

A person wearing a hat and a yellow backpack is walking away from the camera on a dirt path that leads through a field of tall, golden-brown grass. The path is flanked by green grass and some bushes on the right. In the background, there are several large, leafy trees under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A small airplane is visible in the upper center of the sky. A dark teal horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

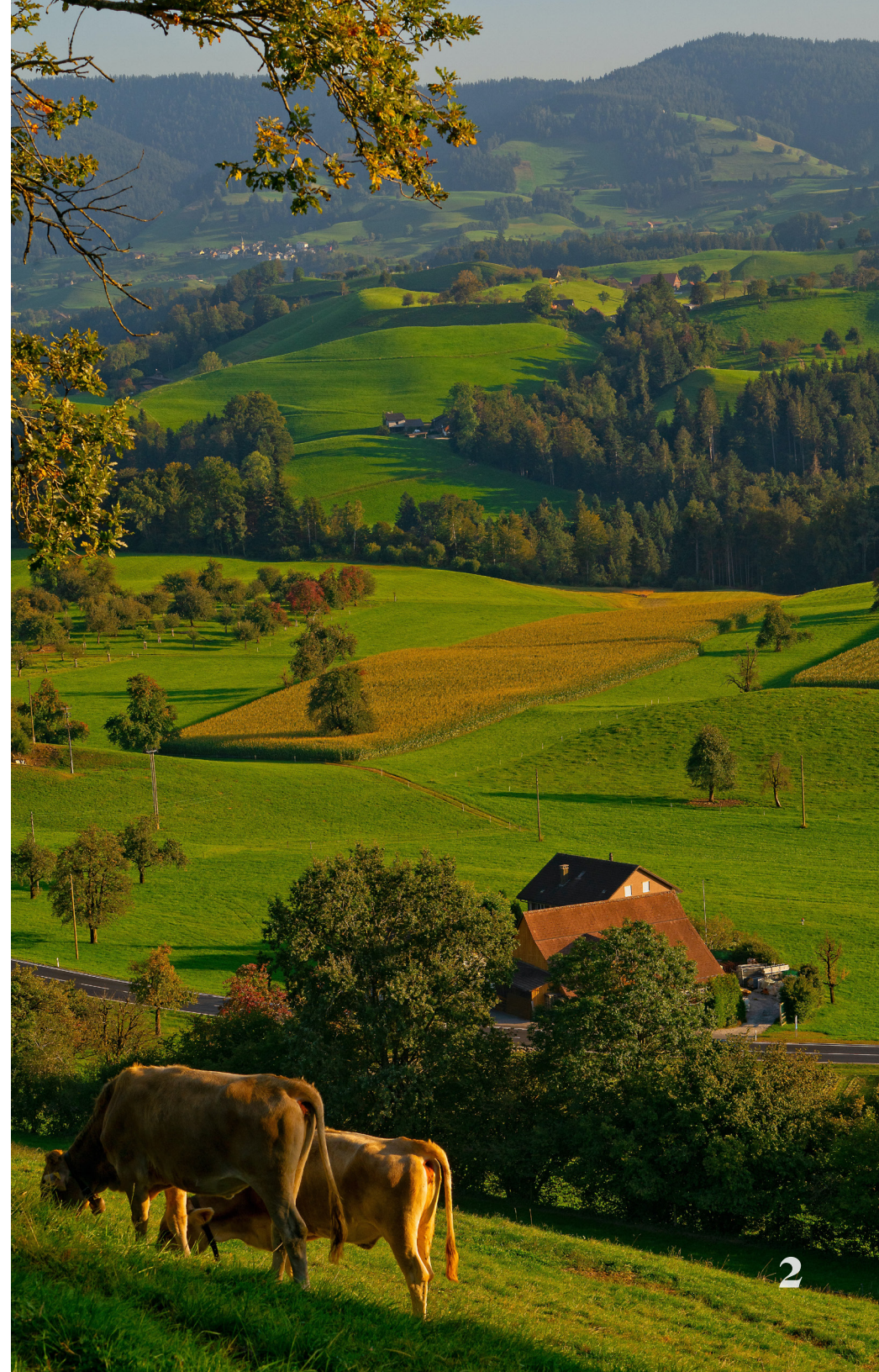
Making Strides for Rural America

RCAP's Fiscal Year 2022 Impact Report

Foreword

Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 was a year of growth, change, and transition for the Rural Community Assistance Partnership Incorporated (RCAP). We witnessed the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), a once-in-a-generation investment in infrastructure for the United States, which we helped to ensure included crucial investments that will help small, rural, and Indigenous communities access safe, affordable water and wastewater services. After IIJA's passage, we worked with partners and agencies to begin mapping out how to strategically utilize these historic funds to meet the needs of those communities that need them the most and often have not had the opportunity to access similar funding in the past. We look forward to all the exciting opportunities this is bringing to our network and the communities we serve.

At the same time, RCAP embarked on a national search for a new CEO in FY22. While our national office staff and our network of technical assistance providers grew to meet the emerging needs of our communities including the increased opportunities created by IIJA, we managed to find an exciting new leader from within our own network, who brings an essential perspective and on-the-ground expertise to our office.

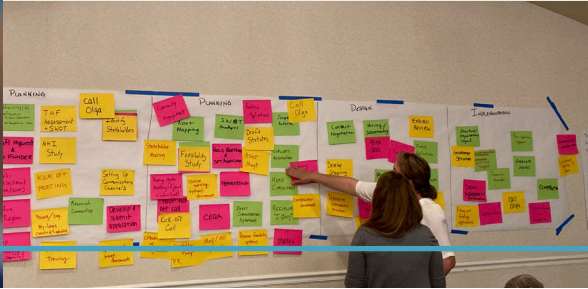


About RCAP

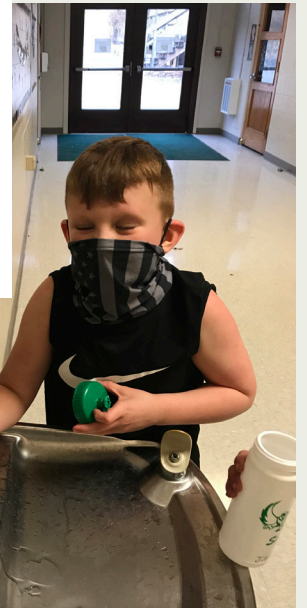
RCAP is a national network of nonprofit partners working with small, rural, and Indigenous communities to elevate rural voices and build local capacity to improve quality of life – starting at the tap. Our more than 350 technical assistance providers (TAPs) act as trusted primary care providers in the training and technical assistance they provide. TAPs are locally based, and with deep trust built over time, we meet communities where they are to co-develop solutions to the challenges that matter most to them. Our TAPs annually work in over 1,600 small, rural, and Tribal communities in every U.S. state, the U.S. territories, and on Tribal lands on issues ranging from gaining access to safe drinking water to creating economic development opportunities that can improve livelihoods and long-term individual and community-wide well-being.



