

Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grant Program

2025 Request for Applications

Application form available on the DATCP website:

https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NMFEGrants.aspx

Deadline: Monday, April 15, 2024.

Electronic submissions only to:

Andrea Topper at andrea.topper@wisconsin.gov

Questions about this application?

Andrea Topper: 608-405-0235

The Nutrient Management Farmer Education (NMFE) Grant Program is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) through the Soil and Water Resource Management program to support nutrient management planning in Wisconsin. The NMFE grant program funds entities to educate farmers on nutrient management and to enable farmers to write their own nutrient management plans. Available funds determine the number and extent of grants awarded. Grants are provided via reimbursement. Award recipients must sign a grant contract with DATCP to receive reimbursements. Funds must be spent in the year for which it is awarded. Awards may be extended for an additional year if a formal request is submitted to the DATCP program manager. Instructions for submitting an extension request will be included in the grant contract.

Application Deadline and Award Notification

Applications must be received electronically by **April 15, 2024**. Award amounts granted for 2025 projects will be communicated after the 2025 Joint Final Allocation Plan is approved by DATCP, DNR, and the Land and Water Conservation Board (LWCB). This is likely to occur in late 2024.

Who Can Apply?

Applicants may include, but are not limited to: conservation districts, county, state and tribal government entities, colleges, universities, UW-Extension, nonprofit organizations, lake organizations, and other organizations focused on land and agricultural resource management. Producer led groups are eligible to apply if they can meet all of the 'Required Project Elements' criteria in this RFA. Applications from multiple-entity partnership applications are encouraged, but one entity must be designated as the grant recipient and project manager.

Available Funding

DATCP will make grant awards in this category from the appropriation available for this purpose. This is subject to any lapses and reductions and reduced by funds set aside by DATCP for conservation practice cost-sharing and financial assistance, producer-led watershed groups, and other cooperator activities. DATCP will attempt to fill all requests for funding that meet the requirements of this Request for Applications.

Project Tiers and Maximum Awards

Nutrient Management Farmer Education Program offers two funding tiers:

Tier 1: Funds projects up to \$25,000 maximum award.

Tier 2: Funds projects up to \$3,000 maximum award.

Note: Applicants must submit separate applications if applying for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 funding.

Multiple-Entity Partnerships

Where two or more organizations combine to submit a single NMFE Application for **Tier 1 Projects**, the applicant can request the \$20,000 maximum award and up to \$10,000 *additional* funds for each added partner. For example, if three counties partnered for Tier 1 NMFE, they could request \$40,000: \$20,000 for the baseline application and \$10,000 for each of the other two partners. Funding for multiple-entity partnerships will be allocated and reimbursed through a single applicant.

Tier 1 Project Proposals

Tier 1 projects offer incentive payments to farmer participants for soil testing and associated costs to update or develop their own 2015 NRCS 590-compliant nutrient management plan.

Required Tier 1 Project Elements. Applicants must commit to perform all of the following activities as described in their grant application:

1. First-time grant awardees are required to attend the NMFE 101 Training. All grant awardees are required to attend the NMFE Share and Learn Training. Specific information related to dates and timeframes will be sent out separately after notice of award.
2. Conduct nutrient management educational workshops for participating farmers which include nutrient management principles and planning concepts of the University of Wisconsin – Extension Nutrient Management Farmer Education Program Curriculum (available from the Nutrient & Pest Management Program: <http://ipcm.wisc.edu/npm>).
3. Assist every participating farmer in obtaining updated soil test results via a [DATCP-approved soil testing laboratory](#). (Soil tests are required only if tests have not been conducted on acres included in the nutrient management plan, or if prior tests are more than 3 years old).
4. Offer a manure spreader calibration, or other reliable method to determine manure application rate, for every participating farm that utilizes manure.
5. Complete or update a 2015 NRCS 590 nutrient management plan with each farmer– including SnapMaps soil and nutrient application restriction maps – and submit signed NM Checklists to the DATCP NMFE program manager. Checklist must be received by grant manager before reimbursement can be approved.
6. Conduct on-farm visits with the farmers who attend nutrient management workshops. The visits should help provide participants with individual help they need to understand various components their nutrient management plan as it relates to their farm.

