

## **Frequently Asked Questions – Administration of the NOPP Grants**

### **Who Can Apply?**

1. Individual agricultural producer
2. Group of individual producers working with a third party as the project manager and/or fiscal manager.
3. Watershed or Producer-Led Group working with a group of eligible agricultural producers
4. Other combination between eligible ag producers + project manager and/or fiscal manager
5. 2023 Awardees may apply for 2024 grant funds for new projects on new acres OR for continuation of current projects but with the inclusion of new producers.

### **How does the funding work? Do I have to enter an agreement with UW directly and budget up to 20% of my award to go to UW?**

DATCP has been authorized to spend up to \$1,000,000 for 2024 NOPP grants. To simplify the award process we will hold back 20% of this total award, or \$200,000, as a potential award to UW, and award \$800,000 to grant projects. The actual total award to UW will be 20% of the total grant project awards. If the award to UW is less than \$200,000, the balance of those funds will be directed to grant projects. The UW portion of the award will be provided via an agreement between DATCP and UW and individual grantees will not need to incorporate payments to UW in their budgets, or enter into a formal agreement with UW. The maximum award to an agricultural producer will be \$40,000.

### **How is the 20% of the budget designated for UW being put to use?**

- Technical assistance – Producers and project leads will receive support and direction regarding project design, field plot layouts, and sampling requirements at every stage of the process.
- Data analysis – UW will analyze all the data provided by farmers to determine if trends seen across the field are statistically significant based on variation in the data. Producers can expect a handout after harvest with results of the project and what the results mean in relation to the research question.
- Long-term nitrogen solutions – The data generated from this project will be added to UW's knowledge base of commercial nitrogen use, contributing to efforts of optimizing nitrogen usage across the state. These valuable findings will be shared with producers to influence long-term nitrogen management decisions.

### **Roles (one person can hold multiple of these roles):**

1. Applicant: individual or entity responsible for administration of the project during the life of the grant. The applicant can be an agricultural producer, an independent crop consultant, a researcher, a nonprofit, or another individual or entity. The applicant can be one of the agricultural producers involved in the project but does not have to be. The applicant is required to sign the grant contract.

2. Agricultural producer(s) must own an eligible farm. Agricultural producer(s) are the ones bringing grant funds to the project. Without eligible ag producers as part of the project proposal, no funds can be awarded. Producers must sign the grant contract.
3. Fiscal Manager: Individual or entity who will be managing the grant reimbursement request, receive the funds, and disperse as necessary. This can be the applicant, one of the agricultural producers, or a third party. Fiscal manager must sign the grant contract.
4. Project manager – individual or entity who will take responsibility for the on-farm research project management on behalf of the applicant. The project manager may be the applicant, an agricultural producer, or a third party. The Project manager will be the primary contact regarding all research and data questions.

### **Budget/Reimbursements**

- How do we request reimbursement for items that do not have a receipt/invoice such as producer stipends/reimbursements?
  - Spreadsheet with the following information included: who was paid; how much was paid; for what reason was, the payment made?
- What are approved expenses for the NOPP grants?
  - Sampling, monitoring and testing costs (soil, water, plant tissue) related to the project
  - Stipend for participating in the project
  - 0-N reimbursement **using the provided 0-N calculation spreadsheet in the Excel portion of the application**
  - Consultant/contractor time, capped at 25% of total project cost.
  - Materials and supplies directly associated with the project, including inputs only for the test strips / areas.
  - County staff time at a rate of \$25/hour as long as the county staff position is not already funded by DATCP SWRM (included in the overall 25% admin cap).
  - Equipment purchases directly associated with the project. DATCP preapproval is required for equipment purchases over \$2,500. A statement of ownership and intended use of the product after the NOPP program is finalized is required as a part of the application.
  - Supplies for outreach such as field days and meetings where NOPP projects will be the main focus
- What are ineligible costs?
  - Real estate purchases
  - Repayment of loans or mortgages
  - Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract
  - County staff time that is already funded by DATCP SWRM grants
  - Lobbying activities
  - Inputs (e.g. fertilizer, seed) and management costs not associated with the research project
  - Calculated potential losses due to lower than normal nitrogen application, with the exception of the zero-N plots / strips.

- Other costs deemed by DATCP as not consistent with the purposed of this grant program

### **Required Deliverables**

- Survey responses
- Data reporting
- Annual report

### **How should data be reported to UW?**

Raw data files from labs or yield monitors can be shared with UW. Be sure to provide a plot map and clearly state what samples correspond to what field plots or blocks. Entering data into an excel file with clearly labeled results, sample IDs, and plot IDs is another option for data sharing. Data can be sent to UW after it comes in, grantees do not need to wait until all data is collected.

### **Other**

- Can producers be held legally responsible for any data retrieved from their farms?

The statute which formed the NOPP program reads, “An agricultural producer and the UW System institution collaborating with the agricultural producer in implementing a project under this subsection may not be held civilly liable and may not be subject to any remedial action or other administrative or enforcement action from the department or the Department of Natural Resources for any discharge of environmental pollution from the land involved in the project, if the actions were taken in good faith by the agricultural producer and the institution and conformed to the project specifications proposed to the department in the grant application. (s. 92.14(16)(f), Wis. Stats).

- Info about Crop insurance and the nitrogen optimization program  
<https://aae.wisc.edu/pdmitchell/2023/06/20/nitrogen-optimization-pilot-program-nopp-and-crop-insurance-coverage/>