

# HUNTER R3

(RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND REACTIVATION)

## GRANT PROGRAM GUIDANCE

*Notice: This document is intended solely as guidance and does not contain any mandatory requirements except where requirements found in statute or administrative rule are referenced. This guidance does not establish or affect legal rights or obligations and is not finally determinative of any of the issues addressed. This guidance does not create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the State of Wisconsin or the Department of Natural Resources. Any regulatory decisions made by the Department of Natural Resources in any matter addressed by this guidance will be made by applying the governing statutes and administrative rules to the relevant facts.*



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## **Program Introduction**

The purpose of the Hunter R3 grant program is to support safe and ethical hunting by funding projects that 1) develop new hunters; and 2) offer continuing education for all hunters. In keeping with national recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) efforts, the goals of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) are to increase awareness and promote the relevance of hunting (and opportunities to hunt); help experienced hunters share their knowledge and expertise with new hunters; and provide useful resources to people from all backgrounds who are interested in learning how to hunt. In particular, the WDNR targets adults and families who have little prior hunting experience; especially those who are currently underrepresented in the hunter community.

Research on the topic of hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation has identified consistent motivations for hunting. These motivations include hunting to acquire food and share it with family and friends; a desire to learn skills contributing to self-sufficiency; the health benefits of spending time in nature; and quality time spent with family and friends. These motivations ring true both with current hunters and with people who did not grow up in hunting or fishing families, whose interest in hunting started later in life.

Research has also identified a variety of barriers that prevent people from learning or continuing to hunt. These barriers include:

- Finding access to private land or high-quality experiences on public land (land that is not overcrowded, has good habitat and high numbers of game species, and easy accessibility to good hunting spots).
- Finding a trusted, experienced hunter willing to act in the role of a mentor for someone new to hunting.
- Finding and maintaining a core group of people to hunt with, who provide moral support and camaraderie.
- Learning and understanding hunting regulations.
- Finding time and motivation to hunt rather than prioritizing other activities.
- Safety concerns related to aspects of the public image of hunting.
- Health concerns related to Chronic Wasting Disease in white-tailed deer.

Successful Hunter R3 grant projects will address one or more of these barriers to provide high quality, welcoming experiences for current and future hunters in Wisconsin.

## **Keys to a Successful Project**

Plan, Plan, Plan! Communication, Communication, Communication!

1- Start **planning** your project early and communicate with the WDNR R3 Coordinator and Hunter R3 Grant Program Manager often about your project goals. Contact information appears below.

2- Before applying for a grant, spend time considering the needs, goals, and expectations of the proposed project. Pre-planning will pay dividends down the road. The WDNR encourages novel, outside-the-box pilots and projects with good strategies and measures. At the same time, projects don't have to reinvent the wheel: if there's something that has been documented to work, build on it, and evaluate your proposal's success.

3- **This grant program is administered as a reimbursement program.** This means you must incur and pay all costs associated with the project **before** seeking reimbursement from WDNR. No grant advances are possible. As costs are incurred, save all invoices and receipts as proof of purchases. For proof of payments, obtain a copy of canceled check (both sides) and/or bank/credit card statements. Make sure to document volunteer hours worked on the volunteer form provided on the Hunter R3 [webpage](#). Taking these actions at the beginning of the project eliminates searching for documents and remembering the number of hours worked, and who worked them, at the end of the project.

4- Finish the grant project before the expiration date listed on the grant agreement. If you need an extension to the date on your grant agreement, contact the Hunter R3 Grant Program Manager **before** the grant agreement expiration date to request an extension. Please note there is no guarantee a time extension will be approved. Costs incurred after the end date of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.

5- The WDNR and staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have the right to audit or examine all books, papers, accounts, documents, or other records related to project costs that the WDNR will reimburse. The purpose of the audit is to verify that claimed project costs are eligible and comply with the terms of your grant agreement and were incurred. Grant recipients agree to retain all project records until final resolution of any audit findings, or for a period of three years following the date on which the WDNR issued final reimbursement, whichever is later.

6- **Ask questions** if you don't know how to proceed or need clarification on topics such as eligible costs or grant administration procedures.

