

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program

Request for Proposals FY 2019

Application Form

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

Deadline

September 17, 2018

Electronic submissions only **(in Microsoft Word format)** to:

Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov

Questions?

Rachel Rushmann: 608-224-4622, Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov



Important Notes

Grants are reviewed on a competitive basis based upon the ranking criteria outlined in this Request for Proposals so please review the criteria very carefully.

New projects and/or projects that focus on outcome-based approaches that deliver tangible results will receive the highest priority scoring.

Remember this is a producer-led grant program so ensure that your group is truly led by producers and that it is communicated effectively in your application.

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Introduction and Funding Priorities

The Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to provide support for producer-led, conservation activities that improve water quality and increase farmer participation in Wisconsin.

- The maximum award per one producer-led group/legal entity is \$40,000 each fiscal year.
- There is a 1:1 match requirement.
- Total program funding is \$750,000 per fiscal year.
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant contract with DATCP and will be required to submit an annual report using a DATCP provided template.
- No funding commitment is final until the contract is signed by all parties.
- No activities are reimbursable until a signed contract is in place.
- Funding will be available at the time of the contract beginning no earlier than January 1, 2019, expiring on December 31, 2019.
- Funding will be available once the contract is signed by both parties until December 31, 2019 unless the grant recipient submits a formal request to DATCP to extend their grant funds into the next grant cycle.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must include producer-led groups that meet **all** of the following criteria:

- The producer-led group¹ includes at least five agricultural producers each of whom operates an eligible farm², within the same watershed³. The group may include additional agricultural producers who are not required to be operators of eligible farms, but those producers must also operate a farm within the designated watershed. The group may also include non-farm participants as long as the requirement of five agricultural producers is met.
- The group collaborates and forms a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with at least **one** of the following:
 - DATCP
 - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 - A county land conservation committee or local land conservation department
 - The University of Wisconsin-Extension or UW-Discovery Farms
 - A non-profit conservation organization⁴
- The group assists agricultural producers in the watershed to voluntarily conduct nonpoint source water pollution abatement activities.
- The group contributes matching funds at least equal to, but not less than, the amount requested (1:1 match).

See "Definitions" on page 8.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects may include the following activities:

- *For new groups only:* Startup costs associated with group formation including work planning, mission statement development, goal setting, etc.
- To provide incentive payments to producers to implement conservation practices such as soil testing, cover crops, nutrient and manure management planning, no-till or reduced tillage systems, buffer strips, grassed waterways, manure composting, low-disturbance manure injection, etc.
 - Including new and innovative practices or techniques is encouraged
- To measure and promote economic and environmental benefits of conservation practices
- To perform nutrient management planning, training and assessments
- To develop innovative approaches to manure storage, stacking, or conservation equipment-sharing that increases and/or identifies economic and environmental benefits of such practices
- To increase voluntary producer and agribusiness participation in a watershed through education and outreach activities such as hosting conferences, workshops or field days
- To collaborate with partner(s) for on-farm research that identifies economic and environmental benefits/opportunities of utilizing various conservation practices or strategies
- To complete edge-of-field and/or in-stream water quality monitoring as part of a larger effort
- To perform farm assessments to evaluate farm, manure, and nutrient management practices and identify solutions to resource concerns
- Other activities deemed by the department as consistent with the purpose of this grant program

Please note: Innovative ideas are welcomed. If you would like to submit a project including activities other than those listed above, we recommend contacting the program manager prior to submittal.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
Development of work plan and goals, learning days to have experts discuss related topics, development of incentive program, etc.	Out-of-state travel and/or conference registrations
Incentive payments for conservation practices	Real estate purchases
Facility rentals, meals, and expenses directly related to hosting field days, workshops or conferences	Repayment of loans or mortgages
Personnel for coordinator role including expenses for salaries and wages, contract and consulting services, and mileage at allowable state rates. The maximum reimbursable amount for any type of labor expense is <u>\$25/hour</u> . Mileage reimbursement is set by the state rate.	Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract
Creation of marketing and outreach brochures, handouts, newsletters, factsheets, mailings, etc.	Lobbying activities
Materials and supplies directly associated with the project	Equipment purchases
Incentive payments for equipment rentals of innovative technologies used/shared by all farmers within the producer-led group; for example, covering costs for renting a low-disturbance manure injector or no-till drill	Administrative or overhead costs that are not direct costs of the grant project
Farm assessments to identify and evaluate potential or existing resource concerns, nutrient management implementation and other water quality practices	Other costs deemed by the department as not consistent with the purpose of this grant program
Rental costs for equipment directly associated with research projects, if pre-approved by DATCP	
Costs associated with monitoring or well testing (capped at \$5,000)	
Other costs deemed by the department as consistent with the purpose of this grant program	

Grant Administration Requirements

Collaborating Entity and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Requirement

All applicants must have or develop a MOU with one of the required entities listed in the "Eligibility Requirements" section (page 2) at the time of application. An example MOU is available on our webpage.

