

ANNUAL EDITION 2025

MIDWEST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, INC.

# SOURCE

YOUR SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

## ELEVATED INSIGHTS RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural Needs Survey Results  
MAP, Inc. Impact and Project Highlights  
Water, Wastewater, and Clerk Training

Serving rural communities since 1979

[www.map-inc.org](http://www.map-inc.org)



Phone: 660-562-2575  
 Email: map@map-inc.org

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 Marty Ostransky, Private Well/Decentralized Wastewater Coordinator  
 Karen Thomas, Training Coordinator  
 Ron Vanderpool, GIS Coordinator  
 Kelli Fika, GIS Technician  
 Casey Burrus, Internal Programs Manager  
 Natalia Heck, External Programs Manager  
 Rhiannon Niemeier, Administrative/Communications Manager

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Chris McKee, IA	William Meyers, MT
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Chad Thompson, MT	Sherri Wedel, KS
Samantha Wheeler, NE	



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Featured on the cover: Photograph taken by Natalia Heck, MAP, Inc. External Programs Manager. Small aircraft over rural North Dakota.

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Design and Editing by: Erin Miller and Rhiannon Niemeier

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Picture by Natalia Heck, MAP, Inc. External Programs Manager. Small aircraft over rural North Dakota.

# Letter from the CEO

by Chris Jewett, CEO

Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP, Inc.), in collaboration with our Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (RCAP) counterparts, remains a steadfast voice and partner for rural communities and tribal nations. Our focus remains centered on the environmental and public health issues these communities face. As we enter a new administration cycle with new priorities, it is more important than ever to ensure that elected officials, agencies, and advocates are fully informed of the challenges and needs confronting rural America. Our advocacy efforts must highlight both the success of existing programs and the necessity for innovative support



Chris Jewett, CEO Midwest Assistance Program, Inc.

strategies. Strong Partnerships and collaborative initiatives are essential to this mission.

MAP, Inc. maintains consistent engagement with key agencies and elected officials across our region. We also support RCAP and our five national partners to ensure a unified, nationwide perspective. Through surveys, monthly reports, case studies, and project feedback, we gather timely, relevant data to substantiate our requests for resources and programmatic support. We actively encourage communities and tribal nations to join us in these efforts whenever possible.

In February, we hosted our annual Congressional Fly-In event, which featured an outstanding representative from an Iowa community. Their participation significantly strengthened our ability to convey the realities, risks, and resource needs of rural communities to policymakers. RCAP partners, MAP, Inc. staff, and our Board of Directors contributed, offering a diverse range of insights, experiences, and examples.

To ensure rural communities and tribal nations thrive and remain vibrant, we must continue to advocate with persistence and purpose. This is a time of opportunity—one that calls for education, outreach, and action. While change can be exhausting, our collective resilience and shared mission will keep us moving forward. Together, we uphold the environment, enhance quality of life, and promote self-sustainability for the communities we serve.

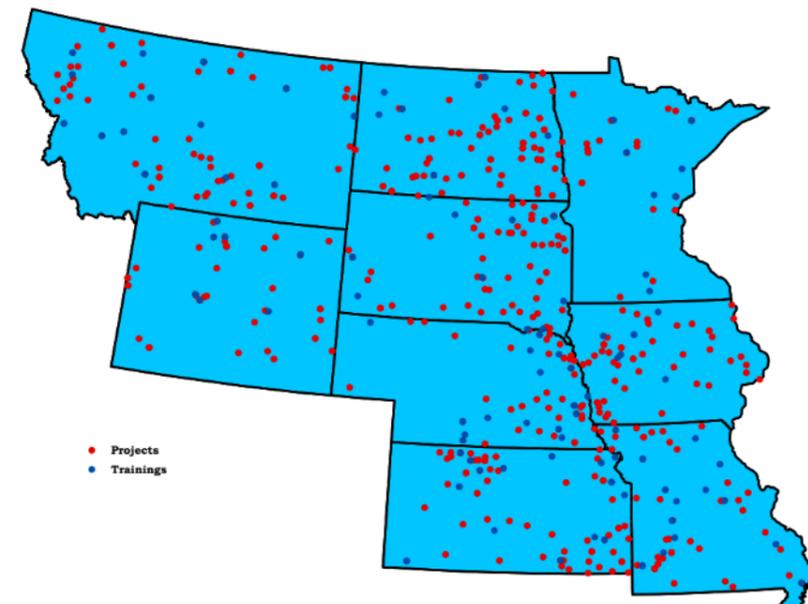


Chasing bubbles. Picture by Erin Miller.



# IMPACT REPORT FY24

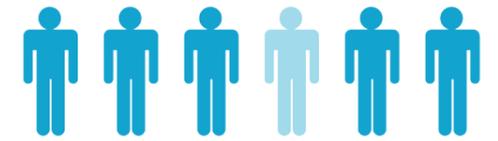
Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP, Inc.), is dedicated to helping rural communities, tribal nations, water and wastewater districts, homeowner's associations, lake associations, and other small utilities find solutions to sustain infrastructure safely, improve their environment, and revitalize communities. MAP, Inc. serves Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.



