



SOUTHEAST NEW ENGLAND PROGRAM
2023 Rhode Island Decentralized Wastewater Improvement Grant
Upgrading Decentralized Wastewater in Coastal Neighborhoods,
North Kingstown Rhode Island
Fact Sheet

Background Information

The Southeast New England Program (SNEP), with funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), solicited bids for projects to be funded with the Rhode Island Decentralized Wastewater Improvement Grant. The Town of North Kingstown submitted an application and was selected for funding.

The intent of the SNEP and USEPA funding was to help meet the objectives of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters." As noted in the request for projects, coastal ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to upstream pollution sources with the coastal watersheds of southeast New England as prime examples. The health of the communities and local economies are directly tied to their unique ecological systems, however these systems are currently impaired by excessive nutrients from largely from wastewater.

The SNEP Five-Year Strategic Plan identifies nutrient pollution from traditional septic systems as a significant challenge that continues to threaten coastal ecosystems. Traditional septic systems are not designed to remove nutrients like nitrogen. Additionally, as septic systems age, they may leach contaminants into nearby coastal resources and contribute to nitrogen pollution. Excess bacteria can lead to beach closures and fish or shellfish contamination.

One of the most effective ways to address the excess pollutants is to upgrade and replace the existing cesspools and conventional onsite wastewater treatment system, (OWTS) with nitrogen reducing, innovative treatment systems. Failed or inadequate septic systems are the primary sources of excessive nitrogen and pathogenic bacteria and viruses found in many of our coastal resources.

The town will utilize the funding to replace and upgrade 30 cesspools and/or conventional OWTS in four coastal neighborhoods. Those neighborhoods include Poplar Point, Shore Acres, Mount View and the Hamilton Plat. Each qualified property owner will receive \$15,000 to offset the cost of the system components and system installation.

This project will be managed and administered through the Town of North Kingstown.

Application Process

Interested property owners can obtain a copy of the application on the town's web site here: <https://www.northkingstownri.gov/557/Wastewater-Management> . Paper copies are also available from the Water Department located in the Municipal Offices Building, 100 Fairway Drive.

Completed applications should be submitted to the Water Department via USPS or dropping them off at the address noted above.

Property selection will be based upon the location of the property in the four target coastal neighborhoods, those being Poplar Point, Shore Acres, Mount View and the Hamilton Plat, along with that property having a cesspool or conventional OWTS.

The qualifying criteria are as follows:

- 1) Be requesting construction/upgrade of OWTS within one of the following areas: Hamilton Plat, Mount View, Poplar Point, and Shore Acres. (To confirm if your property meets this qualification, contact the North Kingstown Planning Department).
- 2) Be upgrading OWTS from a conventional system or cesspool to an RIDEM approved nitrogen reducing wastewater system.

For all innovative, nitrogen reducing systems, the property owner will be required to enter into a maintenance agreement with a service provider to be recorded in the North Kingstown Land Evidence Records.

The selected designer must utilize an approved nitrogen reducing system in their design application to the RIDEM. A draft of the OWTS design should be shared with the town before submitting to RIDEM. The town will ensure that an appropriate system type is being proposed. If the RIDEM requires a redesign and change in system type, the redesign should also be submitted to the town for review.

If for whatever reason site conditions do not allow the installation of an innovative, nitrogen reducing system, the funding shall not be utilized for that property. The funding is to be utilized for innovative, nitrogen reducing system only. The town reserves the right to withhold funding if a qualifying system cannot be installed on the selected site.

Outreach

A press release to local newspapers and a targeted mailing will be used to inform homeowners of this upgrade project. An application will be included with the mailing and also available online and at the Water Department Office in the Municipal Office

Building, 100 Fairway Drive. The funding must be expended by July 1, 2026. The mailing and press release will include a running application until July 2025. At that time, the pool of applications will be closed. If there is still funding available after the initial application period, the town will accept additional applications until the funding limit is reached.

The selection process will be completed in a timely fashion after the closing of the application period. The applicants will be notified in writing of their selection within ten working days. The decision is final and not subject to grievance.

Required Treatment Standards

All wastewater treatment systems installed under this program shall provide advanced wastewater, nitrogen reducing treatment sufficient to protect and restore the quality of the coastal resources, address site constraints to ensure optimum performance with minimal risk of malfunction, and result in the least amount of site disturbance and impact to wetland buffers as possible.

All wastewater treatment systems shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements of the town wastewater management program and adhere to proprietary device vendor and RIDEM operation and maintenance provisions specified on the DEM-approved permit application. Maintenance contracts shall be required on any system with mechanical components such as blower motors, pumps, timers and alarms and the system owner will submit proof annually to the Town of North Kingstown that a maintenance contract remains in effect. The O&M requirements shall be entered into Town land evidence records.

The RIDEM has a list of approved alternative, nitrogen reducing OWTS that must be utilized on their web site available here

<https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/2023-07/ialist.pdf> . This list may change as new technology is reviewed and approved by RIDEM. The applicant must utilize one of these RIDEM approved nitrogen reducing systems in order to be eligible for this funding opportunity.

Reimbursement

Once the OWTS is designed, approved and installed, the town will confirm system installation through a planned site visit. During the site visit the North Kingstown staff member will make certain that the homeowner is fully aware of their responsibilities to maintain the system and exactly how their system's alarm panel works.

The town will make payment to the applicant upon issuance of the Certificate of Conformance by RIDEM. A check will be made payable jointly to the applicant/property owner and contractor.

**For further information please contact Alan Austin, Deputy Director of Water Supply
at 294-3331 extension 233.**