



## Fact Sheet

### Onsite Septic Financial Aid Program

The 2021 Oregon Legislature allocated \$15 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act, or ARPA, funds to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to address problems related to failing and outdated septic systems around the state. These ARPA funds are intended to address public health and economic hardships that have been caused or worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. The onsite septic financial aid can be used for the repair, replacement, upgrade, and evaluation of residential or other onsite septic systems. Connecting failing onsite systems to sewerage systems will also be considered.

DEQ will distribute these funds as pass-through grants for projects with partner entities that will utilize the funding to administer individual grants, loans or other financial aid. Eligible partners to receive these project grants are agencies or other qualified institutions. Evaluation of the outcomes from this financial aid is an important component of this funding opportunity, and costs related to data collection and review will also be allowable.

#### Project priorities

The Onsite Septic Financial Aid Program presents an opportunity to simultaneously address water quality concerns, improve public health and expand outreach to underserved Oregonians. We are especially interested in projects and partners with the ability to use this short-term funding to provide long-term environmental and public health benefits.

The following priorities have been identified thus far, and we will be refining and potentially expanding these through dialog with key stakeholders:

1. Projects where improving substandard or failing systems could demonstrably improve ground or surface water quality.
2. Projects targeting low- and moderate-income property owners who do not otherwise have access to funding for repair and replacement of failing systems.
3. Financial aid to disadvantaged communities, including rural areas and other communities that have been highly impacted by the economic impacts of the pandemic and historic lack of local investment.
4. Project partners that demonstrate good stewardship of funds for issuing grants and low or zero interest loans.
5. Potential for leveraging additional state or federal funds such as Clean Water State Revolving Funds.

## Process

DEQ is reaching out to community leaders, agencies and organizations to gather more information on potential projects, partners and mechanisms for distributing the funds. Initial outreach efforts will inform important questions about the scope, award minimum and maximums, and how we can most effectively and efficiently implement this funding opportunity.

In January 2022 DEQ will issue a Request for Information, or RFI, and proponents can submit letters of interest identifying potential concepts and other key considerations. We will then use the RFI information to further refine priority criteria and expectations for program deliverables. Evaluation of results and impacts will be an important deliverable.

The RFI will also help DEQ to develop the application process for the Requests for Proposals, or RFPs. The agency will issue the Request for Proposals spring 2022. Selected project proponents would then sign contracts with DEQ to implement their projects beginning in fall 2022. Depending on responses and funding available, DEQ may issue a second round of requests for proposals the following year.

## Projected timeline

*Subject to change*

- January 2022: DEQ calls for Requests for Information (RFIs).
- March 2022: DEQ reviews RFIs and prepares application process for Requests for Proposals (RFPs).
- Spring 2022: DEQ calls for first round of RFPs.
- June and July 2022: DEQ reviews RFPs.
- August to October 2022: DEQ awards first round of funding.

## Contact

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## Alternate formats

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