

Septic Upgrade Incentive Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Background

In 2016, the Florida Legislature passed the Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act. Orange County received a grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) funded in association with that act. The purpose of the funding and act is to improve the water quality of Wekiwa and Rock Springs, which are designated as “Outstanding Florida Springs” as well as being federally designated as a Wild and Scenic River. Excess levels of nitrogen, particularly nitrate from septic tanks, have been found to have a negative impact on these springs. To protect the springs, Orange County developed the Septic Upgrade Incentive Program (SUIP) to encourage homeowners to upgrade existing conventional septic systems to enhanced, minimum 65% nitrogen reducing systems. The SUIP provides payments of up to \$10,000, either as a reimbursement to homeowners or direct payments to installers, for upgrading their septic system to enhanced, minimum 65% nitrogen reducing systems approved by the FDEP.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q: Can anyone in Orange County apply for this grant?

A: No, potential applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Your home must reside in the Priority Focus Area (PFA), which is a specific FDEP identified area in unincorporated Orange County in the Wekiwa and Rock Springs region. You can enter your address in the gray box on this website to see if you are located in the PFA:
<https://www.orangecountyfl.net/environment/septicpollutionprevention.aspx>
- Your home must be under the wastewater jurisdiction of Orange County Utilities (OCU).
- Your home may not be in an area where OCU is installing sewer lines within the next five years.
- Only residential homeowners are eligible for the program.
- If you’d like to be pre-screened for the program and receive additional information, you can enter your address and contact information into the Septic Upgrade Incentive Rebate Interest Form at the bottom of this website:
<https://www.orangecountyfl.net/environment/septicpollutionprevention.aspx>

- Q:** My conventional septic system is in good working order; do I still need to change my system?
- A:** No, only if you are making a repair or modification. Upgrades to existing conventional septic systems on lots less than one acre will be required to obtain a repair or modification septic permit. Beginning March 1, 2025, when these permits are applied for, FDEP and / or Florida Department of Health (FLDOH) will require that the system be upgraded from a conventional system to an enhanced, minimum 65% nitrogen reducing system.
- Q:** Can I apply for the grant if I am replacing my septic with a similar system?
- A:** No, you must replace a conventional system with an enhanced, minimum 65% nitrogen reduction system. It must be installed by a licensed and qualified installer.
- Q:** Will the grant cover the entire cost of a new septic system?
- A:** The goal of the grant is to assist with the difference in cost between conventional and enhanced nitrogen reducing systems. In most cases, it will not cover the entire cost. You will need to negotiate the cost with your installer.
- Q:** If I recently replaced my septic system can I apply for a grant?
- A:** If you meet all the eligibility requirements and replaced your conventional system with an enhanced, minimum 65% nitrogen reduction system you may apply. The system must have been installed on or after November 1, 2020, and proper documentation must be submitted.
- Q:** Can a residential property owned by a commercial entity apply for the grant?
- A:** No, only residential properties owned by residential homeowners are eligible for the program.