



Application Information for 2023 Lead Remediation Plumbing Grant for Qualified Customers of NE Rowan Water System

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In July 2018, the Northeast Rowan County Water System (NRCS) began distributing public water supply to customers who were previously supplied from private groundwater wells. NRCS is a consecutive system that obtains water from Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU) and serves a population of approximately 445 people. Rowan County owns the water system, and SRU serves as the Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC or "Operator"). SRU operates a water treatment plant which supplies the City and other surrounding systems, one of which is the Northeast Rowan Water System.

Beginning in July 2018, NRCS and its Operator have performed semi-annual tap sampling for the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) compliance. The system's 90th percentile lead concentration has exceeded the Action Level during many of these sampling events, due to the presence of lead in private plumbing systems.

Because there is no source of lead in the Northeast Rowan County public water supply, the County and Operator have taken action to support the reduction of lead concentrations in homes in the system by altering treatment techniques to best prevent the leaching of lead in the private plumbing systems. These changes are proving to be effective in recent sample results.

Recently, the EPA created a Trigger Level for lead in drinking water of 10 parts-per-billion (ppb).

Rowan County has established the 2023 Plumbing Grant for Lead Remediation for Qualified Customers of NE Rowan County Water System program. The Plumbing Grant will allow qualifying customers (those with prior sampling values greater than 10 ppb) to have appropriate repairs and/or replacements made in their plumbing system to address materials causing lead to leach into the drinking water.

GRANT PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:

To reduce lead in drinking water supplied by NE Rowan Water System to below the EPA Trigger Level while having a goal of zero.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Customers of NRCWS meeting the following requirements are eligible to apply; applying for Plumbing Grant funding does not guarantee that funding will be awarded.

1. The property must have its drinking water supplied through the NE Rowan Water System.
2. Applicants must have a recent lead sample report (within the previous 12 months) on file with Rowan County OR through the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule compliance sampling with SRU.
⇒ If you do not have a recent lead sample report, email plumbinginfo@rowancountync.gov to request testing.
3. The most recent water sample from the property should show near or above the EPA trigger level of 10ppb. (Tap water samples will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.)
4. Property owner must agree to follow-up lead testing after replacement/repair work is complete.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

STEP 1: Ensure you have a recent tap water sample test that was done within the prior year (12 months) of your Plumbing Grant Application. This sample test must indicate lead levels at or near the EPA trigger level.

⇒ To obtain a lead test, email plumbinginfo@rowancountync.gov or call 704-216-8135.

STEP 2: Gather all the required materials together:

1. Completed and signed/dated application form,
2. 3 quotes from licensed and insured plumbing contractors—include copies of license and certificate of insurance (COI) with each quote.

STEP 3: Send applications by email to: plumbinginfo@rowancountync.gov or by mail to:

***Plumbing Grant
ATTN: Rowan County Grants Office
130 W. Innes St.
Salisbury, NC 28144***

APPLICATION REVIEW & AWARD PROCESS

1. The County will review applications received by June 30, 2024¹ to determine each applicant's eligibility. Awards are made by the Rowan Board of Commissioners, based on applicant eligibility, established priorities, and funding availability.

¹ Note: Applications received after June 30, 2024 may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and awards made by the Board of Commissioners based on established priorities and funding availability. No awards will be made after October 31, 2024.

2. A notification letter will be sent to the applicant(s) identifying whether the request has been granted, granted with restrictions, or denied. If awarded, the letter will state the amount of the reward.
3. An agreement between the County and the property owner(s) must be signed before any grant-eligible work commences. The agreement must be signed by the property owner and the County on or before December 1, 2024.
4. To be eligible for grant payment, all work must be completed by December 1, 2025, and all related invoices must be received by the County on or before December 31, 2025. Invoices received after December 31, 2025, will not be paid by the County. The property owner is responsible for ensuring all invoices are paid in a timely fashion and is responsible to submit invoices to the County by the established deadlines.
5. Upon submittal of a copy of the contractor's invoice and any supporting material (e.g. photos, etc.) by the property owner, the County will review and approve all or a portion of the invoice based on whether it represents grant-eligible expenses. Invoices and supporting material should be sent by email to plumbinginfo@rowancountync.gov or by mail to:

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6. Rowan County will make payments for grant-eligible expenses approximately monthly, paid directly to the contractor within 30 days of invoice receipt. Rowan County reserves the right to withhold payment for work found to be not in substantial conformance with the grant proposal.

APPLICANT EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grant application requests received prior to June 30, 2024, will be evaluated on an eligibility basis and are dependent on funding availability.

- Confirmed customer of NE Rowan Water System.
- Completeness of application.
- Lead level indicated in the tap water sample report.
- Date of water sampling (follow-up testing may be required).
- Proof of the plumbing contractor's license and certificate of insurance for plumbing work in the State of NC.
- Eligibility of cost items included in the contractor quote, including evidence that fixtures and other components to be replaced are "like-for-like" components.

The award amount will be based on the lowest quote received from a responsive contractor meeting the required qualifications; the property owner is solely responsible

to hire and oversee the plumbing contractor and to ensure that all work meets the property owner's expectations and established inspection requirements. Rowan County will pay up to the grant amount, for grant-eligible expenses only that meet NC Plumbing Code and other inspection requirements. Any costs above the grant amount and/or not deemed grant-eligible by the County are the sole responsibility of the property owner to pay.

1. Grant requests received after June 30, 2024, may be evaluated individually, based on established priorities, subject to available funds.
2. The proposed action repairs/replacement in the quotes must have a reasonable expectation of life cycle of at least ten years.
3. Established grant program priorities are:
 - a. Lead levels at or above EPA Trigger Level of 10ppb
 - b. Lead levels above the detection limit but below 10ppb

LEGAL STANDARD

Funds for this Grant Program are made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the NC Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for drinking water lead remediation for populations presumed disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recipients of these Grant Program funds are to be considered "beneficiaries" under ARPA guidance.

The American Rescue Plan Act² (ARPA) was signed into law by the U.S. President on March 11, 2021, creating the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSLFRF). The CSLFRF Program provides funding over a to all states, local, and tribal governments in the United States. CFSLRS funds may be used, in part, in assisting impacted populations with lead remediation efforts. U.S. Treasury issued its Final Rule regarding use of American Rescue Plan funds on January 6, 2022. The Final Rule (and the Interim Final Rule) identify permissible uses of ARP/CSLFRF funds and certain limitations and process requirements. Local governments must allocate ARP/CSLFRF funds no later than December 31, 2024, and disburse all funding no later than December 31, 2026. Failure of an entity to expend all funds by December 31, 2026, will result in forfeiture of ARP funds. This grant program is designed to meet requirements set forth in the American Rescue Plan Act and all subsequent U.S. Treasury guidance.

S.L. 2022-74 Appropriated Projects designated a portion of the NCDEQ ARPA funding to the NC DEQ ARPA Grant Funding for Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater. SL2022-74 made a direct appropriation to Rowan County for water, wastewater, and stormwater projects. Funding under this appropriation is subject to state and federal law, including regulations set forth by the American Rescue Plan Act Final Rule and subsequent revisions, and local policy and ordinance.

² American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Public Law No: 117-2 (2021). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text>.