Statistics based on Fiscal Year 2024

**1,045** Communities Served

With a Combined Population of **943,804** Residents



**383,480** Households Served



With an Average Median Household Income of **\$53,402**

**220,478** Minority Populations Served

**147,833** Low-Income Residents Served

**951** Overall projects with **567** as New Projects



**145** Meetings with State and Federal Partners to Advocate for Small Communities

Helped Secure **\$242,637,573** for **83** Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Projects



**101** Trainings Provided to **2,121** Municipal, Water or Wastewater Professionals



**101** Private Wells Assessed



**35** GIS (Geographic Information System) Projects

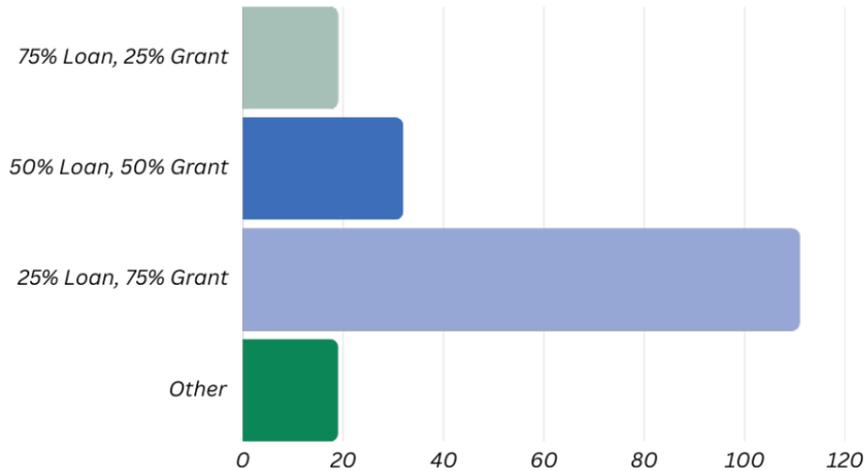




# RURAL NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS

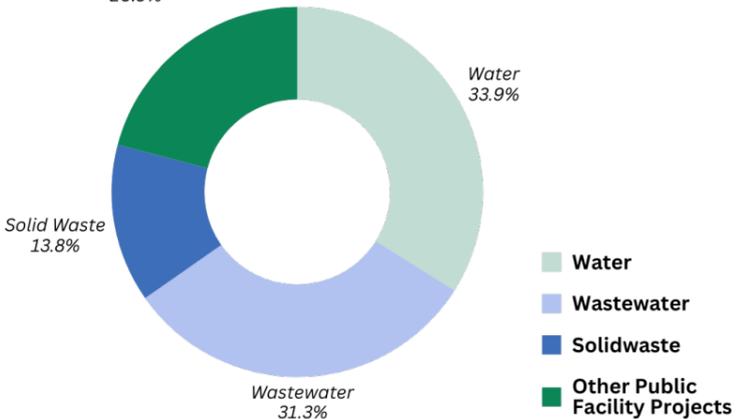
MAP, Inc. surveyed the rural and tribal communities located within the organization's nine-state region to gather feedback on the important issues facing Rural America. The next pages detail the results of the survey.

## WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN AFFORD FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



## AWARENESS OF FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

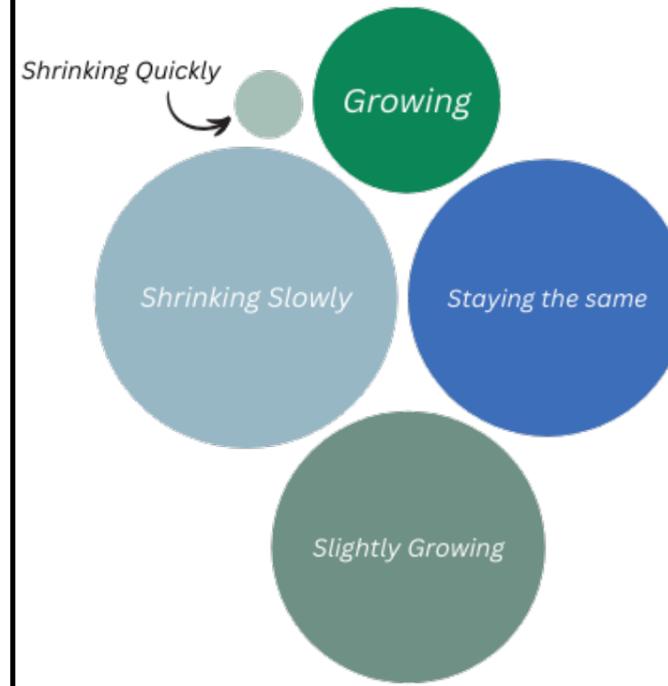
Other Public Facility Projects  
20.9%



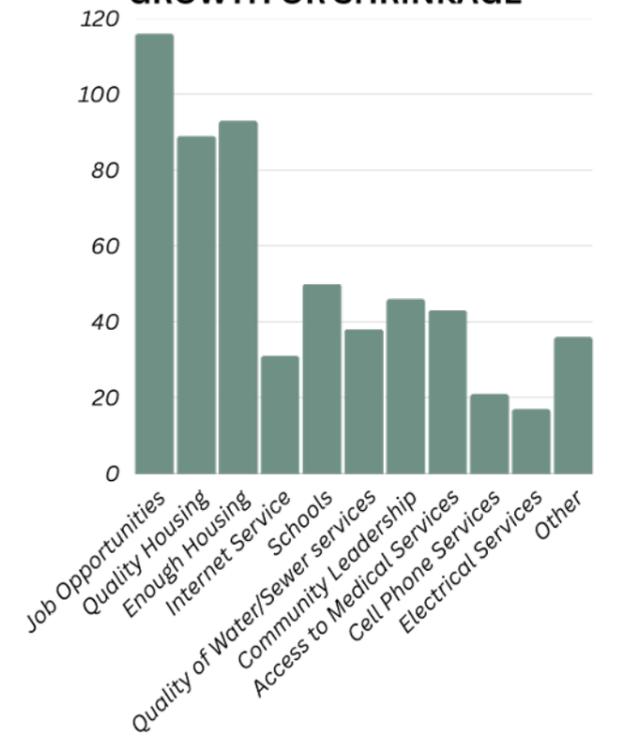
**70%** of communities do not have a **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)** only **8.9%** of those who do have a plan update it annually

Free assistance with creating & updating CIP's would benefit **90% OF SURVEYED COMMUNITIES**

## MY COMMUNITY IS....



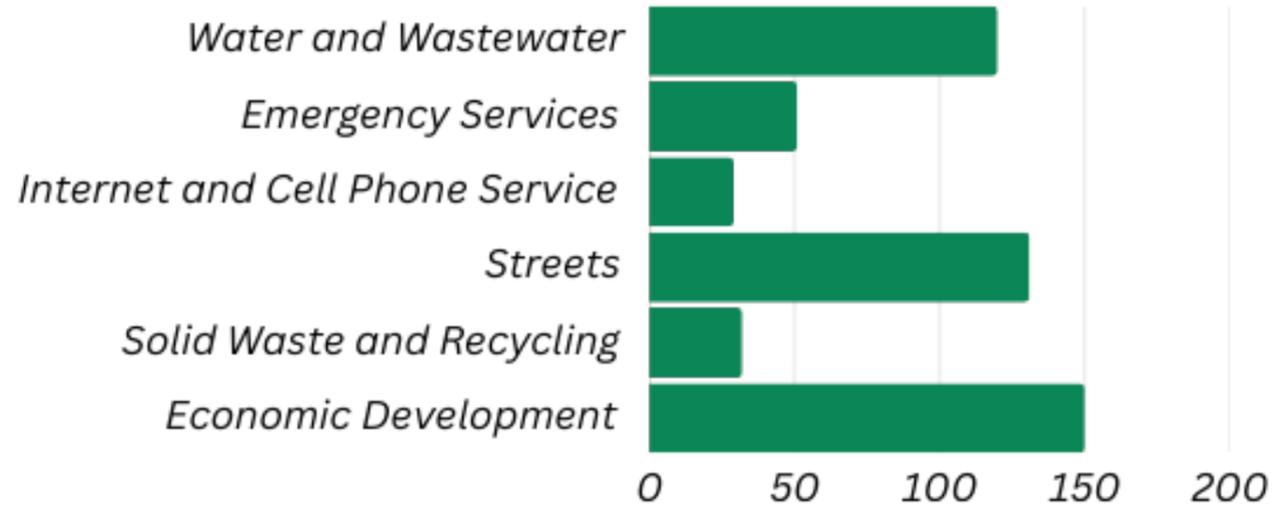
## FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNITY GROWTH OR SHRINKAGE



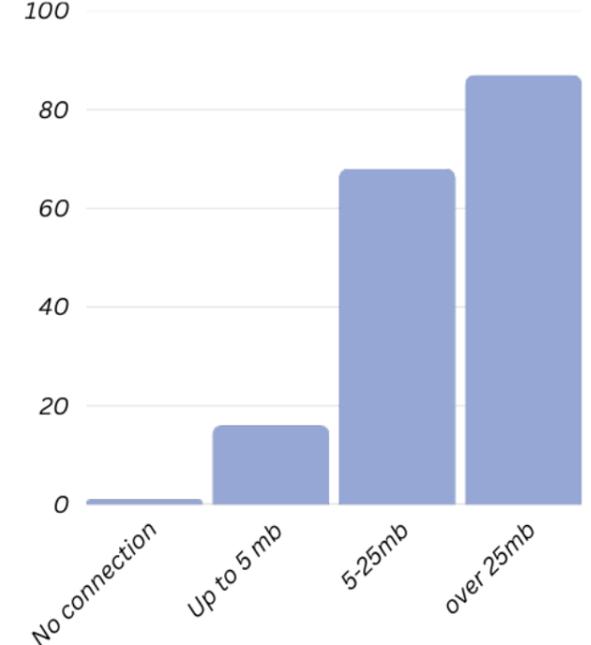
**Common Issues Rural and Tribal Communities Face:**



