

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

DATCP's Producer Led Watershed Protection Grant Program

How many producers are needed to make up a producer led group?

At least five producers that operate eligible farms.

What is an "eligible farm"?

DEFINITION. In this section, "eligible farm" means a farm that produced at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenues during the taxable year preceding the year in which a petition is filed requesting the department to designate an area in which the farm is located as an agricultural enterprise area or a total of at least \$18,000 in gross farm revenues during the 3 taxable years preceding the year in which a petition is filed. This definition comes from DATCP's Farmland Preservation Program. Farms do not need to be in an agricultural enterprise area in order to qualify for this grant.

Can we have farm participants that do not operate "eligible farms"?

Yes, as long as you meet the minimum requirement of five eligible farms. This applies to farm and non-farm participants.

What delineates a watershed?

We are not defining the size of a watershed for these grant purposes, 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 to 250,000 acres) or a HUC 12 (10 to 40,000 acres).

Additionally, limiting your group's efforts to a smaller watershed size may prove to enhance the likelihood of success in achieving watershed goals. A map is provided on our webpage to help you determine what watershed your group resides in.

Can we collaborate with others beyond those mentioned in the Request for Proposals?

Yes, your group can collaborate with any organization or individual you feel will help the group meet its goals, however, you must establish a formal collaboration with at least **one** of the following:

1. DATCP
2. The department of natural resources
3. A county land conservation committee
4. The University of Wisconsin-Extension or the Discovery Farms program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.
5. A nonprofit conservation organization.

When will DATCP start accepting proposals?

DATCP began accepting proposals for 2016 funding on February 29th 2016. Application materials are posted on DATCP's Producer Led webpage. Proposals are due on Friday, April 1st. We anticipate that the Request for Proposals for Fiscal Year 2017 funds will be available late summer 2016.

When will the funds be distributed?

Funds will be distributed after a signed contract is in place with DATCP and the producer led group and/or fiscal manager of the producer led group. This process should take approximately 2-3 weeks after funding decisions have been made.

Must a MOU be established at the time of application?

The MOU does not have to be finalized until the time DATCP awards funding and the contract is developed. At the time of application, it is sufficient to provide us with correspondence of what collaborator will formally partner with the producer led group to form a MOU and what the projected completion date of the MOU will be. Then groups will have approximately 15 days after the grant award is made until the contract is completed to finalize the MOU.

Is a sample MOU available?

Yes, please email the program manager for a copy of an example MOU. This is a sample MOU as if a producer led group were to collaborate with DATCP. It does not include project specifics, which MOUs should include based on project goals, deliverables, roles and responsibilities. We recommend that all groups consult their own legal team when creating the MOU.

How long do we have to spend the funds?

2016 funds will be available until December 31st 2016. At that time, groups can submit an extension request to extend their funds until December 31st 2017 if needed.

How do groups get started?

Several organizations have created documents to help producer led groups establish themselves and be successful. For example, Julia Olmstead, coordinator of the Northwestern Wisconsin Farmer Led Watershed Council project, created a very helpful startup guide for how their farmer led councils were formed. Check it out here: <http://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/wflcp/files/2015/12/FLWC-GettingStarted.pdf>

What does a successful project look like?

Groups will likely find success by tailoring their project to fit their specific watershed improvement goals and farming needs as well as having several committed and innovative farmers involved in the project. A coordinator to organize and advance the project ideas and goals of the group can be helpful in finding success.

How do groups sustain themselves financially? Where do they get the funding?

Most groups receive funding through a diverse set of partnerships, grants and sponsorships. DATCP has put together a list of grantors that fund similar efforts or projects that producer led groups may be eligible to apply for. Another great way to get funding is to establish partnerships with your local agribusinesses.

Other recommendations?

Contact the program manager, Rachel Rushmann at rachel.rushmann@wi.gov or by phone at 608-224-4622 to discuss your project idea. She can help you evaluate your project feasibility and provide recommendations for how to increase the likelihood that your project will be approved for funding and achieve longer term success.