Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grant Program

2021 Request for Applications

Application form available on the DATCP website:

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

Deadline: Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

Electronic submissions only to:

Ryan Erisman at ryan.erisman@wisconsin.gov

Questions about this application?

Ryan Erisman, Program Manager: 608-224-4604

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 in 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, 2020**. Award amounts granted for 2021 projects will be communicated after the 2021 Joint Final Allocation Plan is approved by DATCP, DNR, and the Land and Water Conservation Board (LWCB). This is likely to occur in late 2020.

Who Can Apply?

Applicants may include, but are not limited to: conservation districts, county, state and federal agriculture or natural resource agencies, colleges, universities, UW-Extension, nonprofit organizations, lake organizations and other organizations focused on 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 entities 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, subject to any lapses and reductions, and reduced by funds set aside by DATCP for nutrient management cost-sharing, 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 $20,000 maximum award.

Tier 2: Funds projects up to $2,500 maximum award

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

Multiple-Entity Partnerships (New as of 2020)

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 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. 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 Training Curriculum (available from the Nutrient & Pest Management Program: http://ipcm.wisc.edu/npm).
2. Assist every participating farmer in obtaining updated soil test results. (Required only if prior tests are more than 3 years old).
3. Offer a manure spreader calibration, or other reliable method to determine manure application rate, for every participating farm that utilizes manure.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Once they have completed a NM plan in SnapPlus, have participating farmers complete the post-workshop questionnaires available through SnapPlus via *Help >Support/Contact.* The link to the survey is at the bottom of the Contact Information screen. Additional information about the NMFE farmer survey is located on the NMFE webpage.

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 prepares a nutrient management plan, not to exceed $750 per participant, and
    b. One of the following:
        i. Incentive stipends to participants not to exceed $500 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 $500 per participant.

2. Payments for persons performing administration or training services not to exceed $4,000 and limited to:
    a. Subcontractor fees, employee salary, and fringe benefits for persons who administer or provide training required under this grant. Funds provided to counties must be used for planning, delivery, and evaluation of nutrient management training as defined under the terms of this grant, and not for the support of local land conservation personnel to fund any activities under Stats. s. 92.14 (3) (a) through (f).
    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. **New for 2021: 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. There will be a separate reimbursement form.
    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.

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.

***Note: Payments to participants or reimbursements for items such as soil testing should not be made until the participant completes a 2015 NRCS 590-compliant nutrient management**

plan and submits a the completed plan checklist. 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 *without offering participant stipends*. This tier is geared toward, 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 not providing incentive payments to farmer participants.

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.

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 $750 and limited to:
    a. Subcontractor fees, employee salary, and fringe benefits for persons who administer or provide training required under this Agreement except that funds provided to counties must be used for planning, delivery, and evaluation of nutrient management training as defined under the terms of this Agreement, and not for the support of local land conservation personnel to fund any activities under s. 92.14 (3) (a) through (f) b.
    b. Projects cannot request reimbursement in this category if participants who receive NM training are charged a tuition fee.
2. 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, hand held 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.

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 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
- 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.

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 ryan.erisman@wisconsin.gov in Word format.

Application Instructions

- **Complete the Application Form:**
  - Provide a title for your project, limited to 12 words.
  - 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.
  - Describe the primary audience for your project.
  - Develop an abstract for your proposed project.
  - Identify the amount of grant dollars you are requesting.
  - Identify start and end dates for your project.
  - 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 (last page of application):** Use the form provided, itemize annual expenses with a concise description for each item. Complete for project year: **2021**.
  - 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.
- Provide additional explanation/justifications in Section I. of the application, if necessary

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 and an evaluation component.
- 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 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 project has already identified interested farmers to participate.
- 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 2021 Joint Final Allocation Plan is approved in late 2020.