### COMMUNITY NEEDS RANKING



### INTERNET SPEEDS AMONG COMMUNITIES

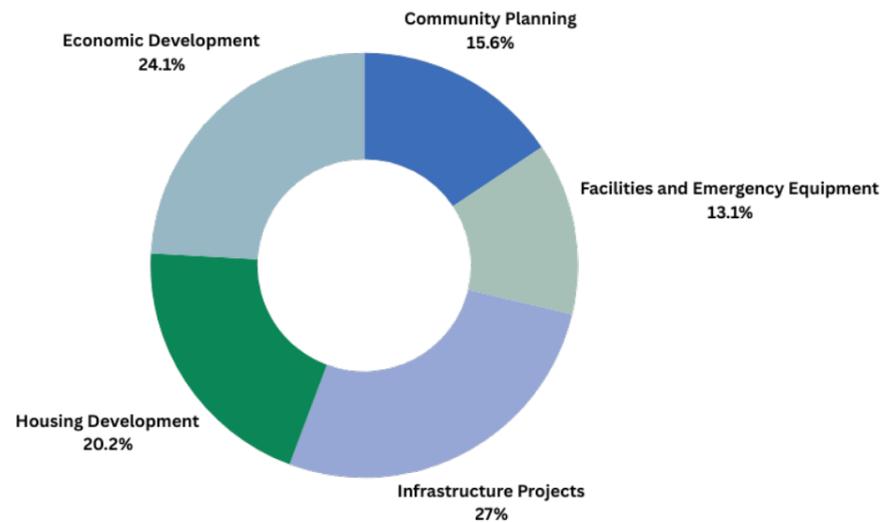


**86%**

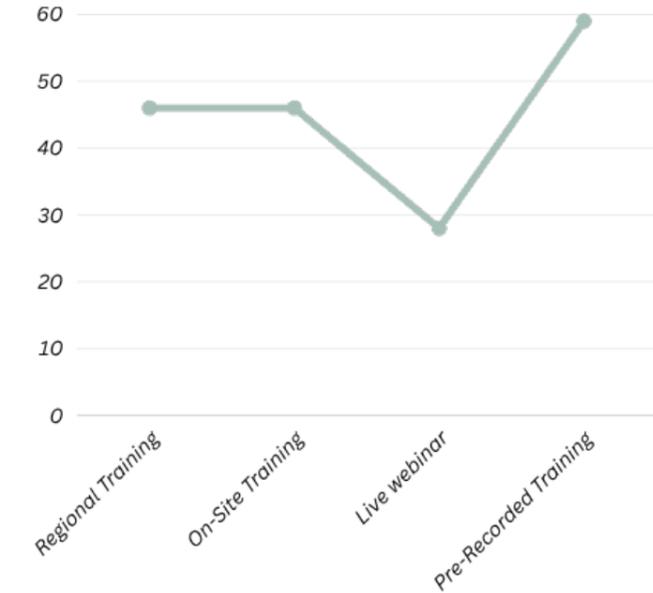
of respondents could use assistance with water/wastewater issues at **no cost** to them!

**63%** OF RURAL NEEDS SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAVE A POPULATION OF LESS THAN 1000 AND **21%** HAVE A POPULATION OF LESS THAN 3000

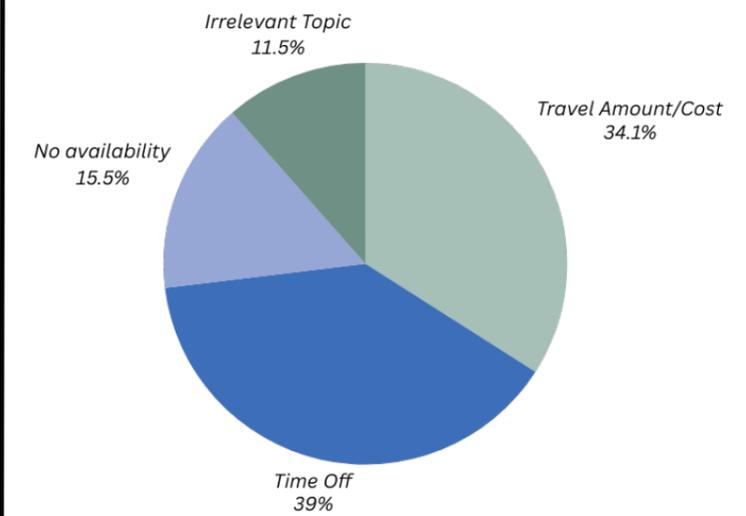
### ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS COMMUNITIES WOULD FIND MOST BENEFICIAL



### PREFERRED METHODS OF TRAINING



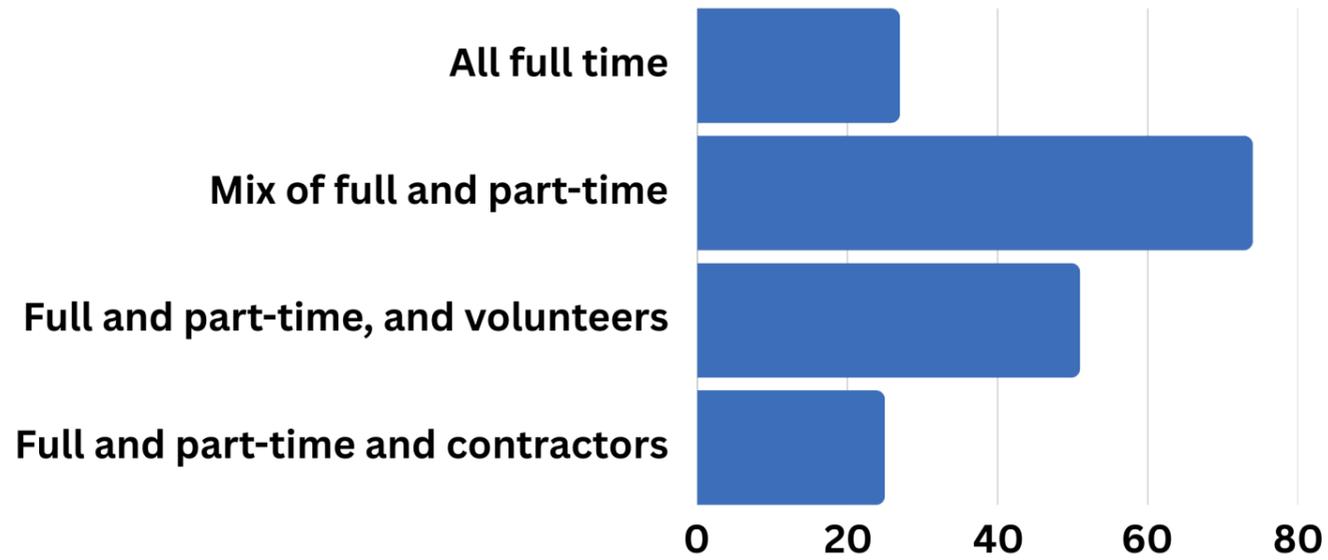
### FACTORS LIMITING STAFF FROM ATTENDING TRAININGS