Regional Partners



Year in Review 2022



Impact by the numbers



TOTAL COMMUNITIES SERVED
1,654

RURAL AND TRIBAL RESIDENTS SERVED
3,328,606

TOTAL TRIBAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS
156

LOW INCOME INDIVIDUALS SERVED
875,376

PEOPLE OF COLOR* SERVED
1,065,504

AVERAGE COMMUNITY POPULATION
1,525

AVERAGE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF COMMUNITIES SERVED
\$ 40,434



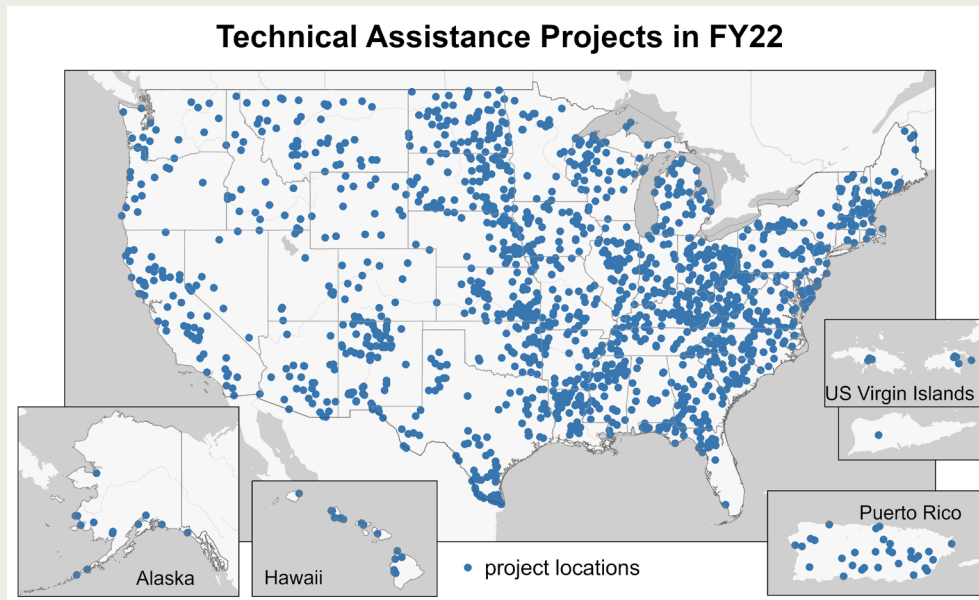
STATES SERVED
50

U.S. TERRITORIES SERVED
5

TOTAL FUNDS LEVERAGED BY COMMUNITIES WITH RCAP ASSISTANCE
\$ 692,488,929

COMMUNITIES SERVED WITH MAJORITY PEOPLE OF COLOR POPULATION
253

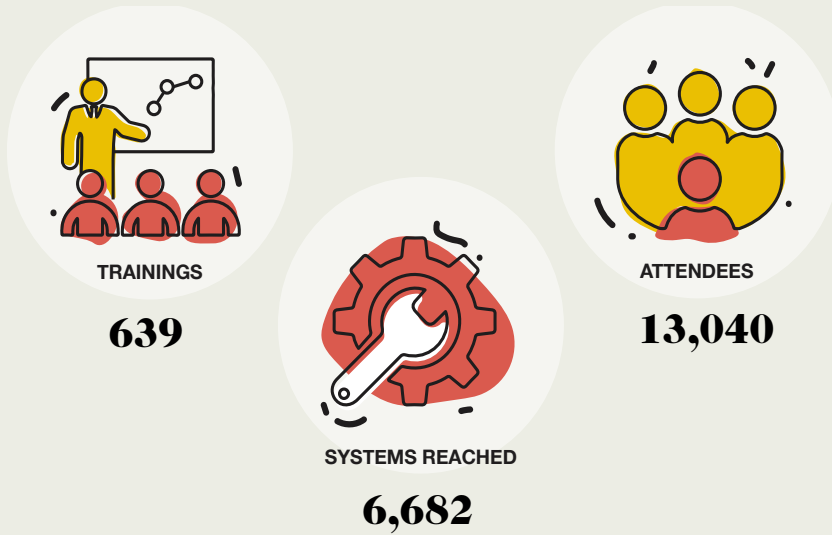
COMMUNITIES SERVED WITH MAJORITY LOW-INCOME POPULATION
514



RCAP also worked on projects providing technical assistance in the Pacific Territories

