

PRESS RELEASE—Contact DSPS Newsroom at dspnewsroom@wisconsin.gov

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DSPS Communications
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DSPS Accepting Grant Applications for Wisconsin Fund

Program helps Wisconsinites repair or replace septic systems

Madison, Wis. – The Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) will soon be re-opening grant applications for the Wisconsin Fund, a program that provides financial assistance to homeowners and small businesses with a failing private onsite wastewater treatment system (POWTS), commonly called septic systems.

Applications are now open and close on January 31, 2024.

Failing POWTS, even if still operating, are a health concern because they contaminate well and ground water with disease-causing bacteria and other microbes. Repairing or replacing these systems can easily cost several thousand dollars, a large financial burden for many homeowners and small businesses. The Wisconsin Fund exists solely to help Wisconsinites with limited resources pay for these repairs.

“DSPS and the Evers Administration realize what a valuable financial lifeline these grants can be for folks in rural Wisconsin” said DSPS Secretary-designee Dan Hereth. “Helping them ensure their well water and ground water are safe is just another way our department protects public safety, and we’re proud to administer this program.”

Eligibility is based on several criteria, including household income and age of the system. Currently, 67 of Wisconsin's 72 counties participate in the program, as well as the City of Franklin and the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin. Anyone interested in this funding should contact their county or tribal government to find out if they are eligible and for help preparing grant applications.

The state has administered the Wisconsin Fund since the program started in 1978. However, the program sunsetted at the end of the 2022-23 biennium.

Recognizing the importance of the Wisconsin Fund, Governor Tony Evers signed 2023 Wisconsin Act 19, which reauthorized the program. Due to the timing of the reauthorization, DSPS was unable to accept grant applications for the 2023-24 budget year. Because grants were not awarded during that year, the department will award up to \$1,680,000 - two years’ worth of grant funding - in a single round next year.

Applications close on January 31, 2024, and funds will be disbursed after July 1, 2024, as set by statute.

About DSPS:

DSPS issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers dozens of boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, and maintains the Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which is a key tool in the multi-faceted public health campaign to stem excessive opioid prescribing. A fee-based agency, DSPS is self-sustaining and receives no general fund tax dollars for its day-to-day operations. With 250 employees throughout Wisconsin, DSPS collaborates with constituents and stakeholders across a wide range of industries to promote safety and advance the economy.

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