



# *Rural Community Assistance Partnership*

Technical assistance  
Training  
Financial assistance  
Information and knowledge-sharing  
Advocating on behalf of rural communities

## *An overview of RCAP's work in rural communities*

**Practical solutions for improving rural communities**

**RCAP** works in small, rural communities across the United States, its territories, and in tribal areas. Most of the communities where RCAP works are low-income and have a population under 2,500. RCAP provides customized, in-person technical assistance and training services, financial assistance, and information and publications to help communities operate efficient water and wastewater systems that are in compliance with regulations. RCAP's assistance enables communities to provide a reliable, safe and clean supply of drinking water and a sanitary wastewater disposal system. The health of residents is



protected, the environment is cared for, and the economies of whole communities are supported by this critical infrastructure.

## RCAP provides assistance to communities through publications and periodicals

RCAP has produced a family of publications and related multimedia materials for small, rural communities. These resources provide a wide range of assistance in the technical, managerial and financial aspects of operating a water system. They are designed to assist a variety of audiences from board members to operators to those responsible for financial reporting.

All resources can be found on the RCAP website at [www.rcap.org/commpubs](http://www.rcap.org/commpubs). Each of the guides can be viewed, downloaded and printed in their entirety on that page as PDFs.



RCAP also produces two periodicals:

- *Rural Matters*, a magazine that is produced several times a year. You can receive *Rural Matters* by mail or email. Subscribe for free at [www.rcap.org/ruralmatters](http://www.rcap.org/ruralmatters)
- *A Drop of Knowledge*, an electronic newsletter sent monthly by email. Sign up to receive it at [www.rcap.org/DoKsubscribe](http://www.rcap.org/DoKsubscribe)

Both periodicals contain practical information for small communities to help them operate and manage sustainable water and wastewater systems.

# Technitrain Program

*funded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development*

This program helps to protect public health and economic well-being in small, rural communities by providing on-site, customized technical assistance and training. Many communities operate facilities that are out of compliance with state and federal safe drinking water or wastewater-disposal regulations. The assistance from this program supports water systems as they improve their existing facilities, develop new facilities, enhance their management and finance operations, or improve their facility's operation and maintenance.

The wider goal of this program is to help communities better manage their assets, stay in compliance with regulations, and adhere to USDA Rural Utility Service's loan and grant procedures and requirements in a construction project. In this process, communities also develop their own capacities to take on other challenges.

RCAP's assistance enables a community's leaders to make responsible decisions on matters such

## Putting a Colorado community on firmer financial footing

Idaho Springs, a city of 1,889 people in the mountains 35 miles west of Denver, owns and operates its water and wastewater systems. The city is applying for funding from USDA Rural Development (RD) for improvements to its wastewater system, but RD is concerned about the organization's current financial status. RD asked RCAC, the Western RCAP, to help the city manage its finances. After meeting with the city's leaders, RCAC determined that a rate study and an asset-management plan were needed.

RCAC held an informational meeting with the full city council in which the approach to financial management was discussed and a plan of action developed. Subsequent meetings were held with the mayor, city administrator, treasurer and head operator to collect budget information on the water systems, data on water usage, and to review the billing structure for analysis.

RCAC uses software developed by one of its staff members to evaluate the budget information and water-usage data and to develop feasible rate structures for further evaluation. Several possible

## By the numbers

*for the year ending Aug. 31, 2011*

- Provided technical assistance to **913** projects in **49** states and Puerto Rico
- Number of residents benefiting from RCAP assistance through this program: **1,564,697**
- Projects:
  - Drinking water: **580**
  - Wastewater: **310**
  - Facilities development: **270**
  - Management and finance assistance: **260**
  - Vulnerability assessments completed: **69**
  - Emergency-response plans completed: **90**
- Amount leveraged: **\$62.9** million for **41** projects in **19** states
- Conducted **80** trainings in **23** states, reaching a total of **1,624** local officials

as choosing the appropriate infrastructure, setting equitable and realistic user fees, managing a system in the long term, and determining capital-expenditure needs.

rate structures have been evaluated with the mayor and city staff, and at least one additional meeting will be needed before alternatives can be presented to the full city council for discussion and approval.