### **Contact Information**

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Wisconsin DNR  
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PO Box 7921  
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Email applications and supporting documents to: [DNRHunterR3Grants@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRHunterR3Grants@wisconsin.gov)

## **Grant Program Specifications**

### ***Eligible Applicants***

- Wisconsin counties, towns, villages, and cities
- Wisconsin universities, colleges, and technical schools
- Other Wisconsin governmental units, as defined in s. 66.299, Wis. Stats.
- Wisconsin tribes
- Wisconsin school districts
- Conservation organizations (*i.e.*, local rod and gun clubs, sporting organizations, local chapters, and national organizations)
- Individuals

**CAUTION:** If a third party completes the application for you, be sure to check the completeness and accuracy of the application before submitting it to WDNR. As the grant applicant, you are responsible for the accuracy of the information provided on your application and meeting program requirements.

### ***Grant Program Priorities***

Applications that enhance public/private partnerships are strongly encouraged. Priorities for the Hunter R3 program include:

- Projects that increase diversity in the hunter community, particularly through engagement of historically underrepresented communities and associated organizations.
- Projects that include a plan for success and/or demonstrate long-term sustainability.
- Projects that utilize best practices established by practitioners in the field outdoor skills-based outreach and education.
- Projects that address barriers to the recruitment, retention and/or reactivation of hunters.

See Project Scoring Criteria on the Hunter R3 Grant webpage (under the Applying tab) for more information on grant program priorities.

### ***Source of Program Funds***

The HR3 Grant Program is administered by WDNR in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Funding for this program is provided by the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (PR). PR funds are generated through a federal excise tax on sporting arms, handguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. These taxes are collected from manufacturers and distributed each year to states and territorial areas by the USFWS. PR funds support a wide variety of wildlife conservation, public access, public shooting range, and hunter education activities. Although PR funds are only available to the States, the States can make the funds available to individuals, organizations, or local governments for their qualifying programs. WDNR has chosen to offer PR funds to eligible partners to support local Hunter R3 programs.

### ***Cost Share Program***

This program is a cost-share program between the state and grantee. Grant awards can be up to 75% share of total eligible project costs. In addition to cash: donated supplies, labor, services, and equipment use may be included as part of the grantee's share. Donations are subject to the following provisions:

- All donations must be indicated in the grant application.
- The maximum value of donated general labor is \$17.00 per hour.
- The value of donated professional services shall be determined by market rates and be established by invoice provided by the donor (typically done on business letterhead or invoice).
- The value of donated equipment use will be based on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) classified equipment rates – standard and special rate units.
- The value of donated supplies shall be determined by market rates and be established by invoice provided by the donor (typically done on business letterhead or invoice).

Contact the R3 Grant Program Manager for current equipment rates and any questions about using donations as part of your cost-share.

### ***Examples of Eligible Project Costs***

- Salaries, wages, and benefits for employees
  - Note: Expenses incurred by a volunteer(s) completing tasks during the period of performance (period during which expenses can be incurred under the grant) can be considered an eligible grant expense. However, compensating a volunteer beyond direct expenses incurred may mean that the volunteer(s) should be considered an employee or independent contractor. For further information, please contact your legal counsel.
- Purchased services – printing materials, mailings, room rental, social media accounts specifically designed for the project
- Supplies – ammunition, hunting gear, decoys, etc.
- Equipment – equipment is defined as one item with a fair market value of \$5,000 or more.
- Hourly rental charges – boats, ATVs
- Other eligible costs needed to implement the project. Contact the Hunter R3 Grant Program Manager with cost eligibility questions.

### ***Total Available Funding and Grant Award***

Up to \$75,000 will be available annually for the Hunter R3 Grant Program.

Applications will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility, then scored, ranked in descending order based on score, and recommended for funding based on ranking. Final grant award decisions are made by the office of the WDNR Secretary. There is no limit to the number of grants that may be awarded, nor a minimum or maximum allowable award per grant.

### ***Grant Program Timeline***

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Application Materials Available Online	July
Deadline for Complete Application Submitted to WDNR*	September 15
WDNR Notifies Applicant of Application Status	December 15
WDNR Anticipates Issuing a Grant Agreement**	August 15, the following year

\*Per s. 990.001(4)(c), Wis. Stats, if any grant application deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday or State Holiday, the deadline is moved to the next State working day.

\*\*Funds will not be available until the grant agreement is signed by the applicant and returned to the WDNR.

