

The Central Virginian

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Well and septic help for Louisa and Fluvanna

Contributed Photos Dec 8, 2022

Housing Foundation receives \$300,000 grant to support those in need

The Fluvanna-Louisa Housing Foundation (FLHF) has received a \$300,000 award from the Virginia Department of Health for their Septic and Well Assistance Program (SWAP). An agreement is scheduled to be sent from VDH to FLHF in this month with a planned implementation in January 2023.

Low-income homeowners in Louisa and Fluvanna will have access to the funds to repair or replace well and septic systems, which can have a major impact on a family's health.

"We have an opportunity to help a lot of residents with water and septic needs that are beyond the homeowner's capacity to repair or replace," said Kim Hyland, FLHF executive director. "When people have basic needs, like water, that are unmet, we step in. Having direct access to this funding allows us to help those who need it most."

Once the local program has been fully developed, residents will be able to apply through the FLHF.

The funds are the result of the Virginia Department of Health's \$11.5 million allocation in the Governor's Budget Bill approved in August 2021 to help low-

income homeowners. The allocation is part of the Commonwealth's funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The Office of Environmental Health Services (OEHS) is using those ARPA funds through the Septic and Well Assistance Program (SWAP), which to assist homeowners with incomes at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines.

Indicating the strength of the local non-profit, VDH shared with FLHF that their application materials were "topnotch."

"VDH notified us that our application scored 94%," Hylnad said. "VDH noted that the application was very well put together, well written, and our staff produced an excellent request document. The high score demonstrates the ability FLHF has to administer aid to the community and we are thrilled VDH recognized our hard work."

The grant team of Judy Belluomini, and Jo Griffith assisted Hyland on the application.

FLHF received Letters of Support from the Board of Supervisors for both counties, demonstrating how county governments and FLHF have worked together to care for the residents.

"The Fluvanna/Louisa Housing Foundation does tremendous work in Louisa County, and we're pleased they were awarded this grant to help residents in need with septic systems improvements," said Wille Gentry, Cuckoo District representative to the Louisa County Board of Supervisors.

In addition to grants, FLHF relies on donations to help fund its support of local homeowners. Programs include installing ramps and roof repairs. The average age of those receiving home repair is 72.

To learn more or contribute, visit www.fluvannalouisahousing.org.

What exactly can be fixed?

SWAP covers the cost of:

- Repairing or replacing failing septic systems.
- Replacing straight pipes and privies.
- Installing conventional system repairs, alternative system repairs, or sewer connection.
- Replacing inadequate private wells and drinking water supplies.
- Properly abandoning unused wells.
- Installing replacement wells or public water connections.

For the purposes of SWAP inadequate private drinking water supplies are considered any of the following:

1. Replacement of a dry well;
2. Replacement of a well that is document to have an exceedances of a maximum contaminant level or other health standards;
3. Replacement of bored wells;
4. Replacement of wells installed prior to any regulatory requirements related to the Private Well Regulations established in 1990;
5. Replacement of a well in poor condition that is potentially under surface water influence;
6. Replacement of a well that is required to be abandoned in order to permit a sewage system repair under SWAP; or
7. Replacement of a developed drinking water supply (e.g. spring or cistern) that is not a private well for an existing home.
8. Replacement of developed private drinking water supply when access to private drinking water is no longer available for an existing home.