

# USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

## Wild Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities

### ***2024 Funding Opportunity Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)***

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) is announcing the 2024 funding opportunity for Wild Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management and Response Activities.

In 2024, USDA APHIS WS will make available around \$5,500,000 in cooperative agreement funding to further develop and implement wild cervid chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance, testing, management, and response activities, including further development and evaluation of techniques and strategies to prevent or control CWD in wild cervids.

**New this year**, all documents submitted in ezFedGrants must be in PDF format and cannot contain digital signatures nor be in a fillable PDFs format. The total size of all attachments for a proposal application cannot exceed 20mb.

Applicants can find this funding opportunity information on [ezFedGrants](#) or [Grants.gov](#) by searching the Funding Opportunity Title **FY24 Wild Cervid CWD Management and Response Activities**, the CFDA/Assistance Listing Number **10.028**, or the Funding Opportunity Number **USDA-APHIS-10028-WSNWRC00-24-0004**. For additional information, the full funding announcement, and resources for applicants, please visit the [Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Funding Opportunities | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#) website.

#### FUNDING FAQs

##### **How much funding is available through this opportunity?**

APHIS WS will make available around \$5,500,000 in cooperative agreement funds to control and prevent chronic wasting disease (CWD) in wild cervids through the development and/or implementation of CWD surveillance, testing, management, and response activities.

##### **Who can apply for funds?**

The following entities are eligible for funding through this opportunity, provided they have regulatory oversight or direct responsibility for **wild cervids**:

1. State departments of agriculture
2. State animal health agencies
3. State departments of wildlife or natural resources
4. Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments<sup>1</sup> and Native American Tribal organizations or universities<sup>2</sup> representing Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments
5. Research institutes<sup>3</sup> and universities<sup>2</sup>

This list does not preclude award recipients from collaborating with other entities who may have direct and

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<sup>1</sup> Federally recognized Native American Tribal governments are listed on the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior; [Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs website](#).

<sup>2</sup> Universities includes the [1994 Tribal colleges and universities](#), the [1890 land-grant institutions](#), [land-grant colleges and universities](#), and other accredited universities.

<sup>3</sup> Research institute is an establishment founded for conducting research that has published peer reviewed articles in the field and that currently employs one or more investigators who will work on the project with relevant experience in applied research on the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.

significant interest in the control or prevention of CWD in wild cervids, such as land grant or other universities, State or national livestock, wildlife, sporting groups, or conservation organizations, or a Federal Agency.

**Can colleges, universities and research institutes apply directly for this funding opportunity?**

Yes, universities<sup>4</sup> and research institutes<sup>5</sup> are eligible to apply directly for funding.

Further details, as well as cost guidance for awarded funds, can be found in the Funding Opportunity Announcement on [ezFedGrants](#), [Grants.gov](#), or the [Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Funding Opportunities | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#) website.

**Are eligible applicants allowed to submit CWD research proposals?**

Eligible applicants may submit applied CWD research proposals. Applied research is defined as research attempting to find practical solutions to solve specific problem(s) such as the ability to detect, prevent, or manage CWD in wild cervids.

**NOTE:** Proposals without a clearly defined application will be rejected.

**How much funding does APHIS WS expect to award to individual applicants?**

APHIS WS anticipates awarding approximately 30 cooperative agreements and the amount awarded will typically range from \$50,000 to \$250,000 each. The average wild cervid award in 2023 was \$171,777 across thirty-five proposals.<sup>6</sup> There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

**Are there limitations on the activities for which awarded funds can be used?**

Yes, funds **may not** be used for the following:

- Land acquisition
- Compensation for Federal Employees
- Travel of Federal Employees
- Federal subawards (any payment to Federal entities) unless paid from recipients share<sup>7</sup>
- Construction and/or major rehabilitation of buildings
- Bonuses or commissions
- Fundraising
- Meeting, conference, symposia, or workshop honoraria, which is payment to individuals or guests other than for documented professional services
- Vehicle purchases or leases

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<sup>4</sup> Universities includes the [1994 Tribal colleges and universities](#), the [1890 land-grant institutions](#), [land-grant colleges and universities](#), and other accredited universities.

