



Wildlife Management Institute

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Request for Proposals

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM, 2026

RFP Theme: Increasing capacity for monitoring and management of bats affected by white-nose syndrome.



Proposals due: February 16, 2026

Project completion deadline: February 28, 2027

The Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) is pleased to announce the 2026 White-nose Syndrome Small Grants Program Request for Proposals (RFP) to support monitoring and management of bats affected by white-nose syndrome (WNS).

The objective of this funding opportunity is to support training costs as well as the purchase of supplies, equipment, and material goods that contribute to monitoring WNS-impacted species and increase data contributions to the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat). Please review this RFP in its entirety, including the Frequently Asked Questions, and ensure you consider all closing dates and purchase deadlines before submitting an application. This funding opportunity is open to the wildlife and natural resource programs of federally recognized Tribal Nations, federal contract-eligible Indian entities, and state governmental agencies responsible for wildlife. State and provincial agencies in Canada and Mexico are also eligible. This RFP is NOT open to U.S. Federal government agencies. The Program is authorized under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended; Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) # 15.657 Endangered Species Conservation – Recovery Implementation Funds (F22AC01974).

Background:

White-nose syndrome is a fungal disease of hibernating bats caused by the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (*Pd*), which was first discovered in North America in 2007. As of January 2026, WNS or *Pd* has been reported in 47 states and ten Canadian provinces, and it continues to spread. North American hibernating bat species have been impacted by the disease, often with high mortality rates, and there is need for broader engagement to understand bat population trends and take appropriate management action.

The WNS Response and NABat programs provide organizational foundations for local to international partnerships, management, and monitoring for collaborative conservation of bats. Established through actions of the Conservation and Recovery Working Group of the WNS National Response, NABat standardizes and aggregates comparable data across jurisdictions and supports effective conservation decision-making for bats across the continent. Importantly, these programs establish coordinated efforts and objectives for bat conservation.

In collaboration with WMI, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has allocated funding to support the purchase of supplies, materials and equipment, develop technical expertise for bat population monitoring and management, and contribute data to NABat, all in support of the WNS Response. Grants up to **\$15,000** will be awarded to purchase supplies and equipment and/or participate in training in areas where data and skills in bat monitoring are most needed. Up to **\$210,000** will be awarded for this grant program in 2026.

All awarded funds must be fully spent and invoiced by February 28, 2027.

RFP PRIORITIES

Priorities for this funding opportunity were developed by the USFWS WNS Program. Eligible projects must directly address one or both of the priorities identified below.

Priority topic 1: Equip and prepare eligible applicants to use standard population survey and monitoring methods to address gaps in knowledge of life history and ecology of bats relevant to WNS response. For example, a successful proposal will demonstrate the applicant's ability to enhance monitoring of hibernating bat species, advance knowledge of the distribution and abundance of hibernating bat species, and provide a plan to contribute data in accordance with NABat protocols. *We are seeking proposals that demonstrate a commitment by the applicant to continue collecting and contributing data to NABat beyond the scope of the project.*

Eligible expenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Cost of acoustic detectors, software, and associated supplies to conduct mobile and/or stationary acoustic surveys.
- Supplies and equipment used for locating and monitoring important roosts or habitat for WNS-affected bat species.

Priority Topic 2: Build expertise in bat survey and management methods through participation in virtual or in-person training or workshops. Requested funds to attend training must include personnel costs for the trainee (not to exceed 40 hours) and registration cost, course materials, and/or travel expenses, as applicable. *Priority will be given to applications that demonstrate a commitment for trained staff to have an ongoing role supporting related work for bat conservation with their organization (see criteria below).*

