

put on agenda

Request for County Feral Hog Grant

Statement of Purpose

Pursuant to the Texas Legislature, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Wildlife Services (WS) program hereby requests applications for County Feral Hog Abatement Grants (Grant). The Grant program ("Program") is designed to encourage counties across the State of Texas to make a concentrated and coordinated effort to reduce the feral hog population and the damage caused by these animals throughout the year. Successful applicants will receive grants to initiate or continue feral hog abatement activities in their county. This document ("RFGA") sets forth Program requirements and procedures.

Current abatement methods in Texas vary depending on the geographic terrain and vegetation. WS recognizes that the responsibility for management rests with landowners and local constituents who know the surrounding land and waterways, as well as the potential challenges to combating feral hogs. Through this program, the highest ranking counties will receive assistance to continue local activities which may range from educating the landowners on abatement methods, coordinating trapping and hunting programs, conducting aerial gunning and addressing public safety hazards related to feral hogs.

Projected Timeline of Events

August 1, 2020	Applications Available
August 28, 2020	Applications Due
October 1, 2020	Anticipated Award Date
August 31, 2021	Project End date

Eligibility

To be eligible for an award under the Program, the applicant must be a Texas county. The county must have or develop a method to accurately track the number of feral hogs taken in the county as well as documentation for other provisions included in the application (e.g. receipts for purchases, trap loan numbers, etc.) for the eligible period September 1, 2020-August 31, 2021.

Grantee Responsibilities and Accountability

Selected Applicants (grantees) will be responsible for conducting a project supported by the Program and for achieving the results described in the application. Each grantee shall monitor the day-to-day performance of the grant project to assure adherence to statutes, regulations, and grant terms and conditions. The grantee must carry out the activities described in the approved scope of work.

The grantee will be accountable for documenting the use of grant funds and must ensure funds are used solely for authorized purposes. The grantee must ensure:

- Funds are used only for activities covered by the approved project.

- Funds are not used in violation of the restrictions and prohibitions of applicable statutes and regulations.
- All budget and performance reports are completed in a timely manner.

Each grantee must ensure they have an adequate accounting system in place and good internal controls to ensure expenditures and reimbursements are reported and maintained for seven (7) years after the conclusion of the project.

Funding Parameters

Awards are subject to the availability of funds. If funds are not appropriated or collected for this Program, applicants will be informed accordingly.

WS will make awards after all applications are processed. Grant funds will be available on a cost reimbursement basis for county use on feral hog abatement expenditures during the grant term. A total of \$100,000 is available. WS anticipates awarding up to 15 grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 each. Applications will be reviewed through a competitive evaluation process.

Bounty programs may be included in a county's proposal, however WS will limit State funding of bounties to 50% of the amount actually paid out.

To receive grant funds, counties that are awarded Program grants must enter into a written agreement with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Grant funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis after awarded counties submit proof of allowable expenditures.

WS reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications submitted. WS is under no legal or other obligation to execute a grant award on the basis of a response submitted to this RFGA.

Public announcements and written notifications will be made to all applicants and their affiliated agencies, organizations, or institutions. Favorable decisions will indicate the amount of award, duration of the grant, and any special conditions associated with the project.

Term of Funding or Duration of Projects

A Notice of Grant Award is *anticipated* to be made in October 2020. However, it is the intention of the legislature that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service continue to make available a level of funding similar to previous grants administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Counties may have continued feral hog projects following the conclusion of the TDA program. Therefore, approved projects may claim expenditures which have occurred since September 1, 2020. Projects under this funding request must be completed by August 31, 2021. No expenditures incurred after August 31, 2021 will be reimbursed.

Application Requirements

To be considered, applications must be complete and include all of the following information.

Grant Applications—Interested applicants must include all of the following information:

A narrative including:

- *County Information.* This is the name and address for the county.

- *Primary Program Contact.* This is the individual who can answer questions about the county's activities and performance.
- *Authorized Official.* This is the person legally able to bind the county in contracts or agreements, generally the county judge.
- *Previous Participation.* For counties which participated in the Feral hog grant program, a copy of the final report is required.
- *Description of Activities.* Include information on:
 - i. Description of the proposed program including abatement activities supported or used;
 - ii. Type and number of county-sponsored education program(s) about feral hog abatement technologies proposed; and
 - iii. A proposed budget (total cost for educational and operational activities, county share of bounty if proposed);
- *Certifications.* The authorized official must sign the application.

Evaluation and Selection Information

WS will conduct an administrative review to determine whether the applicant was responsive to the requirements of this RFGA. WS will take into consideration the status of any continuing project's progress.