<sup>5</sup>Research institute is an establishment founded for conducting research that has published peer reviewed articles in the field and that currently employs one or more investigators who will work on the project with relevant experience in applied research on the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.

<sup>6</sup> Recipients wishing to continue work on or build on projects funded in prior years that are either complete or will be complete by the proposed period of performance may submit proposals to this opportunity. Recipients wishing to continue work on projects funded in prior years which are not complete, and have not been extended previously, should submit a no-cost extension per the [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#) or by contacting the APHIS WS Program Manager rather than submitting a proposal to this opportunity.

<sup>7</sup> Because of strict requirements around the distribution of funds to Federal agencies across fiscal years, subaward of funds or other payments to Federal agencies may not be included in the APHIS share of the financial plan. Recipient may use funds from non-federal sources to pay for services from Federal agencies such expenses should be listed in the recipient share in the financial plan.

- Positions funded by other federal cooperative agreements or grants
- International travel
- Projects or activities associated with APHIS-State-Industry cooperative program activities already funded via USDA APHIS annual cooperative agreements
- Promotional, outreach, or giveaway items such as calendars, rulers, pens, pencils, squishy balls, cups, refreshments, etc.

Further details, as well as cost guidance for awarded funds, can be found in the Funding Opportunity Announcement on [ezFedGrants](#), [Grants.gov](#), or the [Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Funding Opportunities | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#) website.

#### **Is there further clarification on the use of awarded funds for personnel costs?**

It is not APHIS WS' intent to prescribe an applicant's approach to satisfying personnel needs for proposed activities. APHIS WS recommends applicants use caution when hiring or funding personnel with awarded funds because there is no guarantee of future funding beyond the project's performance period. Funds made available to cooperators via this opportunity may only be used to support the objectives and activities described in the agreement Work Plan and are only available for the agreement performance period. Work and Financial Plans should clearly describe the activities to be performed and the time period of the activity for personnel resources.

*Examples: It may be appropriate to fund personnel whose salary is generated from extramural agreements or to fund a portion of an employee's salary that is only funded to work 9 out of 12 months of the year. It would NOT be appropriate to hire a new position with an intent to support that position beyond the agreement performance period.*

#### **Will some entities automatically receive set amounts of funding?**

No, this is a competitive funding opportunity. Proposals will be evaluated by reviewers who will recommend proposals for funding based on the quality of proposals received. High-quality proposals are those that strongly support the priorities and address the needs, considerations, and evaluation criteria described in [Section E.1](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

## **APPLICATION FAQs**

#### **When are proposal applications due?**

Proposals must be received through [ezFedGrants](#) by 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Savings Time on **Monday, June 10, 2024**.

#### **How do applicants apply for funds?**

All proposals must be completed and received electronically through [ezFedGrants](#). All applicant organizations must have at least two users registered in the ezFedGrants system, a Grant Administrative Officer, and a Signatory Official, in order to successfully submit an application.

#### **What format can documents submitted to ezFedGrants be in?**

**NEW for 2024; All documents submitted in ezFedGrants must be in a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. The submitted PDFs should not be digitally signed or fillable PDFs. The total size of all submitted PDFs for a proposal application cannot exceed 20mb.**

#### **What must be included with the proposal submission?**

The proposal package must include the following, as outlined in [Section D.2](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement

- SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance” and SF-424A, “Budget Information”
- [Certification Regarding Lobbying](#) (if applicable)
- [SF-LLL](#), “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” (if applicable)
- Waiver or approval response letter from the State’s Single Point of Contact (if applicable)
- Copy of the current, signed Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)
- Wild Cervid CWD Project Proposal Work Plan
- Wild Cervid CWD Project Proposal Financial Plan
- Copy of a current APHIS CWD Controlled Materials, Organisms and Vectors permit for the possession and handling of known CWD positive samples or tissues from known CWD positive animals, if these samples are to be used for the proposed work.
- For research proposals involving interactions with live animals, documentation of IACUC approval.
- Research institutes or universities submitting a study that includes field work with regulated cervids must **submit** a letter indicating support, cooperation, or no objection from the appropriate cervid regulatory authorities for the state(s) involved to be considered for funding.
- For Native American Tribal organization or universities representing Federally recognized Native American Tribal Governments a letter(s) indicating intent to participate from the Federally recognized Native American Tribal Government(s) (if applicable).
- Letters of collaboration from additional contributors listed in the Work Plan (if applicable)

