

# Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program



## FY 2017 Request for Proposals

Proposal form available on the DATCP Web Site:

[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/ProducerLedProjects.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/ProducerLedProjects.aspx)

**Deadline: Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 at 11:59 p.m.**

**Electronic submissions only to:**

[Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov](mailto:Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov)

Questions?

Rachel Rushmann, DATCP: 608-224-4622, [Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov](mailto:Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov)

Sara Walling, DATCP: 608-224-4501, [Sara.Walling@wi.gov](mailto:Sara.Walling@wi.gov)

The administration of 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 in Wisconsin. **The maximum award per one producer-led group/legal entity is \$20,000 each fiscal year.** Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant contract with DATCP each year funding is awarded. 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 until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

## Deadline and Award Notification

Proposals must be received electronically by **Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 at 11:59 p.m.** Applicants will be notified of their application status within 45 days of the closing of the application process.

## Who Can Apply?

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

1. The producer-led group<sup>1</sup> includes at least five agricultural producers each of whom operates an eligible farm<sup>2</sup>, within the same watershed<sup>3</sup>. 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 (ex. Neighbors and interested citizens) as long as the requirement of five agricultural producers is met.
2. The group collaborates with at least **one** of the following:
  - a. DATCP
  - b. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
  - c. A county land conservation committee
  - d. The University of Wisconsin-Extension or the Discovery Farms program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension
  - e. A nonprofit conservation organization<sup>4</sup>
3. The group must form a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with one of the collaborating entities listed in (2) above.
4. The group assists agricultural producers in the watershed to voluntarily conduct nonpoint source water pollution abatement activities.
5. The group contributes matching funds at least equal to, but not less than the amount requested.

## Definitions

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

<sup>2</sup> An "**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 3 taxable years.

<sup>3</sup> The 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.

<sup>4</sup> A "**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.

<sup>5</sup> For 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.

<sup>6</sup>A “**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.

<sup>7</sup>A “**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.

### **Available Funding and Maximum Awards**

DATCP will make grant awards from the appropriation of \$250,000 per fiscal year for Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants. The maximum amount award per one producer-led group/legal entity is \$20,000 each fiscal year. Funding will be available once the contract is signed by both parties until December 31, 2017 unless the grant recipient submits a formal request to the program manager to extend their grant funds into the next grant cycle.

### **Eligible Proposals**

Eligible proposals may include the following activities:

- *For new groups only:* Startup costs associated with group formation including work planning, mission statement development, goal setting, etc.
- Provide incentive payments to producers to implement conservation practices such as soil testing, cover crops, nutrient and manure management planning, no-till, buffer strips, grassed waterways, manure composting, low-disturbance manure injection, etc.
- Measure and promote economic and environmental benefits of conservation practices
- Perform nutrient management planning, training and assessments
- Develop innovative approaches to manure storage, stacking, or conservation equipment-sharing that increases and/or identifies economic and environmental benefits of such practices
- Increase voluntary producer and agribusiness participation in a watershed through education and outreach activities such as hosting conferences, workshops or field days
- Collaborate with partner(s) for on-farm research that identifies economic and environmental benefits/opportunities of utilizing various conservation practices or strategies
- Complete cost-effective edge-of-field and/or in-stream water quality monitoring
- 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, Rachel Rushmann, at [rachel.rushmann@wisconsin.gov](mailto:rachel.rushmann@wisconsin.gov) or by phone at 608-224-4622.

### **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 ‘Who Can Apply?’ section at the time of application. An example MOU is available on our webpage. **A copy of the MOU must be submitted with the grant proposal.** If requested and approved by program manager, 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 definition on page 3), a fiscal manager who does meet the legal entity definition can be designated to accept the funds on behalf of the producer-led group.

**Note: Your collaborating entity and fiscal manager (if applicable) do not need to be the same entity.**

## **Eligible Costs**

If awarded funding, applicants may request reimbursement to cover any of the following eligible costs:

- Development of work plan, mission development, goal setting, learning days to have experts discuss related topics, development of incentive program, etc.
- Incentive payments for conservation practices such as soil testing, cover crop seed, etc.
- Field days, workshops, conferences (facility rentals, meals, and expenses directly related to hosting the event)
- Personnel (labor) for coordinator role including expenses for salaries and wages, contract and consulting services, and mileage at allowable state rates. The maximum amount for any type of labor expense is \$25/hour
- Mailings, creation of marketing and outreach brochures, handouts, newsletters, factsheets, etc.
- Materials and supplies directly associated with the project
- 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, no-till drill, etc.
- Rental costs for equipment directly associated with research projects, if pre-approved by program manager
- Cost-effective edge-of-field and/or instream water quality monitoring
- 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 consistent with the purpose of this grant program