Impact by the numbers

Training



Impact by the numbers

Well Assessments



WELL ASSESSMENTS

518

WELL TEST KITS

320

STATES SERVED BY PRIVATE WELL INITIATIVES

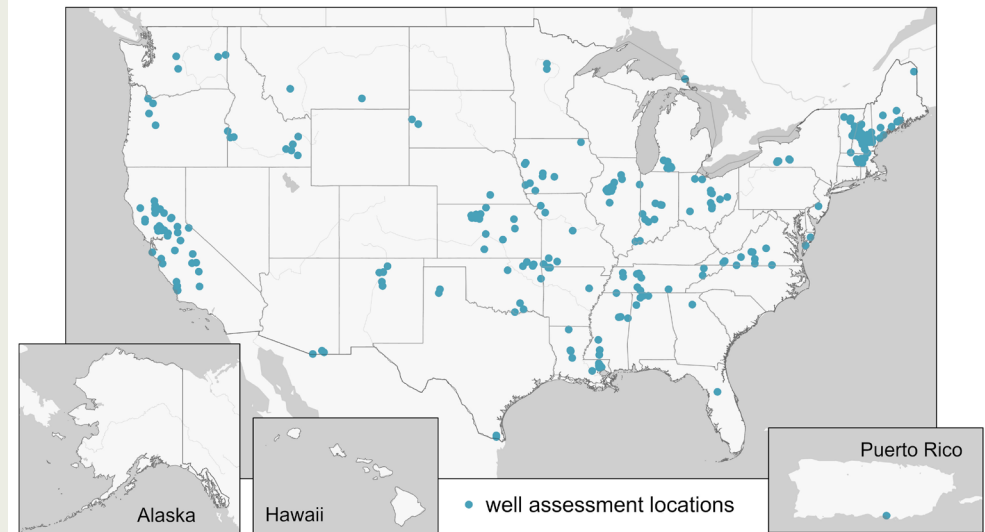
36

U.S. TERRITORIES SERVED BY PRIVATE WELL INITIATIVES

1



Well Assessments in FY22



Highlights from the past year

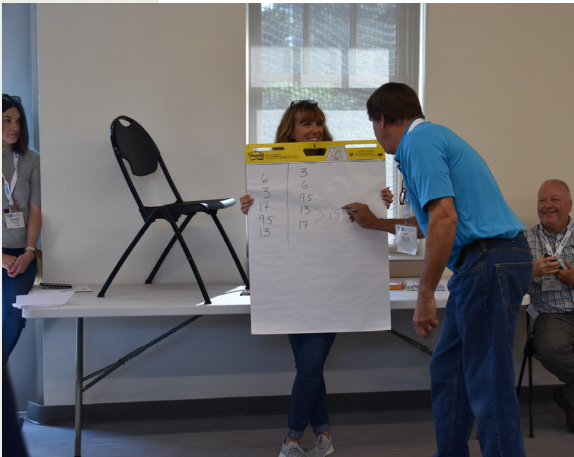
Annual Fly-in

RCAP's annual national Fly-In brings together our six regional partners to generate awareness on rural issues with members of Congress, their staff, and the administration in Washington, DC. The 2022 Fly-In was held virtually from February 28-March and included over 270 meetings. RCAP honored Congressman David Valadao (R-CA-21) and Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) as our 2022 Congressional Champions, an annual bipartisan congressional award chosen by RCAP's regional partners and given to policymakers who have gone above and beyond in supporting policies that benefit small and rural communities as well as taking actions to make them a reality. Additionally, we had key officials from the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) join us virtually including Dr. Lanikque Howard, Director of the Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at HHS; Radhika Fox, EPA Assistant Administrator for Water; and The Honorable Xochitl Torres-Small, former Under Secretary for Rural Development and current Deputy Secretary at USDA.



Annual National RCAP Training Conference

In August 2022, RCAP held its first in-person annual conference since 2019. This was an exciting time for the more than 250 network staff and other colleagues who convened in Columbus, Ohio. Friends and colleagues were able to gather and catch up, some meeting in person for the first time, and learn valuable information from each other and the many talented presenters on the agenda. Topics included educational opportunities such as water, wastewater, solid waste, and regionalization, along with community and economic development, diversity equity and inclusion, environmental justice, conflict resolution, disaster recovery, and more. Other exciting agenda items included a new “World’s Café” format in which we spent a morning rotating around small tables hearing 15-minute talks on several exciting topics such as working with drones and solar feasibility. We also enjoyed the in-person return of “field days” wherein TAPs get hands-on experience with equipment or interactive learning on new operational methods. In addition to DC panelists joining for their usual federal partner plenary and providing the RCAP network with important updates, there was an opportunity for them to meet more informally with RCAP network leadership to discuss pressing challenges and solutions. We were also pleased to celebrate the news of our new CEO’s selection and got to hear from incoming RCAP CEO Olga Morales-Pate about her life and her experience working as a TAP, along with her vision for RCAP’s future and opportunities for rural America.



Olga Morales Pate, new RCAP CEO

In FY22, RCAP underwent a very thorough process of searching for a new CEO. We are so excited to have long-time RCAP network staff, Olga Morales-Pate, joining the RCAP National Office as the new CEO. Her first day was officially the first day of the 2023 fiscal year (October 1, 2023) and we celebrated her incoming leadership at events such as the RCAP National Conference in August 2022.

Olga Morales-Pate came to RCAP with deep knowledge of the network and its offerings after spending 19 years at the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), the Western RCAP, rising from a technical assistance provider (TAP) to Assistant Director of Community & Environmental Services. She previously led the environmental inspection team at the Army's White Sands Missile Range and was an environmental scientist for the New Mexico Environment Department. In 2008, President George W. Bush appointed Olga to the EPA's National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC), where she established strong working relationships with the agency while leading advisory efforts on issues such as climate change, hydraulic fracturing, carbon sequestration, and harmful algae blooms/cyanotoxins among others.

During her 19 years at RCAC, Olga collaborated directly with small, rural, and Tribal communities across the west on the development of infrastructure projects and capacity building and managed an annual portfolio of nearly \$10 million in grants and contracts. She also developed and led the organization's Regionalization program, which facilitated over 100 utility partnership efforts across the west and has been successfully replicated all over the country. She also authored legislation that established the New Mexico Colonias Infrastructure Fund which has secured \$144.6 million for 263 infrastructure projects since 2011. Olga holds bachelor's and master's degrees in agriculture and extension education from New Mexico State University.



Preview: celebrating 50 years of RCAP

2023 marks the 50th anniversary of RCAP's formal incorporation as a nationwide network of nonprofit organizations working to ensure that small, rural and Tribal communities have access to safe drinking water and sanitary waste disposal. Over the next several months, RCAP will reflect on the many communities that have been aided through technical assistance and capacity building over the years, including videos telling a standout story from each RCAP region, looking back at old case studies, and looking forward to what the next 50 years could hold for RCAP and rural America. Stay tuned and follow RCAP for podcasts and other events that we will be highlighting, including a birthday celebration with the entire network at the Annual RCAP National Training Conference in Boston in October 2023.





PROGRAMS

A growing research portfolio

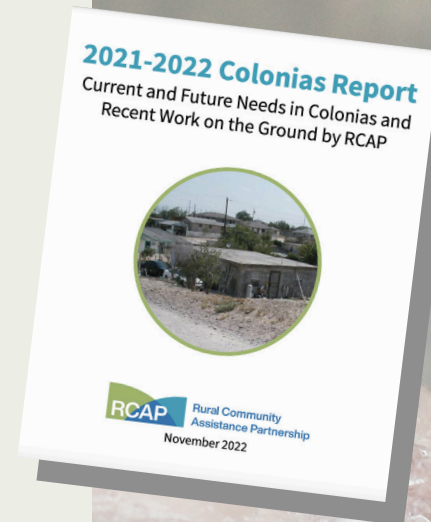
RCAP has spent the last few years growing its research portfolio with a mixture of small one-off research efforts and huge collaborative undertakings, including a broad mix of topics, from drinking water and wastewater regionalization to entrepreneurial ecosystems and rural innovation to rural broadband. Whatever the topic, we are interested in why it matters to rural communities and how we can use our position to both learn about what's happening in communities, how we can improve policies and help spread the knowledge and experience of our network of TAPs and the communities they serve across the country to benefit as many people as possible.