Picture taken by Lance Goodman, MAP, Inc. Technical Assistance Provider of the Thompson Falls Dam in Montana

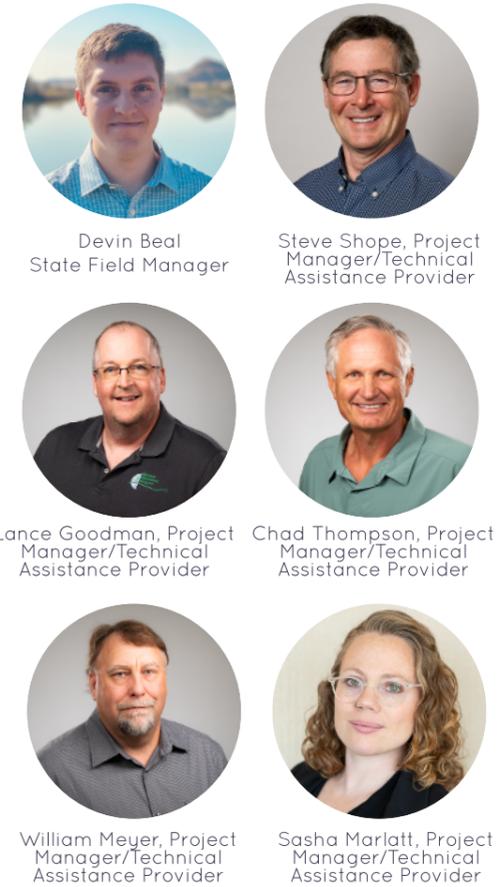
## CURRENT COMMUNITY STAFFING



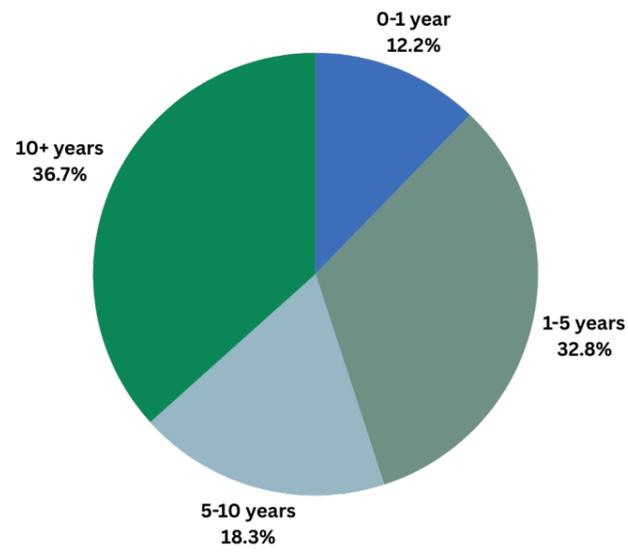
### PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

In the rural community of Hysham, Montana, aging infrastructure and rising costs created urgent challenges for the town's water system. At one point, the community was under water restrictions where residents had to have bottled drinking water brought in or the water was boil-use or no use at all. Residents could not drink the water, they could not cook with the water, or brush their teeth. With support from MAP, Inc. the community identified several critical needs, including the absence of a certified water operator, a failing filtration system, and elevated manganese levels in the water supply.

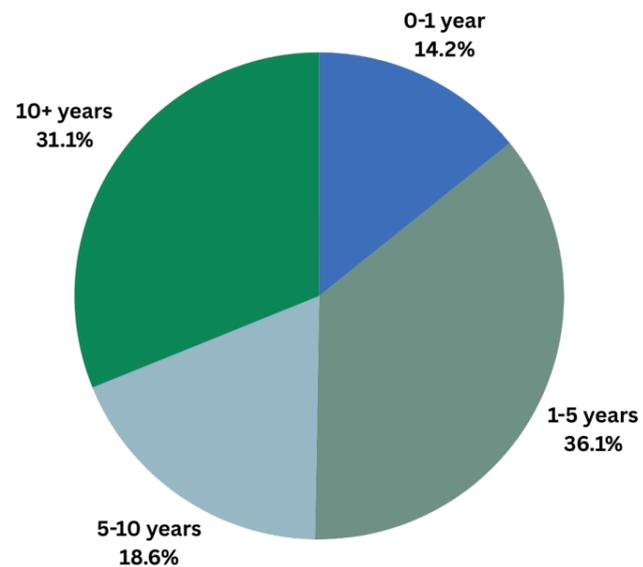
With the guidance of MAP, Inc., Hysham secured essential grant funding to repair one water treatment train, enhance their infiltration gallery, and upgrade their SCADA system. The town is also in the process of applying for an Emerging Contaminants loan to address manganese treatment. This collaboration underscores the importance of investing in rural infrastructure and the vital role of technical assistance in helping small communities secure a safer, more sustainable future. Assistance was made available through the EPA Environmental Finance Center and RCAP.