For new and existing groups, a copy of the MOU must be submitted with the grant proposal. If requested and approved by DATCP, the MOU may be developed after the submission of the grant proposal but prior to the grant contract development.

Fiscal Manager

If the producer-led group does not meet the definition of a legal entity (see definitions), a fiscal manager who does meet the legal entity definition can be designated to accept and manage the funds on behalf of the producer-led group. Your collaborating entity and fiscal manager (if applicable) do not need to be the same entity.

Matching Funds and Source of Match Requirement

Letters of Commitment must be provided by match contributors, outlining their intended support and donations. **Matching funds must be directly related to the work of your producer-led group and within the watershed that the work is being completed.** Matching funds also must be at least equal to the total requested grant funds (1:1 match). *Example: Total requested funds of \$40,000 requires a \$40,000 match.* Applicants must indicate where the source of match is derived from. Matching funds can come in the form of any combination of the following acceptable matching contributions:

- Funds from other grantors and/or sponsorships, including DATCP Nutrient Management Farmer Education funding (https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/NMFEGrants.aspx)
- Time spent at a rate of \$25/hour including staff time, farmer time, outreach, research, legal, administrative, technical and education services
- Purchase of conservation or research equipment
- Cost-share on practice implementation (i.e., the farmer's portion spent on cover crops can be used towards match)
- In-kind contributions for services or resources from organizations other than the producer-led group and collaborator can be included such as donated facility rentals, mailings, printing and production costs

Please note: Up to 50% of an in-kind match is allowable. For example: if you request \$20,000, the match can be up to \$10,000 of in-kind contributions such as services provided by partner entities or time spent. Applications will be evaluated on how much time vs. actual costs are provided as match.

Submitting a Proposal

The application form and an example application can be found on the DATCP website:

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

Applications must be submitted no later than **September 17, 2018**. Applications must be submitted in Microsoft Word format ONLY to Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov.

Application Processing and Evaluation

DATCP staff and advisors to the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program will review and score submitted proposals on a competitive basis. At a minimum, the awards will be determined by and based on the quality, quantity and content of the applications received as well as the extent to which the application meets the following criteria:

Completeness of Proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposal includes all required documentation and fulfills program goals and priorities.• Proposal meets all program eligibility requirements.• Project demonstrates a plan to increase on-farm conservation efforts within watershed area.• Letters of commitment are provided by match contributors.• A MOU with at least one of the required collaborating entities is provided.
Goals/Objectives/Work Plan/Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposal describes reasonable timeline, achievable goals, and anticipated project results.• Work plan is clearly linked to project goals and desired outcomes.• Proposal demonstrates creative and innovative approaches to solve/address water quality issues.
Anticipated Results/Metrics Provided
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project demonstrates that it will increase nonpoint source abatement activities to improve water quality.• Project clearly defines expected results.• Project goals clearly translate into anticipated results.• Project incorporates a viable method for tracking and measuring project results in short and long term.• Adequate metrics are provided to evaluate project progress and success as they relate to their stated goals.
Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Justification exists for each budget item. Budget items are clear, efficient and meet the program requirements.• Budget items and work plan tasks are clearly linked.• 1:1 match is identified. Time vs. actual costs provided as match are reasonable. Source of match is identified.
Support/Commitment/Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farmer leadership and commitment is evident.• Strong project support by participants, partners, industry and other relevant individuals or organizations.• Efforts by the group are complementary to other local and state programs rather than duplicative.• Letters of support are included from project partners identifying their roles and commitment of support for the project. Letters of support are suggested but not required.
Communications/Project Replication
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly defines how project information will be shared with the agricultural community.• Project outlines plan to increase farmer participation in conservation efforts.• Efforts could be replicated in other areas of the state.
Previously Funded Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Past performance under previous grant awards and contracts was satisfactory.• Final reports included quantitative and qualitative deliverables, demonstrated progress, outcomes and results.• Reimbursements were submitted in a timely manner with required supporting documentation.• Group participated in the annual information sharing workshop.

Receiving a Grant: Expectations

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be required to file an **annual report** using the DATCP approved template as well as have at least one representative from the group attend an annual **information-sharing workshop**. Details of what must be included in the final report will be outlined in the grant contract between the producer-led group and DATCP. Funded projects must submit their annual project report no later than December 31, 2019. Grant recipients in 2019 will be required to provide the following quantitative information:

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants Annual Quantitative Reporting			
Administrative	Number of farmers directly involved in group	Number on mailing list	Number of farmers participating in incentive program
Outreach and education events	Number attended		
Conferences/workshops			
Field Days			
Farm Tours			
Nutrient management	Total acres covered	Number of existing plans updated	Number of new plans developed
Practices	Acres	Linear Feet	Number of participating farms
Cover crops			
Low disturbance manure injection			
No-till			
Strip tillage			
Buffer strips			
Grassed waterways			
Soil testing			
Spreader calibration			
Other:			
Total			
Nutrient reduction tracking (if available)	Total pounds of P reduced	Total pounds of N reduced	Total pounds of TSS reduced
Demonstration plots	Total acres in demo plots	Total number of plots	Practices included
Collaboration	Hours spent by collaborator	Number of partnerships created	