These efforts are leading to a stronger overall financial standing for the system. With better management and a more reliable income from user rates, the system becomes a better prospect for loans and grants from RD and hopefully a more responsible borrower.



# Drinking Water and Wastewater Programs for Small Communities

*funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

These programs provide on-site, customized technical assistance and training to help small systems understand and comply with drinking water and wastewater rules and regulations. These services include problem-solving assistance, helping with drinking water projects, and training operators and community leaders. Training topics include asset management, best practices for operations and maintenance, water efficiency, and decentralized wastewater management.

As projects are implemented and the skills of a community's residents are increased, the community's capacity to work together and address other needs is strengthened.

These programs also reach out to communities and disseminate useful information for their systems. The programs provide training for RCAP staff who in turn share their skills and expertise in their work with communities.

## By the numbers

*for the year ending Nov. 30, 2011*

- Provided training and assistance to **95** water projects in **102** communities in **50** states plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands
- Served a total of **764,304** rural residents in **295,441** households, including **203,529** low-income individuals
- Conducted **12** workshops in **7** states, training **165** community leaders, state and federal employees, RCAP staff, and others. At least **139** systems were present at the trainings.
- Provided environmental health and compliance assistance to **64** communities to help them achieve or maintain compliance for individually targeted regulatory violations.
- Provided capacity-development assistance to **37** communities to help them operate in a more efficient and effective manner using appropriate technology, management and financial norms.
- Funds leveraged: **\$2,586,311**

## Ensuring safe water in Minnesota

Bug-o-Nay-Ge-Shig school is located in a rural northern Minnesota forest and has a campus of a combined elementary-middle school, a high school, gymnasium, several out-buildings and a bus garage. An average of 280 students are enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade. The maintenance staff at the school includes two state-certified water operators who are responsible for the non-community drinking water system.

Midwest Assistance Program (MAP), the Midwest RCAP, had been working with the school's water operators under a contract with the Environmental Protection Agency in which it was providing technical assistance and training to tribal water operators and staff in all of the Minnesota tribes. MAP was notified by EPA and requested by the Leech Lake Tribal Sanitarian to work at helping the school resolve a lead problem there. Tests in 2008 showed the levels were over twice the EPA action levels for lead.

When MAP's initial efforts didn't mitigate the problem, it was then requested to help work with the staff to complete full assessment of the water's physical and chemical characteristics and analyze how best to treat it and lower the lead levels. Upon developing the plan and getting the school's staff and sanitarian to endorse and implement it, MAP encouraged communication with their chemical-delivery company to allow the staff the proper set-up and instruction to add a compound that creates a barrier between the lead and drinking water in the pipes.

Continued maintenance and monitoring should ensure that the school's lead levels remain at an acceptable and safe level, as long as the corrosion control plan is followed. Other MAP-provided assistance at the school will involve helping the staff maintain and monitor the system as well as informing the staff and public (parents) on the current status of the water and why it is a safe drinking water source again for their families.

# Assistance to small, rural drinking water and wastewater systems

with funding from the Office of Community Services in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

This program helps communities to develop the capability to improve and maintain permanent, affordable, adequate and safe drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities in rural areas with an emphasis on establishing new services. In many cases, these communities have high concentrations of households at or below the poverty line. RCAP provides technical assistance to help communities make improvements to their water facilities and help in applying for funding to expand the facilities. RCAP also provides training to help communities operate and manage their water systems in an efficient way that also keeps the system in compliance with regulations.

Some RCAP regional partners also offer direct loans to communities that are trying to improve their system.

Two of RCAP's regional partners provide technical assistance and training to Native American tribes, a group that often has particular needs in the area of water services.

A portion of the grant from this funder was used for various activities to educate and assist water and wastewater systems in the areas of safety and security, emergency-response preparedness and recovery, workforce issues, and general technical and managerial assistance in operating a system. These areas were addressed through outreach, training, and presentations.

