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Statewide Fund to Aid Owners of Household Wells Launches

(Salem, OR) – The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) opened grant applications for the first phase of its landmark [Water Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund \(WARRF\)](#) this week. Created by the Oregon Legislature, the first phase of the fund provides financial assistance for low-to-moderate income households to abandon, repair or replace affected water wells used for household purposes in areas recently impacted by drought or wildfire. [Grant applications are available online in English and Spanish.](#)

“The drought and wildfires of the past couple of years have left many Oregonians without access to well water in their homes,” says Kim Fritz-Ogren, Planning, Collaboration and Investments Section manager. “This new fund allows us to help restore access to well water and meet that basic human need.”

Funding may be provided to reimburse eligible applicants for 100% of the eligible costs associated with the work to repair, replace, or abandon their eligible well. Up to \$40,000 of funding is available per applicant. The applicant homeowner will be responsible for any costs incurred that are identified as ineligible costs or above the funding limit. [For information on eligible and ineligible costs, please review the WARRF Guidance for Homeowners.](#)

Individuals may be eligible for financial assistance from WARRF if:

- Their household is low-to-moderate income.
- Their property is in an area recently impacted by wildfire or drought.
- They own the impacted property.
- They live at the property (unless displaced by natural disaster).
- Their well is a water supply well used for household purposes and is connected to a residential dwelling for the purpose of supplying water for drinking, cooking, washing, bathing, or household uses.
- Their well is not a public water supply well.
- Their water supply well, or components of the well system, are in an area recently impacted by drought or wildfire whose condition is unable to supply water for drinking, cooking, washing, bathing, or household uses.
- Their property does not have an alternate source of water available.

Background

During the 2021 session, the Oregon Legislature directed OWRD to establish the Fund to provide financial assistance to persons or members of a federally recognized Indian tribe in Oregon to permanently abandon, repair, or replace a water well used for household purposes.

Later that year, the Oregon Legislature further directed OWRD to prioritize repair, replacement or abandonment of low-to-moderate income households with domestic wells that are impacted by drought or wildfire for the 2021-2023 biennium. Based on this direction, WARRF is established in two stages:

- **Stage One** is focused on meeting urgent public health needs of low-to-moderate income Oregonians in areas recently impacted by drought or wildfire.
- **Stage Two** focuses on comprehensive design for full Fund implementation.

To help OWRD understand the scope of the problem of dry wells across the state and the potential need for future funding, OWRD encourages all Oregonians to report dry wells online at: <https://bit.ly/owrd-drywellreport>.

The Oregon Water Resources Department is the state agency charged with studying, allocating, and distributing water in Oregon to meet the needs of Oregon's economy, environment, communities, and cultures. Visit www.oregon.gov/owrd to learn more.

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