

Impact of the Rural Community Development (RCD) Program in South Dakota

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 South Dakota

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.

MAP helped the unincorporated community of Cedar Gulch II, SD, which supplies drinking water to 33 people, comply with regulations and create safer conditions for residents. The water system experiences challenges in adhering to state and federal regulations. The drinking water supply regularly exceeded the Maximum Contaminant Levels for total radium and gross alpha particles set by the EPA by more than five times. Elevated radium and gross alpha particles are known to cause health problems, including cancer.

MAP helped the community resolve the compliance issues by using RCD funds to assist the community in organizing a State Sanitary and Water District, obtaining engineering services through the AWWA Community Engineering Corps (CEC), which provides no cost engineering services to evaluate the water resource and provide water treatment alternatives for the community to consider, installing water treatment infrastructure, performing sampling tests for compliance, and establishing a district-owned Point of Use treatment.

Cedar Gulch II is now on track to build a safe water system that is in compliance with all state and federal regulations.

¹ Based on data pulled February 2023