### WATER / WASTEWATER OPERATOR LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT IN COMMUNITY



### CLERK/FINANCE OFFICER/AUDITOR LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT IN COMMUNITY



A view of the Hysham water tower taken from main street. Picture by Devin Beal



SCAN QR CODE or visit <https://vimeo.com/1027827610>



# Nebraska

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Beaver City, Nebraska, with a population of 609 and 278 household connections, has been experiencing multiple wastewater issues stemming from several manholes at or below grade, non exposed manholes, and inflow and infiltration problems. These issues may have led to the deterioration and dilapidation of the lagoon liner, allowing wastewater from the lagoons to seep under the liner. The community received a violation order from the state for lagoons, which led to the need for discharge lagoon rehabilitation. To address these MAP, Inc. has provided several forms of assistance:



Above: Rural water tower at sunset and MAP, Inc. working with Beaver City during a smoke test of their wastewater system to locate deficiencies.

- Board training for infrastructure and asset management
- Identification of potential lagoon rehabilitation funding sources
- Inflow and infiltration testing and training for operators
- Inflow and infiltration of the village wastewater system
- Wastewater GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping



Monte Kerchal  
State Field Manager



Eric Teegerstrom, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Derrick Luebbe, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Jay Colson, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Shane Bush, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Samantha Wheeler, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



# Iowa

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Gilmore City, Iowa is a farming community that was incorporated in 1876. It was originally named Blooming Prairie because of the abundant growth of grass and flowers in the area. However, the public drinking water system was struggling to provide an adequate supply of water, resulting in insufficient water pressure and poor water quality. With the support of MAP, Inc., Gilmore City was able to complete the application process to receive federal funding and build improvements to their system. MAP, Inc. worked with the city staff to determine adequate revenue from user rates and complete a vulnerability assessment and emergency response plan.



Jason Towne  
State Field Manager



Chris McKee, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Nancy Janssen, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Mary Ohnmacht, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Pictured above:  
Construction of the  
Gilmore City water  
tower.

Pictures by: Chris  
McKee

# Kansas

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

The City of Liberty, Kansas, has a deteriorating wastewater collection system due to age. The system has experienced bypasses during heavy rainfall events, causing raw sewage to escape and posing a health hazard. With limited staff and no operating capital, the city struggled to repair the utility. MAP, Inc. conducted a smoke test to identify deficiencies and began assisting the city in applying for federal/state funding opportunities. Despite several denied funding applications, the city received a \$1 million grant through the Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE) Small Town Water & Sewer Infrastructure Assistance Grant Program. With MAP, Inc.'s assistance and KDHE funding, the community is now on its way to rehabilitating its wastewater collection system.



Shelly Underwood  
State Field Manager



Tom Finger, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Curt Bigge, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Reuben Martin, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Belinda Nelson, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Austin Masters, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Sherri Wedel, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider

# Missouri

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

MAP, Inc. staff provided team training to Mokane, Missouri community staff and elected officials, covering topics such as record retention, Sunshine Law, budgets, and utility projects. The training emphasized the importance of establishing secure systems for file management, understanding the Freedom of Information Act, and effectively managing community budgets. Mokane learned about available infrastructure funding opportunities, legal postings, Missouri Labor Laws, and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance. MAP, Inc. will provide additional training in the future and assist with bond and permit compliance.



Kristina Hartley  
State Field Manager



Stephanie Ross, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



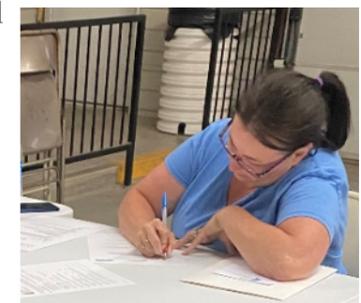
Dave Akins, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Lonnie Kevin Clark,  
Project Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Kerri Peters, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



MAP, Inc. training in  
Mokane, Missouri



# Minnesota

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Trosky, Minnesota, a town of eight-six in Pipestone County, faced long-standing issues with failing septic systems. Surface discharge and effluent was pooling in yards and flowing along roadways which posed significant health hazards and environmental concerns. MAP, Inc. has worked with the city for



Chris Ziegler  
State Field Manager



Andrew Olson, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Michael Faulhaber, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Above: Trosky City hall  
Left: Water along roadway



Mary Mullane, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider

over a decade including coordinating with agencies and stakeholders to secure funding, provide board training, and guide the engineering and permitting process for a new wastewater treatment system. The system will feature sewer collection mains, sewage pumping and treatment ponds. MAP, Inc. supported the city with funding applications, progress reporting, compliance filings, budgeting, and advocacy, helping secure funding through a legislative bonding bill. Looking ahead, MAP, Inc. will continue to assist the city to establish affordable utility rates and empower the city board and officers to make informed decisions.