**Is there a limit on the length of the proposal document?**

Project proposal Work Plans using the Work Plan template may not exceed twenty pages in 12-point font. This template is available as [Appendix 3](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement and on the [Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Funding Opportunities | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#) website. Project proposal Work Plans not using this template may not exceed ten pages in 12-point font. If a work plan exceeds the page limit, the extra pages may not be evaluated. The use of diagrams, visuals, and reference sheets, as well as any letters of collaboration from contributors will not count toward these page limitations.

**What is the period of performance?**

The performance period will begin on or before September 30, 2024. Projects must be completed no later than twelve months after the start date. Funding will not be allowed, nor activities approved to occur, outside of the period of performance. There is an allowance of a one-time extension request of the performance period up to twelve months to complete the project, assuming there is no increase in funding requested. This request must be submitted in accordance with the [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#) in order to be considered.

**FUNDING PRIORITY FAQs**

**What are the funding priorities?**

Eligible applicants are encouraged to develop project proposals that directly support at least one of the five funding priorities described below:

1. **Improve the management of CWD-affected wild cervid populations.** For the purpose of this priority, management means effectively **controlling** CWD in affected cervid populations or **preventing** the introduction or spread of CWD from affected or endemic populations to non-affected wild cervid populations by implementing or improving upon current guidance, such as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) [Best Management Practices](#).

*Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are: detection and prevention of CWD*

*in wild cervid populations not currently affected with CWD; **increasing capacity and reporting for CWD testing in wild cervids**; increase disease detection, investigation, and/or response; the development and use of novel CWD tests in wild cervids; epidemiology and risk analysis; wild cervid movement monitoring and control (traceability); identification and investigation of treatment options for CWD; wild cervid population management; sample collection training programs for personnel collecting samples; surveillance of CWD in wild cervids; prevention of CWD in wild cervid populations currently affected with CWD; or test result reporting to APHIS.*

2. **Improve the management of wild cervid CWD-affected areas.** For the purpose of this priority, management means managing the environment to effectively control CWD in wild cervid affected areas (CWD endemic areas) to control or prevent the spread of CWD by implementing or improving upon current guidance, such as the AFWA [Best Management Practices](#).

*Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are: development and **use of novel CWD tests for environmental testing; environmental decontamination**; wild cervid carcass and waste management; identification and investigation of treatment options for CWD; or investigating the role of scavengers or predators in CWD transmission to or within wild cervid populations and/or managing these risks.*

3. **Conduct research on amplification assays in wild cervids and other new test methods.** Amplification assays are test methods that identify CWD by amplifying small amount of prion protein to levels that are detectable [e.g., Protein Misfolding Cyclic Amplification (PMCA), real-time quaking induced conversion (RT-QuIC)]. Specifically, this funding opportunity is interested in novel proposals which further the use of amplification assays as diagnostic or environmental tests.

*Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are: development of new amplification assays or the expanded use of amplification assays for novel sample types and applications, and/or the development or investigation of new tests for the detection of CWD.*

4. **Development and/or application of predictive genetics for wild cervids.** Research to support the use of genetics to determine and understand the susceptibility of wild cervids to CWD on the landscape. Current and ongoing research supports the use of whole genome predictive genetics to determine the susceptibility of cervids to CWD, which may provide the foundation for a genomics based CWD control or eradication program in the future.

*Examples of activities that may be included under this priority are: evaluation of predictive genetics in wild cervids affected with CWD or located in CWD endemic areas to prevent or reduce the incidence of CWD.*

5. **Develop and/or deliver educational outreach materials or programs to wild cervid stakeholders or Tribal entities.** For purposes of this priority, educational outreach means the methods, processes, or actions that provide education and facilitate learning of critical knowledge necessary to control and/or prevent CWD and it's spread in wild cervids, including the study of human dimensions on CWD prevention and control. Behavioral messaging research may also be included as part of an outreach program.

