



Wildlife Management Institute

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Request for Proposals

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM, **2018 - 2019**

RFP Theme: RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS FOR WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

September 24, 2018

The Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for grants to address Research and Communications Needs for White-Nose Syndrome (WNS).

Please read this entire RFP, including the Frequently-Asked- Questions section, before submitting an application for WNS Small Grants Program funds.

WMI coordinates and administers the WNS Small Grants Program on behalf of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Program is authorized under the US Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended; Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) #15.664 Fish and Wildlife Coordination and Assistance and FAIN F17AP00100.

Background:

The USFWS has made funds available to support research and communications needs outlined in the White-Nose Syndrome National Plan (<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/national-plan/white-nose-syndrome-national-plans>). This opportunity is open to entities that are not U.S. Federal government agencies. The deadline to submit a proposal is **Tuesday, October 23, 2018**, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time.

WNS continues to affect bats in North America, where there is now evidence of the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (*Pd*) throughout much of the continental United States and Canada. Multiple hibernating bat species in North America have been confirmed with the disease or detected carrying the fungus. Additional species in Europe and Asia, where the pathogen is likely endemic, have also been confirmed with WNS. Surveys in affected areas in North America continue to reveal population declines associated with the disease, and evidence to date suggests that several affected bat species may not stabilize or recover in the immediate future. To assist in the advancement of conservation efforts to manage WNS, we will award grants of up to \$25,000 to address Priority Communications and Research needs. The USFWS has committed \$200,000 for this grant program in 2018.

RFP PRIORITIES

Priorities for this funding opportunity were developed by the working groups of the WNS National Response, and are presented here in no particular order. Projects must directly address one or more of the priorities identified below to be eligible to receive funds through this opportunity. Information about the working groups is available at <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/static-page/working-groups>

TOPIC 1: Outreach, education programs, and tools for communicating about WNS and the products developed by working groups of the WNS National Response.

*** Applicants for this topic must contact Catherine Hibbard (information below) to notify the National WNS Communications and Outreach Working Group of their intent to submit a proposal.

Priorities:

- A. Develop website content or resources for the national WNS website, www.whitenosesyndrome.org, in cooperation with the National WNS Communications Working Group (e.g. educational resources, interactive informational resources)
- B. Develop interactive tools (apps, games, etc.) that convey messages of the National WNS Response, engage new audiences in bat conservation, and reinforce good practices for bat conservation

TOPIC 2: Gaps in knowledge of bat life history, habits, and ecological interactions **relevant to managing WNS**

Priorities:

- A. Develop tools and strategies to improve surveillance and monitoring of bat species throughout their annual or life cycles
- B. Improve understanding of WNS vulnerability and winter distribution and abundance of bats

TOPIC 3: Tools and strategies to improve survival rates for bats **vulnerable to, or affected by WNS**

Priorities:

- A. Identify and protect important habitat or other resources for remnant or vulnerable populations of bats
- B. Develop and implement management tools or conservation strategies that improve survival and population growth for hibernating bats

ABSTRACT OF GUIDELINES

- **Proposal Deadline:** Tuesday, October 23, 2018, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. Confirmation of receipt of your application will be sent within 2 business days of your submission. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.
- **Funding:** Proposals for the 2018/2019 funding cycle for the WNS Small Grant program of the USFWS are now being solicited. Up to a total of \$200,000 is available for projects within the 2018 grant program. Grant proposals may not request greater than \$25,000 from this program.
- **Non-Federal Match:** You must provide non-federal match that is equal to or greater than 35% of the WNS Small Grant request. Requests for federal funds must be accompanied by documentation of match. If match is lower than required, the payment will be lowered to meet the amount of match available.
- **Special Reporting Requirements:** Grant recipients will be required to submit quarterly invoices, financial and accomplishment progress reports, a final report and provide periodic updates to the WNS community on conference calls.
- **Project Completion Term:** Projects must be completed within 1 year of funding. Extensions may not be allowed and any unused funds at the termination of the project will be forfeited.

INSTRUCTIONS ON SUBMITTAL OF PROPOSALS:

1. Proposals must be submitted as a MS Word document to swilliamson@wildlifemgt.org no later than Tuesday, October 23, 2018, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. Confirmation of receipt of your application will be sent within 2 business days of your submission. If no confirmation is received within 2 days, your proposal may not have been received. If you do not receive a confirmation, please call (802) 563-2087.
2. The proposal is limited to a total of 7 pages:
 - Page 1 is a single cover page with contact information (see details in section #3 below) and a summary of the proposed project.
 - Pages 2-6 are for text and figures (if included) about the proposed project. Required elements are described below.
 - A single page outlining the qualifications and roles of the individuals and organizations involved.

