

# EMERGENCY DROUGHT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR LOW-INCOME RESIDENTIAL WELL OWNERS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(PREPARED 12-4-2020)

### General Questions

**I am the homeowner and the drinking water well at my primary residence has little or no water.**

**What do I do?**

If you have ceased all non-discretionary uses of water such as watering a lawn or other outdoor uses and are experiencing or have experienced little to no water due to drought, you should contact a licensed well contractor ([Click Here for Licensed Well Contractors in NH](#)) and complete an application to the Emergency Drought Assistance Program ([Click here for link to Low-Income Residential Drought Assistance Application](#)).

**How do I sign up for bottled water while waiting for my well to be worked on?**

If you are interested in bottled water as a short-term solution for a drinking water supply, please complete a survey for the Income Eligible Residential Well Drought Assistance Initiative that will get you into the queue [Click here to complete the survey](#). Note, the quantity of bottled water is based on household cooking/drinking needs and not intended for other uses such as laundry, flushing toilets, etc.

The provision of bottled water is a temporary solution and shall be discontinued:

- If the sunset date of this program is reached based on drought classification in the state;
- If we have not received an application from you;
- If the well improvement or replacement project is completed; or
- If you notify us that you no longer wish to receive bottled water assistance.

**I was experiencing drought issues this summer and had my well worked on. Can I receive financial assistance for that work?**

The Emergency Drought Assistance Program effective date is retroactive to June 23, 2020. If you completed improvements or replacement of your well on or after that date, you may be eligible to receive financial assistance for that work. You must still complete Parts 1 and 2 of the application for financial eligibility determination and verification from a licensed driller that the work was to mitigate drought related issues.

**I have all my paper work to send in, I'm just looking for a fax number or do I have to mail it?**

All applications must be received by mail or can be dropped off in an envelope at the Department of Environmental Services, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH to protect your privacy. The address on the envelope should read:

NHDES MtBE Remediation Bureau  
Attn: Paige Relf  
29 Hazen Drive, P.O. Box 95

## Verification of Financial Eligibility

### **How do I know if I am eligible for financial assistance?**

Financial assistance is available to anyone at or below the eligibility criteria based on the household size and the county you live in as presented on Table 1A in the application and on our website ([Click here for link to Eligibility Guidance](#)). Your income is calculated as your total household income (not adjusted gross income).

### **What is my total household income based on?**

Your total household income is the gross total of income for all occupants in the household 18 years old or older, other than tenants, and is calculated using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) criteria. Generally, the total household income **includes taxed and non-taxed income before deductions**, the full amount of periodic amounts received from retirement and other funds typically declared for federal income tax purposes, even if no federal tax returns are filed.

### **What is the difference between Tier 1 and Tier 2?**

Tier 1 and Tier 2 refer to the level of financial assistance available. If your total household annual income is no greater than \$37,028.50, up to the full project cost may be eligible for financial assistance from the State, less a \$250 deductible to be paid by the homeowner to the contractor.

If your total household annual income is greater than \$37,028.50 but less than or equal to the eligibility criteria presented on Table 1A in the application, up to 50% of the total project may be eligible for financial assistance from the State with the homeowner responsible for the balance to be paid to the well contractor.

### **Is the income eligibility table before or after adjustments for taxes?**

The income eligibility criteria for both Tier 1 or Tier 2 is based on the total gross household income before tax adjustments are made.

### **I own a small business. How do I calculate my eligibility?**

The calculation for total household income includes the net profit, not the gross receipt of sales, from your business. This is the value indicated on Form 1040 Schedule C Line #31 from your federal tax return, that is further reported Form 1040 Schedule 1 Line #3.

### **I'm doing "Rent to Own" with my parent, do I qualify?**

Unfortunately, to apply to this program, you must be the homeowner experiencing drought-related loss of a safe, reliable source of drinking water at your primary residence. If your parent is the homeowner and this is not their primary residence, they are not eligible to apply either.

### **What if I lost my job, so my 2019 proof of income is not relevant now?**

If you have suffered the loss of a job and are receiving social security, welfare, unemployment, or any income from a temporary position, we can start there with evaluating your financial eligibility. We understand many people may be in a different financial situation in 2020 than indicated in the 2019 tax return and we will work with you to determine financial eligibility. The more information you can provide us, the better. Key information such as when you were laid off, the date you started unemployment, etc., will help us calculate your total income.