Eligible Tier 1 Costs. As part of the budget submission, applicants may request funding to cover any of the following eligible costs:

1. Training participant payments limited to:
 - a. Soil sample collection and testing reimbursement, paid directly to each participant who completes a compliant nutrient management plan, not to exceed \$750 per participant. This reimbursement is intended to cover the cost of soil sample analysis, not for a hired party to pull the soil samples.
 - b. Manure Analysis reimbursement, paid directly to participants who submit one or more manure source samples for analysis and complete a compliant nutrient management plan. Payments cannot exceed \$100/per participant.
 - c. One of the following:
 - i. Incentive stipends to participants not to exceed \$700 per participant for new nutrient management plan completion or annual nutrient management plan update, or

- ii. Tuition vouchers to participants for attending nutrient management training, not to exceed \$700 per participant.
2. Payments for persons performing administration or training services not to exceed twenty-five percent of the grant award and limited to:
 - a. Subcontractor fees, and employee salary and fringe benefits for persons who administer or provide training required under this grant. Per s. 20.115(7)(qf), Wis. Stats., counties are prohibited from receiving funds to support land conservation department staff.
 - b. Projects cannot request reimbursement in this category if participants who receive NM training are charged a tuition fee.
3. Support costs are not to exceed ten percent of the grant award and are limited to the following unless otherwise approved by the DATCP program manager:
 - a. Mileage per allowable state rates. (Funds may not be used to lease or purchase a vehicle.)
 - b. Facility rentals, meals, and expenses directly related to holding training sessions.
 - c. Equipment leased or purchased to carry out nutrient management training such as soil probes, hand held GPS, wireless hotspots, scales to calibrate manure spreaders, etc.
 - d. Information and education materials, training supplies, computer supplies including memory sticks, maps and plats, photocopying, printing and postage.
4. **Funding to purchase laptops for Nutrient Management training—not to exceed \$2,000.**
 - a. This is an *additional* budget line item, in addition to the \$20,000 Tier 1 maximum request. Available to counties only at this time.
 - b. Laptops may be purchased by the county and reimbursed in the same manner as any other NMFE-related cost.
 - c. Laptops must meet the minimum requirements for SnapPlus computers (found in the SnapPlus Help Menu: Search “minimum requirements” for information below.)
 - i. OS: Windows 10 is recommended.
 - ii. Memory: 1 GB minimum for SnapMaps. 4GB+ recommended
 - iii. Processor: To get optimal performance, use Windows 10 with at least 4 processors and 4GB of memory (using Win 10 with a 4 core CPU will speed up some calculations by 3X or more)
 - iv. MS Office: Excel is required to import soil tests, manure analysis, etc. MS Word is required for the 590 Checklist.
 - v. Browser: SnapMaps works with Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, or Mozilla Firefox. Internet Explorer is not supported.

***Note: Payments to participants or reimbursements for items, such as soil testing and manure analysis, should not be made until the participant completes a 2015 NRCS 590-compliant nutrient management plan and submits the completed plan checklist. The checklist must be turned in with the reimbursement form in order to receive payment. Requests for any changes to the above list must be submitted in writing to the program manager before expenses are incurred.**

Tier 2 Project Proposals

Tier 2 projects educate farmers about soil testing and nutrient management planning principles and practices. This tier is for, but not limited to:

- Projects that are only seeking support for conducting nutrient management education activities and are not necessarily intended to result in the completion of a 2015 NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Plan.
- New projects/applicants who have not previously conducted Nutrient Management Farmer Education training programs.
- Projects that have secured other sources of funding for soil testing, etc.
- Projects that are working towards implementation of nutrient management plans through nutrient management plan review sessions.

Required Tier 2 Project Elements. Applicants for Tier 2 funding must commit to perform all of the following as described in their grant application:

1. Provide individualized maps showing soil types and nutrient application restrictions for participating farmers using SnapMaps.
2. Conduct educational workshops for participating farmers (approximately six hours of instruction) which includes elements of the University of Wisconsin – Extension Nutrient Management Farmer Education Program Curriculum (available from the Nutrient & Pest Management Program: <http://ipcm.wisc.edu/npm>). Content may be tailored to meet local conditions and may include related topic areas if approved by DATCP program manager.
3. Offer to conduct a manure spreader calibration for every participating farm that utilizes manure.
4. If conducting a nutrient management plan implementation review, the above three items are not required.
5. If conducting a nutrient management plan implementation review, participants must come in for a one-on-one session to review their nutrient management plan and identify if plan is being implemented correctly and or make an implementation plan.
 - a. Participant is eligible for \$150 participation stipend for completing the implementation review.
 - b. If plan is written by a plan writer, plan writers are encouraged to attend (either in-person or virtually) the nutrient management plan implementation review to offer comments, feedback, and assistance in making an implementation plan.
 - c. If plan writer attends, they are eligible for a \$150 participation stipend and one Nutrient Management CEU.
 - i. Grant manager is required to request the plan writer’s CCA number and report it to DATCP program manager, so plan writer receives CEUs.

