



# Wildlife Management Institute

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## Request for Proposals

### **WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM, 2016 - 2017**

***Theme: RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS  
FOR WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME***

***August 30, 2016***

**The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 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.

The Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) Coordinates and Administers the WNS Small Grants Program on behalf of the USFWS.

#### **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 all entities EXCEPT U.S. Federal government agencies. The deadline to submit a proposal is October 12, 2016.

As of July 8, 2016, WNS or evidence of the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd)

has been reported from at least one location in 32 states and five Canadian provinces in North America. Seven North American, thirteen European, and one Asian species of bats have been confirmed with WNS and additional five North American, two European, and five Asian species have been detected carrying Pd. 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 are not likely to 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 \$40,000 to address Priority Research and Communications needs. The Service has committed up to \$250,000 for this grant program in 2016.

The coordinated response to white-nose syndrome in the U.S. is led by the USFWS in the framework of a national plan developed by many agencies, organizations, institutions and individuals involved in the response. The plan, <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/national-plan/white-nose-syndrome-national-plans>, includes organization of actions guiding research and communications. Each year working groups established under the plan determine priority actions for their topics. Information about the working groups is available at <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/national-plan/white-nose-syndrome-national-plans>

In 2016 The USFWS has committed up to \$250,000 for this program. To advance conservation in managing WNS, we will award grants of up to \$40,000 to address priority research and communications needs.

## **RFP PRIORITY TOPICS**

Priorities for this funding opportunity were developed by the working groups of the WNS national response, and are presented here in no particular order.

**TOPIC 1:** Develop outreach and education programs or tools for WNS communications products prioritized by the national WNS Communications and Outreach Working Group.

Examples include:

- a. Create resources (e.g. videos, mobile apps, information packages) to facilitate outreach for National Cave Advisory and National Decontamination Protocol for WNS to outdoor groups, retailers of caving and climbing equipment, commercial caves, etc.
- b. Develop content in partnership with the National WNS Communications Working Group for WNS website [whitenosesyndrome.org](http://whitenosesyndrome.org) (e.g. press kit resources, educational resources).
- c. Refine and improve general messaging on containment, management of WNS, and public engagement in bat conservation.

**TOPIC 2:** Patterns and mechanisms of survival and persistence between and within species.

Examples include:

- a. Conduct localized research to verify or quantify survival of bats affected by WNS.

- b. Understand variation in hibernation ecology, behavior, and physiology within and among species related to differences in survival.

**TOPIC 3:** Improve survival rates for bats susceptible to WNS

Examples include:

- a. Advance development, application, and registration of biological or chemical treatment agents, and other tools to reduce the virulence of Pd or impacts of WNS.
- b. Develop and implement management tools and/or conservation strategies that reduce lethal and sublethal effects of WNS on bat populations, or otherwise improve survival.
- c. Implement strategies to protect important habitat for remnant populations of bats. e.g. install cave gates, establish bat preserves.

**TOPIC 4:** Elucidate gaps in knowledge of bat history relevant to WNS

- a. Resolve differences between population estimates during winter and summer.
- b. Develop tools to improve surveillance and monitoring of elusive species in hibernacula
- c. Improve understanding of WNS vulnerability, and winter distribution and abundance for western bat species

## ABSTRACT OF GUIDELINES

- **Proposal Deadline:** October 12, 2016 at 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered.
- **Funding:** Proposals for the 2016/2017 funding cycle for the WNS Small Grant program of the USFWS are now being solicited. Up to a total of \$250,000 is available for projects within the 2016 grant program. Proposals requesting greater than \$40,000 from this program will be disqualified.
- **Non-Federal Match:** You must provide non-federal match that is equal to or greater than 35% of the WNS Small Grant request. Matching funds in the form of in-kind contributions and waived costs are allowed.
- **Special Reporting Requirements:** Grant recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress and financial 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 [wmisw@together.net](mailto:wmisw@together.net) no later than October 12, 2016 at 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.
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 an executive summary of the proposed project.

- Pages 2-6 are five pages of text and figures (if included) about the proposed project. Required elements are described below.
  - Page 7 is a single page outlining the qualifications of the individuals and organizations involved.
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3. The cover page should provide the following information:
- Title of Project
  - Name(s) and Job Title(s) of Principal Investigator(s)
  - 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 7 page limit.)

- Total sum of funds requested from this program and total funds required for the project, including source(s) of funds not requested from this program.
  - An Executive 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. **THIS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY MAY BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE PUBLIC SO PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED ON CONTENT CAREFULLY.**
4. The principal component of the proposal will be composed of no more than five pages of explanatory text and figures. This section should be written as clearly and concisely as possible, address the following six points (A-F), and provide the appropriate 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 priority WNS topic(s) does your proposal address?
    - 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 study.
    - 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 research and management, and/or outreach efforts?
  - 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 comply with the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and any other relevant law.
  - F. What is the proposed total budget of your project? 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.
5. 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 request 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, reduced charges for fringe and indirect benefits, and others. Applicants are strongly urged to review the Federal guidance on in-kind services and the documentation requirements therein. 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.
6. All grants require non-federal matching funds of at least 35% of the total budget. All applicants are required to describe matching funds from non-federal sources at the time of application. A pending grant application from another potential funding source cannot be considered as certified match until such grant application is officially awarded by the Grantor to the applicant. If a grant is awarded, the recipient will be required to certify matching non-federal funds prior to completion of the agreement. Federal funds will be disbursed on a quarterly basis, and in an amount not to exceed the amount of approved non-federal match.
7. Addenda: In addition to the 7-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

- her or his role in completing the project.
- Copies of all cited materials that are not open access or readily available (e.g., reports, draft manuscripts) that support proposed actions. These documents will not be distributed.
8. Grant applications may not request greater than \$40,000 in WNS funds, including all indirect charges.
  9. Projects must be completed in one year or less from the time the grant funds are received.
  10. Grant recipients must be willing to present preliminary results to the USFWS WNS Coordinators and may be asked to provide a project description or present final results to the WNS community via conference call or webinar.
  11. 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.

## **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 October 12, 2016. 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 review committees by October 30, 2016. Funding decisions will be made by the WNS SMALL GRANT PROGRAM Committee. Contracting between WMI and grant recipients will then begin.

**What is the duration of a project?** Projects must be completed within one year of the award date.

**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.

**Are matching funds required?** Yes. Non-federal matching funds in the amount of 35% or more of the total request is required. Matching funds in the form of in-kind contributions and waived costs are allowed.

**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. 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 must be emailed in MS Word format to [wmisw@together.net](mailto:wmisw@together.net)

**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, Principal Investigators 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.

**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 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.
- **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:**

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wmisw@together.net  
office: 802.563.2087  
mobile: 603.770.4494

**Technical questions, Contact:**

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