

The Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program



Additional Information

If you think you may qualify for the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program, please contact BWSC's Operations Division at 617-989-7000.

For information regarding programs and services provided by BWSC, please contact the Communications and Community Relations Department at 617-989-7000.



Boston Water and Sewer Commission

Communications and
Community Relations
Department
617-989-7000

980 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02119-2540
www.bwsc.org

Michelle Wu
Mayor, City of Boston

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Executive Director/ Treasurer



2022

How to Participate in the Program

- Based on a defect in the lateral, the property owner can repair, relay (replace), or reline the sewer lateral to correct the condition.
- The property owner signs a BWSC waiver agreement and obtains written repair estimates from three BWSC licensed and bonded contractors. BWSC then provides authorization to the property owner to proceed with the repair work.
- Once all work is completed, BWSC will inspect and confirm that the lateral is no longer blocked, collapsed, or leaking. A check in the amount not to exceed \$4,000 will then be issued to the property owner within 2-3 weeks.
- The property owner is responsible for paying the contractor in full.
- All work must be completed within 30 days of determination of eligibility, unless an extension is approved by BWSC.

Advisory

A partial repair made to the sewer lateral can reestablish flow in the pipe but will not necessarily eliminate leaks occurring along a different length of the pipe and/ or prevent any future breaks in the non-repaired portion of the lateral. As homeowners are responsible for both maintaining flow in and preventing leaks from their sewer lateral, and as grants provide only one-time assistance, owners who are approved for repairs requiring excavation are encouraged to use the grant toward replacing and/ or relining the entire sewer lateral from the building foundation to the connection to BWSC's line.

Guidelines

The following is a list of guidelines to assist property owners when applying for the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program.

If You Have a Blocked or Collapsed Lateral:

- When a blockage or collapse occurs, the property owner hires a licensed and bonded contractor to attempt to clear the blockage.
- If the licensed and bonded contractor hired is unable to clear the blockage, the property owner needs to arrange a meeting between the contractor and BWSC to verify the blockage or collapse. Please call BWSC's Operations Division at 989-7000 to schedule a lateral inspection appointment.
- If the contractor clears the line through power rodding or snaking, the property owner is responsible for all expenses incurred in clearing the blockages.
- If the contractor is unable to clear the blockage, and BWSC verifies the condition and property owner's eligibility, the property owner may participate in the program.
- Please follow the steps in the [How to Participate](#) in the Program section on the next page.

If You Have a Leaking Lateral:

- When a leaking lateral is identified, the property owner will receive a letter from BWSC.
- If the property owner receives a letter, please contact BWSC's Engineering Planning Department at 617-989-7441.
- Please follow the steps in the [How to Participate](#) in the Program section on the next page.

The Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program is designed to assist property owners with the repair or replacement of their sewer laterals.

It is important for customers to understand that the condition of the sewer lateral is the responsibility of the property owner. With increasingly stricter enforcement of environmental regulations, sewer laterals must allow wastewater to flow from the property to the sewer main, but must do so in a way where there are no leaks over the length of the sewer lateral that can contaminate either storm drains or water bodies adjacent owner's to the property.

It is equally important for property owners to understand that the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program is effectively a one-time grant. When BWSC makes a grant to a property, that property will not be eligible to receive any additional sewer lateral grant funding for 20 years.

What Is a Sewer Lateral?