While we are working diligently on several ongoing projects, one of our crucial topics of FY22 was water access in Colonias communities. Colonias are often defined as rural communities near the U.S.-Mexico border that lack access to the basics, like water and sewer services. Colonias are predominantly low-income communities, often unincorporated with mainly Latino residents who are mostly U.S. citizens.

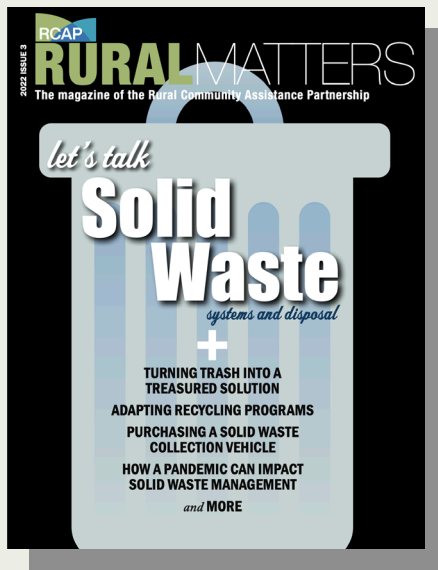
RCAP published a research report “[Current and Future Needs in Colonias and Recent Work on the Ground by RCAP](#)” shortly after the end of FY22, based on work done in FY22. The report highlighted past research on the conditions of water access in Colonias and expanded upon that based on data collection by RCAP TAPs working in those communities as well as conversations with them about what they see day to day on the ground. Despite many years of work in these underserved communities, there is still much to be done. TAPs have concerns about many of the communities they see and work with regarding their drinking water and wastewater services. The importance of continued technical assistance and financial support for infrastructure improvements and capacity building is critical. We also found that key challenges that need continued support for Colonias communities include affordability and asset management, monitoring requirements, and capacity for proactive planning and management. Additionally, Colonias are at major risk of climate change effects, particularly worsening drought, which has a huge impact on water access, quantity, and quality for these already struggling communities.

Working on research related to Colonias communities has been a valuable reminder, as the RCAP research team has been fortunate enough to work with TAPs from our network and other experts in the field, of the importance of ensuring our research is neither extractive nor exploitive. We are working to rethink and reshape how we structure research projects. Though we hope all our research will at least indirectly benefit rural communities because of the lessons learned and spreading of awareness on various topics that matter to rural communities, we want to ensure that we undertake research in a way that is both fair to the communities we seek to represent and compensates any participants for sharing their time, energy, and knowledge.

This will continue to inform us as we move into other research activities in the future. Also keep an eye out for FY2023 research on rural broadband, rural innovation, needs assessments, and the intersection of water, climate, and equity and FY2024 research on innovative treatment technologies for small water systems. This is just a taste of the exciting things to come for RCAP’s research portfolio!

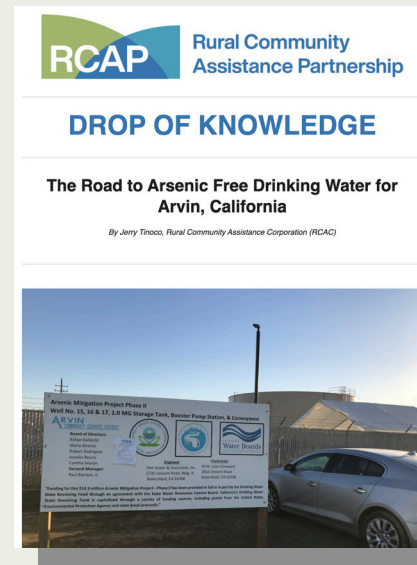


Publications



Rural Matters

RCAP publishes helpful and educational materials regularly. These include our quarterly magazine **Rural Matters**, which in FY22 featured issues on wastewater, drinking water, solid waste, and regionalization.



A Drop of Knowledge

Our monthly article series **A Drop of Knowledge**, a more technical resource on topics such as onsite/decentralized wastewater, private drinking water well testing, preparing for winter storms, the lead and copper rule revisions, and more.

Program outcomes and success stories

Drinking Water Systems

RCAP's TAPs work tirelessly to ensure communities have access to safe drinking water. One example of a difficult situation that the Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP, the southeastern RCAP) helped a community through in Bedford, Virginia was in a mobile home community which had its own community water system but was struggling to manage it, and was under a consent order from the state regulator. TAPs helped the community to enact an approved Cross-Connection Control and Back Flow Prevention Plan and to develop an Emergency Management Plan. SERCAP continued to work with the community to find long-term solutions to providing safe and affordable drinking water, as it is difficult to build the needed capacity to do so within the community. In the meantime SERCAP provided assistance by developing the system's required Consumer Confidence Reports, which educate residents on the state of their drinking water annually. SERCAP helped them to secure funding to address several challenges including construction of a new water storage tank. TAPs will continue to provide assistance as needed to ensure the community meets all state and federal requirements and regulations, so its members have safe drinking water.

Some of RCAP's regional partners also provide financial assistance (in the form of low or no interest loans) themselves in innovative and meaningful ways. Communities Unlimited (CU, the southern RCAP) has a loan program which has allowed them to change the lives of many for the better. [Read about a family in Texas who was able to access running water in their home for the first time in decades thanks to CU](#), a story which also helps to explain the importance of our work to bring water access to all.



Program outcomes and success stories

Private Wells

The RCAP network seeks to support overall health and wellbeing in rural and Tribal communities, and with half a century of experience in improving water infrastructure, the network is able to utilize EPA funding to assist some of the approximately 23 million households in the U.S. that rely on private well water. Providing private well assessments, free well testing, well owner and stakeholder workshops, webinars, e-learning courses, podcasts, and more has led to cooperative programs all over the country with partners ranging across private and public sectors alike. For more information, see the [RCAP Private Well Program Brochure](#).