**Will a proposal that does not address one of these priorities be considered for funding?**

Any other proposed projects or activities that would further develop and implement wild cervid CWD

control, prevention, surveillance, testing, management, and response fall within the scope of activities for this funding opportunity. While proposals within this scope that do not fall under the priorities above would receive a lower score than a proposal of equal quality that do, they will be reviewed and may score sufficiently for funding.

**If an applicant would like to address multiple priorities, should they all be included in one proposal, or should multiple proposals be submitted?**

Applicants are encouraged to submit separate proposals for each priority provided the objectives or activities are not dependent on all proposals being selected for funding. Submitting separate projects in a single proposal may result in an activity that would have scored high enough to be funded individually but not scoring well due to another activity in the proposal resulting in scoring poorly or being unacceptable. If multiple priorities are addressed within a single Work Plan, applicants should specify which funding priority is addressed for each objective.

**Will partial funding of a priority, objective or an activity on a proposal be considered?**

Based on reviewer recommendations, a project may be selected for partial funding of specific objectives or activities within a proposed Work Plan.

**What are other funding considerations?**

Within the context of addressing the overall goal of controlling or preventing CWD and the priorities described above, applicants are encouraged to develop proposals that:

- Meet the evaluation criteria described in [Section E.1](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement;
- Describe how the project will leverage existing resources through partnerships with local, State, and/or Federal government agencies, Tribal entities, industry organizations, professional associations, producer groups, and/or non-profit organizations with direct and significant interest in the control or prevention of CWD in wild cervids; and,
- Describe the anticipated involvement by APHIS personnel needed to complete the proposed activities in the Work Plan and Financial Plan (excluding personnel to administer or oversee the cooperative agreement). APHIS intends to collaborate with recipients to successfully complete activities funded via this opportunity; however, due to the limited availability of personnel, APHIS encourages proposals that are not contingent on APHIS participation where possible, unless that participation was agreed upon during the development of the proposal.

**NOTE:** While all proposals meeting the administrative eligibility criteria listed in [Section C.4](#) will be considered for funding, APHIS WS may give priority to management proposals submitted by an eligible applicant (1) in a state or Tribal land that has either experienced recent incidents of CWD in wild cervids or that have wild cervid populations bordering a CWD endemic area; and, (2) has a State or Tribal CWD control program that includes, but is not limited to, monitoring and surveillance, or that proposes to create a control program. **Eligible applicants not meeting these criteria are encouraged to apply and their proposals will be considered for funding.**

## AGREEMENT FAQs

**What is competitive funding and how does it work in a cooperative agreement?**

APHIS WS funds projects using cooperative agreements and specific rules and regulations apply to the application, use, and reporting of these funds. When cooperative agreements are awarded through a competitive process, applicants must submit a complete application by the deadline in the announcement. There is no opportunity for proposal modifications during the review process.

The Wild Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities 2024 Funding Opportunity Announcement calls for proposals to be awarded through a competitive process, in which an expert or team of experts evaluates the merits of each proposal using predetermined criteria. The evaluation criteria are described in [Section E.1](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement. Recipients are not pre-determined. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of APHIS WS.

**Is cost sharing required?**

Although cost sharing is not required, APHIS WS may take into consideration an eligible entity's ability to contribute non-Federal funds to carry out such a cooperative agreement. Additional information on cost sharing is outlined in [Section C.2](#) of the Funding Opportunity.

## PROPOSAL FAQs

**Can I submit more than one proposal?**

An eligible applicant may submit multiple proposals for this opportunity, requesting up to \$250,000 per proposal for activities to control or prevent CWD in wild cervids. Applicants who wish to submit multiple proposals must submit each proposal as a separate proposal package. Multiple proposals from a single eligible applicant may be selected for funding with the applicant receiving a total award greater than \$250,000, provided the additional awarded proposal(s) is significantly superior in reviewer scoring when ranked against other applications.

**If my project was funded in prior years, can I resubmit those activities for this opportunity?**

Recipients wishing to continue work on or build on projects funded in prior years that are either complete or will be complete by the proposed period of performance may submit proposals to this opportunity. Recipients wishing to continue work on projects funded in prior years which are not complete, and have not been extended previously, should submit a no-cost extension per the [Terms and Conditions for APHIS awards](#) or by contacting the APHIS WS Program Manager rather than submitting a proposal to this opportunity.

