

567—93.4 (455B,466) Onsite wastewater system assistance program.

93.4(1) *Onsite wastewater system assistance program.* Assistance under the onsite wastewater treatment system assistance program shall be in the form of low-interest loans made by participating lending institutions through a linked deposit arrangement with the CWSRF. The following eligibility conditions and restrictions apply to such assistance.

a. Location restrictions. Assistance is available for the improvement or rehabilitation of onsite wastewater treatment systems serving homes that do not have a connection to a publicly owned treatment works.

b. County eligibility. Assistance shall be provided only for systems located in counties that have an environmental health program meeting minimum standards for onsite sewage systems. The department shall maintain for public record a list of all counties meeting such standards. At a minimum, counties must carry out statutory responsibilities as provided in Iowa Code section 455B.172 as well as provide for the following measures. The department will adopt guidance in cooperation with county boards of health to evaluate the adequacy of county programs.

(1) Proper site evaluations to determine the appropriate design and size of onsite wastewater treatment systems prior to permitting and installation.

(2) Inspection of onsite systems by a qualified inspector at the time of renovation or construction.

(3) Enforcement of existing monitoring requirements, in accordance with rule 567—69.2(455B), for existing, permitted onsite systems with secondary treatment which discharge aboveground, such as those authorized by NPDES General Permit No. 4 in rule 567—64.6(455B).

(4) Assurance of regular system maintenance and monitoring for the life of the loan for those systems receiving assistance under the onsite wastewater systems assistance program.

c. Eligible project costs. The amount of assistance available shall be limited to the total costs deemed necessary, reasonable, and directly related to the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of an onsite treatment system needed to meet state or local standards for onsite systems. Eligible costs include all costs directly related to the design, permitting and construction of an onsite wastewater treatment system.

d. Applicant eligibility. Assistance is limited to applicants who meet the applicable provisions of 567—Chapter 69 and all other local provisions for the siting and construction of onsite wastewater treatment and disposal systems.

e. Project eligibility. Assistance can be provided only for the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing onsite wastewater treatment and distribution systems. Assistance is not available for new housing. A system serving an equivalent of 16 individuals or more (with an average daily flow of 1500 gallons or more) is considered a public system (requiring permitting by the DNR) and is not eligible under this program.

93.4(2) *Applying for assistance.* Prior to applying for a loan from a participating lending institution, an eligible individual or entity must receive approval of the proposed improvements from the county in which the onsite wastewater treatment system is located. Application for project approval shall be made on forms provided by the department or its agent. Forms may also be downloaded from www.iowasrf.com.

a. County requirements for individual applicants. County approval forms shall include:

(1) A description of the type and general specifications of the proposed work.

(2) Project cost estimate(s).

(3) A proposed construction schedule.

b. County requirements for cluster system applicants. County applications for cluster systems using onsite technology must include:

(1) A description, if available, of each participating property owner's current onsite wastewater treatment system, including a discussion of existing and potential problems or failures in the current treatment scheme.

- (2) An estimate of the population and number of households to be served.
- (3) A rationale for the proposed design of the new treatment system.
- (4) Descriptions of the management entity and program.

93.4(3) *County review and approval.* The county shall review applications to determine if the proposed work meets the applicable provisions of 567—Chapter 69 and all other relevant local provisions for the siting and construction of onsite wastewater treatment and distribution systems. For proposed projects that meet relevant criteria, the county shall issue a permit or certificate. The county permit or certificate shall be accompanied by a cost estimate and proposed construction schedule. A county may deny an application for reasons of noncompliance with applicable state and local criteria. Written notification of the denial shall be provided to the applicant and shall state the reason(s) that the application was denied.

93.4(4) *Eligible costs.* All costs directly related to the design, permitting, construction, and financing of the onsite wastewater treatment system are eligible for loans. Eligible costs include the removal of existing structures, such as abandoned septic tanks, earth moving or any land purchases directly related to proper wastewater treatment.

93.4(5) *Ineligible costs.* Costs for additional earthwork, reseeding, replanting, or any other aesthetic improvements are not eligible. Maintenance or monitoring costs will not be allowed as part of the loan.

93.4(6) *Recipient record keeping.* The loan recipient shall maintain adequate records that document all costs associated with the project. The loan recipient shall agree to provide access to these records to the department, the state auditor, the EPA SRF project manager, and the Office of the Inspector General at the Environmental Protection Agency. The loan recipient shall retain all project records and documents for inspection and audit purposes for a period of three years from the date of the final loan payment.

93.4(7) *Site access.* The loan recipient shall agree to provide the department and the administrative authority access to the construction site to verify that the loan was used for the purpose intended and that the constructed works meet applicable state and local environmental requirements and ordinances for onsite wastewater treatment systems. The loan recipient also shall agree to provide access to the onsite system for periodic monitoring by the department and administrative authority, at times mutually agreed upon with the system owner, for the duration of the loan.

93.4(8) *Priority allocation of funds and intended use plan.* The department shall, on an annual basis, prepare a plan describing the amount of funding available for loans under the program for the coming state fiscal year. The plan shall also identify those counties qualified to participate in the program and provide an estimate of the loan funds needed in those counties within the coming year. To the extent that the pool of funds available for lending involves funds controlled by Title VI of the federal Clean Water Act, this plan shall be incorporated into the annual intended use plan authorized in 567—Chapter 92.

93.4(9) *Targeted assistance.* The department may set aside a portion of the annual available funds identified in the IUP for financing onsite wastewater treatment systems in targeted areas. Such targeted areas may include impaired watersheds, high-density housing areas, agricultural drainage areas, or other environmentally sensitive or degraded areas where the repair and rehabilitation of onsite wastewater treatment systems are needed to preserve and protect water quality. The annual intended use plan shall specify the need for targeted assistance, the areas covered, and the estimate of funds needed to address the water quality problems.