

Focus on: Regional OSS Loan Program



More information

For details about the Regional Loan Program, visit our website at: www.ecology.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Water-Quality-grants-and-loans/On-site-sewage-projects

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Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-407-6600 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711.

People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

The problem

Washington State has about one million on-site sewage systems (OSS), often referred to as a septic system. A properly functioning OSS treats household wastewater before it enters ground or surface water. However, failing systems do not fully treat household wastewater.

Untreated sewage can:

- Back up into the home.
- Puddle on the ground above the drain field.
- Enter ground or surface water.

Since untreated sewage can contain bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and parasites harmful to people, these failures pose hazards to public health and water quality. Repairing and replacing a failing system is expensive. Property owners might face a bill they cannot afford.

The Regional Loan Program solution

Through the Regional OSS Loan Program (RLP) partnership, Craft3 – a nonprofit lender – offers loans to property owners to repair or replace failing OSS. Ecology provides the majority of the capital for the loans through the Water Quality Combined Funding Program. Craft3 also uses funds from private sources.

Craft3 loans include:

- Financing for the full cost of designing, permitting, installing, and maintaining the OSS.
- Competitive interest rates and no up-front costs.
- Highly inclusive coverage for a range of incomes and property types (including commercial and non-owner occupied).
- Deferred payment options for homeowners with lower incomes.
- A \$2,000 reserve to support the system's ongoing health.

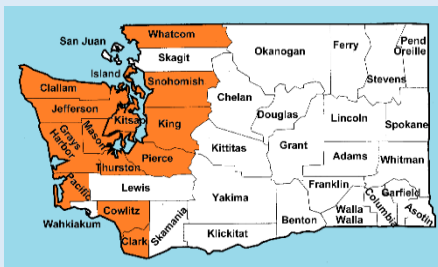


Figure 1 Craft3 Clean Water Loans are available in the RLP Partner Counties. These counties are: Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, and Whatcom. With separate funding, Craft3 also offers loans in Wahkiakum County.



Figure 2 An excavator replaces a drainfield on a Puget Sound inlet.



Figure 3 New septic tanks.

Joining the Regional Loan Program

Ecology funds are available to the RLP through its competitive grant and loan program. The RLP selects one of its partners to act as lead agency to apply for additional funding on behalf of the RLP partnership.

Successful funding requests describe how the RLP will address documented water quality and public health concerns for impaired water bodies. Any county or health district interested in joining the RLP must provide information about local water quality, specific water bodies, and public health concerns associated with failing OSS.

Local governments interested in joining the RLP must take the following steps:

1. Submit a letter of request to join the RLP from County/Public Health leadership. Send the letter both to Craft3 and the State Department of Health.
2. Attend the Annual RLP Partners' Meeting.
3. Sign the Memorandum of Understanding.
4. Assist with the launch of the RLP in your community.

More detailed information on each of these steps can be found in the RLP Guidelines on Ecology's Water Quality Program website (see inset, page 1).

Partner responsibilities

The RLP allows easy access to affordable loans without local governments establishing their own program.

RLP partners participate in the program by:

- **Promoting the program in their jurisdiction.** Referring property owners to Craft3, conducting outreach to OSS professionals, and making Craft3 information available on their website with tools and content provided by the lender.
- **Fulfilling regular responsibilities** for permitting septic systems and other regulatory work.
- **Serving in an advisory capacity.** Participating in annual meetings, calls, and other meetings. Assisting with program implementation.

About Craft3

Founded in 1994, Craft3 is a regional nonprofit organization that makes loans in Oregon and Washington that strengthen the resilience of businesses, families, and nonprofits, including those without access to traditional financing. Craft3 has offices in Port Angeles, Seattle, Spokane, and Walla Walla, Washington, and Astoria, Bend, Klamath Falls, and Portland, Oregon. For more information on Craft3's Clean Water Loans, visit <https://www.craft3.org/CleanWater>.

Contact Craft3 by phone 888-231-2170 or email CleanWater@Craft3.org.