- Literature cited should be included as an appendix that does not count toward the page limit.
3. The cover page should provide the following information:
- Title of Project
 - Name of Principal Investigator and Job Title
 - Name of Institution
 - Email Address
 - Physical Mailing Address
 - Telephone and Fax Numbers
 - Other Principal Investigators Involved (name, title, institution, email address)
- All submitted proposals must be accompanied by copies of correspondence from co-PIs and key collaborators to the lead PI affirming that they have read and approve of the final proposal.**
- (These pages are not included in the seven page limit.)
- Total sum of funds requested from this program and total funds required for the project, including source(s) and amount(s) of funds not requested from this program (i.e. non-federal match)
 - A brief summary of the proposed project. The description should not exceed 250 words and must include primary objectives, a brief summary of methods, expected outcomes and a timeline. **The summary may be made available to the public.**
4. The project description will be composed of no more than five pages (single spaced and font size no smaller than 11) of explanatory text and figures. (Title page and personnel information are separate.) This section should be written as clearly and concisely as possible, address the following six points (A-F), and provide the information as outlined below. (Note that tables, graphs and photos can be included in the proposal but they must be contained within these five pages):
- A. Contribution to the WNS National Response
- Which of the priorities does your proposal address? Please identify by number and letter (e.g., 3.C).
 - How does the proposed action or project advance efforts of the WNS National Plan and Working Group Implementation Plans?
- B. Background information
- Provide data, supporting evidence, and rationale for the proposed project.
 - What is the goal of your project and what major objectives or tasks will you undertake to achieve that goal?
- C. Project design
- Clearly describe the study or project design.
 - In what area or state(s) will your project be conducted? Specific sites for the proposed project should be identified if applicable.
 - A clear timeline of project activities and deliverables.
- D. Results and products
- What measurable products or outcomes will result from your project?

- How will the study advance WNS outreach efforts and/or research and management?
- E. Projects and investigators must be in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act with satisfactory review of animal use protocols by an established Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (as appropriate). All awarded projects must demonstrate compliance with the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and all other relevant law. Selected applicants may be required to submit additional information prior to issuance of the award.
- F. The budget table and justification (1 page) should include funds requested from this program and source(s) and description(s) of matching funds. Separate the budget into the following categories: Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Indirect Overhead, Supplies and Materials, Travel to conduct the project, Contractual Service, and In-kind Services.
- Clearly indicate which activities will be supported by WNS Small Grant funds and which will be supported by non-federal match. For non-federal matching funds committed to the project, specify whether those funds are direct or indirect and clearly designate the source of the non-federal funds.
 - Provide a clear and concise budget justification that describes what the funds will be used for and how costs are calculated.

Applicant budgets must be complete and document suitable matching funds for their proposal. Suitable non-federal match funds must be an amount equal to or greater than 35% of the total amount requested (direct + indirect) for WNS Small Grant funds. Eligible matching funds include any non-federal source of funds including cash, supplies and materials, waived costs, or in-kind services. These may include donation of professional services and reduced charges for fringe and/or indirect overhead. Applicants are strongly urged to review the Federal guidance on in-kind services and the documentation requirements therein (<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title43-vol1/pdf/CFR-2013-title43-vol1-sec12-64.pdf>). All costs, including match, must be incurred during the term of the award, defined as the period beginning with the date of a final grant award letter to the expiration date of the service contract executed as a result of the grant application. If indirect costs are included in the budget, applicant must include a copy of the current Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement (does not count toward seven page limit).

5. Addenda: In addition to the seven-page proposal, applicants must submit:
- Signatory Page - A single document or pdf containing statements from all principal investigators and key collaborators indicating they approve of the final proposal to be submitted. The statement should include the individual's name, the title of the project, and his or her role in completing the project.
 - Copies of any unpublished materials (e.g., reports, draft or submitted manuscripts) that are cited in support of the proposal. (These documents will not be distributed.)