**Can several different proposal ideas for projects that support the 2024 funding priorities be combined into a single proposal?**

Submitting separate projects in a single proposal may result in an activity that would have scored high enough to be funded individually but not scoring well due to another activity in the proposal resulting in scoring poorly or being unacceptable.

**Can an eligible entity collaborate with other eligible entities on a proposal?**

Yes, an eligible entity may collaborate with any other eligible entities.

**If multiple eligible entities are collaborating, how should the proposal be submitted?**

If there is one project with each eligible entity doing a similar activity or task, submit one proposal from the main applicant and subcontract with the other applicant(s). If the project has multiple parts and each entity is responsible for an individual activity or task, then each entity may submit their own proposal if this is preferred. Any application with a proposed subaward over \$10,000 must complete an individual Financial Plan as a part of the proposal package.

**Can an eligible applicant partner with non-eligible entities?**

Yes, an eligible entity may collaborate with a non-eligible entity who may have direct and significant interest in the control or prevention of CWD in wild cervids, such as land grant or other universities, State or national livestock, wildlife, sporting groups, or conservation organizations, or a Federal Agency. The proposal should describe the necessity and added value to engage non-eligible entities as collaborators to accomplish the proposed activities. Any application with a proposed subaward over \$10,000 must complete an individual Financial Plan as part of the proposal package.

**May a foreign entity submit a proposal?**

No, a foreign entity is not eligible for this opportunity. However, a foreign entity may contribute to a proposal submitted by an eligible entity. In this case, the proposal should describe the necessity and added value to engage foreign collaborators to accomplish the proposed activities.

**How are proposals reviewed and who reviews them?**

Proposals meeting the administrative eligibility criteria described in [Section C.4](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement will be evaluated by reviewers based on the merits of the proposal as outlined in [Section E.2](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement. APHIS WS is responsible for reviewing proposals against the evaluation criteria found in [Section E.1](#) of the Funding Opportunity Announcement and the review panel will consist of internal and external subject-matter experts from various departments and agencies, and from academia as appropriate. High quality proposals are those that strongly support the priorities and address the needs, considerations, and evaluation criteria described in the Funding Opportunity Announcement.

**Who makes the final decision for funding?**

Final funding decisions are at the discretion of APHIS WS.

**What is the timeline for review of submitted proposals and when will applicants be notified of award status and when will funds be awarded?**

There is a single application deadline followed by the simultaneous review of all applications. APHIS WS will review proposals within 60 days of the application deadline and applicants will be notified by email of award status.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FAQs

**Where are the websites located with this information?**

Applicants can find this funding opportunity information on the [ezFedGrants](#) website or the [Grants.gov](#) by searching the Funding Opportunity Title **FY24 Wild Cervid CWD Management and Response Activities**, the CFDA/Assistance Listing Number **10.028**, or the Funding Opportunity Number **USDA-APHIS-10028-WSNWRC00-24-0004**. The following information can also be found on the [Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Funding Opportunities | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](#) website:

- The FY2024 Wild Cervid CWD Funding Opportunity Announcement (PDF)
- The FY2024 Wild Cervid Work Plan Template (Word)
  - Applicants must submit a project proposal Work Plan that includes all information outlined in this template. Applicants are encouraged to use this template.
- The FY2024 Wild Cervid Financial Plan Template (Excel)
  - Applicants must submit a project proposal Financial Plan that includes all information outlined in this template. Applicants are encouraged to use this template.

**Who can applicants contact regarding questions about the Wild Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Response Activities 2024 funding opportunity?**

For questions about the funding opportunity, required documents, or the [ezFedGrants](#) application process, please contact [APHIS-WS.CWD\\_Agreements@usda.gov](mailto:APHIS-WS.CWD_Agreements@usda.gov).

For questions regarding the wild cervid CWD program, please contact the following APHIS WS NWDP Program staff (primary point of contact):



Tim Linder, Staff Wildlife Disease Biologist, WS National Wildlife Disease Program,  
[Timothy.J.Linder@usda.gov](mailto:Timothy.J.Linder@usda.gov) , (O) 970-266-6217, (C) 970-420-5309