



Rural  
Community  
Assistance  
Partnership

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# USDA Water and Environmental Programs

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# Who is RCAP?

- RCAP is a non-profit organization made up of a network of regional non-profit partners (6) and a national office in Washington DC serving rural communities (under 10,000 pop.) across all 50 states, the U.S. territories and on Tribal lands
- RCAP has been providing TA and training services for 50 years
- RCAP is staffed by over 350 on the ground TA providers across the country that live and work in the communities they serve



# Rural Community Assistance Partnership



RCAP National Office



COMMUNITIES  
Unlimited



Served more than **3,566,000** million rural and tribal residents and over **1,650** communities in all **50** states and four territories



Conducted **639** trainings, serving **6,680** systems reaching **~13,000** attendees



Helped rural communities across the country leverage **\$692,488,929** in infrastructure funding



Supported the smallest, often overlooked communities with an average population of **1,520** and median household income of **\$40,430**

# The work that makes a difference



RCAP works with small, rural, Tribal, and often disadvantaged communities to access infrastructure funds, achieve compliance, address public health concerns, develop capacity, and create long-term sustainability and resilience.





# ***Pre-Pre Development*** **(also termed planning)**

**When there is a need but  
no vehicle to get there**

- Work with community leaders to create a governance structure
- Help seat a governing body
- Hire staff – operator, billing clerk, others
- Create operating budgets
- Develop operating policies, rules, and regulations
- Train decision-makers and staff
- Feasibility



# Pre-Development

**A need has been identified and a solution needs to be put in place**

- Mapping/Asset Management
- ID compliance challenges and solutions
- Scope of work
- Procurement services
- Financial Review – Financial statements, budgets, rates
- Income surveys
- Financial, technical and environmental planning – PER & ER/EA
- Funding applications



# Project Development

The PER & ER have been completed. We can apply!

- Work with the decision-makers on the alternative analysis
- RDApply
  - Work with utility staff
  - Upload documents
  - Ensure eligibility
- Resolutions
  - Draft and get decision makers to approve funding resolutions
- Community Engagement
  - Facilitate conversations with the community – financial impacts and beyond
- Funding application – Design, Construction



# Letter of Conditions

RCAP TAPs help entities with:

- Policies – assist to develop missing policies – Drug-Free Workspace, LEP
- Permits – right-of-way, easements, water rights, etc.
- Rate Analysis - Review/Revise Rates
- Set up reserve set-asides
  - Annual targets
  - Reserve policies
- Work with the utility to develop the VA/RRA & ERP
- Provide board training (in some states)
- Others

# Project Implementation

Work with decision-makers through the project implementation

- Will there be over \$750K spent in a year?
  - Does the utility have the budget to pay for an audit?
  - Does the utility need an RFP for an auditor with federal grant experience?
- Are all the permits in place?
- Is the project budget spending on track with the project implementation?
- Is there enough funding or is there a funding shortfall?
- Is the project meeting all the federal and state requirements?
- Is the community loving/hating their consultant(s)?

## Project close-out and beyond

- RCAP's work with a community is a long-term relationship including building and maintaining trust
- RCAP will provide periodic reviews of the rates to ensure sufficient revenues to cover operating expenses including loans and reserve set-asides
- At the request of USDA, RCAP will:
  - Work with the utility to update the VA/RRA & ERP
  - Conduct Security Inspections
  - Submit required budget forms
  - Ensure debt repayment/maintenance of the debt and other reserves

**RCAP's commitment is to make sure that every project is sustainable and provides technical, managerial and financial TA and training to build local capacity.**

# How is RCAP's work for communities supported: RD Title

## ❑ USDA Technical Assistance & Training Program (*Sections 306 Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act*)

❑ In the last few years this has also included GIS TA, training and licensing

## ❑ USDA Technical Assistance & Training – Tribal

❑ Includes the creation and maintenance of the Native American Water Masters Association (NAWMA)

## ❑ USDA Technical Assistance & Training – Colonias

❑ Major focus of regional collaboration and water access

## ❑ USDA Solid Waste Management Program

❑ Diverse set of TA service from the landfill to the classroom to ensure public/environmental health and water quality/pollution prevention



# Leveraged Funding:

RCAP leverages USDA funds with other federal programs:

- EPA
- HHS
- EDA
- DOT

# **RCAP services are intended to be wrap-around services to ensure rural prosperity and sustainability**

- Economic Development
- Broadband
- Leadership Development
- Regionalization
- Workforce Solutions
- Disaster and Climate Resiliency

# Additional Resources

- [RCAP's 2023 Farm Bill Priorities](#)
- [CRS Report on USDA Rural Development Programs](#)
- [CRS Report on USDA Rural Definitions & Program Eligibility](#)
- [USDA Water & Environmental Programs Website](#)
- [RCAP Website](#)

# Questions?

**To learn more about RCAP, please visit us at:  
[www.rcap.org](http://www.rcap.org)**

Thank you for your time:

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