## Verification of Project Eligibility

### **Does my well need to be completely dry?**

Your well does not need to be completely dry, but you must be experiencing insufficient water or no water due to drought conditions even after having stopped all discretionary water uses such as lawn watering. Project eligibility is determined through Part 2 of the application. This requires a licensed NH well driller to evaluate your situation and sign off with you on the application.

The purpose of this program is to mitigate drought related issues now while also considering resiliency of your well to potential droughts in the future.

### **Do I need to have a review by a well company before I can submit my application?**

In order to be approved for this program, the drought-related issue with your well and the appropriate solution to your drinking water needs must be verified by a licensed well contractor before NHDES can approve the project. Without notification of approval from NHDES, any work that you have done by a well contractor is at your own cost.

Although we would like to receive a completed application, we understand you may not want to move forward with a well contractor until you know your level of financial assistance. You may submit Part 1 separately to determine financial eligibility and if found eligible, then proceed with working with a contractor to submit Part 2. Once we have reviewed and approved Part 2, you may proceed with the work under this program.

### **What happens if the well contractor is at my house doing the work and needs to drill deeper or conditions have changed that will affect the total cost?**

You need to contact Stephen Roy immediately in the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau for approval of the additional cost and subsequent increase to the financial assistance amount. Stephen's contact is 603-271-0660 or [Stephen.J.Roy@des.nh.gov](mailto:Stephen.J.Roy@des.nh.gov).

## Payment and Reimbursement

### **I received an approval letter for financial assistance and am having my well improved now. Will I get a check to give to my well contractor from the State?**

No. This is a reimbursement program for work that is completed and the financial assistance will be paid directly to the well contractor by the State. You will receive an approval letter stating the amount of financial assistance that you are eligible for. Once the work is completed, the well contractor will

invoice you for the total project amount and seek payment for the eligible amount directly from the State. You will only be responsible for the balance. If your project is in the Tier 1 category, you will be responsible for a \$250 deductible to be paid to the contractor. If your project is in the Tier 2 category, you will be responsible for 50% of the total project cost reflected in the contractor invoice.

**I was approved for retroactive reimbursement of the well work I had done. How do I get my approved financial assistance from the State?**

If you were approved for a project that was already completed (retroactive), you may seek reimbursement directly from the State for the amount you have paid to the contractor up to the maximum assistance amount, provided you supply proof of payment in the reimbursement claim. If in an installment plan with the well contractor, you may seek multiple partial reimbursements up to the maximum financial assistance. We will work with you to determine the best way to proceed with the reimbursement for the retroactive work completed. You should contact John Pasquale of the MtBE Remediation Bureau for assistance ([john.p.pasquale@des.nh.gov](mailto:john.p.pasquale@des.nh.gov)).

**Can I get reimbursed by the State if I pay for the well improvements or replacement or does the reimbursement have to go through my well contractor?**

Regardless of whether the State is reimbursing the homeowner or the well contractor, the eligibility application must be completed by both the homeowner (Part 1) and the homeowner and well contractor (Part 2) for consideration of funding assistance. Eligible applicants will be notified of their financial assistance approval through a letter from NHDES. If the homeowner has already paid for the work completed and has received notification of approval from NHDES, they can submit a reimbursement claim directly to the NHDES. The homeowner will need register for a vendor ID and submit the required documents to be reimbursed by the state. You may register for a vendor ID electronically by clicking this [link](#).

**Why am I, the homeowner, getting invoiced?**

Regardless of whether you are approved for financial assistance of the total project cost minus a \$250 deductible per Tier 1, or for a 50/50 cost share per Tier 2, you will be invoiced from your well contractor for the portion of the total bill for which you are responsible. We suggest that you compare the invoice to the approval notification letter from the State that will clearly explain the maximum amount of financial assistance approved for you and what portion of the cost you are responsible for. By both the owner and contractor signing Part 2 of the application, the contractor may only seek payment from the owner for the portion of the project that is not eligible for assistance.