



# Nonpublic Household Water Well Recommendation #1: Create a “Nonpublic Household Water Well” Designation

## Proposed Action

Create a new designation of and definition for *nonpublic household water well* for use by KDHE and local county and city governments.

This designation would include all private, semipublic, and other active nonpublic water wells used for cooking, bathing, drinking, household pets, and other household purposes.

(Household purposes do not include water used for lawn and garden, irrigation, watering livestock, or nonpublic water wells that have been properly plugged or registered with KDHE as inactive.)

## Potential Funding

No new funding is needed to implement this recommendation.

## Background Information

Counties and cities across Kansas take a wide range of approaches in the terminology and definitions used for nonpublic wells, semipublic wells, and private wells.

Key categories of nonpublic water wells identified in Kansas county sanitary codes in 2018 include the following definitions:

- **Nonpublic:** General term that applies to all water wells that do not meet a federal or state public water source definition. Kansas state law defines a public water supply well as a water source that provides water to the public for human consumption, and has at least 10 service connections or serves an average of at least 25 individuals daily for at least 60 days during a calendar year.<sup>1</sup>

- **Semipublic:** Term used by some counties to create a sub-category of nonpublic water wells. The definition is usually based on the number of service connections and includes a range of anywhere from 2 to 9 service connections.
- **Private:** Term used by some localities that is inconsistently defined. It can be used as broad category similar to “nonpublic,” or it can be used to make a distinction between the “semipublic” category and water wells with fewer service connections than used in a semipublic designation.

The current *nonpublic*, *private*, and *semipublic* water well designations do not indicate which nonpublic wells are used for *household purposes*.

## Why This Action Is Needed

Regardless of the number of connections or individuals served by a well, everyone needs access to clean, safe water. Without consistent definitions, it is extremely challenging to protect private, semipublic, and nonpublic well users. Creating a category of “nonpublic household water wells” for the state, county and/or cities to use would provide a uniform approach that could:

- Serve as a basis for other county- and city-level efforts to support those using nonpublic household water wells, including inspection and water analysis recommendations and the availability of financial and technical resources for these well owners; and
- Support any remediation/correction actions if problems are identified.

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<sup>1</sup> K.A.R. 28-30-2 (v).

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