems resolve Safe Drinking Water Act or Clean Water Act compliance issues.



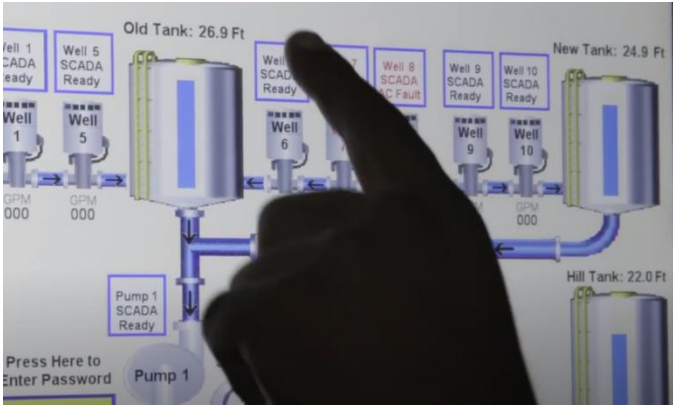
To learn more about the impact of the RCD program, check out these videos that spotlight RCD efforts across the nation:

- [Improving New Boston, Ohio's Ancient Combined Sewer System](#)
- [Extending Sewer Service to over 30 Households in Magnolia, Mississippi, Population 2,000](#)
- [Training Certification for the Colorado River Indian Tribes \(CRIT\) to Ensure the Health of the River](#)
- [Technical Assistance Brings Reliable Public Drinking Water to Hobson Village, Virginia](#)

Project Highlights

Project highlights include providing training and technical assistance to improve technical capacity and increase critical infrastructure reliability of rural water and wastewater systems, such as:

- Creating maps of water system infrastructure (e.g., pipes and drains) using GIS technology;
- Providing technical trainings on: chemistry basics for water and wastewater operators, regulatory compliance with wastewater systems (in Spanish), and chlorine treatment and residual testing;
- Developing plans for responding to emergencies, mitigating risk, and ensuring system resiliency for tribal entities;
- Developing and implementing a plan for a tribal entity to correct compliance violations related to pollutant discharge.



“Point blank, without those funds from the Rural Community Development program, we’re very limited in the assistance that we can provide... Those residents experience a better quality of life, and the partnerships that was created out of that is key to them moving forward.”

— Alexander Brandon, Area Director, Environmental Services, Communities Unlimited