The private well program can provide enormous benefits to local communities and households, as demonstrated by the results of one project from 2022 that explained mysterious health problems plaguing a family in an affordable housing community in Massachusetts. The family had been experiencing unexplained health problems, and previous well testing hadn't found any issues. Working with RCAP Solutions (the northeastern and U.S. Caribbean RCAP), the family re-tested their well using a private well testing kit provided by RCAP. The lab results showed extremely high Uranium levels, a contaminant that had not been tested for previously. Based on the results, the family was able to make upgrades to their treatment system and finally get an answer that could help them work with their doctors on addressing their health. Additionally, all other low-income households in the community had their water tested for Uranium, and a public health advisory was issued for the area to ensure everyone was aware of the risk.



Closing the Wastewater Access Gap

In 2022, RCAP partnered with EPA to stand up an innovative new pilot program to tackle sanitation challenges in disadvantaged rural communities. In most cases these are communities currently without centralized wastewater systems that need assistance working through how best to improve sanitation and set up a wastewater treatment system that will protect both public and environmental health. When the initiative, called the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative, was launched, several news outlets highlighted it and the collaboration between EPA and USDA. RCAP is proud to be leading this work to improve sanitation and address long-term capacity building for six of the eleven pilot communities which have been shown to have significant need. This is just one impactful piece of RCAP's new Treatment Works program which began in April 2022 and was created in part because of our advocacy work on the 2018 America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA).

In FY22, RCAP formed a new national Wastewater Working Group (WW WG), which is made up of all six of RCAP's regional partners as well as the Water Environment Federation (WEF), the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA), the University of Illinois (U of I) and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). The group meets every other month to discuss updates on wastewater technical assistance and training curriculum and to share resources and information. The group has provided feedback on NOWRA's onsite train-the-trainer pilots and guidebook, has helped develop the WEF wastewater training resources including 23 new training modules, and is supporting additional wastewater activities.

Wastewater may be apt to get less attention than drinking water, but it is also an essential service and requires the same capacity building efforts including technical, managerial, and financial capacity.

Lodge Grass, a small town within the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana, had been accumulating various violations in their lagoon system for years. Midwest Assistance Program (MAP, the midwest RCAP) TAPs were able to build additional local financial capacity by helping them acquire grants for system renovation, and when construction became bogged down due to litigation, the TAPs stepped in to offer technical assistance on operations and maintenance in the interim. MAP also provided in-depth operator training, which led to the system's violations being resolved. The system also needed to complete an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) as part of a letter of conditions from USDA Rural Development (RD). MAP was able to offer managerial assistance as well and build their long-term capacity by helping them finish their ERP, along with completing overdue budget reports. Over the course of working with this community, RCAP was able to significantly enhance operations and maintenance in order for the system to be technically sustainable into the future as well.

In Kentucky, the Farmdale Sanitation District took ownership of poorly maintained privately owned package treatment plants (pre-manufactured treatment facilities used to treat wastewater) in 2016 and 2017. Recently, Farmdale needed to access grant funding for capital improvements to the plants, but a condition of the funding was a rate evaluation to ensure rates were sufficient for the system's ongoing operation and maintenance. They had a tight deadline they needed to meet to remain eligible, but fortunately Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP, the great lakes RCAP) TAPs in Kentucky were able to offer financial assistance by completing a rate study for them with a very quick turnaround. Since Farmdale met the deadline, they received the grant, and have been able to continue addressing the operational and environmental concerns that have plagued the district for decades.



Program outcomes and success stories

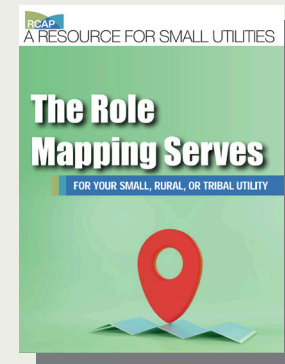
GIS

Over the last few years, RCAP has been expanding our work to provide technical assistance with mapping and the use of geographic information systems, also known as GIS. A GIS is a system that captures, manages, analyzes, and maps all types of data and integrates location data. It allows, among other things, utilities to accurately map their assets including distribution lines, meters, and more. Spatial information can be critical for general management of the system and can speed up recovery from a disaster or emergency. For a wonderful example of why using GIS is so important, see this video from MAP's work with GIS technology in Corsica, South Dakota.

We are also extremely proud to have published a new guidebook in 2022 with support from USDA: [Mapping: The Role Mapping Serves for Your Small, Rural, or Tribal Utility](#). This guidebook helps communities understand the basics of GIS, its benefits and uses for small systems, how it can improve asset management, and what considerations to keep in mind for optimal success.



Using GIS for Water and Wastewater Systems Improvements



Our New Guidebook

Community and Economic Development

RCAP's 5th annual RuralRISE Summit, held in Emporia, Kansas from September 28-30, marked a significant milestone. This year's summit was the first in-person gathering since the COVID-19 pandemic began, bringing together 125 rural ecosystem-builders from across the country alongside 47 online attendees. RuralRISE, co-led by the National Center for Resource Development (NCRD) and RCAP with support from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Appalachian Regional Commission, Network Kansas, and other partners, was founded in 2018. The summit covered a wide range of topics, including the future of the rural ecosystem-building movement, broadband access, adaptive leadership, advocacy training, and innovative funding and development models. The event took place in Main Street community Emporia, Kansas and included a guided tour showcasing the town's unique approach to revitalization.

Community Facilities

RCAP, in partnership with USDA-RD, successfully implemented a Community Facilities (CF) Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement aimed at enhancing community resources and securing funding for vital facilities in rural areas. Over a two-year pilot period, RCAP supported 42 communities in 22 states, with an average population of 4,461 and average median household income of \$42,776. With \$400,000 in funding, RCAP leveraged an additional \$51 million from USDA and other sources for various community facilities projects. Notably, RCAP assisted the Pinal Hispanic Council in Arizona to secure USDA Community Facilities funding, enabling them to expand and upgrade their nonprofit health centers to meet the rising demand for health services and help tackle the opioid crisis. Additionally, RCAP provided disaster recovery technical assistance through USDA's CF Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Disaster

Relief Pilot Program to 29 federally declared disaster-affected communities in five states and one territory. RCAP's expertise and relationships position us as a valuable resource for rural and Tribal communities seeking USDA Community Facility financing, offering comprehensive technical assistance support from planning to implementation and accessing much needed funding.

