

**Private Sewage  
System Replacement  
&  
Rehabilitation Grant  
Program**

**Application Guide**



**Wisconsin Fund**

# The Wisconsin Fund Grant Program

Established in 1978, the Private Sewage System Replacement or Rehabilitation Grant Program – "Wisconsin Fund" provides financial incentives to protect and improve public health, safety and groundwater quality in Wisconsin. Since its inception, the program has awarded over \$33 million in grants for nearly 18,000 private sewage systems statewide.

As part of this program, Wisconsin counties and Indian tribes may apply to the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations (DILHR) for grants to assist homeowners and small commercial establishments in the rehabilitation or replacement of failing private sewage systems. This publication explains how the program works and who is eligible for financial assistance.

The program is voluntary and not all counties are taking part at this time. As of April 1, 1993 the counties **NOT** participating in the Wisconsin Fund are Ashland, Douglas, Green, Marinette, Marquette, Milwaukee, Taylor and Waushara.

## **When is my private sewage system considered failing?**

Wisconsin law defines three categories of failing private sewage systems, which are listed in the order of decreasing public health, safety and environmental harm:

**CATEGORY 1** – Systems fail by discharging sewage to surface water, groundwater, drain tiles, bedrock, or seasonally saturated soils. These are considered the most serious types of failing systems.

**CATEGORY 2** – Systems fail by discharging sewage to the surface of the ground. This type of failing system is eligible for a grant, but has a lower priority for funding than Category 1 systems.

**CATEGORY 3** – Systems fail by backup of sewage into the structures served. This type of failing system **IS NOT ELIGIBLE** for grant assistance.

When properly operating, a private sewage system safely treats wastewater by storing sludge and solids in the septic tank and by treating wastewater in a soil absorption field. However, a failing system can harm the environment by discharging sewage to the surface, to a lake or stream or to the groundwater.

Your private sewage system may not show any apparent signs of failure and yet be failing. An inspection of your system by your County Sanitarian or Health Inspector is required before you can apply for a grant.

## **Who can apply for a grant?**

If your principal residence or small business falls within Category 1 or 2 (as designated by your inspector), you may be eligible for a grant under the Wisconsin Fund provided that **ALL** of the following additional requirements are met:

- Your county is a Wisconsin Fund participant. If you live in Milwaukee County, you should contact your town code administrator.
- You have received a written enforcement order or determination of failure to correct the failure.
- Your family or business income is within program limits.
- Your home or business is not located in an area served by a municipal sewer.

- Your home or business was constructed and occupied prior to July 1, 1978.
- You comply with all other program requirements.

For a home to qualify as your principal residence, you must occupy it at least 51 percent of the year. Seasonal homes or rental housing units do not qualify. To qualify as a small business, the total wastewater flow may not exceed 5,000 gallons per day.

## **What costs are covered by the grant?**

A grant can be provided for the following activities:

