
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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“SAG Plus” Funds For Municipal Septage Disposal Projects

Approximately 80 percent of New Hampshire residents rely on septic tanks for their on-site wastewater treatment. “Septage” is the term used to describe material removed from septic tanks, cesspools, holding tanks, portable toilets or other sewage treatment storage units. There are a number of management choices for proper septage disposal. The most commonly used disposal option is at publicly-owned wastewater treatment facilities, which accounts for 66 percent of the in-state disposal. This is no surprise since state law makes municipalities responsible for septage disposal. To assist municipally-owned treatment plants with the cost of disposal projects the Department of Environmental Services has established the SAG Plus program.

What is the municipal responsibility regarding septage disposal?

Improper management and disposal of septage can pose serious health hazards, as well as degrade the state’s water resources. Recognizing the potential for public health and environmental problems, the New Hampshire Legislature gave municipalities the responsibility to provide proper septage disposal for their residents. RSA 485-A:5-b states:

- I. Each municipality shall either provide, or assure access to, a department of environmental services approved septage facility or a department approved alternative option for its residents.*
- II. For the purposes of paragraph I, "provide, or assure access to" shall mean a written agreement with a recipient facility, or department approved alternative option, indicating that the recipient facility agrees to accept septage generated in that municipality. The municipality shall consider providing sufficient annual capacity equal to the number of households with septic multiplied by the average septic tank capacity of 1, 000 gallons divided by the average septage pumpout frequency of 5 years.*

Approximately 100 million gallons/year of septage is currently generated for disposal (pumped out by septage haulers) from New Hampshire communities. There is a growing concern that there is a shortage of in-state septage disposal capacity.

What are SAG Plus grant funds and who is eligible?

Keenly aware of the need to provide a financial incentive for municipalities to move forward in meeting their septage disposal obligation, the New Hampshire Legislature authorized additional funds under the State Aid Grant (SAG) Program. These funds are known as SAG Plus funds since they provide additional monies to the State Aid Grant for wastewater projects that include septage disposal.



The SAG Plus grant funds allow municipalities to be reimbursed by the state, an additional 10 percent of the eligible costs resulting from the acquisition and construction of septage treatment facilities, which result in increased septage handling and/or treatment capacity to meet the septage disposal needs for that municipality. The grant increases by 2 percent for each additional town for which the host community formally (through written agreement) agrees to meet their septage disposal needs. The grant amount is not to exceed 50 percent of eligible costs contribution.

How do you apply for a grant?

Grant pre-application forms and further information can be obtained from the DES Wastewater Engineering Bureau by contacting the DES septage coordinator at (603) 271-3571.