



Fact Sheet



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

EPA's Small Community Wastewater Project

This project is a training and technical assistance program focused on addressing wastewater treatment and disposal issues in small, rural and tribal communities which have difficulties complying with Clean Water Act (CWA) requirements. These communities 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 or to address watershed pollution threats is often nonexistent. In a partnership agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Rural Community Assistance Program, Inc. (RCAP), provides the appropriate financial management, operations and maintenance, and other community-specific technical assistance through the Small Community Wastewater Project. RCAP receives a grant from the EPA to support small community wastewater system needs.

RCAP's technical assistance activities are coordinated and selected with state and local governments or tribal pollution control agencies, EPA's outreach coordinators and other appropriate organizations to address small community wastewater treatment problems. RCAP's activities will be targeted to:

- include or increase efforts in training and technical assistance for minority and/or tribal communities;
- assist in the maintenance and/or development of decentralized wastewater treatment systems;
- link the wastewater treatment needs of small, disadvantaged rural communities with fewer than 3,000 people to the EPA's State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) program;
- unsewered communities under administrative orders;
- small systems with operations and maintenance problems;
- small, rural communities with individual permits and flows less than one million gallons per day (<1MGD) that are in violation of their discharge permits, or are in danger of noncompliance of discharge permit requirements;
- small, rural communities that need to upgrade their wastewater collection, treatment, and/or disposal facilities to meet CWA requirements; and
- small, rural communities with other management, financing, construction, operations, and technical needs, including difficulties accessing public financing, a history of noncompliance, the absence of institutional capacity to implement facility improvements, (whether central or non-central solutions), an insufficient financial base to construct, operate, manage and maintain facilities, and, watershed pollution threats.

What is RCAP?

The Project is a component of the Small Communities Team in the Municipal Support Division's Municipal Assistance Branch. The team's goal is to administer programs through which small communities can access information, financial resources, and technical assistance to achieve adequate and cost-effective wastewater systems. Visit EPA's webpage at "www.epa.gov/owm/smallc.htm" to obtain information for the team's other small community programs.

RCAP is a national network of nonprofit organizations that provides on-site technical assistance to rural communities to help them attain and/or maintain adequate wastewater treatment services. RCAP is also a resource for community leaders seeking technical assistance services for other community-specific needs. Technical assistance is carried out through RCAP's experienced community development and leadership specialists at six regional organizations and their service areas. Assistance is provided at no cost to the participating communities. Most of RCAP's work is done in small, rural areas with populations of 3,000 or less and with a high percentage of low-income individuals who display a commitment to addressing their wastewater problems.

Funding for the Small Community Wastewater Project

For the FY 2002 project year, EPA is targeting \$1,128,300, to the Small Community Wastewater Project. Additionally, RCAP is providing \$56,000 of in-kind contributions for the Project. RCAP will continue to provide technical assistance efforts initiated through previous years' Congressional add-ons to address small community wastewater treatment and disposal needs. RCAP will provide on-site assistance for approximately 115 projects in 33 states and Puerto Rico. Projects are selected in response to requests from state or tribal pollution control agencies, rural wastewater treatment facility owners and operators, and rural community residents. Additionally, RCAP will provide 17 training sessions or workshops for system owners and operators. Topics will include affordable wastewater treatment technology, system operation and management issues, operator training, requirements of the CWA and the management of decentralized wastewater systems.

In FY 2001, funding for the Project totaled \$1,045,516, including an EPA grant of \$995,716 and \$49,800 of RCAP's in-kind contributions. RCAP provided technical assistance efforts in 131 small, rural communities in 27 states and Puerto Rico: Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Also, RCAP conducted a total of 13 training sessions for owners and operators of small wastewater treatment systems.

During FY 2000, RCAP provided on-site technical assistance to 78 small, rural communities in 22 states. RCAP managed 48 facilities development projects, 11 management and finance projects, 11 operations and maintenance projects, 6 planning and development projects, one capacity building project, and one source protection project. Six training workshops were conducted in five project states. A total of 70,152 people directly benefitted from RCAP's assistance during the project year.

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