



## Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Program Expansion

*New Communities Invited to Participate*

February 2024

An estimated 2.2 million people in the U.S. lack basic running water and indoor plumbing in their homes. Inadequate and failing wastewater infrastructure poses direct health risks to families and stymies economic growth and community vitality.

In August 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in collaboration with states and Tribes, partnered on the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative. EPA and USDA jointly leveraged technical assistance resources to help historically underserved communities identify, and pursue, federal funding opportunities to address their wastewater needs.

Building on the success of the initial pilot program, which assisted 11 underserved communities<sup>1</sup>, EPA is expanding the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Program to 150 additional communities across Rural America. This program—along with historic funding availability through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other federal funding programs for water infrastructure—will change the odds for rural communities who are burdened by the lack of adequate wastewater services.

### Technical Assistance Provided

Communities with inadequate, non-existent or failing wastewater infrastructure would be eligible for help through this program. Recipients of technical assistance will access solutions-oriented guidance that focuses on community's wastewater needs. EPA technical assistance will help identify financial options to improve wastewater infrastructure including finding funding sources. Participating communities will be matched with an EPA technical assistance provider that has expertise specific to the community's needs with septic systems and wastewater management.

Examples of technical assistance provided through the Closing America's Wastewater Access Gap Program:

- Assess the community's wastewater needs.
- Evaluate the feasibility of wastewater solutions, including performing a rate study.
- Identify funding options, such as grants and financing.
- Help with completing the preliminary engineering and paperwork requirements for funding applications.
- Assist the community/county with establishing an ordinance for wastewater management.

### How to Request Assistance

Request assistance by completing the WaterTA request form at: <https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/forms/water-technical-assistance-request-form>. Communities will be selected on a rolling basis; there is no deadline to apply. For questions, email [SepticHelp@epa.gov](mailto:SepticHelp@epa.gov).

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<sup>1</sup> Greene County, Alabama; White Hall, Lowndes County, Alabama; San Carlos Apache Tribe, Arizona; Tri-Cities area, Harlan County, Kentucky; Dunlap, Bolivar County, Mississippi; Chaparral, Doña Ana and Otero Counties, New Mexico; Santo Domingo Pueblo, New Mexico; Haliwa-Saponi Tribe/Halifax County, North Carolina; Teachey and Wallace, Duplin County, North Carolina; Keystone and Northfork, McDowell County, West Virginia; Rhodell and Amigo, Raleigh County, West Virginia