Tyrel Owens  
State Field Manager



Lee Allen, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Chris Dutcher, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Julia Belopotosky, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider

# Wyoming

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Located in Niobrara County, Wyoming, the Lance Creek Water and Sewer District serves a small community of around 43 residents with deep ties to ranching and oil production. The district faced serious water quality issues, with wells exceeding EPA limits for radium and arsenic. MAP, Inc. worked closely with local officials and the district to acquire a new test well that met all safety standards. MAP, Inc. assisted in identifying funding opportunities and facilitated the permitting process through persistent coordination with state agencies. Lance Creek now has access to safe, compliant drinking water.



North Dakota flight  
Picture by Natalia Heck

# North Dakota

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

The City of Reeder relied on neighboring communities for essential services such as meter reading, monthly billing, and water sampling. However, a supporting community recently withdrew their assistance, leaving Reeder in a challenging position. MAP, Inc. stepped in and worked closely with the city auditor to determine the appropriate software for meter reading and billing. MAP, Inc. provided training in proper sampling techniques for coliform and chlorine, and facilitated with a certified laboratory for water testing. When a positive bacteriological sample was detected, MAP, Inc. guided the city through the resampling process to ensure public safety. MAP, Inc. continues to support Reeder in the upcoming lead and copper sampling efforts and has assisted the city auditor in fulfilling the compliance requirements set by the city's loan provider, helping to ensure compliance.



Brian Day  
State Field Manager



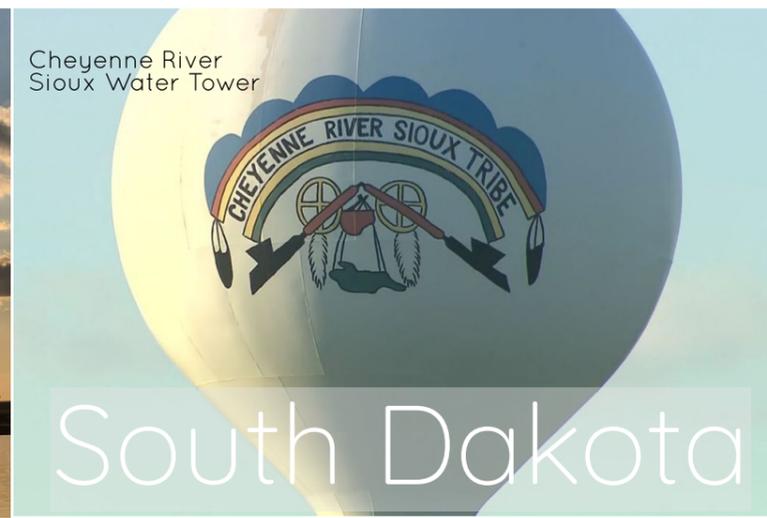
Garrett Clark, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Mary Jamerson, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Mikel Kunza, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Cheyenne River  
Sioux Water Tower

# South Dakota

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Eagle Butte, South Dakota, faced serious wastewater issues due to conflicts between the city and tribe, lost records, and halted funding efforts. MAP, Inc. stepped in to reunite stakeholders, restore communication, and provide technical support. MAP, Inc. trained a local operator for certification, helped the new finance officer rebuild accurate systems, and reconnected the city with its planning district and engineer. This hands-on support renewed collaboration, enabling the community to pursue long-overdue infrastructure improvements.



Eagle Butte  
Lagoons Picture  
by Kevin  
Coldsmith



Jackie Luttrell  
State Field Manager



Hope Block, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Kevin Coldsmith, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



Jessica Casey, Project  
Manager/Technical  
Assistance Provider



# MAP, Inc. Snapshots

Pictured above left to right: LeAnn Kerzman, MAP, Inc. Programs Director; Staff from John Thune's Office; Margot Gillette, MAP, Inc. Board Member; Jackie Luttrell, MAP, Inc. State Field Manager South Dakota

"With this assistance we have addressed compliance concerns, updated practices, procedures, and have improved tools and knowledge for our daily operations and management."

--Paul Hawley, Mayor City of Liberty, Kansas

## INFRASTRUCTURE IN ACTION



Pictured above MAP, Inc. staff visited Washington D.C. in February 2025 to meet with legislators and their staff and provide advocacy for rural communities in our region.



Photos by Rhiannon Niemeier.

# Clean Drinking Water Agua4All

by Rhiannon Niemeier,  
Administrative/Communications  
Manager

Thanks to generous funding from CoBank through the RCAP Agua4All program, MAP, Inc. proudly partnered with RCAP, Inc. to bring a vital resource to Exira-EHK Elementary School in rural Iowa—clean, accessible drinking water.

Mike Obal, MAP, Inc. Assistant Operations Director played a key

role in making this project a reality, working closely with school staff and community partners to ensure a smooth installation and successful rollout. His hands-on efforts helped turn vision into action.

Through this grant, MAP, Inc. installed a state-of-the-art water bottle filling station, with help from Evo Market Solutions and Rural Community Assistance Partnership Inc., giving students and staff a reliable source of fresh, filtered water each day. To promote long-term healthy hydration and reduce plastic waste, every student and staff member also received a brand-new reusable water bottle.

While simple in concept, this project is already making a big impact—encouraging healthy habits, supporting sustainability, and bringing positive change to a rural community that deserves it.



