

Town of Bridgton

Wastewater Connection Assistance Program

Wastewater Connection Assistance

1.1 Purpose.

The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance to Bridgton single family property owners who, due to their income level, need assistance in paying for connecting to the newly constructed Wastewater System. Under this program, the Town of Bridgton will provide financial assistance to those individuals who own a single-family dwelling in which they reside as their primary residence and meet the criteria established by this program. Assistance will be on a first-come first served basis. The Select Board may discontinue the program at their sole discretion by vote at a scheduled Select Board Meeting.

1.2 Definitions.

As used in this program, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

BENEFIT BASE

Actual costs to connect to the Town's Wastewater System by a Town approved contractor.

HOMESTEAD

For purposes of this program, "homestead" shall be defined as an owner-occupied principal dwelling. Generally, a homestead is the principal dwelling owned by the person seeking connection assistance under this program or held in a revocable living trust for the benefit of that person. The dwelling must be occupied by the person making application.

INCOME

Total household income as determined by the total (gross) income reported on the applicant's most recent federal income tax return, plus the total (gross) income reported on the most recent federal income tax return of each additional member of the household if filing separately. If the applicant and/or any member of the household do not file a federal income tax return, income shall be the cumulative amount of all income received by the applicant and each additional member of the household from whatever source derived, including, but not limited to, the following items:

- A. Compensation for services, including wages, salaries, tips, fees, commissions, fringe benefits and similar items;
- B. Gross income derived from business;
- C. Gains derived from dealings in property (capital or other);
- D. Interest;
- E. Rents from real estate;
- F. Royalties;

- G. Dividends;
- H. Alimony and separate maintenance payments received;
- I. Annuities;
- J. Pensions;
- K. Income from discharge of indebtedness;
- L. Distributive share of partnership gross income;
- M. Income from an interest in an estate or trust;
- N. IRA distributions;
- O. Unemployment compensation; and
- P. Social security benefits.

QUALIFYING APPLICANT

A person who is determined by the Town Manager, or his designee, after review of a complete application under § 1.4 of this program, to be eligible for wastewater connection assistance under the terms of this program.

1.3 Criteria for participation.

In order to participate in the wastewater connection assistance program, an applicant shall demonstrate all of the following:

- A. The applicant shall be a resident at the time of application.
- B. The applicant shall have a homestead in the Town of Bridgton at the time of the application.
- C. The applicant shall meet the application and eligibility criteria set forth in §§1.4 and 1.5 of this program.

1.4 Application and payment procedures.

- A. Persons seeking to participate in the Wastewater Connection Assistance Program shall submit an application to the Town Manager prior to connecting to the wastewater system. The application form for the program shall be made available upon request in the Town Manager's office and shall include, at a minimum, the applicant's name, homestead address and contact information. Attached to all applications shall be proof of household income.
- B. Applicants shall also submit proof of estimated wastewater connection fees by a Town approved contractor or contractor of homeowner's choosing.
- C. The Town Manager, or his designee, shall review and determine if the application is complete and accurate and if the applicant is otherwise eligible to participate in the program. The Town Manager, or his designee, shall notify an applicant, by regular mail, if an application is determined to be incomplete. The Town Manager's, or his designee's, decision on eligibility to participate in the program shall be final.

1.5 Determination of eligibility and amount.

Eligibility under this program is designed to provide greater benefits proportionally to applicants with lower income in relation to their benefit base. Applicants with income greater than an amount equal to 80% of the current United States Department of Housing and Urban Development metropolitan area median family income shall not be eligible for benefits under this program. Eligible applicants will receive a benefit totaling the amounts set forth in (1) and (2) as follows:

- (1) The total amount (100%) of the connection fee for Extremely Low Income Limits;
- (2) A percentage of the connection fee as determined by the Wastewater Connection Committee based on the following:
 - (a) 75% for households qualifying as Very Low Income;
 - (b) 50% for households qualifying as Low Income;

1.6 Limitations on payments.

A. The Town Manager shall report to the Select Board for its approval at its first meeting of each month the projected payments and number of eligible applicants requesting assistance from the program fund.

B. Payments under this program shall be conditioned upon the existence of sufficient monies in the program fund for the year in which participation is sought. If there are not sufficient monies in the program fund to pay all qualifying applicants under this program per the calculations set forth in § 1.5, payments shall be limited to the amounts available in the fund and may be prorated accordingly. In the event that a lack of funding results in no payment or less than the full payment to a qualifying applicant, the payment shall be considered final with no unpaid balance being carried forward.

1.7 Creation of program fund.

The program fund from which payments shall be made under the terms of this program shall be created as follows:

- A. The Select Board, pursuant to the Town of Bridgton's Reserve Accounts Policy (approved 04/15/15 as amended), shall establish the Wastewater Connection Assistance Reserve.
- B. An appropriation for funding the program may appear as a budgeted appropriation in the Town's Annual Water Reclamation Budget for approval by the Select Board. An appropriation may also be approved by the Select Board from the Wastewater Unassigned Fund Balance. The Town may also seek grant funding to support the program.

1.8 Timing of payments.

A person who qualifies for payment under this program shall have their connection costs paid directly to the Town approved contractor or contractor of homeowner's choosing upon completion of the connection and receipt of an invoice from said contractor.

1.9 One applicant per homestead.

Only one application per homestead shall be entitled to payment under this program. Eligibility shall be determined based on total household income. The right to file an application under this program is personal to the applicant and does not survive the applicant's death, but the right may be exercised on behalf of an applicant by the applicant's legal guardian or attorney in fact. If an applicant dies after having filed a timely complete application that results in a determination of qualification, the amount determined by the Committee shall be disbursed to the contractor.