## By the numbers

for the year ending Sept. 30, 2011

- **1,370** total projects in all **50** states plus Puerto Rico
- **11** different types of projects
- **\$702.36** million total leveraged funds (grants and loans) for projects in **33** states

### Trainings:

- **159** individual training sessions in **32** states plus Puerto Rico
- Total of **2,964** individuals with **1,609** different systems trained
- Average attendance at trainings: **18.6**

## Loan helps extend water lines to homes with contaminated wells

Living in a rural area that has a viable and functioning water system doesn't always ensure that residents have clean, safe drinking water.

The Cherokee County [Oklahoma] Rural Water District #7, near the town of Tahlequah, purchases water from Tahlequah's water treatment facility and distributes it to more than 400 customers in the small communities of Welling and Tailholt. The district also provides water to a local school district.

During the summer of 2011, the district identified major issues in its coverage area, including a section where 14 homes were getting water from privately drilled wells because there were no water lines running to their property. In addition, the wells had become contaminated with bacteria, making the water unsafe. The homeowners wanted to become part of the water system. However, hooking up those homes would require approximately 1.3 miles of water line extensions, and the water district was not in a position to fund a project of that size.

The staff of Community Resource Group (CRG), the Southern RCAP, helped board members identify their concerns, prioritize projects, and develop a plan to fund the water line extension. As part of its assistance, CRG conducted a rate analysis to ensure the district would be able to secure and service financing of the extension.

The district financed a loan through CRG's revolving loan fund to extend its distribution system to the 14 homes. Families that previously had no safe drinking water source now have access to clean, safe water because of the extension of the district's water line.

# Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc.

## Combined Statement of Financial Position

*September 30, 2011*  
*(with summarized financial information as of September 30, 2010)*

	2011	2012
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$202,242	\$155,288
Grants receivable	692,120	1,198,630
Accounts receivable	29,250	37,125
Prepaid expenses	<u>11,840</u>	<u>12,868</u>
Total current assets	935,452	1,403,911
Note receivable	250,000	250,000
Other assets	<u>7,979</u>	<u>14,044</u>
Total noncurrent assets	<u>257,979</u>	<u>264,044</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,193,431</b>	<b>\$1,667,955</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$83,297	\$92,937
Accrued salaries and related benefits	45,319	37,530
Grants payable	601,811	1,120,708
Refundable advances	<u>60,000</u>	<u>34,125</u>
Total current liabilities	790,427	1,285,300
Note payable	250,000	250,000
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>1,040,427</u></b>	<b><u>1,535,300</u></b>
Net assets		
Unrestricted	<u>153,004</u>	<u>132,655</u>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b><u>153,004</u></b>	<b><u>132,655</u></b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,193,431</b>	<b>\$1,667,955</b>

# Serving RCAP Nationally

## Board of Directors

**Stan Keasling, President**

Rural Community Assistance Corporation,  
the Western RCAP  
West Sacramento, Calif.

**Niel Ritchie, Secretary/Treasurer**

League of Rural Voters  
Minneapolis, Minn.

**Marcie McLaughlin**

Midwest Assistance Program, the Midwest RCAP  
New Prague, Minn.

**Hope Cupit**

Southeast Rural Community Assistance  
Project, the Southeast RCAP  
Roanoke, Va.

**Karen Koller**

RCAP Solutions, the Northeast RCAP  
Gardner, Mass.

**Deb Martin**

Great Lakes RCAP  
Fremont, Ohio

**John Squires**

Community Resource Group, the Southern RCAP  
Fayetteville, Ark.

**Stanley Cothren**

Professional engineer (retired)  
Hot Springs, Ark.

**Suzanne Crawford**

Maine Fulbright Association  
Robbinston, Maine

**Michael Taylor**

Louisiana Land Trust  
Baton Rouge, La.

**Jon Townsend**

AgreementsWork  
West Linn, Ore.