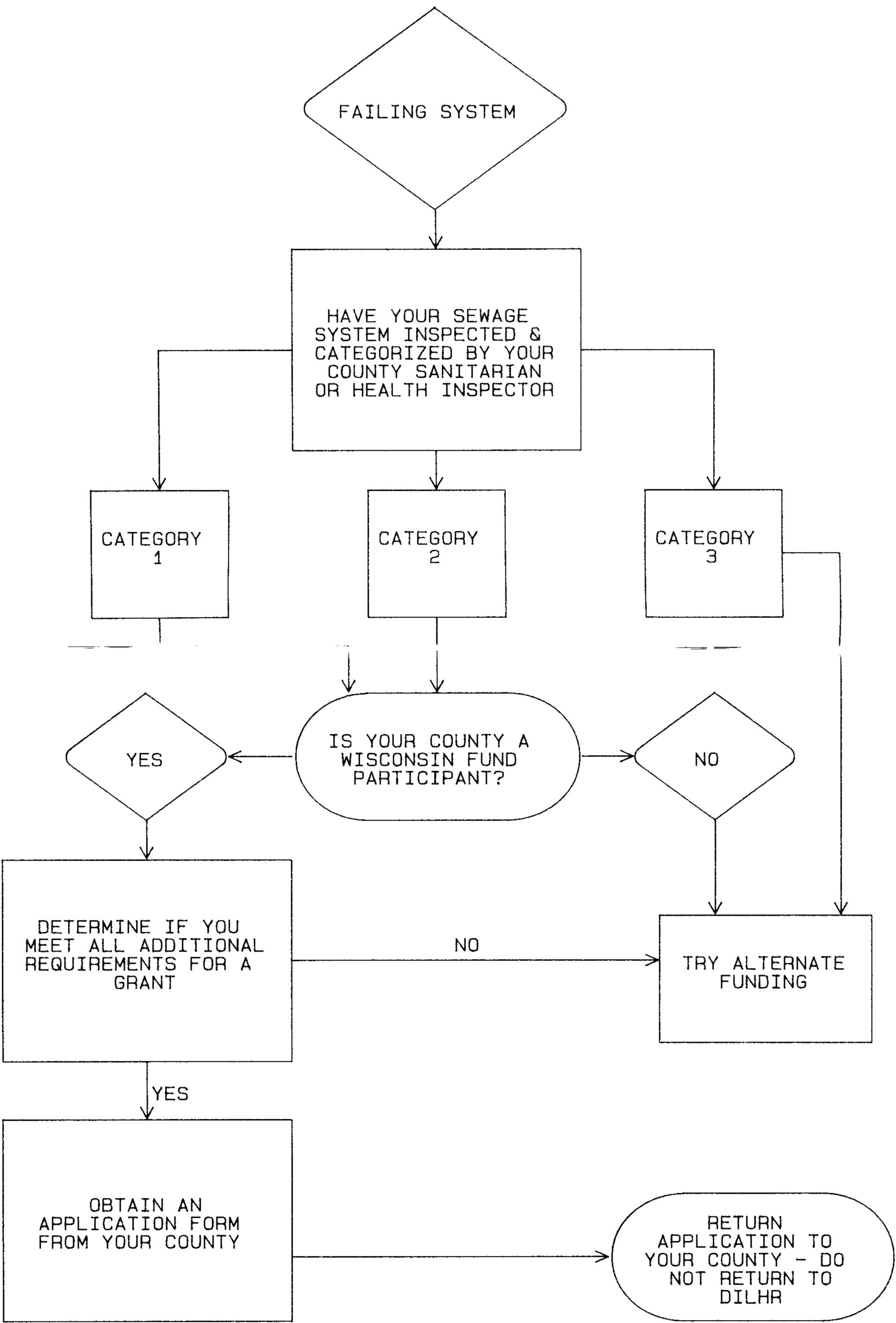
- Site evaluation and soil testing.
- Installation of replacement or additional septic tanks.
- Installation of a pump chamber or lift pump.
- Installation of a conventional, in-ground pressure, at-grade, or mound soil absorption area.
- Installation of a holding tank.

Except for soil testing, any work done before the enforcement order or determination of failure is issued **IS NOT GRANT ELIGIBLE.**

## **How much money can I receive?**

The maximum grant is limited to the amounts listed in the tables published by DILHR or \$7,000, whichever is less (your participating county zoning office or health department has copies of these

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funding tables and can explain how they are used). Amounts may vary depending on the extent of the work needed to bring your system into compliance with the state plumbing code.

Wisconsin Fund grant money **IS NOT GUARANTEED**. If there is not sufficient funding available for a full grant, you may receive a reduced grant or your grant application could be denied. Category 1 applicants have a higher priority for available funds than Category 2 applicants. Also, no more than 10 percent of the funds available each year may go for grants to small commercial establishments.

## **How do I apply for a grant?**

First, call your county zoning office or health department to find out if your county is participating in the program. County staff can help you determine the cause of your sewage system problems, suggest possible solutions and establish whether you are eligible to apply for a grant. In Milwaukee County, contact your city or village sanitary inspector.

