

FY 2024 - 2025

Clean Water Rural, Small, and Tribal Technical Assistance Program



Program Summary

The Clean Water Rural, Small, and Tribal Technical Assistance (RST TA) Grant Program was authorized by the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 and codified under the Clean Water Act. This program provides funds to Technical Assistance providers who support rural, small and tribal communities to improve their wastewater systems and protect public health.

The RST TA providers help communities access and utilize funding for wastewater infrastructure projects, and support communities' efforts to improve the operations of their systems. Our partners provide technical assistance by:

- ~ Assisting rural, small, and tribal communities in planning, developing and accessing finance and funding for projects eligible under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CSWSRF) and
- ~ Supporting rural, small, and tribal wastewater treatment systems – centralized and decentralized – to build their technical, managerial, and financial capacity to operate their systems and maintain compliance.

The statutory authority for this grant program is Section 104(b)(8) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Services are available to municipalities and treatment systems nationally in all 50 states, the U.S. territories, and for tribes.

Recent Program Highlights

	FY 2024	FY 2025
 Grants Awarded by the RST TA Program	18	12
 Funds Awarded for Clean Water Programs	\$41M	\$49M
 Number of Technical Assistance Activities Performed	500+	600+

RST has supported nearly 3,000 communities since 2023

Program History

The RST Program received its first congressional appropriations in 2020. The graphic below shows the history of each of the awards for competitions that have been held from FY 2020 to FY 2025.

Award Year	Amount of Funding Distributed	Number of Awards
2022	\$12,000,000	3
2024	\$41,000,000	18
2025	\$49,000,000	12

National Rural Water Association: Spillville, IA



In 2024, National Rural Water Association (NRWA) was the recipient of several RST cooperative agreements with EPA. Under their Lagoon Priority Area grant, they have helped many communities who operate on lagoon wastewater systems, including Spillville, Iowa.

The community of Spillville was facing challenges with their wastewater treatment lagoon, which was infested by midge flies. Midge flies eat a lagoon's "good bacteria" and can lead to the lagoon falling into disrepair. The area was experiencing drought and unusually high temperatures, which produced ideal breeding conditions for the midge flies and led to the infestation.

NRWA's Water Quality Action Specialist in Iowa visited the community's lagoon to provide recommendations for remediation. A common fix is to apply chemicals to kill the fly larvae, but this approach was cost-prohibitive for the community. The Water Quality Specialist provided a more financially feasible option: the operator installed a storm pump, which helped add oxygen back to the lagoon to disrupt the still waters and drown the fly larvae. After four days of running the pump, the lagoon was fully recovered and absent of fly larvae. On a follow-up visit, the Water Quality Specialist tested the lagoon for the dissolved oxygen and determined that the lagoon had returned to normal operations. This intervention prevented the lagoon wastewater system from becoming out of compliance with permit conditions.



Above: The lagoon cleared of midge flies after RNWA's technical assistance.

Below: The midge fly larva that infested the lagoon.

Moonshot Missions: Chesterfield County, VA



Moonshot Missions providing on-site training for operators in wastewater treatment techniques to help a community simplify operations and return to compliance

Moonshot Missions is a subgrantee under the University of New Mexico RST grant. Moonshot Missions works directly with communities to help them access funding and financing for their wastewater infrastructure projects and to support with water quality compliance issues. In 2024, Moonshot Missions supported 52 wastewater systems across 10 states.

In Chesterfield County, Virginia, Moonshot Missions provided support to a small community with a population of 840. Moonshot Missions conducted three site visits with this community and completed five different projects, which included: providing technical memos that explained how to resolve a flow issue, as well as a simplified wastewater process control technique; suggesting a simpler and more cost-effective ammonia analyzer instrument; and providing asset management guidance and maintenance procedures on collection system issues. As a result of these projects, the community regained compliance with their effluent permit. The projects saved the community money and increased the community's water treatment capacity by training their operators on asset management and system upgrades.

Rural Community Assistance Partnership: Davenport, FL

Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a technical assistance provider who received grant funds under the RST program in 2024. Through their grant, RCAP helped the City of Davenport, Florida diagnose wastewater leaks and address chronic stormwater flooding problems in their treatment system. RCAP performed a “targeted smoke test” and identified 23 leaks within a quarter-mile radius.

Leaks in wastewater collection systems can be caused by age or lack of maintenance. Leakages allow rainwater to enter the system and can cause overflow of untreated wastewater into a community. When leakages are fixed, runoff rainwater goes to the stormwater lines instead of the wastewater system. These fixes also decrease operational cost when dealing with a plant upset. This in turn reduces costs associated with overtime because staff are spending less time onsite. Additionally, it reduces the amount of chemicals needed for disinfection, lowering chemical cost. By pinpointing and fixing leaks, the project reduces inflow and infiltration, prevents sanitary sewer overflows, and helps Davenport maintain compliance with water quality standards—avoiding violations and potential fines for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Because of the success of RCAP's work, the utility is planning to conduct future targeted smoke tests in Davenport.

This smoke test helped the Utility Director determine the best use of resources in their ongoing WWTP Rehabilitation project. The city's inflow and infiltration issues are being addressed before the hurricane season begins.



Joe Gonzalez, SERCAP Technical Assistance Provider in Florida, conducting the smoke test in Davenport.



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