Applications will be evaluated on the following criterion:

- The degree to which the proposal meets or supports established watershed or agricultural protection programs (*a maximum of 30 points will be awarded to those county proposals which are consistent with watershed protection plans or agricultural protection programs*).
- The estimated contribution of the proposal to removing feral hogs from the landscape (*a maximum of 30 points will be awarded for aspects of the project which contribute to fewer hogs, including trap loan programs, aerial hunting contracts, equipment purchased for control and bounties. NOTE: WS will only reimburse counties 50% of actual bounties paid. Counties planning on bounty programs need to state the total bounty pool and the county commitment to the remaining 50%. Programs which remove feral hogs but contribute to perpetuation of hogs as a resource may not receive full points.*)
- The number of landowner outreach events planned or conducted from September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021 which include at least 1 hour of feral hog management topics, including biology, management strategies and damage assessment. We recognize that outreach in the current pandemic environment will be challenging and encourage applicants to develop adaptive and innovative outreach plans. Media articles, 4-H presentations and collaborations with schools may be included in outreach planning (*a maximum of 5 points per event planned and 10 points per event conducted up to 20 points per application will be awarded*).
- The degree to which the county project conducts a formalized damage and control assessment (*a maximum of 10 points will be awarded if the county project records numbers of feral swine removed and up to 10 additional points will be recorded for a formalized county level damage assessment*).

WS will include outside reviewers in evaluating proposals. County Primary Point of Contact may be queried during the evaluation process to clarify proposals.

Deadline for Submission of Responses

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Only materials actually received by WS by 5:00 pm CDT on application due date will be reviewed as part of the application. Applicant will not be allowed to supplement the application after the application deadline.

One complete application package, including narrative and final reports (if applicable) must be **received by WS before close of business (5:00 p.m. CT) on Friday, August 28, 2020.** It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the timely delivery of all required materials.

WS will send an acknowledgement receipt by email indicating the application was received.

Preferred:

Electronic Version

Email: Michael.J.Bodenchuk@usda.gov

Email subject line must contain the program and applicant name (Ex: 2021 Feral Hog Grant- Travis County). The respondent is solely responsible for ensuring that their complete electronic submission is sent to, and actually received by, WS in a timely manner and at the proper destination server.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All submissions must be sent in Microsoft Word or other Word compatible format or as .PDF files. Unreadable submissions may be deemed unresponsive and will not be reviewed for funding consideration.

WS takes no responsibility for electronic bids that are captured, blocked, filtered, quarantined or otherwise prevented from reaching the proper destination server by any anti-virus or other security software. WS will send an acknowledgement receipt by email indicating the application was received.

Hard Copy Submissions.

All applications must be **received** by WS (P.O. Box 690170, San Antonio, TX 78269) by closing date and time. Applications will be documented with a date/time stamp for receipt documentation purposes.

For questions regarding submission of the application and/or WS requirements, please contact WS at (210) 561-3801, or by email at

Michael.J.Bodenchuk@usda.gov

Successful Application Requirements

Reporting. Selected applicants will be required to submit periodic performance reports. Reporting timelines will be provided in the grant agreement. As part of WS's ongoing monitoring of grant funds, grantees must show both a strong progress of work completed on all projects as well as

financial progress. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in the withholding of a request for reimbursement and/or termination of the award.

Budget Development Information.

