



Shared Vision:

Lessons Learned In Facilitating Partnerships to
Sustain Rural Communities

COMMUNITIES
Unlimited

Benefits of Regionalization

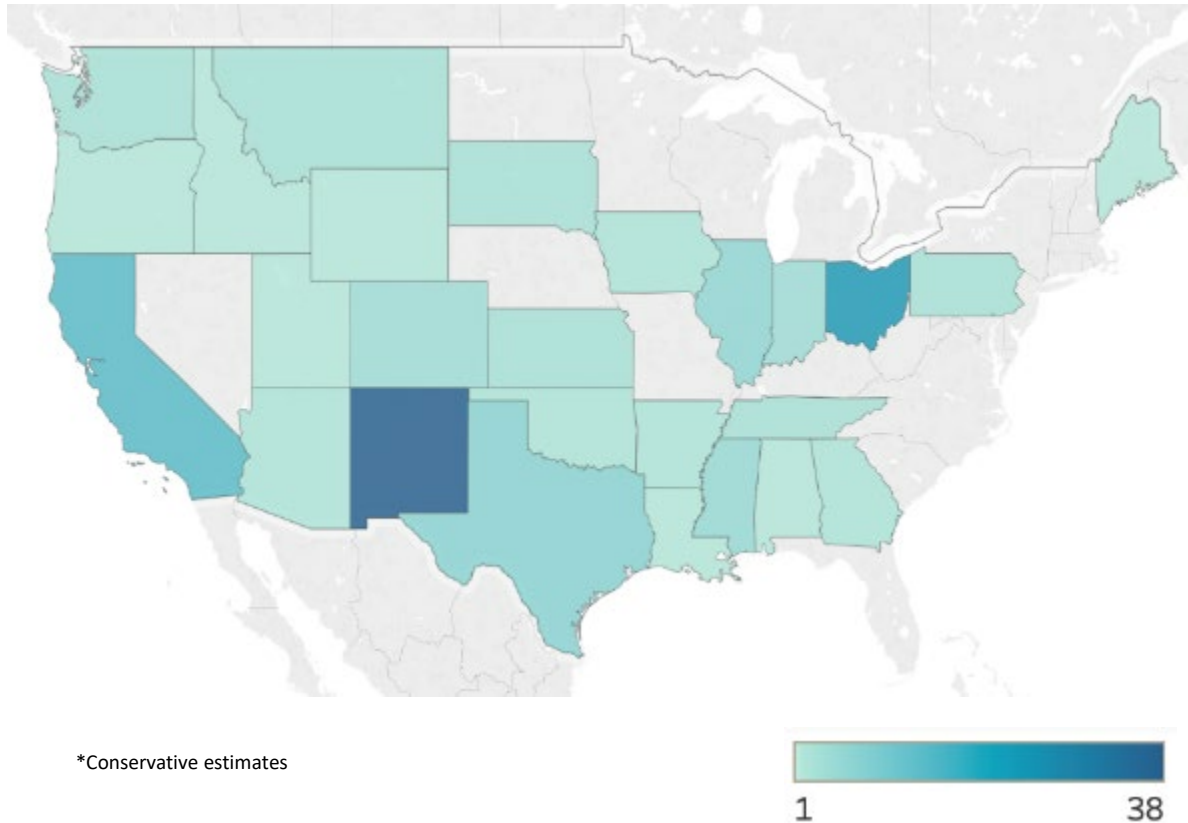


Photo credit: Ashley Zuelke, RCAP

- **Improve Effluent Quality and Treatment Affordability**
- **Improve Level and Cost of Service**
- Focus on **System Sustainability**, the Long-Term Vision of the Future

Context for Lessons Learned

**HEAT MAP:
RCAP Regionalization Projects mid 2012 to mid 2018***

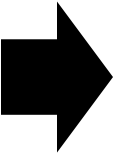


- RCAP's regionalization work began nearly 20 years ago
- In June of 2018, captured data on at least five years of regionalization projects
- Personal experience working on projects

1. Regionalization consolidation, but can

Increasing Transfer of Responsibility

Informal Cooperation	Contractual Assistance	Joint Powers Agency	Ownership Transfer
<p>Work with other systems but without contractual obligations</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing Equipment • Sharing bulk supply purchases • Mutual aid arrangements 	<p>Requires a contract, but contract is under system's control</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting operation and management • Outsourcing engineering services • Purchasing water 	<p>Creation of an entity by several systems that continue to exist independently (e.g., regional water system)</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing System Management • Sharing operators • Sharing source water 	<p>Takeover by existing or newly created entity</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition and physical interconnection • Acquisition and satellite mgmt • One system transferring ownership to another to become a larger existing system or a new entity



2. “Let’s help you regionalize / you should think about regionalizing” is not the best conversation starter



This Photo by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#).

- Building trust between integral stakeholders first is key
- Regionalization does not work if forced

- The amount of buy-in generation that needs to occur is significant
- The main reason we have seen that communities decide not to pursue a partnership is sovereignty

3. Don't underestimate history



Photo credit: Ashley Zuelke, RCAP

- Let communities tell *each other* their stories
 - Why and how were they established?
 - How did their community first get water service?
 - What were the economic drivers?
 - What are the similarities/distinctions of their water supply's history?

4. Everybody should win

(and each community can define “winning” for themselves)

Systems need a driver to even consider regional collaboration

Most Frequent Precipitating Conditions for Regionalization by RCAP Region (2012-2018 projects)



5. Regionalization does not happen overnight

- Often negotiations can take several years, and even up to a decade
- It is better to explore all options and be thorough than rush into it.
Do not want systems involved to regret the results later
- There are less than desirable ways to regionalize and there are cases where the solution was the "wrong fit" for that unique set of systems
- No two regionalization projects are the same



[This Photo](#) by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](#).

6. Having a third-party, non-biased professional facilitator helps

- Can bring all parties to the table, provide the education and resources needed
- Can help interested parties move through this often-complicated process
- Critical to maintaining momentum, facilitating needed connections, translating, and negotiating
- Have no stake in the result and can guide parties – often with some creativity – toward the light at the end of the tunnel



[This Photo](#) by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#).

Questions?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Sarah Buck - Director of Strategic Initiatives and Regional Collaboration and Ashley Zuelke, Senior Director for Research and Programs for Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP)

Contact Information

Karen Conrad

Phone: 918.919.1653

Email: Karen.Conrad@CommunitiesU.org

Arthur Pittman

Phone: 405.612.8084

Email: Arthur.Pittman@CommunitiesU.org

Julie Hudgins

Phone: 918.507.1596

Email: Gaylene.Riley@CommunitiesU.org

Gaylene Riley

Phone: 580.364.4345

Email: Gaylene.Riley@CommunitiesU.org