

APPENDIX A

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program Grants,
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

2024 APPLICATION MATERIALS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants. Please make yourself familiar with the grant process, project eligibility requirements, and the terms and conditions of these grants. Please contact a [regional Project Manager to discuss your project before you submit an application](#).

All application materials are located at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Stewardship/ApplyLUG>

If you cannot open the application forms, or you are getting an error message rather than a grant application form, it's likely due to an incompatibility issue between your web browser and the PDF format. Troubleshooting tips are available here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/site/pdf>.

Application deadlines – DNR will rank and evaluate complete applications received by **11:59 pm on May 1, 2024**.

Application materials – All required application forms are available on the DNR's website on the "Application materials" tab. An application checklist is included in the program guidance document.

Timing of grant evaluation and award – If your project is selected for funding, you will be notified of a *tentative* award approximately 4 months after the application deadline. Final award and payment will be subject to several additional required reviews, including, in some cases, approval of the Natural Resources Board and the Joint Committee on Finance. The time between submitting a complete application and receiving a grant contract ranges from **six to eighteen months**. While we strive to make review as efficient as possible, we advise applicants to factor this into their timelines.

From the Stewardship, LWCF, and RTP grant staff, thank you!

What's new?

Please read this, even if you're a seasoned applicant...

Some important and new notes about 2024 project evaluation

1. **PLEASE CONTACT US BEFORE APPLYING:** It is helpful for staff to know what applications will be forthcoming. Please contact your regional Project Manager to alert us to new applications and to discuss your project before applying. That is especially true in the following circumstances:
 - **Grants exceeding \$250,000 or acquisition projects north of State Highway 64 regardless of the amount of the grant require** approval from the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance. The Committee's review adds both time and a degree of uncertainty to the end of the evaluation and approval process. Ample planning time can benefit such projects.
 - **Acquisition projects north of State Highway 8 require supporting resolutions from each municipality affected by this project.**
 - **Projects proposing the value of another property as match** – Please review guidance about eligibility and discuss property to be used as match with your regional Project Manager before you contract an appraiser.
2. **RANKING CRITERIA REVISIONS:** Repeat applicants will notice that questions have been revised and new questions have been added. Please read through the ranking questions carefully.
3. **CHANGES TO THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF) PROGRAM:**
 - LWCF funds are distributed regionally based on population. Thirty percent of the LWCF allocation will be equally distributed to the five DNR grant regions. The remaining 70% will be distributed to the regions based on population. This change distributes the LWCF funding more equally across the state.
 - LWCF-specific criteria were added to Section D of the program guidance. All LWCF applications will be ranked against projects within each region and no longer statewide.
 - Applications will no longer be reviewed as "LWCF Only" projects. The addition of Section D will distinguish those projects more specifically suited for LWCF funding.
 - Build America Buy American (BABA) Department of Interior Small Grant Waiver of \$250,000. applies to the amount of the total project cost (federal share and match) and not the LWCF grant award amount.
4. **CHANGES TO THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP):**
 - The RTP grant program falls under the FAST Act, so acquisition applications are not being accepted for State Fiscal Year 2025 due to the timeframe that must be met.
 - Buy America, Build America specific to the RTP program (Effective August 16, 2023)
If the total amount of the federal funding for a project is below \$500,000, the Buy America requirements for iron, steel, manufactured product, and construction materials is waived. If the total amount of the federal funding for a project is \$500,000 or more, the allowable threshold for noncompliant products is the lesser of \$1,000,000 or 5% of total applicable costs for the project. However, if the noncompliant products include iron, steel, manufactured products, the FHWA's threshold amount of 0.1% of the total contract amount or \$2,500 applies.

See <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/08/16/2023-17602/waiver-of-buy-america-requirements-for-de-minimis-costs-and-small-grants#further-info>

- The RTP grant award maximum is \$250,000.
- 5. PLEASE SUBMIT ELECTRONIC FILES FOR EACH DOCUMENT** rather than one large file of the whole application package. Grant staff do not have the software to break apart big files. Complete grant applications should be submitted electronically (e.g. email, zip files, wibox.wi.gov/dropoff) to your Regional Project Manager by 11:59 pm on **May 1, 2024**.
- 6. APPRAISALS:** Please contact Greg Hicks, DNR Appraisal Reviewer, prior to hiring an appraiser. Greg can be reached at 608-640-7241 or gregory.hicks@wisconsin.gov.