- A. Payment. *Selected grantees will be paid on a cost reimbursement basis.* Grantees will be required to submit payment requests quarterly, but no more frequently than monthly in order to show significant financial and programmatic progress. Payment requests must include sufficient detail and supporting documentation. Backup detail may include, but is not limited to, documentation of personnel expenses, or copies of invoices.
- B. Payment Schedule. Up to 90% of the total grant award may be reimbursed provided the work for which payment is requested has been completed and proper documentation has been submitted. The remaining 10% will only be disbursed once all reporting requirements have been met, including, but not limited to, the final performance report.
- C. Eligible Expenses. Generally, expenses that are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient performance and administration of the project are eligible. Examples of eligible expenditures include:
1. Personnel costs – including salary and benefits related to temporary or event staff, grant funds may not be used to pay for existing employees in the performance of their day-to-day duties;
 2. Direct operating expenses that directly relate to project activities, this may include facility rental or other workshop related expenses (note: meals, food, or beverages of any kind are not considered an eligible expense);
 3. Supplies that cost less than \$5,000, such as office supplies, printing services, and materials needed to accomplish the proposed project;
 4. Contracts – agreements made with a third-party to perform a portion of the award;
 5. Controlled Assets are defined as certain items valued \$500.00 - \$4,999.99 which must also be inventoried,
<https://fmx.cpa.texas.gov/fmx/pubs/spaproc/appendices/appa/index.php>; and
 6. If grant funds are proposed to be used to fund bounty efforts, Grantee must have a written policy implemented to prevent the intentional breeding and raising of feral hogs for the purpose of meeting bounty requirements. **Bounty-related grant fund reimbursement is limited to 50% of the bounty paid and a maximum of \$5.00 per feral hog.**
- D. Ineligible Expenses. Expenses may be prohibited by state or federal law or determined to be ineligible by program guidelines. Examples of these expenditures include, but are not limited to the following:
1. Alcoholic beverages;
 2. Entertainment;
 3. Contributions, charitable or political;
 4. Expenses falling outside of the contract period;
 5. Items not listed in the project budget or an approved amendment;
 6. Expenses that are not adequately documented;
 7. Travel, including but not limited to mileage reimbursement, meals and lodging; and
 8. Meals, food or beverage costs of any kind, including those associated with an educational workshop.

It is important to ensure that all costs meet the criteria, of allowable, allocable, and reasonable.

General Information

Selected applicants will receive a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) letter and an official Grant Agreement from WS. The NGA is not legally binding until a grant agreement is fully executed.

WS reserves the right to fund projects partially or fully. WS reserves the right to negotiate individual elements of any application and to reject any and all applications. Where more than one application is acceptable for funding, WS may request cooperation between grantees or revisions/adjustments to an application in order to avoid duplication and to realize the maximum benefit to the state. Selected projects will receive funding on a cost-reimbursement basis.

WS reserves the right to reject all applications and is not liable for costs incurred by the Applicant in the development, submission, or review of the application; or costs incurred by the Applicant prior to the effective date of grant agreement.

Right to Amend or Terminate Program

WS reserves the right to alter, amend, or clarify any provisions, terms, or conditions of this program or any grant awarded as a result thereof, or to terminate this program at any time prior to the execution of an agreement, if WS deems any such action to be in the best interest of WS and of the State of Texas. The decision of WS will be administratively final in this regard.

Proprietary Information/Public Information

If it is necessary for Grantee to include confidential, proprietary, trade secret or privileged information (Proprietary Information) in its application or other submitted information, Grantee must clearly mark and label all Proprietary Information in 14-point or higher bold font on each page as it appears, and identify the specific exception to disclosure in the Texas Public Information Act (PIA) for each specific piece of Proprietary Information. Additionally, all Proprietary Information must be segregated in a separate and discrete section of the application or other submitted information, which must be able to be conveniently separated and detached from the other sections of the application.

Failure to properly label, identify and segregate any Proprietary Information in the application or other submitted information may result in all such information or material being disclosed as public information.

Unless specifically exempt from disclosure under the PIA, all applications and materials submitted under this program are subject to release under the PIA.

Conflict of Interest

The Applicant is required to disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest relative to this grant program. Failure to disclose any such relationship may result in the Applicant's disqualification or termination of any resulting grant agreement.

General Compliance Information

1. Grantees must comply with WS's reporting requirements and financial procedures outlined in the grant agreement. Any delegation by the Grantee to a subcontractor regarding any duties and responsibilities imposed by the grant award must be approved in advance by WS and shall not relieve the Grantee of its responsibilities to WS for their performance.

2. All grant awards are subject to the availability of funds appropriated and authorized by the Texas Legislature.
3. Grantees must remain in full compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. Non-compliance may result in termination of the grant or ineligibility for reimbursement of expenses.
4. Grantees must keep a separate bookkeeping account with a complete record of all expenditures relating to the project. Records shall be maintained for seven (7) years after the completion of the project, or as otherwise agreed upon with WS. WS and the Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO) reserve the right to examine all books, documents, records, and accounts relating to the project at any time throughout the duration of the agreement and for three years immediately following completion of the project. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action is initiated prior to the expiration of the retention period, then the records must be retained until authorized by WS. WS and the SAO shall have access to the physical locations related to project activities.
5. If the Grantee has a financial audit performed during the time the Grantee is receiving funds from WS, upon request, WS shall have access to information about the audit, including the audit transmittal letter, management letter, and any schedules in which the Grantee's funds are included.
6. Grantees must comply with Texas Government Code, Chapter 783, Uniform Grant and Contract Management, and the Uniform Grant Management Standards (UGMS) and 2 CFR Part 200.