



"Improving the quality of life in rural communities"

Drinking Water and Clean Water SRF Reauthorization

About RCAP

The RCAP network provides technical assistance and training to more than 2,000 small, rural water and wastewater systems each year throughout the U.S. and its territories. We help communities maintain compliance with SDWA and CWA regulations; protect public health and the environment; develop, operate, and maintain sustainable systems; support economic development; and build local leadership capacity.

Background

Small systems experience diseconomies of scale that result in higher user rates, per capita construction costs, and staff turnover than large systems. They are often operated by part-time, insufficiently-trained staff and overseen by inexperienced boards. They need training and technical assistance to operate efficiently and effectively, and to access funding when facilities must be upgraded.

Priorities for Each Program

- Authorize a \$25 million annual technical assistance set-aside for small systems. A set-aside already exists in the SDWA.
- Authorize a minimum 15% mandatory loan funding set-aside for small, disadvantaged systems (low MHI and/or non-compliant). An optional 15% DW set-aside already exists.
- Establish a hardship grants program to assist small, disadvantaged systems.
- Establish a disadvantaged community provision (already exists in DW-SRF), which permits states to provide additional subsidization to low MHI systems.
- Establish a small system revolving loan fund for pre-development costs and small projects, to be administered by a nationwide nonprofit with lending experience.
- Require that small systems evaluate consolidation/regionalization options.
- Simplify initial application requirements for small communities.
- Require states to conform application materials/processes to other infrastructure funding sources.
- Restrict eligibility to existing publicly-owned or private nonprofit systems, while allowing formation of systems to address compliance issues.
- Exclude growth/sprawl, which is bad economic and environmental policy, dilutes resources for existing systems, and should pay for itself.
- Mandate watershed-based, integrated water resource management. Funding decisions should take into account upstream and downstream impacts.