The Golden Feather Union Elementary School District, located in rural Butte County, California, faced challenges after the Concow School was damaged during the 2018 Camp Fire, resulting in students being relocated to Spring Valley. The school experienced disruptions due to Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) by PG&E in 2019, which affected communication systems, the cafeteria, and heating and cooling. To address this, the district sought disaster relief funds from USDA-RD through the Community Facilities grant program, with support from RCAC (through RCAP's CF Disaster TA funding), enabling them to secure \$190,900 to purchase a generator and install a transfer switch at Spring Valley School to maintain power during PSPS.



Program outcomes and success stories

Open for Business

In FY 2022, our Open for Business program made significant strides in supporting small businesses across the US. Throughout this period, we served a total of 1,206 businesses. Among the businesses served, 467 were small businesses with fewer than 10 employees (excluding sole proprietors), and 379 were sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed individuals. Furthermore, we provided assistance to 935 small businesses having less than \$1 million in annual revenue. Our program played a crucial role in helping 72 small businesses to navigate federal, state, and local programs like the Paycheck Protection Program and other local small business funds. Additionally, we preserved 428 existing small businesses and facilitated the creation of 109 new businesses. 103 of those businesses experienced revenue growth following their receipt of capital and/or services from our program. In terms of job preservation, our clients were able to preserve a total of 236 jobs, while 154 new jobs were created as a result of our support. The businesses we served were categorized into different stages, with 210 in ideation, 161 in startup, 133 in growth, 20 in turnaround, and 10 in succession. Throughout the year, we provided extensive support through 1,368 one-on-one consulting/coaching sessions (virtual or in-person), 223 group training settings such as live webinars and group workshops, and 286 people using our on-demand resources like pre-recorded webinars and online courses through our Learning Management System (LMS). Lastly, our program served 416 clients from low- to moderate-income backgrounds, underscoring our commitment to supporting a diverse range of businesses. This work was supported by Wells Fargo and the Siegel Family Foundation. **For more information and to access our Open for Business Resources, including our self-paced training library, please visit <https://openforbusiness.rcap.org/>**

We can already see amazing outcomes from the Open for Business Program. In Virginia, SERCAP assisted an entrepreneur by providing no-cost business consulting services which helped her to develop a business plan and financial projections. These key pieces were required for her local economic development agency to be able to work with her on her idea – which was also good for the environment. SERCAP continued to work with her on building a business to take discarded food and beverage glass, which is hard to recycle in the local municipal recycling plant, and turn it into other products which are useful for purposes such as artistic sand, pool filtration, sand blasting material, construction additive, and bedding for water and sewer projects. See the whole story at <https://openforbusiness.rcap.org/earthmagic/>. Projects like this are important because they build local leaders and their capacity and economic opportunity, and in this case, address a real solid waste challenge for the community. RCAP also works with communities across the country addressing diverse solid waste challenges and building capacity at the municipal level, such as by providing technical, managerial, and financial assistance to community waste and recycling programs, and even at the classroom level, by teaching school children how to compost.



Predevelopment Accelerator

The Milken Institute and RCAP recognized that many rural communities were struggling to access the Economic Development Administration's (EDA's) funding opportunities and that there was a gap in predevelopment services including much-needed technical assistance. Out of this the idea of the predevelopment accelerator was born. RCAP and Milken surveyed and interviewed hundreds of rural communities from across the country to hear about their community project priorities and to identify their major barriers to accessing funding and making their plans and visions a reality. The results of this were then used to inspire the [Community Infrastructure Center \(CIC\)](#): a hub for communities to find training, technical assistance, and other resources to help them get to the finish line. This also sparked the creation of a much larger initiative called [10,000 Communities](#), of which RCAP is a key partner and will be hosting a rural infrastructure-focused event in Fall 2023.

Advocacy for Rural Entrepreneurs

The Marion Ewing Kauffman Foundation Advocacy Grant for Rural Entrepreneurs brought about significant positive impact and accomplishments. Throughout the program, over 60 participants actively engaged in advancing rural entrepreneurship and inclusive prosperity. The creation of the [Rural Entrepreneurial Policy Playbook](#) provided practical guidance for navigating policy challenges. Moreover, advocacy training sessions equipped entrepreneurs with essential skills, and congressional briefings facilitated meaningful dialogue between policymakers and rural entrepreneurs. The program's outcomes included sustained policy advocacy by entrepreneurs and the proposal of pro-entrepreneurial policy improvements. Lessons learned emphasized the importance of tailored training, engaging ecosystem builders, and collecting demographic data. The program's success demonstrates its contribution to empowering rural entrepreneurs and creating a supportive environment for their growth and success.



Advocacy and Policy Development

Engagement with federal policymakers

RCAP Advocated for and Secured Provisions in the IIJA

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed on November 15, 2021, providing the largest ever investment in infrastructure in the United States. IIJA provides funding for all kinds of infrastructure, including water services and broadband, which are extremely important to rural Americans. Some focus areas include lead in drinking water, emerging contaminants, environmental justice and climate resiliency. RCAP's advocacy on behalf of small, rural, and Indigenous communities across the United States helped to ensure that key challenges they face would be given recognition and focus in upcoming funding opportunities and that historically disadvantaged communities would be provided with the necessary resources to help them access this historic opportunity to improve and invest in critical infrastructure.

RCAP was instrumental in the creation of new resources and investments through IIJA that will provide access to critical technical assistance and training needed for improving drinking and wastewater programs and infrastructure. The IIJA also increased funding for both the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds – including provisions for loan forgiveness and decreased non-federal cost matching requirements – which will allow many more small systems to benefit from this federal funding.

Additionally, RCAP worked with Congress on creating a new grant program in the IIJA to provide funding to low- and moderate-income households through a qualified nonprofit to address septic and wastewater challenges. This new program is flexible in allowing solutions that best fit the needs of the household, geography, and community by allowing grants to be used for the construction, repair, or replacement of an onsite wastewater system, connection to a publicly owned treatment works, or the installation of a larger decentralized wastewater system that can provide treatment to two or more households.

Lastly, RCAP helped secure the first nationwide pilot program for low-income water customer assistance, building on the \$1.1 billion in emergency funding included in COVID-19 response legislation.

Other Accomplishments

- RCAP co-hosted a Rural Innovation Summit as a member of the Rural Network Steering Committee in May 2022 with House Agriculture Chair, GT Thompson (R-PA), and Under Secretary Xochil Torres Small in addition to Suzanne Anarde, RCAC's CEO and an RCAP Board Member. The in-person convening in Washington, DC included more than 20 rural organizations and was convened to consider changes to the Rural Development Title of the 2023 Farm Bill.
- The advocacy team led the charge to secure strong funding levels for rural infrastructure and technical assistance programs through annual congressional appropriations for FY23 including increases to EPA's National Priority Areas Technical Assistance including private well education and the Small Publicly Owned Treatment Works Technical Assistance Program.
- RCAP worked closely with federal agencies including EPA on implementation of key water provisions in IIJA and strengthening technical assistance programs for rural and/or underserved communities including comment letters on new requirements such as Build America Buy America.



