



PRESS RELEASE—CONTACT DSPS NEWSROOM AT (608) 266-6795

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Nearly \$1 Million in Clean Water Grants Awarded by Department of Safety and Professional Services

MADISON, Wis. – The Department of Safety and Professional Services awarded **\$949,051** in fiscal year 2019 to homeowners and small commercial businesses to repair private onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS) through the Wisconsin Fund. In total, 210 grant recipients received awards averaging \$4,519. The agency expects to make 196 awards in fiscal year 2020 totaling \$1,225,507 and averaging \$6,253 per award.

Approximately 750,000 homes in Wisconsin dispose of their wastewater using private onsite wastewater treatment systems, often septic systems, when municipal sewer service is unavailable. Household wastewaters may contain substances such as disease-causing bacteria and viruses, household chemicals, and excess nutrients including nitrogen and phosphorous. Onsite wastewater treatment is necessary to protect public health and prevent groundwater pollution. According to a recent report from the Southwest Wisconsin Groundwater and Geology Study of Grant, Iowa and Lafayette Counties, faulty septic systems continue to contaminate groundwater in parts of the state.

“We are pleased to award funds that allow homeowners to repair and improve their existing wastewater treatment systems,” says Department of Safety and Professional Services Secretary-designee Dawn Crim. “Without the Wisconsin Fund, many Wisconsinites would not be able to afford to make the repairs necessary to avoid groundwater contamination and to ensure safe drinking water for their families. This is a critically important program.”

The Wisconsin Fund has been an important part of Wisconsin’s commitment to clean water since 1978. Since its inception, the program has awarded more than \$108 million in grants to assist more than 43,000 residences and businesses, according to the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau. While currently slated to end after 2020, the Wisconsin Fund is included in Governor Evers’ plans for his ongoing Year of Clean Drinking Water initiatives. Secretary Crim looks forward to working with legislators to update and continue this important program that keeps Wisconsin water clean and safe.

Currently 67 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties, the City of Franklin and the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin participate in the program. Homeowners interested in the Wisconsin Fund should visit <https://dsps.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/WisconsinFund/Default.aspx> for program and application information and to determine eligibility, which is based on income and other factors.

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