Eligible Tier 2 Costs. As part of the budget submission, applicants may request funding to cover any of the following eligible costs:

1. Payments for persons performing administration or training services, not to exceed twenty-five percent of the grant award and limited to:
 - a. Subcontractor fees, and employee salary and fringe benefits for persons who administer or provide training required under this grant. Per s. 20.115(7)(qf), Wis. Stats., counties are prohibited from receiving funds to support land conservation department staff.
2. Payments for nutrient management plan implementation reviews limited to:
 - a. \$150 per participant. Participants can be farmer and or plan writer.
 - b. Indicate the number of farmer and planner stipends you are requesting in the NMFE Application on page 3 - Budget Request, under the Training Participant Payment-Stipend, Voucher or Instructional or Incentive Payment section. While it states that only Tier 1 grants are eligible for stipends, please indicate in that section, your total request for farmer and planner stipends. On page 4 in the Budget Narrative, please state how many farmer and planner stipends you are requesting and at what rate you plan to offer the stipends.
3. Support costs limited to:
 - a. Mileage per allowable state rates. (Funds may not be used to lease or purchase a vehicle.)
 - b. Facility rentals, meals, and expenses directly related to holding training sessions.
 - c. Equipment leased or purchased to carry out nutrient management training such as soil probes, handheld GPS, scales to calibrate manure spreaders, etc.
 - d. Information and education materials, training supplies, computer supplies including memory sticks, maps, photocopying, printing, and postage.

In-kind and Other Support.

Applicants must make a reasonable effort to provide in-kind and direct support and list their contributions in the application. Applicants should also use cost reducing measures including using electronic media and communication in lieu of printing and mailing materials.

Reimbursement Requests

Reimbursement requests can be submitted twice during the award year. When requesting participant stipend or soil sampling reimbursement the applicable 590 Checklist is required to be turned in with the reimbursement request. The final deadline for submitting reimbursement requests is February 15th following the award year.

Extension Requests

If funds are not able to be spent within the award year, awardees are able to submit an extension request. This allows rollover of remaining unspent funds for one year. If funds are not spent in the next year, they will be lost. Extension requests must be received by December 31st of the award year. DATCP program manager will send out an email reminder with extension request form attached.

Reporting Requirements

DATCP has prepared a final report template available at:
https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NMFEGrants.aspx

Funded projects must submit a final project report, whether funds were spent or not, within 45 days after the funding period has ended, no later than February 15th in the year following the award of funds. Final project reports must include at a minimum:

- Dates and locations of training events
- Name and number of participants
- Number of 590 compliant nutrient management plans developed or updated
- Copies of checklists
- Matching/in-kind contribution amounts and descriptions
- Total number of acres planned
- Narrative summary of the training events. Include comments describing what went well, what could use improvement, and any other amplifying information about your workshops. If conducting Nutrient Management Plan Implementation Reviews participation information is required.

In addition to the reporting requirements above, nutrient management plan checklists completed or updated as part of the NMFE project must be sent to the DATCP program manager upon completion of the project.

Submission Guidelines

The application form is located on the DATCP website:
https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NMFEGrants.aspx

Full applications must be electronically submitted to andrea.topper@wisconsin.gov in Word format.

Application Instructions

- **Complete the Application Form:**
 - Provide the name of the organization that will take responsibility for the fiscal administration of your project (i.e., pay for grant expenses, fill out reimbursement requests, and receive reimbursement payments).
 - Select a geographic focus area for your project.
 - Identify the amount of grant dollars you are requesting.
 - Fill out contact information for the project manager and financial manager. Include information about vendor contact and reimbursement check recipient if different than the financial manager.
 - Respond to freeform questions and please limit your answers to the space provided. Provide additional sheets only when necessary.
- **Complete the Budget Request Form:** Use the form provided, itemize annual expenses with a

concise description for each item. Complete for project year: **2025**.

- Within the boxes provided on the form, describe expense items you want the NMFE grant to cover in each listed category.
- Include how much direct or match/in-kind assistance will be used to help pay for expenses in each category.
- Add up the total grant request and in-kind support from each expense category and list these totals in the spaces provided at the bottom of the form. The amounts you list here must match the amounts you list on the Cover Page

Application Processing and Evaluation

Staff and advisors to the NMFE Program will review and score submitted proposals on a competitive basis with amounts subject to funding availability. Additionally, the awards will depend on the quantity and content of the applications received. Awards preference will go to Tier 1 projects.

Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- The degree to which the project meets the NMFE Program goals.
- The degree to which the project includes measurable objectives.
- The comprehensiveness of the training proposal in terms of reaching farmers who need to update existing nutrient management plans and farmers who need assistance developing nutrient management plans for the first time.
- The ratio of farmer participants to grant funds requested. Serving more farmers in relation to the amount requested reflects positively on the application. **Applicants should try to identify, as accurately as possible, the number of farmers they anticipate serving so funding can be shared among as many projects as possible.**
- The degree to which the results of the program will benefit the environment and achieve the goals and priorities of federal and state environmental and agricultural agencies.
- The cost benefit of the project budget for conducting the proposed program.
- The extent to which the project is supplemented with outside funding or in-kind support. (A 1:1 ratio or better of in-kind to awarded funds is recommended).
- For previously awarded applicants, the degree to which you have completed your project goals and reporting requirements.

DATCP will notify grant recipients of the funding awards after the 2025 Joint Final Allocation Plan is approved in late 2024.

