

Remote Maintenance Worker (RMW) Program

- The Remote Maintenance Worker (RMW) Program was initiated in 1981 to provide onsite training and technical assistance to operators of water and wastewater utilities in rural Alaskan communities.
- By providing communities a knowledgeable resource, available to deliver training and assistance at the local level, the RMW Program aims to build local operational capacity and avert catastrophic failure of utility systems.
- The RMW Program is funded by grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and US Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD), each of which require a 25% State match.
- In SFY 16 the program received \$2.45 million; \$1,394,357 in EPA funds, \$425,000 in USDA-RD funds, and \$631,453 in State matching funds.
- Five regional health corporations partner with DEC to provide regional RMW services through the state grant program: *Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation* (BBAHC), *Maniilaq Health Corporation* (MHC), *Norton Sound Health Corporation* (NSHC), *Tanana Chiefs Conference* (TCC), and the *Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation* (YKHC).
- Three DEC RMWs provide service to the remainder of the state.
- A total of 13 RMWs offer assistance to the owners and operators of water and wastewater utilities, both tribally and municipally owned, in 200 communities throughout the State.
- RMWs deliver relevant on-the-job and classroom training; provide routine on-site preventive maintenance assistance to local operators to ensure that sanitation facilities and system components do not fail prematurely; and respond to water and sewer emergencies to sustain utility delivery to village residents and prevent catastrophic infrastructure failures.
- In coordination with the Rural Utility Business Advisor Program (RUBA), housed in the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED), RMWs strive to bring operators, administrators and community leaders together to address the overall capacity of the utilities, including technical, managerial and financial aspects.
- During SFY 15, RMWs collectively made 338 routine community trips and 61 additional trips to provide emergency assistance.
- They also provided more than 2,000 hours of hand-on training to operators in the local communities, in addition to nine classroom based trainings.

