DNR: Now accepting applications for ARPA Well Compensation and Well Abandonment Grant Programs

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is now accepting applications for the new American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Well Compensation and Well Abandonment Grant Programs. The DNR will accept applications until funding runs out.

The new programs will provide $10 million in financial assistance to well owners to address contamination in their wells by awarding grants for the replacement, reconstruction, treatment or abandonment of their well. The eligibility criteria for both programs have been expanded beyond the previous Well Compensation Grant Program, and many previously ineligible individuals will now be eligible to apply.

The expanded eligibility criteria include these changes to the contamination requirements:

- Any well contaminated with nitrate at concentrations at or above the state's public health standard of 10 parts per million (ppm) is now eligible. Previously, only nitrate-contaminated wells with concentrations above 40 ppm that were used as a water supply for livestock were eligible.
- Any well contaminated with arsenic at concentrations at or above the federal drinking water standard of 10 parts per billion (ppb) is now eligible. Previously, only arsenic-contaminated wells above the threshold of 50 ppb were eligible. The arsenic threshold for arsenic-contaminated wells has been lowered from 50 ppb to 10 ppb to comply with federal drinking water standards.
- Any well with a source of bacterial contamination that presents a human health risk is now eligible for the program. Previously, only wells contaminated with

fecal bacteria caused by livestock were eligible.
- A well with PFAS exceeding the drinking water standard in Ch. NR 809 (70 parts per trillion for PFOA+PFAS) or subject to an advisory from the Department of Health due to the levels of PFAS in the well is eligible for Well Compensation.

All applicants must provide results of two water samples, taken at least two weeks apart, that confirm the contamination in their well. Samples must be tested at a certified laboratory, and testing needs to have been done within the last two years of the application date to be eligible.

Additionally, the expanded eligibility criteria include these changes to the income requirements:

- The family income limit for grants has been increased from $65,000 to $100,000 annually.
- There is no longer a requirement that an award must be reduced by 30% if the owner or renter of the well has a family income that exceeds $45,000.
- Owners of contaminated public water systems classified as non-community are now also eligible to apply. Income eligibility will be based on the business owner's income instead of family income.

Well owners interested in applying should first determine if they are eligible by completing the Well Compensation Grant Preliminary Eligibility questionnaire. Well owners who are eligible for a Well Compensation Grant can follow the steps to apply on the Well Compensation Grant Program webpage.

Financial assistance is also available from the American Rescue Plan Act Well Abandonment Grant Program to properly fill and seal abandoned or unused private or non-community wells. Applicants must meet the income limit of $100,000 to apply. Eligibility can be determined by completing the Well Abandonment Grant Preliminary Eligibility questionnaire. Well owners who are eligible for a Well Abandonment Grant can follow the steps to apply on the Well Abandonment Grant Program webpage.

Applicants and contractors who wish to learn more can attend a webinar about the American Rescue Plan Act Well Grant Programs at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 10, 2022, and should register in advance.

Submit any general inquiries on these programs to DNRARPAWellGrants@wisconsin.gov.