

# Water Well Abandonment Repair and Replacement Fund

## Background

The Water Well Abandonment, Repair, and Replacement Fund (WARRF) was established through the passage of HB 2145 (2021). The Oregon Legislature allocated \$2M in American Rescue Plan Act funding and \$100,000 in General Fund during the regular Legislative Session in 2021. An additional \$3.75M in General Fund was authorized during the December 2021 Special Session along with direction that the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) shall prioritize repair, replacement, or abandonment of low to moderate income household wells affected by drought or wildfire. Some of those funds were used for limited duration staff positions to support the program. This meant ~\$5.4M was available to award as grants.

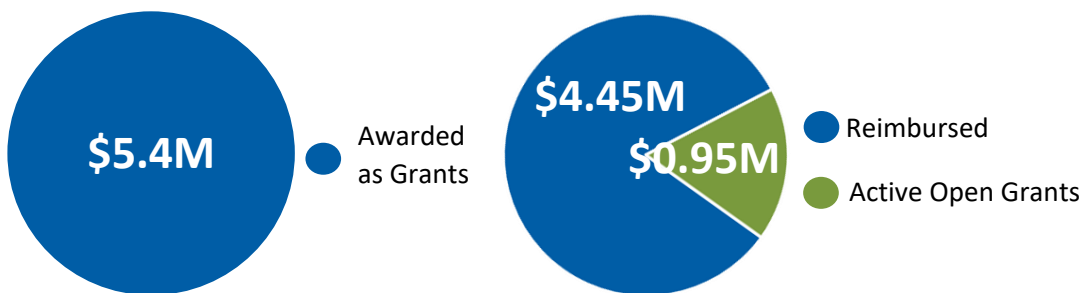
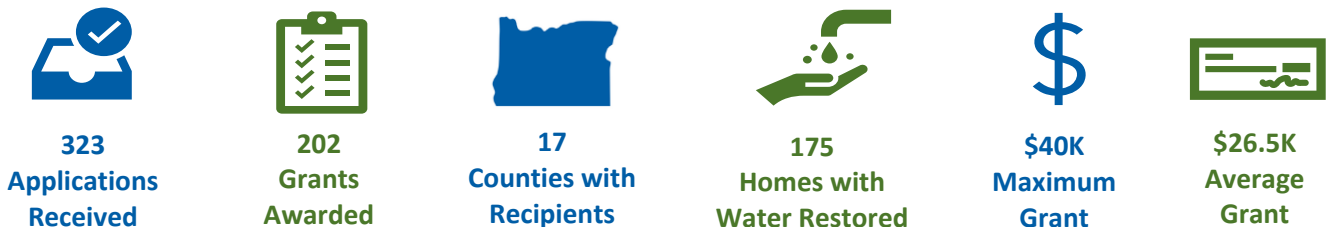


## What Does the Program Fund?

HB 2145 authorizes OWRD to fund the repair, replacement, and abandonment of wells for a wide range of purposes. OWRD prioritized providing financial assistance to low to moderate income households in areas impacted by drought or wildfire. Reimbursement grants up to \$40K were awarded to pay to repair or replace and abandon wells that can no longer supply enough water to sustain the household.

## Program Statistics – June 2022 through December 2023 (19 Months)

From January 2022 through May 2022, OWRD stood up the new funding program. OWRD began accepting applications in June 2022 and awarded funds to applications received through early November 2023, when funding ran out.



## Learn More!

Contact: OWRD Well Funding | [OWRD.well.funding@water.oregon.gov](mailto:OWRD.well.funding@water.oregon.gov) | 503-779-5763

Funding Website: <https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/WARRF/Pages/default.aspx>

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## The People We Serve

The story of WARRF is about replacing fear with hope for each of the families who now have access to water for drinking, bathing, washing their clothes, and flushing the toilets in their own homes. These families include:



- A single dad who feared losing 50% custody because he did not have running water at home. Replacing his well for about \$14K means he now has enough water for his girls to have a bath every night.
- A 77-year-old disabled veteran recently diagnosed with lung cancer and his 75-year-old wife who were able to have a storage tanked loaned to them but cannot afford for water to be delivered. When they applied for funding, they did not understand the work that would be needed to get water into their home and had a quote for only part of the work. We recognized they would need additional work, provided contact information for contractors who can help them with a plan, directed them to a low-interest loan program to fund the up-front costs or work that is ineligible for WARRF, and are available to support them through the process.
- A mom with an 8-month-old daughter who drove across town most days to a family member's home to give the baby a bath at and bring home enough water to make it through the night. The \$40K grant made her \$45K well replacement financially manageable for her.
- A woman in her 80's who was thriving at home but could not afford her \$15K well repair and as a result was considering moving to assisted living. Now she is able to stay in her home as she desires.
- A gentleman who was initially upset the program required him to permanently abandon his old well that the program replaced. He contacted us a few months later to thank us for requiring him to abandon the old well, which did not meet current well construction standards. A nearby septic system and a pond had begun leaking underground into the old well. Had we not required that the well be abandoned, that water would have contaminated the fresh water from the new well.

## 2023-25 Next Steps

OWRD is currently not accepting new applications due to insufficient funding. Work will continue to:

- Review and process remaining application and manage 25 open grants;
- Continue program development and conduct rulemaking; and
- Work on development of 2025-27 Agency Request Budget, including considering asking for additional WARRF funds.

## Report Your Dry Well!

Let OWRD know that your well has gone dry (that is, not producing enough water to meet your needs). Reporting your dry well also helps scientists and water managers better understand changes in groundwater supplies and how those changes may be impacting people that rely on that water supply.

Report your dry well online at: <https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/Pages/drywell.aspx>