ABSTRACT OF GUIDELINES

- **Proposal Deadline:** 11:59 PM EST on February 16, 2026. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.
- **Funding:** Up to a total of \$210,000 is available for projects. Proposals may request no less than \$5,000 and no more than \$15,000 from this program.
- **Reimbursement Program and Purchase Requirements:** All expenses must be incurred no later than **February 28, 2027**. No exceptions or extensions will be allowed. A copy of the invoice with proof of purchase will be required before the reimbursement payment is made.
- **Non-Federal Match:** Matching funds are not required.
- **Special Reporting Requirements:** Grant recipients will be required to submit a brief final report as well as invoices for all expenses. Data collected in conjunction with awarded funding and associated with purchased supplies and equipment is expected to be submitted to NABat, as applicable.
- **Project Term: Anticipated start date is April 1, 2026, and all purchases/training must be completed no later than February 28, 2027.** Final reports and all invoices must be submitted to WMI no later than March 31, 2027. Extensions will not be allowed, and any unused funds remaining on this date or the completion date of the project (if earlier) will be forfeited by the recipient. Invoices submitted for reimbursement after this date will not be paid.
- Only one proposal per organization or entity will be eligible to receive an award. If more than one application is submitted by the same entity, only the first application received will be considered eligible.

INSTRUCTIONS ON SUBMITTAL OF PROPOSALS

- Proposals must be submitted as an MS Word document or PDF to mgilbart@wildlifemgt.org no later than **February 16, 2026**. Confirmation of receipt of your application will be sent within two business days of your submission. If you do not receive a confirmation within two business days, please call Meghan Gilbert (see below).
- Recipients' names and project descriptions may be made available to the public.
- The proposal must not exceed **four (4) pages** in total and must include:

A. Cover Page (page 1)

- Project Title
- Personnel: Name(s), job title(s), and any collaborators. Briefly describe each individual's role and qualifications. *Highlight the primary point of contact.*
- Institution/Organization Name
- Email Address of primary point of contact
- Physical Address of primary point of contact
- Telephone Number(s) of primary point of contact
- Total Amount of Funding Requested
- Brief Executive Summary: Identify in one or two sentences what requested funds will be used for.

B. Project Description (pages 2-4)

The intent for awarded funds is to improve capacity for long-term bat monitoring by the applicant's organization through training and/or the purchase of bat monitoring supplies/equipment. Describe how awarded funds will support the collection of bat population data within the project period and beyond. Training and purchases must be completed within the award term, and all expenses must

be incurred no later than February 28, 2027.

- 1) Identify the goal(s) and objective(s) associated with the proposed supply/equipment purchases and/or training including how the project supports the WNS National Response and NABat efforts.
- 2) Provide detailed descriptions about how the purchased items and/or training will support long-term bat monitoring (i.e. build capacity) for the applicant and their organization.
- 3) Specify who will maintain and use the equipment and/or receive training.
- 4) Describe how the organization intends to use the skills and collected data to support management decisions.

Within the project description, include:

- **Monitoring Locations (for Priority 1):** Identify where the equipment will be used (please include a map figure indicating the monitored area), a description of how specific locations will be selected (including consideration of NABat grid cell prioritization), and whether appropriate permits and land access permissions have been or will be obtained.
- **Training Information (for Priority 2):** Identify the course, workshop or module that will be used to train personnel (include specific or anticipated date(s) and location(s)). Identify the trainee(s) and their current and future roles with the applicant's organization.
- **Project Timeline:** Identify the timing of purchase acquisition, and the expected timeline for use of the supplies/equipment. Availability of funds for selected projects is anticipated to begin on April 1, 2026, and all purchases and training must be concluded no later than February 28, 2027.
- **Sustainability Plan:** Describe how supplies, equipment, skills and acquired information will be used beyond the scope of this grant period. If purchase of equipment is requested, describe how that equipment will be maintained beyond the scope of the award (NOTE: government purchased *equipment* is defined in CFR 200 as tangible personal property, including information technology systems, having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient or subrecipient for financial statement purposes, or \$10,000).
- **Budget and Justification:** Provide an itemized, clear and concise budget table with justification for all expenses (all expenses and purchases must comply with the cost principles and procurement standards in 2 CFR 200, and any telecommunication and/or video surveillance purchases must also comply with 2 CFR 200.216).
Include:
 - Name or description of the item (provide product numbers, if relevant)
 - Unit cost, quantity, and total cost
 - Anticipated vendor
 - If training or workshop expenses are included, include personnel costs (not to exceed 40 hours) for training attendance as well as the number (or who/positions) of staff, length of the training and what costs are included such as registration, lodging, travel and per diem, with a comment that it will follow state policies and procedures. If personnel costs during training are not being requested, the applicant must identify volunteered or donated personnel costs that will be committed to support the trainee while

attending the training. Donated personnel costs cannot be derived from federal sources.