Above: Mike Obal hands water bottles out to 3rd graders. Below: Students check out their new water bottles



Pictured above MAP, Inc. Technical Assistance Provider Curt Bigge and Kansas State Field Manager Shelly Underwood examine the wastewater system to assist the community in locating deficiencies during a smoke test. Pictures above and to the left taken by Eric Teegerstrom.



Montana State Field Manager and Chad Thompson, Technical Assistance Provider examine a fitting



Pictured to the left and right are photographs of MAP, Inc. staff during training sessions. Pictures taken by Rhiannon Niemeier.

# MAP, Inc. Staff Highlight: Lonnie Clark

by Rhiannon Niemeier,  
Administrative/  
Communications Manager

When it comes to providing clean, safe water to rural communities, Lonnie Clark is no stranger. With years of experience in the water and wastewater industry, Lonnie has built a career on helping small communities overcome the significant challenges of maintaining reliable water services.

Lonnie's work covers a wide range of responsibilities, from operator training and compliance assistance to hands-on troubleshooting and long-term infrastructure planning. He helps small utilities navigate the technical and regulatory maze of water and wastewater management, especially those that are understaffed or facing urgent system failures.

Growing up in a small town gave Lonnie firsthand insight into the realities rural communities face—tight budgets, limited staff, and aging infrastructure. That experience continues to drive his dedication to strengthening systems that are often stretched to their limits.

One of his proudest



Lonnie Kevin Clark, Technical Assistance Provider

moments came while assisting Lilbourn, Missouri, in addressing compliance issues with its failing lagoon system. After the town lost critical aeration lines and lagoon covers, Lonnie provided technical guidance, trained operators, and ultimately connected them with donated lagoon components



Clark providing a Board and Clerk Training

from Silver Dollar City. “Knowing it gave the community a second chance made it especially meaningful,” he shares.

Another standout project involved the Bennett Springs Campground Wastewater Treatment Facility. Working closely with the owner, Lonnie helped modernize the facility, improving operations and protecting the surrounding environment. The project ensured continued access to a beloved outdoor recreation area while meeting regulatory standards.

In 2024, Lonnie received the RCAP TAP of the Year Award recognizing his significant work in the field. For Lonnie, success means creating systems that are financially sustainable, compliant, and resilient over time. “It’s not just about patching problems,” he says. “It’s about helping communities stand on their own and plan for the future.”

“The best part of this job is seeing small communities succeed,” Lonnie says. “The impact of clean, reliable water in these places can’t be overstated.”

“I’ve always had a passion for public service and infrastructure. I realized just how critical water is to public health—and how many small towns don’t have the resources they need to do it right.”



-Lonnie Clark

# Empowering Communities

## Free Training for Utility Professionals!

Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. offers on-site and virtual training each month at no cost to attendees throughout Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Our training programs are fully customizable to meet your specific needs and are designed to benefit utility operators, board and council members, clerks, and elected officials across key areas such as water, wastewater, solid waste, and utility management.

### WATER OPERATOR TRAINING

Water operator training is designed to educate operators on topics including mathematics, hydraulics, pumps, motors, safety, and regulations. This training provides guidance on maintaining the distribution system operation, maintenance, repair and replacement techniques.

### WASTEWATER OPERATOR TRAINING

Wastewater operator training is provided to help wastewater operators identify inflow and infiltration (I&I) causes, the effect on the wastewater system, methods to identify I&I, and provide hands-on experience with smoke testing equipment.

### CLERK/FINANCE TRAINING

MAP, Inc. staff provide training to city staff, clerks, finance officers, and auditors for completing financial reporting, bank reconciliation, budgeting, setting utility rates, preparing for an audit, grant and loan requirements, and record keeping.

### WELL OWNER TRAINING

Private well educational seminars provide an overview of water well best practices and procedures including: well system components, wellhead management, contaminants, and testing.

### VIRTUAL TRAINING

Virtual training is provided throughout the year on topics such as: Lead and Copper Rule/Lead Service Line Inventory, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) updates, and many more!

Scan to see our training list!



[WWW.MAP-INC.ORG/TRAINING.HTML](http://WWW.MAP-INC.ORG/TRAINING.HTML)

# SOURCE

Midwest Assistance Program, Inc.  
Phone: 660-562-2575  
Email: [map@map-inc.org](mailto:map@map-inc.org)  
Website: [www.map-inc.org](http://www.map-inc.org)

## Source Mission:

To provide information for the clients of the Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP, Inc) to better understand the programs and services offered, help improve their communities and tribal associations, and showcase the expertise of MAP, Inc employees.



FIND US ONLINE!



MIDWEST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, INC.  
309 E SUMMIT DRIVE  
MARYVILLE, MO 64468

Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP, Inc.) is a member of the Rural Community Assistance Partnership Incorporated (RCAP)

Midwest Assistance Program, Inc. (MAP, Inc), assists rural drinking water, wastewater, and solid waste utilities in finding solutions to their infrastructure needs. Since 1979, MAP, Inc. has been helping rural utilities and tribal nations in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming to build financial managerial and operational capacity.

Through MAP Inc.'s individualized support, rural communities, tribal nations, water and wastewater districts, homeowner's associations, lake associations, and other small utilities find solutions to sustain infrastructure safely and efficiently while revitalizing the communities.

## MAP, INC NINE-STATE REGION