Expansion and Future Directions

Strengthening and expanding current programs and building our team's capacity

Creation of the Data & Impact Team

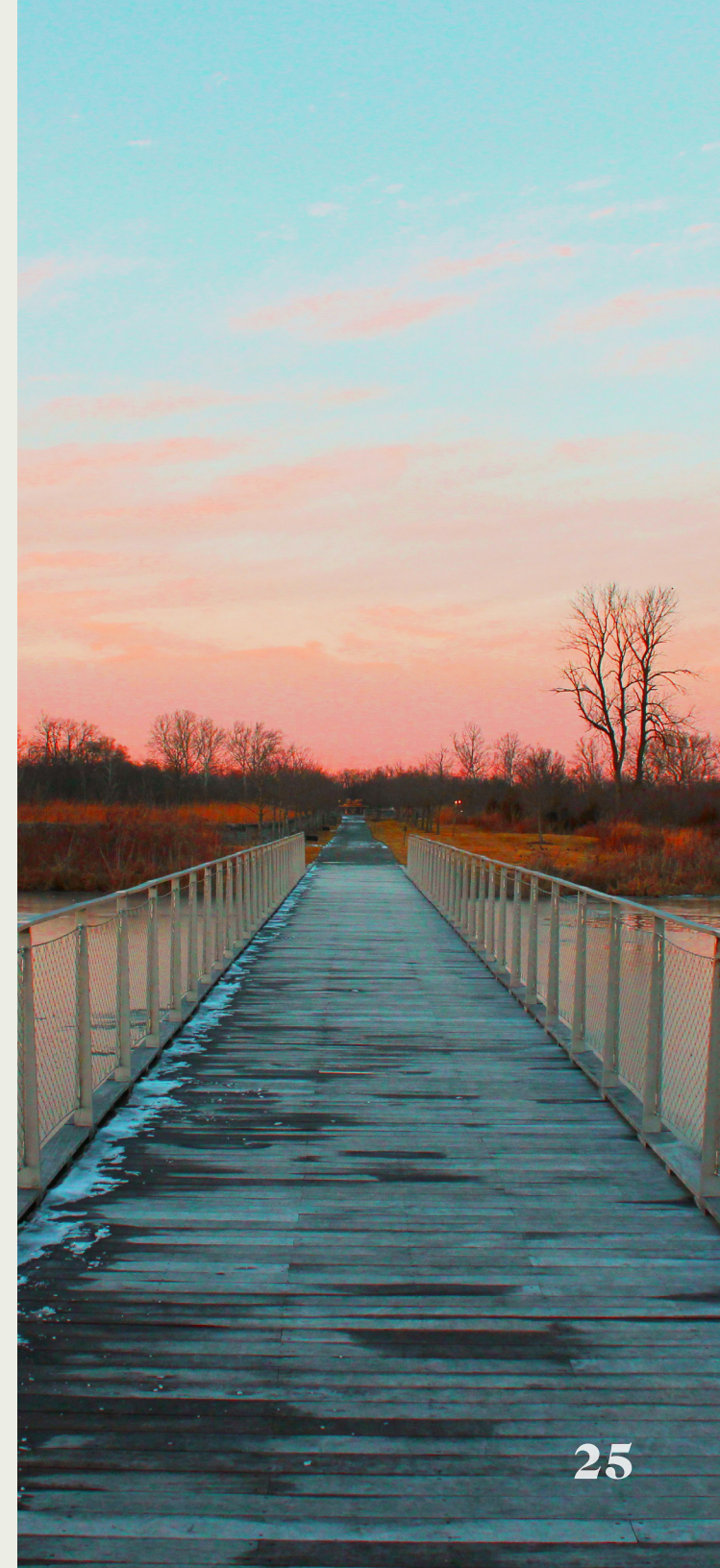
In late FY2022, RCAP expanded to include a new team dedicated to Data and Impact. The Data & Impact team is responsible for tracking, maintaining, and reporting on all RCAP data on technical assistance and training efforts as well as bringing some critical data analysis skills which have proven helpful across the board, including working on proposals, briefings, and more. The team also leads the Annual Impact Report and helps us analyze and share the important work RCAP does. In the long term, we believe that dedicating a team to this work will also allow us to begin to think about “impact” in more diverse and important ways beyond the basic deliverables we meet for existing programs. We want to start thinking about our impact through the lens of real people who live in the communities we serve and how our work affects their daily lives.

Creation of Fund Development

As Congress creates and appropriates new programs, especially as a result of IIJA, which included extensive new opportunities for training and technical assistance, RCAP has had to continue to grow its staffing for fund development activities. RCAP now has a full-time staff member dedicated to both federal and private/philanthropic funding opportunities to continue to diversify and grow our funding portfolio and ensure small, rural and Tribal communities are prioritized and not left out of these historic investments.

Community and Economic Development (CED) Strategy for 2023 and Beyond

RCAP recognizes that although infrastructure is vital, it is not the only ingredient to ensure that rural and Tribal communities thrive. More than five years ago, we began as an entire network to expand our focus beyond just water, wastewater and solid waste and are working to further expand these holistic services for our communities. Many impactful outcomes have come from these new CED programs which have included entrepreneurial ecosystem building and the development of value chains, helping communities to access USDA's Community Facilities Loan and Grant Program, the creation of the Open for Business Program which included coaching and capacity building for rural BIPOC and women entrepreneurs, the co-development of the Community Infrastructure Center Predevelopment Accelerator, the co-development of the Rural Opportunity and Development initiative and the successful implementation of the annual RuralRise Summit since 2018. We are excited to continue to expand on these initiatives and embark on new ones to benefit rural America including our new partnership with Main Street America on the Department of Transportation's new Thriving Rural Communities program which will begin in FY2023. As RCAP prepares for its next five-year strategic plan, we are planning to take our fifty years of horizontal infrastructure success and work on building the human capital and vertical infrastructure to ensure small, rural, and Tribal communities have sufficient economic opportunity and are ultimately sustainable and resilient.