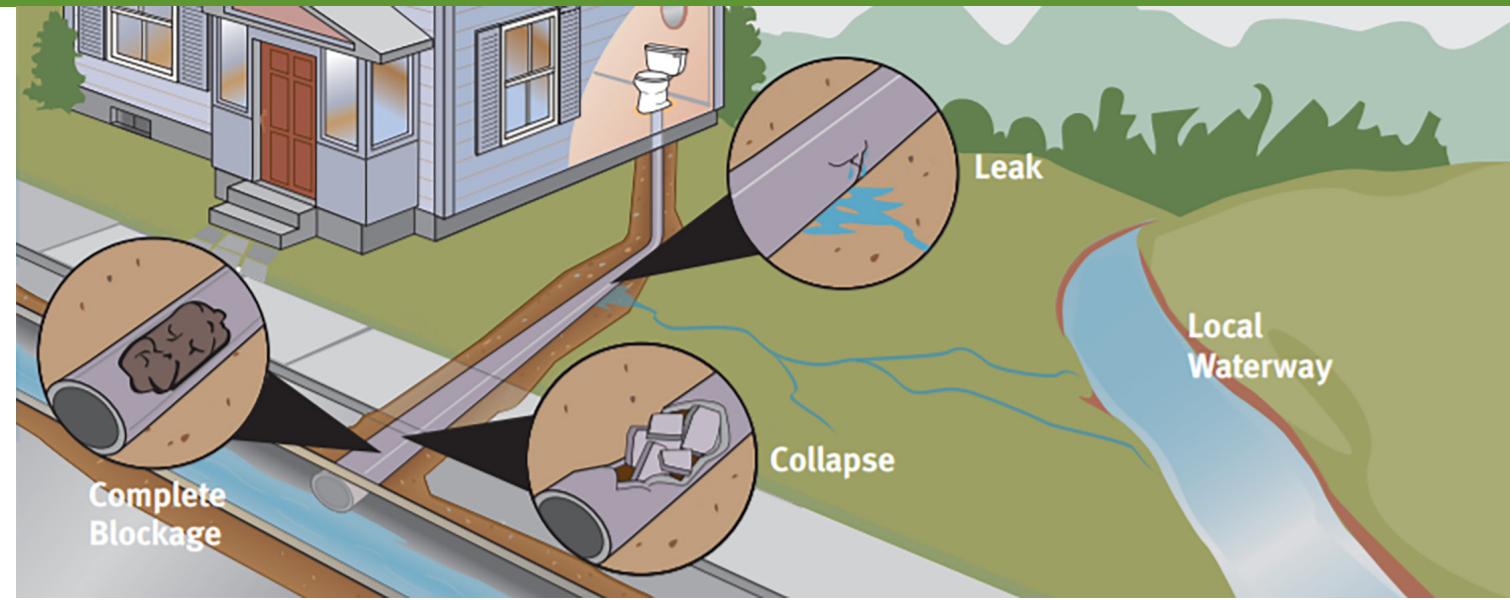
A sewer lateral, also known as a building's sewer, is the waste disposal pipe connecting a home or business to the BWSC sewer main in the street.

Maintaining and Repairing the Sewer Lateral

While BWSC is responsible for maintaining its sewer main located in the public way, property owners are responsible for all expenses resulting from maintenance and repair of their building's entire lateral from inside the property's basement to BWSC's sewer main in the street. The property owner is also responsible for expenses incurred in determining or relieving the cause of any blockage in the entire sewer lateral from the building foundation to the connection to the BWSC line.

- Maintenance of the sewer lateral includes cleaning out debris, removing grease, cutting roots, and any other procedures used to keep the entire length of the sewer lateral clear and functional.
- Repair of the sewer lateral includes removing blockages, replacing collapsed pipes, or fixing any leaks.

If the plumber or drain cleaner is unable to clear a blockage or if the pipe is collapsed or leaking, the property owner may be eligible to participate in the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program.



The Program

To help homeowners ensure the proper operation of a building's sewer lateral, BWSC may provide a one-time grant (up to a maximum reimbursement of \$4,000) to property owners who meet the eligibility criteria. A property is eligible only once every 20 years for the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program.

Benefits

Eligible property owners who participate in the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program will not have to bear the full financial burden to repair the completely broken, blocked, or leaking sewer lateral. BWSC will reimburse the property owner up to a maximum of \$4,000 to repair, reline or replace the broken, blocked, or leaking sewer lateral.

Eligibility

A property owner is eligible to participate in the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program if all of the following conditions are met:

- The sewer lateral is blocked, collapsed or leaking.
- The condition is verified by BWSC.
- The BWSC account for the property is current.
- Three estimates are obtained from contractors licensed and bonded by BWSC. See the Sewer Lateral Bonded Contractors List at www.bwsc.org.
- The building has not participated in the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program in the last 20 years.
- The property owner has received confirmation of eligibility for the Sewer Lateral Financial Assistance Program from BWSC and complies with all program guidelines.