



Tribal Access to Clean Water Act of 2025

Access to clean water is a human right. Clean water is foundational for human health, growing economies, and a basic level of support for communities. But Native American communities have lagged well behind, with nearly half of all households in those communities lacking clean water or basic sanitation. This is a disparity that must be addressed.

While funding for safe drinking water systems for Tribal communities received a boost in the 117th Congress, partly rectifying historical inequities, that funding will expire in 2026, and the need has only increased. Technical assistance is urgently required to allow Tribes to plan and design the systems necessary to remedy the longstanding problem of lack of access to clean drinking water and bring those plans to the "shovel ready" stage where available construction funding can be deployed. In addition, Tribes need support to develop the managerial, financial, and regulatory capacity necessary for a fully functional and self-sustaining utility. Furthermore, construction funding has not been made available to connect essential community facilities, like schools and Tribal offices, to centralized water and sanitation. Without these facilities, Tribes struggle to achieve a basic level of economic development. Finally, because Tribes cannot rely on the same types and volumes of revenue streams to support the operation and maintenance (O&M) of water systems, initial and temporary O&M assistance is essential to ensure that the benefits of infrastructure investments are fully realized.

The Tribal Access to Clean Water Act of 2025 would address these gaps and fulfill the federal government's treaty and trust obligation to provide clean and accessible water for Native communities.

Specifically, the bill will:

- Authorize the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development, to make grants and loans for technical and financial assistance, as well as for construction;
- Increase funding authorizations for USDA's Rural Development Community Facilities Grant and Loan Program by \$100 million per year for five years, provide \$30 million per year specifically for technical assistance, and ensure that Native communities are treated equitably and appropriately when considered for grants and loans;
- Increase funding authorizations for existing programs of the Indian Health Service for water and sanitation facilities construction over a five year period, including for community facilities (\$2.5 billion), technical assistance (\$150 million), and operation and maintenance assistance (\$500 million); and
- Authorize \$90 million over five years for the Bureau of Reclamation's existing Native American Affairs Technical Assistance Program.