6. Grant applications may not request greater than \$25,000 in WNS funds, including all indirect costs.
7. Projects must be completed in one year or less from the time the grant funds are received.
8. Grant recipients must present preliminary results to the USFWS WNS Coordinators, if requested, and may be asked to present a project description, progress updates, or final results to the WNS community or a relevant working group via conference call or webinar.
9. Grant recipients will be required to provide a copy of all manuscripts developed as a result of this funding award to USFWS at least 7 days prior to submission to a journal.
10. To remain in good standing with USFWS, all grant recipients must acknowledge the USFWS as the source of these project funds whenever the project is presented or described.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How does the grant proposal process work? The USFWS is the lead federal agency coordinating the national response to WNS in the U.S. A multi-agency team identifies priority science and response needs annually, and the USFWS uses those priorities to inform their grant opportunities. For the WNS Small Grants Program, proposals are solicited for projects that deliver communications and/or science products that contribute to the understanding of, resolution of, or advancement of conservation actions addressing WNS.

Who developed the Priority Project Topics? Priority science needs were developed by the National WNS Coordination Team in coordination with the national WNS Working Groups, the USFWS, and the multi-agency WNS Steering Committee (<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/national-plan/white-nose-syndrome-national-plan>).

Who may apply? Eligible applicants include entities that are not U.S. Federal government agencies.

What is the schedule of review and approval of proposals? Proposals are due by **Tuesday, October 23, 2018**, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time. Proposals will be reviewed by WMI, the USFWS, and additional subject matter experts for scientific merit, clarity, and completeness. WMI may contact applicants for clarification or to allow for amendments to remove disqualifying elements. Eligible applications will be forwarded to the review committee by October 26, 2018. Funding decisions will be made by the WNS SMALL GRANT PROGRAM Committee. Contracting between WMI and grant recipients will then commence. Award decisions will be announced in

December.

What is the duration of a project? Projects must be completed within one year of the award date. Projects must begin no later than June 15, 2019.

What if a project cannot be completed in one year? This grant opportunity is meant for projects that can be completed within one year; plan your projects accordingly. Extensions may not be allowed and any funds remaining at the end of the project will be forfeited.

How will applications be evaluated? All applications received by the due date will be reviewed by WMI for scientific merit, completeness and eligibility, as appropriate. Proposals may be categorized into research and communications subjects. All projects that are deemed complete and eligible by WMI will be forwarded to the USFWS to coordinate evaluation using the following criteria:

- Degree to which the project addresses one or more of the priority RFP topics
- Contribution to actions and research prioritized by the Working Groups of the WNS National Plan
- Scientific and technical merit, if appropriate
- Programmatic capability and feasibility: Are project objectives/goals clearly defined, measurable, and connected to specific milestones/deliverables and timelines? Will/can proposed methods accomplish/produce the project's objectives/goals, deliverables, and timelines?
- Engagement of partners
- Demonstration that products will be accessible and useful in conservation and resource management decision-making
- Degree to which the project builds upon, rather than duplicates, existing efforts
- Outreach and education projects will be evaluated for how they meet ongoing priorities and actions of the WNS Communications and Outreach Working Group.

What is the source of funding for WNS Small Grant Program grants? The USFWS has granted to WMI the funding for the WNS Small Grant Program under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination and Assistance Program, CFDA 15.664, FAIN F17AP00100.

Are matching funds required? Yes. Non-federal matching funds in the amount of 35% or more of the total request are required. Matching funds in the form of in-kind contributions and waived overhead costs are allowed (see instruction 4.E., above).

How will I receive payments? The WNS Small Grant Program is a reimbursement program. Applicants must be prepared to fully fund their projects in the first instance and submit payment requests to WMI for reimbursement. Grant recipients will be required to enter into a grant agreement with WMI in order to receive payment.

Payment requests may be submitted to WMI on a quarterly basis. Reporting associated with payment requests will be circulated to technical teams appointed by the USFWS. Technical team will review and approve payment. Work that is not up to technical standards or that deviates from the proposal scope of work will not be approved for payment. No advance payments will be

provided. WMI will retain 10% of the grant amount pending receipt of all grant agreement deliverables. Upon the WNS Small Grant Program's approval of said deliverables, the final 10% retainage will be released to the grantee.

Where should proposals be submitted? Proposals should be emailed in MS Word format by **Tuesday, October 23, 2018**, at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time to swilliamson@wildlifemgt.org. Confirmation of receipt of proposals will be provided within two business days. If you do not receive confirmation your proposal may not have been received by WMI. If no confirmation is received, please call (802) 563-2087. It's the responsibility of the submitter to make sure all application materials are received by the deadline.