Lead and Water in Schools

RCAP continues to lead the way on innovating solutions to troublesome challenges that impact many rural communities, such as lead in drinking water. This has included the creation of an ad-hoc Lead Working Group to gather intel from the field and inform state and federal initiatives and comments on policies and regulations.

In communities, RCAP's Agua4All program continues to provide essential access to safe drinking water for children in schools as well as education about the importance of drinking water and opportunities to drink water instead of sugary drinks. The program also helps decrease plastic pollution from single-use plastic water bottles. This video showcases why this work, funded by Co-Bank, the Chris Long Foundation and new partner Liquid IV in FY22, is important and highlights a school in Massachusetts that benefitted from the program, which specifically helped to get the lead out.

Agua4All Program Accomplishments

- Funds bottle filling stations
- Funds reusable bottles
- Reduces disposable plastic bottle waste
- Provides student and community education

RCAP's Agua4All Program

RCAP also worked to create helpful educational tools about lead service lines in drinking water distribution systems. These videos feature Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP's) work and knowledge on the topic.



Potholing for Lead Service Line Verification



In-home Inspection for Lead Service Lines

Strengthening and expanding current programs and building our team's capacity

Environmental Justice

The RCAP Environmental Justice (EJ) Working Group was born out of an environmental justice session at the 2022 RCAP National Conference where attendees asked for additional EJ resources and to continue the conversation about EJ in RCAP's work. RCAP is already involved in EJ and continues to expand the ways in which EJ is incorporated into our programs and direct technical assistance and training. With the new Justice40 initiative under the Biden administration, RCAP wanted to formalize our focus on EJ initiatives through this national working group represented by the national staff and each of the six RCAP regional partners.

The working group's goals are threefold: to (1) educate the RCAP network on EJ principles and how EJ is important in the work we do, (2) connect underserved communities to EJ funding and resources, and (3) support the RCAP network with EJ supports as needed, providing feedback or insight. The group already collectively provided feedback in a recent EPA Request for Information on their future EJ funding to ensure the program better meets the needs and eligibility of small, rural and Tribal EJ communities.

Disaster and Climate Resiliency

Similar to the EJ Working Group, the Disaster and Climate Resiliency (DCR) Working Group was created starting from energy developed at the 2022 National Conference. Several sessions included disaster or emergency planning themes and the "ah ha" moment was when the connection between new mitigation assistance and resources to our current field work was made. This highlighted the need for organizing the emergency response and recovery work we already do with our water and wastewater utilities, but expanded to look at communities as a whole as well as broad education on the many ways regionalization can assist in times of disaster.

Developing new initiatives and partnerships

In addition to some of our new and exciting community and economic development work previously mentioned, we have continued to expand our environmental work as well:

- In FY22, RCAP began implementing its EPA Workforce Innovation Grant to build a job task analysis and need to know criteria for water industry clerks and administrative professionals which will ultimately turn into a national certification program.
- In late FY22, RCAP was informed that we were successful in our EPA Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation's Reducing Lead in Schools and Childcare program which will likely begin in FY24 and be a lead-specific expansion of our Agua4All water in schools work in at least 9 states across the country.
- RCAP's previous partnership with Spring Point Partners to expand our work on regionalization and two of our regions' years of success providing community leadership development training led to a new award for FY23 for RCAP to establish the National Rural

Leadership Institute on Water that will be piloted in the summer and fall of 2023.

- It was also announced that starting in 2023 RCAP will be one of EPA's new 29 Environmental Finance Centers to ensure disadvantaged communities who need it most get access to the influx of federal infrastructure dollars over the next five years, most specifically from IIJA via the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds.
- EPA's Treatment Works grant program, which RCAP helped create into law in 2018, was appropriated again and split into five priority areas, all of which RCAP was awarded and will participate in during FY24 with funds from FY21/22.



Advocating for increased investment and support for rural communities

RCAP drafted and completed our 2023 Farm Bill Policy Priorities in partnership with our network and inclusive of rural voices. We hope for the inclusion of many of these essential new and improved programs in the final Farm Bill to benefit rural communities for years to come.



Financials

INCOME

Federal Grants

~~\$~~**24,352,264**

Other Grants & Contributions

~~\$~~**993,785**

Conference Registration Fees
& Sponsorships

~~\$~~**191,538**

Dues

~~\$~~**49,000**

Interest

~~\$~~**4,874**

In-Kind

~~\$~~**38,081**



EXPENSES

Drinking Water & Waste Water

~~\$~~**24,408,938**

Solid Waste

~~\$~~**843,004**

Research & Economic
Development

~~\$~~**1,308,401**

Managerial

~~\$~~**349,141**

Development

~~\$~~**128,951**



Partners

120Water
American Bankers Association
Association of Clean Water Administrators
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
American Public Works Association
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Water Works Association
Appalachian Regional Commission
Arizona State University
Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
Association of State Drinking Water Administrators
BeatBabel
Bipartisan Policy Center
Brookings Institution
C47 Films
Community Roots
Center on Rural Innovation
Central Appalachian Network
Chris Long Foundation
CoBank
Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities
Columbia University - Earth Institute
Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation
Economic Impact Catalyst
Environmental Finance Center Network
Environmental Policy Innovation Center
ESRI
EveryLibrary
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
Farm Credit
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
Federal Reserve Board
Georgetown University
Heartland Forward
Housing Assistance Council



With Gratitude

RCAP'S work is powered by the generous support of donors and partners. We thank them and all those we collaborate with for their continued support and commitment to rural America.

International Association of Administrative Professionals
International Economic Development Council
Inter Tribal Council of Arizona
Land O'Lakes
LiKEN
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Misfit
Moonshot Missions
Native Americans in Philanthropy
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship
National Association of Counties
National Association of Development Organizations
National Association of Regional Councils
National Association of Water Companies
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Virginia Tech University
Water and Wastewater Equipment Manufacturers Association
Water Environment Federation
Water Finance Assistance
Water Finance Exchange
Water Foundation
WaterReuse
Water Systems Council
Wells Fargo
Xylem Watermark

Conclusion

The potential for greater change and development

At RCAP, we are excited and ready to take on the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead. With historic investments in all kinds of infrastructure and hard-won recognition of the need to prioritize historically disadvantaged communities, the potential for a sea-change in how America's small, rural, and Indigenous communities are able to tackle their challenges, build the capacity of their communities, and improve their quality of life is truly astounding. We have so much hope for the future of the communities we serve, and we will continue to utilize new resources to help maximize their potential.