

# Impact of the Rural Community Development (RCD) Program in Iowa

## 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 provides training and technical assistance grants to build 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 often even indoor plumbing. Many of these communities have populations of less than 2,500 people and face barriers in funding, building, or operating water infrastructure.

There are currently [eight RCD grant recipients](#)—six regional organizations and two organizations that support tribal communities—which collectively serve all regions of the country.

## Program Outcomes

Since the beginning of Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, RCD grant recipients:<sup>1</sup>

- Helped over 14,000 residents in rural, low-income communities gain access to safe drinking water;
- Helped over 12,000 residents in rural, low-income communities gain access to sanitary sewer systems;
- Conducted over 10,000 management, technical operations, and compliance trainings to ensure effective operation of water and sewage systems, resulting in over 3,000 technical certifications; and
- Leveraged over \$448 million in additional public and private resources to invest in safe and affordable water and wastewater services.

## Highlights in Iowa

RCD grant recipient Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP) uses RCD funds to implement training and technical assistance services to build technical, managerial, and financial capacity for rural water and wastewater systems in the Midwest United States. These services include emergency response plan development, water management training, and education about water and wastewater infrastructure needs.

For households not served by community drinking water and wastewater facilities, MAP supports communities' planning and development of reliable and compliant systems. Communities with existing infrastructure receive training to increase their operational capacity as well as assistance in planning and development of safety, security, and sustainability upgrades.

MAP used RCD funding to help the City Council in Stockport, IA, build financial capacity. The City Council in Stockport purchases water from a nearby district to provide clean drinking water to the town's 296 residents, but the cost to purchase the water exceeded available funding.

After conducting inspections, running analyses, and speaking with community members, MAP determined actionable steps for the council to take towards building financial resiliency that would allow the Council to provide quality water to residents. First, MAP helped the town replace old, outdated meters and create a bill collection system, in conjunction with calculating new, reasonable rates. Next, MAP provided best practices information about establishing dues collection procedures and payment due dates. Lastly, MAP helped the council create a budget for the water system that would allow for repairs, maintenance, and reserves.

With MAP's assistance, the town has taken large steps towards creating financial health and sustainability.

<sup>1</sup> Based on data pulled February 2023