Funding Distribution and Reimbursement Information

Awards will be distributed through a stipend and reimbursement process. If specified by applicant, DATCP will distribute up to \$5,000 of the requested funds to the grant recipient upon the signing of the grant contract. The remaining funds will be distributed through a reimbursement process upon receipt of the reimbursement request(s) and required receipts and other supporting documentation for both the reimbursement request and upfront stipend payment (if applicable). Reimbursement may only be requested for activities completed after the signing of the grant contract.

A detailed invoice of expenses including **any and all** receipts for expenses, purchases made or services provided will be required at the time funding reimbursement requests are made. When requesting reimbursement, grant recipients must use the DATCP reimbursement request form and submit all receipts and invoices associated with their reimbursement request, including all documentation to support how the initial upfront stipend payment was spent, if applicable.

Open Records

Applications submitted for funding and all related contracts and reports shall be subject to disclosure under the Public Records law. If the grant applicant or recipient requests any information be deemed a trade secret, the document should be labeled using "trade secret" and the requested status should be noted to DATCP when the document is submitted. The department shall notify the grant recipient if a public records request is made for the information claimed to be trade secret by the grant recipient. Such information may be kept confidential by the department only as authorized by law (see s. 19.36(5), Wis. Stats.).

Other Considerations

All applications submitted in response to this RFP become the property of DATCP. The agency reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, otherwise use, and to authorize others to use materials produced under this grant agreement.

DATCP also reserves the right to:

- Post content from funded applications to the DATCP website.
- Reject any or all applications received.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received, after prior notification and agreement of applicant.
- Amend program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to potential applicants.
- Require a good faith effort on the part of the applicant to work with DATCP subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results in Wisconsin.
- Withhold any payments when contract conditions are not met.

Definitions

¹ A **"producer-led group"** is a group of at least five farmers that operate eligible farms² who work collaboratively on nonpoint source abatement activities within a watershed.

²An **"eligible farm"** means a farm that produced at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenues during the taxable year or a total of at least \$18,000 in gross farm revenues during the preceding three years.

³The size of a **watershed** is not defined for the purposes of this grant program, however, every farmer in your group must reside within the same watershed. For example, the watershed you choose to work in could be a HUC 10 (from 40,000 to 250,000 acres) or a HUC 12 (10,000 to 40,000 acres). Limiting your group's efforts to a smaller watershed size may enhance the likelihood of success in achieving watershed goals. A map is provided on our program webpage to help you determine what watershed your group resides in.

⁴A **"non-profit conservation organization"** means a nonstock corporation, charitable trust, or other entity whose purposes include the acquisition of property for conservation or agricultural preservation purposes, that is described in section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, that is exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code, and that is a qualified organization under section 170 (h) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

⁵For the grant application, an **"existing"** group refers to a producer-led group that has applied for and received a grant from the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant program in past grant cycles.

⁶A **"new"** group refers to a group of producers that have never received funding through the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant program in past grant cycles.

⁷A **"legal entity"** includes a corporation, partnership, company, or association registered by the department of financial institutions or a nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Application tips

As you develop your grant application and work to create the strongest application possible, consider the following tips and suggestions.

- Be clear and concise. Some or all of the reviewers of applications may not work with you directly and will need some background information on your project to fully understand the intentions of your project.
- Review the ranking criteria listed on page 5 of this RFP to make sure you are including those criteria in your application.
- Be sure you include all of the items listed in the Application Checklist (below).
- Include measurable outcomes and methods to track results.
- Develop a strong work plan and achievable goals.
- Describe strategies to increase farmer participation.
- Farmers: include complete descriptions of your operation, why you want to participate and what your role will be to demonstrate farmer leadership within the group.
- Include a clear budget and budget explanation so reviewers can understand what each line item will be used for and how it relates to the overall project.
- Develop a diverse project and application that includes actual practice implementation, outreach and a way to track results.
- Have an industry partner review your application before you submit.
- If you are an existing group, be sure to explain specifically how DATCP funds will be used and what was accomplished using previous funds.

Applicant Checklist

A complete application in Microsoft Word format that includes:

- ☐ Application with all required fields completed
- ☐ Budget that includes:
 - Match contributions at least equal to the requested grant award
 - Staff time requests on separate line items
 - Electronic signatures by lead farmer and fiscal manager (if applicable)
 - Letter(s) of commitment or correspondence provided by all match contributors
- ☐ A MOU signed by all necessary parties



Resources including example budgets, projects, and applications, model MOUs, etc. are available on the DATCP Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant webpage:
https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/ProducerLedProjects.aspx