**Jennifer McLaughlin**

Nalu Energy  
Columbus, Ohio

## National office staff

**Robert Stewart**

Executive Director

**Joy Barrett**

Director of Training and Technical Services

**David Clark**

Director of Environmental Programs

**Eleanor Lloyd**

Director of Finance

**Ari Neumann**

Director of Policy Development and Applied Research

**Stephen Padre**

Director of Communications

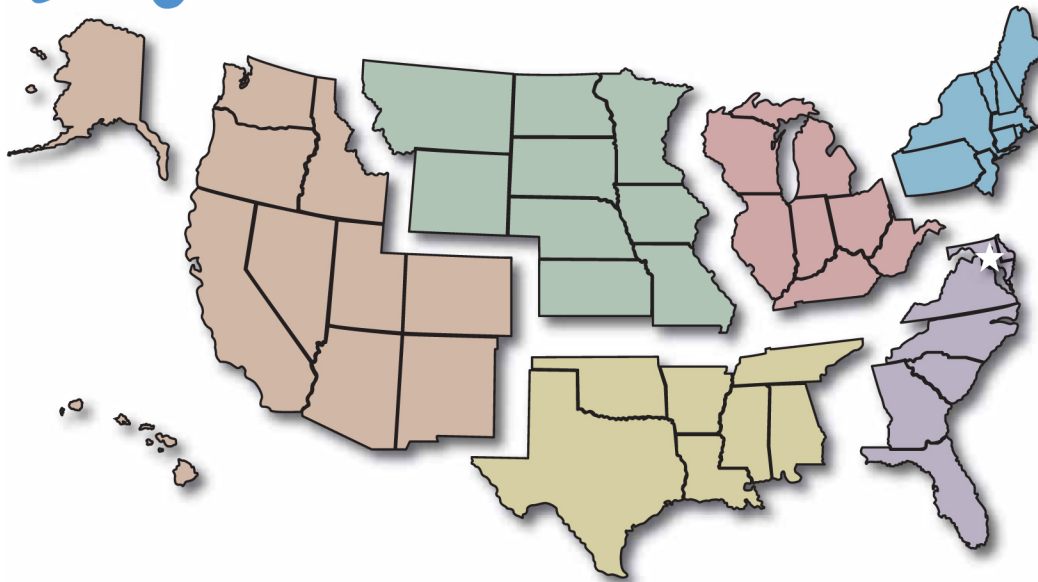
# Need help with your community's water or wastewater system?

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a national network of nonprofit organizations working to ensure that rural and small communities throughout the United States have access to safe drinking water and sanitary wastewater disposal. The six regional RCAPs provide a variety of programs to accomplish this goal, such as direct training and technical assistance, leveraging millions of dollars to assist communities develop and improve their water and wastewater systems.

If you are seeking assistance in your community, contact the office for the RCAP region that your state is in, according to the map below. Work in individual communities is coordinated by these regional offices.



## Rural Community Assistance Partnership



### Western RCAP

**Rural Community Assistance Corporation**  
3120 Freeboard Drive, Suite 201  
West Sacramento, CA 95691  
(916) 447-2854  
[www.rcac.org](http://www.rcac.org)

### Midwest RCAP

**Midwest Assistance Program**  
P.O. Box 81  
212 Lady Slipper Avenue NE  
New Prague, MN 56071  
(952) 758-4334  
[www.map-inc.org](http://www.map-inc.org)

### Southern RCAP

**Community Resource Group**  
3 East Colt Square Drive  
Fayetteville, AR 72703  
(479) 443-2700  
[www.crg.org](http://www.crg.org)

### Northeast RCAP

**RCAP Solutions**  
P.O. Box 159  
205 School Street  
Gardner, MA 01440  
(800) 488-1969  
[www.rcapsolutions.org](http://www.rcapsolutions.org)

  
Puerto Rico (Northeast RCAP) and U.S. Virgin Islands (RCAC)

### Great Lakes RCAP

**WSOS Community Action Commission**  
P.O. Box 590  
219 S. Front St., 2nd Floor  
Fremont, OH 43420  
(800) 775-9767  
[www.glracap.org](http://www.glracap.org)

### Southeast RCAP

**Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project**  
347 Campbell Ave. SW  
Roanoke, VA 24016  
(866) 928-3731  
[www.southeastrcap.org](http://www.southeastrcap.org)

### ★ RCAP National Office ★

1701 K Street NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20006  
202/408-1273 • 800/321-7227  
[www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org)