

# RURAL AMERICA RELIES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT



## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER PROGRAMS PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

### PUBLIC HEALTH FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Water is a vital resource and is required for all aspects of daily life, including drinking, cooking, washing, and flushing. In order to protect public health, all Americans should have access to this resource through reliable infrastructure.

Rural America's 46.1 million residents deserve safe drinking water and clean wastewater treatment just as much as urban or metropolitan residents.

While access to basic water infrastructure may be taken for granted by many American citizens, it still is not a reality for approximately 146,000 rural households.

Over the last 70 years, through billions of dollars in financial assistance through USDA RD, the U.S. has made great advancements in the standard of living in rural America. Millions now have access to safe drinking water that their parents did not have. Thousands of rural communities now have modern wastewater systems, eliminating millions of failed septic tanks, cesspools, straight pipes, and worse.

For the 27,500 public elementary and secondary schools, approximately 9.8 million students, and 1,810 hospitals in rural America, public health would be immediately jeopardized without safe drinking water and clean wastewater treatment.

Even for established water and wastewater systems, new regulations such as EPA's recent PFAS and Lead and Copper Rules results in costly operational and infrastructure upgrades. USDA RD WEP ensures rural America and its communities have access to funding when they are faced with making these upgrades to remain in compliance.

*Today's Congressional policies and funding decisions are jeopardizing the public health of every community in rural America. Budget cuts will leave USDA WEP unable to accomplish its mission. WEP is instrumental in helping rural America ensure public health is protected for all rural people.*

### USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS (WEP)

Since 1972, USDA RD WEP has been the consistent source of support for rural communities to complete necessary upgrades to their water and wastewater facilities.

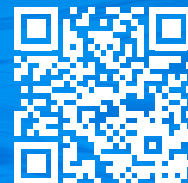
During 2023, WEP obligated more than \$1.6 billion in loans and grants, with 73.5% of projects addressing a health and sanitary issue.

The projects funded support more than 1.1 million rural residents, including approximately 28,326 new service connections.

### TELL CONGRESS NOW

**KEEP RURAL AMERICA STRONG!**

Scan the QR Code to learn more about how you can help keep Rural America Strong!



# THE IMPACT



## WEP PROVIDES NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT FOR SULLIVAN, ILLINOIS

### RURAL AMERICA DESERVES RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“If Congress does away with this funding, there will be a lot of communities that are unable to provide safe drinking water to their customers. Nobody is going to pay an additional \$150 every month for their water services. This funding is vital to small communities to be able to meet compliance and provide safe drinking water.”

- Chuck Woodworth  
Sullivan Public Health and Safety  
Commissioner



NRWA

### IMPACT IN ACTION

Portions of the City of Sullivan's treatment plant were over 40 years old and in dire need of repair and the chlorination system had no backup.

“We had an evaluation from the EPA with the old water plant and they wanted redundancy on the softening process and other items. With the condition of the building, we were going to have to rebuild part of the building,” said Chuck Woodworth, Sullivan's Public Health and Safety Commissioner.

Illinois Rural Water Association Circuit Riders worked with the community's administration and operational staff to obtain funding through USDA RD.

“We met with them and got the paperwork started. They said we were eligible for everything and that it would be a wonderful project for us to do. Working with RD was awesome. We would ask something, and they would have an answer. The whole process, I felt like, was very easy,” Woodworth said.

This project, completed in October 2023, alleviated all health and sanitary concerns, met Illinois EPA requirements, and ensured safe potable water for all users.

“If not for the help from the loan to build the plant, we would probably not be able to meet compliance today. We would not have been able to afford to make the required changes. Without Rural Development funding, we wouldn't have been able to do that,” Woodworth said.

### CALL TO ACTION

#### Fund Water Infrastructure - Stand Up for USDA Rural Development

Rural Development will continue to play a vital role in modernizing, preserving, and protecting rural America's infrastructure and public health. You can help secure its future today by signing the pledge and writing to your Congressional representatives today.

Providing adequate support and resources necessary to protect and enhance the environment, public health, sustainability of utilities, and economic vitality of rural America with clean, affordable, and safe water service is a primary responsibility for our federal elected officials.

Visit [www.ruralwaterstrong.org](http://www.ruralwaterstrong.org) to learn more.

**CITY OF SULLIVAN, IL**  
**POPULATION | 4,413**  
**WATER USERS | 2,367**