## ***Grantee Responsibilities***

**Financial Responsibilities.** Financial responsibility listed in a grant agreement cannot be passed to another entity. All reimbursement requests must **be submitted by the grantee named on the grant agreement.**

[Grant Project Resolution Form 8700-388](#). Every grant application, with the exception of those submitted by “individuals”, must include a resolution adopted by the applicant’s governing body. This resolution must do the following:

- Request financial assistance from the WDNR
- Authorize one representative, preferably by “title” rather than by name, to act on behalf of the applicant organization to:
  - submit an application
  - sign a grant agreement
  - take necessary actions to complete the project
  - request reimbursement from WDNR
  - submit a final report
- Affirm that the applicant has funding from eligible sources to meet the grantee’s share of the project costs.

**Cost Containment.** Local government applicants must follow procurement requirements in Wisconsin Statutes. See link to [WDNR Procurement Guide](#).

**Grantee Share.** Grantees must provide “grantee share” funding at the level identified in the grant agreement. “Grantee share” means the portion of the cost of the project that you will be contributing from eligible sources. This share is usually between 25-50% of total eligible project costs. Funds from other federal sources may not be used as grantee’s share.

## ***Project Scopes***

Successful project scopes will:

- Describe how the applicant plans to develop, test, and implement effective techniques to mentor and train safe and ethical novice hunters.
- Involve as many groups as possible in implementing these effective techniques.

## **Application Review**

Grant applications will be reviewed for adherence to program priorities and detail provided in the application. Application will be scored by a team consisting of internal and external specialists with experience in hunter and mentor recruitment/training. For more information, see Project Scoring Criteria on the Hunter R3 Webpage under the Applying tab.

A detailed and complete description of the need, objective, approach, and specific measurable outcomes (results and benefits expected) is required. Applications should identify the approach to

project evaluation, including effectiveness at developing, training, and educating new hunters. Long-term evaluation is strongly encouraged.

### **Grant Award and Grant Agreement**

Projects will receive funding based on application score and rank. Grant funding may be awarded for projects with multiple year duration. Typically, grant agreements are for a two-year period. In extenuating circumstances, grantees may request a time extension. Most time extensions require approval from the USFWS and may be granted or denied at their discretion.

Upon selection of the project, you will receive a notice of grant award and grant agreement from the WDNR detailing the approved project scope, period of performance for the grant award, and budget. **Read your grant agreement carefully and share it with your consultant if you are working with one. Your grant agreement contains conditions that govern your project.** Make sure you and your consultant, if applicable, agree with the project scope and conditions described in the grant agreement before you sign it.

Successful applicants must sign the grant agreement and return a copy to the Hunter R3 grant program manager within 30 days of receipt from the WDNR. See page 2 for contact information. Consultants cannot sign grant agreements on behalf of eligible grant applicants.

**NOTE: Costs incurred prior to the start date of the grant agreement or after the end date of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.**

### **Reimbursement Process**

This grant program is administered as a reimbursement program. This means the grantee must incur and pay costs associated with the project *before* seeking reimbursement from WDNR. No grant advances are available. When the project is complete, the grantee may request final reimbursement.

Grantees may submit partial reimbursement requests. The total of all partial reimbursements shall not exceed 90% of the total grant award. To receive the final reimbursement, grantees must submit a [final report](#), a [participant report](#), and a [mentor report](#), where applicable, with the final reimbursement request.

Grantees must use the Grant Payment Request and Worksheet, WDNR [Form 8700-001](#), to request reimbursement. Reimbursement requests must include both proofs of purchase and proofs of payment. Examples of proof of *purchase* include invoices, receipts or signed contracts with vendors. Examples of proof of *payment* include canceled checks (both front and back), front of check and bank statements showing check has cleared, credit card statements or local government payroll vouchers. Donated services and supplies can be documented by invoice that shows donated value. To document donated volunteer time, use the WDNR [volunteer timesheets](#). Grantees must also submit a completed Grant Partner Financial Data Report, WDNR [Form 9300-230](#), with each reimbursement request.

## **Interim and Final Report Requirements**

Reports describe the project's progress and final assessment. Multi-year grants will require yearly progress reports and all grantees must submit a final report that summarizes the project prior to receiving final reimbursement. The WDNR R3 Coordinator or Hunter R3 Grant Program Manager can provide templates and further guidance regarding interim and final reports.