

★ *LAUNCHED OCTOBER 3RD* ★

New \$10 Million Grant Program
for Homeowners, Renters, & Businesses
with Contaminated Private Wells

★ *State Representative Katrina Shankland* ★

What is the new state program?

A new supplementary \$10 million grant program
launched October 3rd, 2022

This new program will support the **replacement, reconstruction, treatment, or abandonment** of contaminated private wells in Wisconsin. The program expands eligibility beyond the current Well Compensation Program to support more private well owners and increase access to clean drinking water.

The website for the new program is here:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/WellCompensation.html>

Key changes from the existing Well Compensation Grant Program eligibility criteria:

- No longer required that a nitrate-contaminated well is only eligible if it is used as a water supply for livestock.
- Nitrate threshold for nitrate-contaminated wells is lowered from 40 ppm to 10 ppm.
- Arsenic standard for arsenic-contaminated wells is lowered from 50 ppb to 10 ppb.
- Any source of bacterial contamination that presents a human health risk is now eligible for the program.

- Family income limit for grants is increased from \$65,000 to \$100,000.
- No requirement that an award must be reduced by 30 percent if the owner or renter of the well has a family income that exceeds \$45,000.

- Eligible applicants have been expanded to include owners of contaminated non-community wells (churches, daycare centers, rural restaurants and other small businesses).
- Income eligibility will be based on the business owner's income instead of family income.

Funding and award amounts:

- There is \$10 million available for the program. The funds will be awarded on a first come, first-served basis.
- The DNR estimates the ability to fund an additional 1,036 awards, a mix of Well Compensation awards and Well Abandonment awards.
- The maximum award amount under the program would be \$16,000. There is no requirement for cost sharing, so eligible applicants that meet the criteria will have the cost of their treatment or private well replacement fully funded – up to \$16,000 as a reimbursement from the state program.

Deadlines and contacts:

- Interested parties can sign up for notifications and announcements from the The Department of Natural Resources here:
 - <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDNR/subscriber/new>.
 - Under the “Grants and Loans” category, check the box next to ARPA Well Grant.
- Questions surrounding the program and eligibility can be directed to the Wisconsin DNR. My office is also available to help you.
- DNR began accepting applications **October 3, 2022**, and will issue awards on a continuous basis until all funding is expended.
- ***Prepare your application materials ASAP! This program is first-come, first served and is one-time funding, so it's important to apply as soon as possible.***

Application Materials:

- Applicants need to test their wells twice, at least two weeks apart to show contamination. Samples must have been collected within the last 2 years to be used for the grant application.
- Applicants will also need to provide income eligibility paperwork, such as a State of Wisconsin Income Tax Return for the prior year.
 - If your current income changed significantly from what was reported on your last year's income tax report, due to job loss or retirement, you should also complete and submit an Affidavit of Income Exempt Filing, an Affidavit of Income Reduction, OR an Affidavit of Projected Income for Current Year.

Application Materials:

- Applicants will need to submit an ARPA Well Compensation Grant Application Claim or an ARPA Well Abandonment Grant Application Claim, which are forms provided by the DNR.
- Applicants will also need a copy of a well construction report for the existing contaminated well, a detailed description of all feasible alternatives, and an itemized cost estimate for the selected alternative.
- Lastly, applicants will need to submit a complete W-9 form to allow for grant payment.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Do tests taken at county fairs and town halls from the local health department count?
 - The water must be tested by a laboratory certified under s. 299.11.
 - In Portage County, the UWSP Water and Environmental Analysis Lab is a great option! You can contact them here: 715-346-3209 or weal@uwsp.edu
- What kinds of items are grant eligible?
 - Water tests that determine if the well is contaminated;
 - Reconstruction of a contaminated well;
 - Construction of a new well;
 - Connecting to an existing private or public water supply;
 - Installation of a new pump, including the associated piping for a replaced well;
 - Proper abandonment of a contaminated well;
 - Equipment for water treatment (if no other option is feasible); and
 - Providing a temporary bottled or trucked water supply.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Does the program cover filters and other upkeep expenses for reverse osmosis systems?
 - Should it be determined that a reverse osmosis system is the best option to remedy the contaminated water supply, the grant would cover the cost of the system and the initial filter only. Once those costs are incurred and it is determined that the water is no longer contaminated, the grantee would submit a reimbursement request, receive payment, and the grant would end.
 - Future costs for additional filters, new membranes, scheduled maintenance, etc. would not be grant eligible and would be the responsibility of the individual who owns the system.
- Can I receive a grant for work I have already done?
 - There is no retroactive eligibility. Only work conducted after the grant is approved will be eligible.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- How do I submit an application?
 - Applicants can submit their application form and all additional materials either by email or by mail.
 - Online applications are located on the DNR's website.
 - Online applications can also be submitted to: DNRARPAWellGrants@wisconsin.gov
 - Paper applications must be mailed to:
Well Grant Intake
WI DNR - DG/5
PO Box 7921
Madison WI 53707

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Is the report from the well driller eligible for reimbursement?
 - The time it takes to prepare the well report is covered under administrative costs.
- How do I know if I am eligible?
 - The DNR has an Eligibility Questionnaire on their website that individuals can use to find out if they are eligible! The link is also here:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QBPCNSX>
- Where can I find the information online?
 - <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/WellCompensation.html> is the new website, and all details can be found there! You can also go to my website, where all the information is posted as well.

Additional Resources to be Aware of:

- **State Safe Drinking Water Loan Program**
 - The Safe Drinking Water Loan Program, administered by the WI DNR, provides affordable financial assistance to municipalities for publicly-owned drinking water infrastructure projects.
- **Portage County WATER Project (Well Owner Assistance for Treatment and Economic Recovery)**
 - *Two separate programs:*
 - 1) Serving Portage County residents who obtain their drinking water from a private residential well by providing free lab-certified water tests, AND well users whose water quality results exceed the nitrate-nitrogen drinking water standard of 10 mg/L may be eligible to receive up to \$1,500 in reimbursement to help offset the cost of purchasing/installing a reverse osmosis treatment system where that is appropriate.
 - 2) Serving drinking water sources that are categorized as transient noncommunity drinking water sources by the Wisconsin DNR.
 - *More information is available on the Portage County Website (<https://www.co.portage.wi.us/>) under the Planning & Zoning Department's Water Resources section!*

Additional Resources to be Aware of:

- **2021 Wisconsin Act 223**
 - *I was pleased to author this new law to support farmers with water quality conservation practices and reduce nitrate contamination. The new law achieves all of the following:*
 - Creates a new **nitrogen optimization pilot program** to help farmers reduce nitrogen loading and leaching
 - Supports a **new cover crop insurance rebate program** to help farmers utilize cover crops to improve soil health, and
 - Funds a **new Wisconsin State Hydrogeologist position** to help local governments find and address local hotspots of contamination.
- **Existing State Well Compensation Grant Program**
 - Additional action is still needed to permanently broaden eligibility criteria for our state's existing well compensation program, so that the much-needed support provided by the new grant program can continue beyond this one-time funding. I've been working on this issue for years, and won't stop until the necessary changes are made!

My legislative website: legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/71/shankland

Questions?

You can also always contact my office at [\(608\) 267-9649](tel:6082679649) or Rep.Shankland@legis.wisconsin.gov with any questions you may have!

★ State Representative Katrina Shankland ★