

Wastewater Treatment Programs Serving Small Communities

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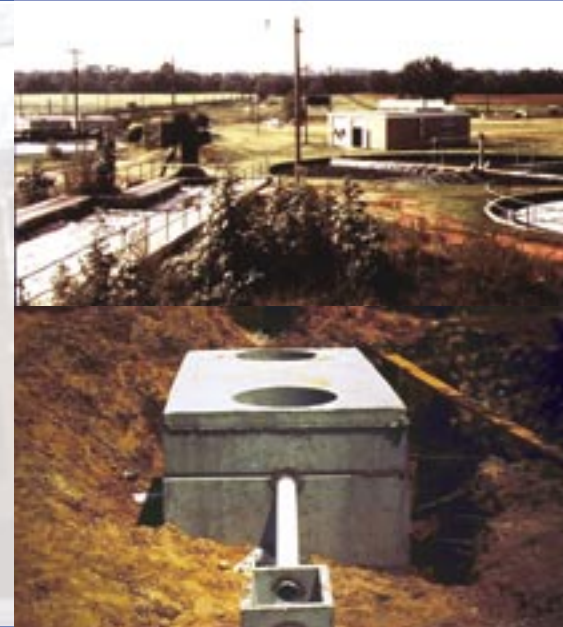
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Small communities often face significant challenges as they work to manage wastewater effectively. These challenges can be financial or technical. They might include the planning, design, and construction of new or upgraded systems or the operation and maintenance of existing systems. Small communities also face challenges in working with homeowners to ensure that onsite treatment systems like septic systems are properly designed, installed, and maintained. This brochure provides a brief overview of EPA and EPA-sponsored programs that provide assistance on wastewater issues to small communities.

EPA-Sponsored Wastewater Programs for Small Communities

Wastewater carries a wide variety of pollutants, including toxins, nutrients, and disease-causing organisms. Improperly treated wastewater adversely affects the health of our citizens and our rivers, lakes, coastal waters, and groundwater. EPA estimates that small communities—communities with fewer than 10,000 people—will need to spend nearly \$14 billion to meet the wastewater-related requirements of the Clean Water Act.



Alaska Native Village Sanitation Grant Program

www.epa.gov/owm/mab/indian/anvrs.htm

Residents of many Alaska Native villages lack adequate sanitation systems. This program provides grants to such villages for drinking water and wastewater facility construction, training, and technical assistance.

Clean Water Tribal Grant Program

www.epa.gov/owm/mab/indian/cwisa.htm

Tribal lands cover 13 percent of the nation's watersheds. This program provides grants to Indian tribes (including tribes on former reservations in Oklahoma) and Alaska Native villages for planning, design, and construction of wastewater facilities.

Colonias Program

www.epa.gov/owm/mab/mexican

The southwestern United States contains more than 1,200 colonias—Hispanic communities along the U.S.-Mexican border. This program offers grants for the planning, design, and construction of wastewater and drinking water facilities in those communities.

National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC)

www.nesc.wvu.edu/netcsc

The Center develops and delivers training courses on wastewater, drinking water, and solid waste

to environmental trainers and state and local officials. Services include a toll-free technical assistance hotline, a Web site, computer databases, newsletters, and other activities.

Management of Onsite/Decentralized Systems

www.epa.gov/owm/onsite

This effort provides voluntary national management guidelines and other information to regulators, community and business leaders, and citizens in small communities served by a variety of onsite wastewater technologies, including septic systems.

Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund Program

www.epa.gov/owm/cwfinance/cwsrf

All 50 states and Puerto Rico operate loan programs that provide low-interest financing for wastewater and other water quality projects. All of these programs provide assistance to small communities, and over half of the states have developed special programs for disadvantaged communities.

National Small Flows Clearinghouse (NSFC)

www.nesc.wvu.edu/nsfc

The Clearinghouse collects and distributes information about small wastewater

treatment solutions. Services include a toll-free technical assistance hotline, an Internet-based discussion group, computer databases, newsletters, and other publications.

Operator On-Site Technical Assistance Program—104(g)

www.epa.gov/owm/mab/smcomm/104g

This program provides hands-on assistance to small municipal wastewater treatment plant operators to address compliance assistance, maintenance, and performance improvement matters by providing operations and maintenance, financial, and technical assistance at no cost to the community.

Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP)

www.rcap.org

This network of nonprofit organizations provides community-specific information and technical assistance at no cost. The goal of the program is to improve the ability of rural communities to plan, design, operate, and maintain wastewater systems.

Small Communities Outreach and Education Network (SCORE)

www.epa.gov/owm/mab/smcomm/scmore.htm

SCORE information and outreach help small communities build and operate self-sufficient wastewater facilities that meet clean water standards.

Small Community Wastewater Facts

- More than 70 percent of the nation's housing units that have inadequate plumbing are in small communities.
- Nearly 1 million housing units in small communities use outhouses or privies for sewage disposal.
- More than 19 million housing units in small communities use septic tanks or cesspools as the primary source of treatment.
- Many small community wastewater problems can be addressed with assistance from EPA's wastewater programs for small communities and from partner organizations.