

Impact of the Rural Community Development (RCD) Program in Minnesota

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:¹

- 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 Minnesota

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 helped the town of Bricelyn, MN, fix Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) issues that were causing sewer problems for the 365 residents that utilize the town's wastewater system. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) inspected the wastewater system and identified needed fixes.

MAP assisted the community's wastewater operator in developing an I&I plan. The plan helped monitor the city's progress in reducing the I&I issues. MAP also helped the town hire a company to investigate, locate, and repair issues that may be causing the excessive inflow and infiltration. The company fixed many pipes throughout the town, improving the wastewater system in the process.

As a result of these technical assistance efforts, the town was able to identify, track, and resolve many of the I&I issues and work with the wastewater company to investigate any underlying issues. MAP also assisted the town by developing a map of the I&I plan to continue to track the pipe repair process.

¹ Based on data pulled February 2023