

Hawaii Cesspool Pilot Grant Program F.A.Q.

How were the priority areas chosen?

With the cooperation of the University of Hawaii, the Cesspool Conversion Working Group (CCWG), and the Department of Health (DOH), a detailed ranking was developed that considers multiple risks including risks to environment, sensitive ecosystems, human health, etc. This detailed ranking was then used to create a cumulative score for areas defined by the pre-defined geographic boundaries of the United States Census. The results of this study are detailed in the 2021 Hawaii Cesspool Hazard Assessment and Prioritization Tool (HCHAPT).

The areas with the highest priorities (i.e., Level 1 and 2) were prioritized for the purposes of this pilot grant program.

For further information regarding the HCHAPT, please visit <https://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/cesspools-tool/> for more details.

Are properties owned under a trust eligible for the grant?

Yes, the applicant should be one of the owners under the trust and the eligibility requirement related to the AMI should be calculated based on the applicants 1040 Federal Tax Return.

I want to submit my application by mail, will a delay in mail delivery hurt my chances of receiving the grant reimbursement?

We understand that this is a concern given the first-come, first-serve basis of the program. To account for this, the Department will use the postmark date on mailed applications to determine the time of submission.

When submitting a copy of my tax return for the application, can I just submit a photo of the tax return?

Unfortunately, no, we will not be accepting photos of tax returns. We need to ensure that the copy of the tax return is legible. If you need to access a copy machine, please note that Hawaii State Public Libraries offer copying services: <https://www.librarieshawaii.org/how-do-i/use-the-library/make-copies/>

How long will it take for my initial application to be processed?

It will take us about one (1) month to process application forms due to limited departmental resources. We appreciate your patience and understanding regarding this matter.

How many grants will be given?

The number of grants that will be given is based on the available funds. After adjusting for administrative costs, the number of available grants is currently capped at 225. We will be maintaining a limited waitlist for the program as well.

How will the reimbursement be given? How long will this take?

The reimbursement will be sent in the form of a check addressed to the grant recipient. Please allow two to three months for the processing and delivery of the reimbursement.

Would the reimbursement count towards my income for the purposes of my federal and state tax returns?

Although the Department of Health (Department) requested approval in December 2023 from the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury to approve the Hawai'i Cesspool Compliance Pilot Grant Program as a tax-exempt incentive program, the Department has not received confirmation of federal approval from either Secretary. As such, the cesspool conversion grant reimbursement remains taxable for federal and state income tax purposes. Grant recipients should consult with their tax preparer/advisor. If these approvals are ever acquired, then these reimbursements may be excluded from taxation.

What happens to my application and tax returns, which has sensitive personal information?

After your application is processed, the sensitive information will be redacted and then shredded. Non-sensitive information will be retained to track applications and process reimbursement.