



Fact Sheet



Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) Help for Small Community Wastewater Projects

What is RCAP?

RCAP is a National network of nonprofit organizations that provide technical assistance to communities to help them attain adequate wastewater treatment services. Technical assistance is carried out through RCAP's six regional organizations and their service areas at no cost to the participating communities or systems. A significant amount of RCAP's work is done in small, rural areas in minority communities, underserved rural areas, or rural areas with a high percentage of low-income individuals who display a commitment to addressing their wastewater problems. RCAP's focus is to help communities meet Clean Water Act (CWA) requirements and to empower them to operate and maintain the systems they develop. RCAP receives a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to support small community wastewater system improvements.

EPA's Small Community Wastewater Project

Many communities and tribes experience difficulties in attaining the wastewater treatment levels to comply with CWA requirements. They often lack adequate financing, management skills and training to construct, operate, manage and maintain wastewater treatment facilities or systems. Institutional capacity to implement facility improvements is often non-existent. In a partnership agreement with EPA, RCAP provides the appropriate financing, management, operations and maintenance, and other technical assistance through the Small Community Wastewater Project.

The Project provides on-site technical assistance and information transfer to address community-specific wastewater treatment or compliance problems in small, rural communities. RCAP targets:

- unsewered communities under administrative order
- small systems with operations and maintenance problems
- small, rural communities with individual permits and flows <1 MGD that violate discharge permits
- small, rural communities that need to upgrade wastewater collection, treatment, and/or distribution facilities
- small, rural communities with other management, financing, construction, operations and technical needs, such as a history of non-compliance and watershed pollution threats
- communities eligible for EPA's new Hardship Grants.

RCAP's technical assistance activities are coordinated and selected with state and local governments or tribal pollution control agencies, EPA's regional Small Community Outreach and Education (SCORE) coordinators and other organizations. The Small Community Wastewater Project is administered in EPA's Office of Wastewater Management, Municipal Support Division. The Project is a component of the Small Underserved Communities team in MSD's Municipal Assistance Branch. The team's goal is to administer programs through which small underserved communities can access information, financial resources and technical assistance to achieve adequate and cost effective wastewater systems. Nine additional technical assistance programs are managed by members of this team.

Funding for Small Communities

For FY 1998, EPA is targeting \$521,000 to the Small Community Wastewater Project. Additionally, RCAP is contributing \$27,420 to the Project from in-kind contributions. RCAP's technical assistance efforts are being provided to 62 projects in 27 states, including nine states without previous technical assistance for wastewater projects: Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, South Carolina, and South Dakota. RCAP's technical assistance projects are obtained in response to requests from state or tribal pollution control agencies, rural wastewater treatment facility owners and operators, and rural community residents.

In FY 1997 the Project was funded by EPA's congressional add-on grant of \$307,000 and \$16,158 of in-kind contributions. During 1997, RCAP's project activities provided community-specific on-site technical assistance to 42 projects in 19 states. The Midwestern and Southeastern Regional RCAPs provided assistance to small communities without community-wide wastewater treatment facilities, with failing on-site systems, or with uncertain wastewater treatment and collection options. The Southern and Great Lakes Regional RCAPs targeted assistance to communities with systems that had flows less than 1 MGD and violated their discharge permits. Assistance to communities with pollution prevention issues continued in the Northeastern RCAP. On-site technical assistance to the Navajo Nation was a special target in the Western Regional RCAP, and assistance is provided to tribal systems.

During the 1996 project year, RCAP provided technical assistance to 49 community projects in 17 states: Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, Maryland, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. RCAP managed 22 facility development projects, 10 management and finance projects, 13 operations and maintenance projects, and four projects for program planning and other types of technical assistance. A population of 38,000 benefitted from these types of technical assistance.

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