**Note: Reimbursement for time devoted to the project cannot exceed 25% of the total requested funds. Any staff time requested must be set at a cap of \$25/hour. Time exceeding the 25% cap is eligible to be used as part of your matching contribution.**

## **Grant funds may not reimburse any of the following expenses:**

- Real estate purchases
- Repayment of loans or mortgages
- Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract
- Equipment purchases
- Administrative or overhead costs that are not direct costs of the grant project
- Lobbying activities

### **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 must be at least equal to the total requested grant funds (1:1 match). *Example: Total requested funds of \$20,000 requires a \$20,000 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 sponsorship, including DATCP Nutrient Management Farmer Education funding
- 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 (for example, a farmer's portion spent on cover crops can be used towards the match)
- In-kind contributions for services or resources from organizations other than the producer-led group and collaborator can be included such as facility rentals, mailing, printing and production costs

**Note: Up to 50% of an in-kind match is allowable. For example: if you request \$20,000, you must provide a \$20,000 match. The match can be up to \$10,000 of in-kind contributions such as services provided or time spent. Applications will be evaluated on how much time vs. actual costs are provided as match. If you have any questions regarding eligible match, please contact the program manager at 608-224-4622.**

### **Reporting Requirements**

Grant recipients will be required to file an **annual report** with DATCP 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 within 45 days after the funding period has ended, regardless of whether an extension of funds has been requested.

**Note: A detailed invoice of expenses including any receipts for expenses, purchases made or services provided will be required at the time funding reimbursement requests are made. Detailed documentation about match and in-kind expenses will also be required at that time.**

**Chart 1: Example Metrics for Annual Report**

Example reporting metrics for a new group	Example reporting metrics for an existing group
Number of hours spent on planning activities	Number of acres of conservation practices
Completed work plan with goals and mission statement	Number of soil samples taken
Plan created to distribute conservation incentives	Attendance at outreach events
Number of outreach materials created	Increase in number of group participants and partnerships
Data collection and analysis plan	Number of farm assessments
Number of group meetings and list of accomplishments	Coordinator position: hours spent
Number of new farms involved in the group	Soil test P reductions
Number of new partnerships formed	Number of speaking engagements
Number of speaking engagements	Number of nutrient management plans developed or updated
Number of mailings sent out to farmers in the watershed	Phosphorus Index value reductions
Water quality monitoring plan	Water quality monitoring completed

**Proposal Submission Guidelines**

Proposals, with all supporting application materials, must be received electronically by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 to [Rachel.Rushmann@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Rachel.Rushmann@wisconsin.gov). Applicants will be notified of their application status within 45 days of the closing of the application period. **We strongly suggest you reach out to the program manager to discuss your concept or project prior to submission of your application.**

**Applicant’s Checklist**

A complete application includes:

- A complete application with budget that identifies match contributions at least equal to the requested grant award
- A signed MOU
- Letter(s) of commitment or correspondence provided by match contributors

**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 Proposals** – Proposal includes all required documentation and complies with DATCP’s Request for Proposals and ATCP 52 including eligibility and legal entity status, and letters of commitment or correspondence are provided by match contributors.
- **Project scope** – The proposal meets program goals and priorities to increase nonpoint source pollution abatement activities to improve water quality through farmer participation.
- **MOU** – A MOU with at least one of the required collaborating entities is provided.

- **Budget** – Costs are allowable, realistic, and budgeted in accordance with DATCP’s Request for Proposals. The grant proposal and budget adequately identifies the nature of project expenses to be reimbursed under the proposed grant.
- **Matching funds** – Budget reflects matching funds at least equal to the total requested amount. Applications will also be evaluated on how much time vs. actual costs are provided as match. Source of match funding must also be identified.
- **Measuring progress** – Project includes a plan for measuring progress during the proposed project period.
- **Project evaluation metrics** – Adequate metrics are provided to evaluate project progress and success.
- **Innovation** – Project shows creative and innovative approaches to solve/address water quality issues.
- **Nonpoint source pollution abatement** – The degree to which your project is expected to increase nonpoint source abatement activities that improve water quality.
- **Past performance** – Past performance under previous grant awards and contracts will be assessed.
- **Letters of support** – 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.
- Other factors deemed by the department as consistent with this grant program.

**This program is intended to help establish producer-led watershed protection projects throughout the state of Wisconsin, therefore priority may be given to new producer-led groups based on the amount of funding available and number of applications received.**

#### **Funding Distribution**

Awards will be distributed through a stipend and reimbursement process. If specified by applicant, DATCP will distribute 25% 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 or other supporting documentation. Reimbursement may only be requested for activities completed after the signing of the grant contract.

**DATCP will notify grant recipients of funding decisions within 45 days of the closing of the application process. Resources including example budgets, projects, model MOUs, etc. are available on the DATCP Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant webpage:**

**[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/ProducerLedProjects.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/ProducerLedProjects.aspx)**