The Impact of COVID-19 on Rural and Tribal Water and Wastewater Systems

PENNSYLVANIA

FINDINGS FROM THE RCAP NETWORK NATIONAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

RCAP Solutions, the Northeast RCAP, serves all six New England states, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. RCAP Solutions promotes public, environmental and economic health by providing consulting, planning, financing, build-out oversight, regulatory and compliance oversight, management and operational support for a wide range of community development and infrastructure projects. Visit rcapsolutions.org for more info.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

How long respondents can continue to pay for all system expenses under the current financial circumstances due to COVID-19:

- N/A: Already could not cover all costs
- Less than 2 months
- 2 to 6 months
- 7 to 12 months
- More than a year
- Don’t know/too early to tell
- Don’t want to answer

25% of all PA respondents cannot sustain losses for more than six months of current financial conditions

Challenges faced because of financial conditions:

- Complying with state and/or federal regulations
- Delays/limitations to capital improvement

About the survey: In early May, the RCAP Network surveyed communities to understand the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural and tribal water and wastewater systems. Results are from systems the RCAP Network serves and are not representative of all small systems. These results, however, provide an important snapshot of rural and tribal experiences so policymakers can make informed decisions on how to address these issues during COVID-19 recovery.

8 respondents

100% of respondents were small systems

≈ 783 residents
Average system size of respondent

FACILITIES TYPE:

- 50% water
- 37.5% both
- 12.5% wastewater

1-2: Average full-time staff size
Many supplement with part-time, contract or volunteer staff

Has the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted your system’s financial position, or do you anticipate negative impacts?

- 75% : Yes
- 7.5% : No
- 17.5% : Not sure

2 respondents answered they are collaborating with other utilities or organizations to help fill gaps and/or resolve any issues

Two respondents answered detailed financial questions; their revenue did not change from April 2019 to April 2020.