



Rural Community Assistance Partnership

RCAP Selected as National Environmental Finance Center by EPA

RCAP will Deliver Tailored Technical Assistance to Rural and Tribal Communities Nationwide

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 31, 2023) – The Rural Community Assistance Partnership Incorporated (RCAP) has been awarded \$9.375 million by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assist small, rural and Tribal underserved communities in accessing federal funds for projects focused on drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater.

EPA designated RCAP as a National Water Infrastructure Environmental Finance Center (EFC), authorizing RCAP to help un/underserved communities identify sustainable infrastructure solutions and advance equitable health and environmental safeguards.

RCAP plans to provide disadvantaged small, rural, and Tribal communities with locally tailored in-depth technical assistance (TA) and existing or newly developed tools and resources for predevelopment activities and funding applications that result in access to infrastructure dollars, as well as assistance to ensure solutions are community-driven, affordable, and sustainable. In FY2022 alone, RCAP helped communities leverage \$692 million in federal funds for infrastructure projects which demonstrates RCAP's long history assisting communities in this arena. RCAP will initially undertake at least 78 projects per year over the first two years, with at least 50 systems/communities accessing at least \$100 million in Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) funding during the five-year grant cycle. RCAP's areas of focus for its TA will include regionalization, communities currently not served by centralized water or sewer, and traditional/hard to reach systems such as schools, Manufactured Housing Communities and non-community water systems, partnering with the Indian Health Services to ensure readiness for investment and access to Tribal set-asides under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), as well as helping communities with lead, PFAS/emerging contaminants, and stormwater projects.

In addition to its vital on the ground technical assistance and capacity building services, RCAP, in partnership with UCLA's Luskin Center for Innovation and the Illinois State Water Survey at the University of Illinois will be taking on a needs assessment process to help identify un/underserved communities that have never been able to or had limited access to unlock state and federal funding and also are experiencing major environmental and public health risks as well as other historical inequities. RCAP and the Luskin Center recently published a [report](#), "*Considerations for a National Drinking Water Quality Compliance Assessment*," which will inform the needs assessment activities.

This assessment process will help EPA, RCAP and other EFCs prioritize limited TA resources to ensure the communities most in need are able to get the support they require to access these funds. Additionally, RCAP is also partnering with the American Water Works Association and Water Finance Assistance to build out additional internal RCAP network capacity in the field and to develop curriculum and other resources to meet the aforementioned program goals.

“RCAP is honored to receive the EFC designation. Having helped communities leverage \$692 million in federal funds in fiscal year 2022 alone, we are uniquely experienced at working alongside populations and local leaders who often feel forgotten,” said Olga Morales Pate, RCAP’s Chief Executive Officer. “Our nationwide network of over 350 technical assistance providers is ready to get to work helping communities secure funding and sustainably manage critical infrastructure around safe drinking water, wastewater, and resiliency as we have for the last fifty years.”

The EFC grant program is funded through the BIL which provided \$98 million of the total investment through EPA’s CWSRF and DWSRF.

RCAP looks forward to this EFC work resulting in a growing number of small, rural, and Tribal communities that have the technical, managerial, and financial resources and capabilities to pay for environmental protection, operate in compliance with environmental requirements, and increase regional utility partnerships to ensure that infrastructure solutions are affordable, sustainable, and resilient.

###

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a national network of non-profit partners working to provide technical assistance, training, resources, and support to rural communities across every state, the U.S. territories, and Tribal lands. Through RCAP’s regional partners, more than 350 technical assistance providers (TAPs) build long-term, trusted relationships with thousands of communities across the country.

Media Contact:

Seth Johnson
sjohnson@rcap.org
724-986-9341