To apply for a grant, you must complete an application form, obtain a sanitary permit to replace or repair your system and provide evidence of your annual income. Forms and instructions for this are provided by the county. Return all completed application forms to the county. Do not send the forms to DILHR.

It is best to apply as soon as you have obtained your sanitary permit. However, you may apply up to three years after the date of the enforcement order, if your county was participating in the grant program when you corrected your system, and when you have met all current program requirements.

Questions concerning the Wisconsin Fund – Private Sewage System Replacement or Rehabilitation Grant Program may be addressed to:

Cate Gimse-Owen, Program Manager  
Private Sewage System Replacement or  
Rehabilitation Program  
Department of Industry, Labor & Human Relations  
P.O. Box 7969  
Madison, WI 53707  
(608) 266-7319

Deaf, hearing or speech impaired callers may reach us through the Wisconsin Telecommunication Relay System (WI TRS).

### **If I am not qualified for a grant or my application is denied, do I still have to correct my failing system?**

Yes. Remember: A failing private sewage system is a violation of county ordinance and state statute. You may be ordered to correct a violation even if your county is not participating in the program or if you are not eligible to receive financial assistance from the Wisconsin Fund.

### **If my application is approved, when do I get the money?**

Grant applications and payments are processed on a yearly schedule. Your county receives applications from individuals starting June 1st and sends them to DILHR by May 31st of the following year. State funds are then set aside for each county to distribute over the next 12 months. Your county may then request payment for applicants who have completed work on their private sewage systems.

### OWNER'S APPLICATION

Use of this form is required by the Department for any application filed pursuant to ILHR 87, Wis. Adm. Code. The Department will not consider your application unless you complete and submit this form.

Instructions for property owners: You may apply after you have received a determination of failure and obtained a sanitary permit (see s. ILHR 87.06). Complete Part A of this form, attach evidence of your annual income, and send these items to the participating governmental unit shown below:

TO BE COMPLETED BY DILHR	
Application Number	Date Received
State Share Pending	Status

#### PART A. TO BE COMPLETED BY PROPERTY OWNER

Name of Owner or Business	Social Security No. *	Additional Owner(s) & Their Spouse(s)	Social Security No. *
Name of Owner's Spouse	Social Security No. *		
Street or Route			
City, State, Zip Code			

Telephone Number (include area code) \_\_\_\_\_ \* Note: Disclosure of your Social Security Number is voluntary. Refusal to disclose it will not affect your application. If disclosed, the Social Security Number may be used to verify your income.

1. Legal Description of Property

\_\_\_\_\_ 1/4, \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4, S \_\_\_\_\_, T \_\_\_\_\_, N, R \_\_\_\_\_ E/W     City     Village     Town of \_\_\_\_\_

Lot No \_\_\_\_\_ Block No \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision Name \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Parcel No \_\_\_\_\_ Register of Deeds Document No \_\_\_\_\_

2. This application is for (complete both, if applicable):

Principal Residence    Do you occupy this residence at least 51% of the year?     Yes     No

Small Commercial Establishment - Brief Description \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the owner a licensed plumber or contractor engaged in the business of installing private sewage systems?     Yes     No

4. Uniform Sanitary Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date Issued (month/yr) \_\_\_\_\_ DILHR Private Sewage System Plan ID Number (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Evidence of Income

Attach a copy of your Wisconsin income tax return for the year prior to the enforcement order. If you were married and filed on separate forms, you must also include your spouse's Wisconsin income tax return for the same year. You must include evidence of income for each owner (and for each owner's spouse) listed above. Evidence of income will be kept on file at the governmental unit and is subject to verification by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue and by the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations.

If you or any owner listed above did not file a Wisconsin income tax return or were a part-year resident in the year prior to the enforcement order, check this box  and contact your governmental unit for further instructions.

6. Property Owner's Certification

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information I have provided on this form and all attachments are true and correct.

Signature of Owner or Business Representative	Date Signed	Signature(s) of Co-Owner(s)	Date Signed