- **Indirect Costs:** If indirect costs are included, attach a **copy of the current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement**. *(This attachment does not count toward the 4-page limit.)*
- *Note: Program funds cannot support long-term salary, fieldwork costs, or data processing fees. Projects will be evaluated based, in part, on the recipients' plan for long term collection and contribution of data beyond the scope of this grant.*

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

All applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by WMI to determine eligibility, completeness, and overall merit. Projects deemed complete and eligible by WMI will be forwarded to the USFWS for further evaluation and ranking. Each eligible application will be reviewed and scored by at least three subject matter experts.

Feasibility (0 to 5): Each application will be given a score of 0 (infeasible) to 5 (highly feasible) assessing if the timeline for training and/or purchases is realistic and achievable within the term of the award. Any application with an average score less than 3 for Feasibility will not be eligible for a full award.

Priority Responsiveness: Each application will be given a score of 0 (poor) to 5 (best) assessing whether the proposal clearly addresses at least one of the stated priorities of this funding opportunity. Any application with an average score less than 3 for Priority Responsiveness will not be eligible for an award.

Previous funding: For each applicant to this funding opportunity, USFWS will assess the amount of funding received from USFWS or WMI for work related to management of bats and WNS. With the goal of increasing expertise and participation in monitoring and managing bats, applicants who have received less funding in support of these efforts will have an advantage over applicants who have received more funding:

- Received less than \$20,000 in past three years: No adjustment
- Received \$20,000 - \$50,000 in past three years: Subtract 10 points
- Received >\$50,000 in past three years: Subtract 20 points

The following criteria will be used to score all proposals (max 100 points):

Evaluation Criteria

- 1) Capacity building (30 points)
 - For purchases:
 - o How effective is the planned use of equipment, materials and supplies for long-term monitoring and managing of bats?
 - o How well will the purchases be maintained to maximize their useful lifespans?
 - For training:
 - o How well will training provide expertise relevant to ongoing involvement in bat monitoring and management?
 - o Will trained individuals have the support and resources needed to use acquired skills?
 - For all applications:

- How likely is it that the applicant will maintain and use skills and/or purchased items to monitor and manage bats in their jurisdiction beyond the award period? (Note: Use of skills and purchased items is not limited to the award period. This funding opportunity is intended to supply grantees with skills and tools for sustained use.)

2) Monitoring focus and strategic alignment with national monitoring efforts (25 points)

- How important to bat conservation are the area and species assemblages where skills and/or purchased items will be applied?
- How well does the proposed use of skills and/or purchased items contribute information valuable to the WNS National Response, NABat and managers of hibernating bat species?
- Is the planned selection of monitoring locations (if relevant) justified with attention to NABat sampling procedures or other clearly described objectives?

3) Collaboration (20 points)

- Does the applicant have a clear plan for collaboration, partnerships, and resource sharing (if appropriate) to maximize use of skills and purchased items in their area? (Collaboration that involves equipment sharing and use of items in multiple areas or seasons increases the benefits of purchased items.)

4) Budget justification (25 points)

- Is the budget itemized and clearly justified with only necessary and appropriate costs requested?
- What is the cost/benefit ratio for the overall cost of the project and anticipated outcomes?

Note: Reviewers will provide an Overall Impression score (0 to 5) for each proposal and determine if an application is fatally flawed for any reason(s). Any proposal with a verified fatal flaw will be rejected regardless of scores assessed for criteria above.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS AND PROVISIONS

Supplies and equipment purchased through this award may not be used for profit generating monitoring or sale of materials and are not eligible for use as match or in-kind contribution for other federally funded projects.

See the USFWS General Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to USFWS funded awards. WMI will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to award recipients in their notices of award.