Can a single organization submit multiple proposals? Yes, single organizations can submit multiple proposals within one priority topic area, or may submit proposals to more than one priority topic area. However, a Principal Investigator may only receive funding for one proposal to this funding opportunity in a funding year.

Are partnerships encouraged? Yes, partnerships in funding and/or delivery of project products are encouraged. All Principal Investigators and key collaborators must submit written or email correspondence to the applying investigator indicating that they approve of the final proposal to be submitted. The applying investigator will compile these messages and send them as an addendum to the submitted proposal. This correspondence does not count against final page limits.

What are some applicant responsibilities? Grantees must meet federal eligibility requirements under this grant program. All funds awarded through this RFP are contingent upon the applicant meeting all federal permitting and compliance requirements. The WNS Small Grant Program reserves the right to reallocate grant awards in the event that the project applicant cannot meet the federal or state grant and/or permitting requirements in a reasonable time frame that allows for completion of the project within one year. Applicants selected to receive a grant may also have their proposed budgets revised pending federal review of eligibility of costs and matching funds. It is the applicant's responsibility to investigate the permits that may be required to carry out their proposal, and obtain all applicable federal or state permits, data use agreements, or similar permissions.

What are eligible costs? Grant reimbursement payments will be based on actual expenditures incurred by the grantee that are necessary and reasonable to the accomplishment of the work. Grantees will be required to provide documentation of project-related costs, including submission of copies of invoices and cancelled checks, with each payment request. Applicant budgets may include billable expenses related to the project in the following categories:

- Personal services: includes salary of project staff employed by the applicant organization.
- Fringe Benefits: The fringe benefits such as healthcare and retirement provided to permanent employees of the applicant organization. State employees must use the approved federal rates for their agency. Fringe benefits are normally calculated as a percentage of an employee's salary.

- **Indirect/Overhead:** The costs of maintaining the offices for project personnel such as utilities, support services, rent, etc. This is normally calculated as a percentage added to the salary and fringe benefits of an employee. Indirect/Overhead rates equal to or less than 15% of direct costs are encouraged. Reductions to overhead cost from those identified in the requesting institution's Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement can be applied to the 35% match requirement.
- **Travel and Equipment Usage:** Vehicle mileage at the federal rate, fuel costs, commercial carrier costs, and other similar expenses. Equipment usage covers the equivalent cost of the use of equipment such as tractors, brush clearing equipment, research vessels, etc.
- **Supplies and Materials:** Office supplies, consumable field gear such as flagging tape and stakes, non-retrievable animal tags, nets, software, etc.
- **Contractual Services:** If you are a not-for-profit organization and you subcontract out for services such as data entry or laboratory analysis, you must be able to provide proof that those costs are necessary and reasonable to the accomplishment of the work.

What are some ineligible costs? Costs related to the preparation of this application or any other costs incurred prior to notification from the WNS Small Grant Program acknowledging final approval of the grant award, are NOT eligible for reimbursement and cannot be used as match. Funds cannot be used to support political lobbying or capacity building of organizations.

How will I be notified of an award? Applications that score high enough to be selected to receive an award will receive written notification from WMI. Applicants may be offered partial awards, in which case the applicant will have the opportunity to either revise the proposed budget or decline the award.

When may I start work? You may begin work once federal compliance is met, and you have received written notification from WMI of your final grant award. However, all project activities funded must be reviewed and comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). No on the ground work or activities that have the potential to affect resources protected by these Acts may begin until the Service has notified you in writing that such work may begin.

What are the requirements for sharing and managing data related to this project? The WNS Small Grant Program is committed to distributing information needed by managers and scientists to make informed decisions and of interest to a wide variety of partners. Raw data, derived data products, and other supporting information created or gathered will be made available to the WNS Small Grant Program, and data are expected to be made publicly available except where protected by state or federal laws. Principal investigators must preserve and transfer data according to commonly accepted standards, including standards for metadata. All manuscripts supported by work funded under these awards must be shared with the USFWS WNS program prior to submission.

To Apply, Submit Proposals via Email to:

Scot Williamson
Wildlife Management Institute
swilliamson@wildlifemgt.org
office: 802.563.2087
mobile: 603.770.4494

With Technical Questions, Contact:

Jonathan D. Reichard, Ph.D.
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or

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