Selected applicants may be required to submit additional documentation prior to award issuance. Providing copies of existing permits with submitted applications (not included in proposal page limits) may facilitate administration of awards.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who developed the Priority Project Topics?

Priority topics for this RFP were developed by USFWS as lead agency coordinating the National Response to WNS (www.whitenosesyndrome.org).

Who may apply?

This funding opportunity is open to the wildlife and natural resource programs of federally recognized Tribal Nations, federal contract-eligible Indian entities, and state governmental agencies responsible for wildlife. State and provincial agencies in Canada and Mexico are also eligible. This program is NOT open to U.S. Federal government agencies.

What is the schedule of review and approval of proposals?

Proposals are due by 11:59 PM EST on February 16, 2026. Proposals will be reviewed by WMI and the USFWS for merit, clarity, and completeness. The WNS Small Grant Program will make final award decisions, and successful applicants will work with WMI to complete all contracting.

What is the duration of a project?

The earliest anticipated start date is April 1, 2026, and all purchases/training must be completed no later than February 28, 2027. Final reports and all invoices must be submitted to WMI no later than March 31, 2027. Extensions will not be allowed, and any unused funds remaining on this date or the completion date of the project (if earlier) will be forfeited by the recipient. Invoices submitted for reimbursement after this date will not be paid. The intent for awarded funds is to establish long-term bat monitoring capacity for the applicant's organization through training and/or the purchase of bat monitoring supplies/equipment therefore work may extend beyond the life of the project.

What is the source of funding for WNS Small Grant Program grants?

Funding for the WNS Small Grants Program was provided through a cooperative agreement between USFWS and WMI (F22AC01974) and is authorized under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended; Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) # 15.657 Endangered Species Conservation – Recovery Implementation Funds.

How will recipients receive payments?

The WNS Small Grant Program is a reimbursement program. Applicants must be prepared to complete purchases and submit payment requests to WMI for reimbursement. Assuming all expenses are eligible and documented, payment can be expected within 2 to 5 weeks of receipt by WMI of the invoice and documentation. Grant recipients will be required to enter into a grant agreement with WMI in order to receive payment.

Where should proposals be submitted?

Proposals should be emailed in MS Word or PDF format by 11:59 PM EST on February 16, 2026, to mgilbart@wildlifemgt.org

Can a single entity submit multiple proposals?

No. Only one proposal from a particular entity (organization, agency, etc.) will be evaluated for possible funding. If more than one application is submitted by a single entity, only the first application will be eligible for funding.

What are eligible costs?

Grant reimbursement payments will be based on actual expenditures incurred by the grantee and that are allowable under 2 CFR 200 Subpart E-Cost Principles. Any telecommunication and/or video surveillance purchases must also comply with 2 CFR 200.216. 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:

- Supplies and Materials: Field supplies, software licenses, detectors, and non-retrievable animal tags, nets, disposables, etc.

- **Equipment:** An item of non-expendable, tangible personal property, having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient organization for financial statement purposes, or \$10,000.
- **Training costs:** Course registration, course materials travel expenses (limited to airfare, vehicle rental and fuel, lodging, and mileage for use of owned vehicle), and personnel costs (only in conjunction with, and necessary for, attendance to specified training and not to exceed 40 hours) to attend the course or participate in the training activity.
- **Overhead (if any):** An approved federally recognized indirect cost rate negotiated between the sub-recipient and the Federal Government will be accepted; if no negotiated rate exists, a de minimis indirect cost rate of 15% of total modified direct costs will be accepted. These instructions apply for all recipients and sub-recipients of funding.

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. Funds cannot be used to support political lobbying or organizational capacity building beyond the scope of this project. Funds may not be used for salary, fringe or benefits except as allowed for training as described above.

How will I be notified of an award?

Applications 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 you have received written notification from WMI of your final grant award.

To apply, submit proposals via Email to:

Meghan Gilbert
Wildlife Management Institute
mgilbart@wildlifemgt.org
office: 802.563.2087
mobile: 603.770.4494

With technical questions, contact:

Christina Kocer
Northeast Regional White-nose Syndrome Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Christina_Kocer@fws.gov
office/mobile: 413.335.4482