



Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin State Legislative Funding Request for Proposals #3

Funding New or Ongoing/Renewal of Projects: Student Learning Opportunities, Academic Program Development, Collaborative Research and Career Pathways

RFP Release: February 1, 2023

Proposal Submission Deadline: April 3, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

Introduction

The Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin partners with Wisconsin's 13 public universities to advance freshwater research and education, build partnerships with communities and industry, and contribute to a thriving water agenda in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin State Legislature has awarded the Freshwater Collaborative \$5 million in its biennial budget to support freshwater initiatives at UW System campuses that align with the Freshwater Collaborative's goals and legislative priorities. The Freshwater Collaborative has a total of \$4,250,000 available in 113 funds to support this round of proposals, contingent on available legislative funds.

This Freshwater Collaborative State Legislative Funding 2023-2025 grant program deviates from many traditional grant programs to enhance equity in the selection process, accelerate access to funding, and build upon existing efforts that are likely to foster alignment between the Freshwater Collaborative's mission and goals and individual campus goals and investments.

Program Purpose and Rationale

The Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin must demonstrate ongoing viability, economic importance, sustainability, and contribution toward developing a vibrant freshwater workforce to the state legislature. The legislature requires evidence for a positive return on investment prior to committing additional funds to the Freshwater Collaborative.

The purpose of the 2023-2025 State Legislative Funding Request for Proposals is to support cross-campus projects that engage undergraduate students in courses, research, hands-on experiences, and internships. Proposals can be for continued funding to enhance existing Freshwater Collaborative projects or for funding of new projects that will expand cross-campus collaborations.

State Legislative Directives and Freshwater Collaborative Priorities

- Devise new water-centric training programs focused on undergraduates (science and innovation).
- Provide scholarships and student support to retain and attract new talent and more students.
- Amplify Freshwater Collaborative's marketing efforts to communicate Wisconsin's role in freshwater science, including branding Wisconsin as the global leader in freshwater.
- Enhance workforce development programming (economic growth goal).
- Recruit dedicated faculty and staff to advance training programs, research, and innovation (science and innovation goal).
- Foster collaborative research and initiatives among 13 UW universities, the private sector, community, and state institutions that address the 10 Grand Water Challenges, with a specific focus on Agricultural Water Management (Challenge 1) and Water Quality Safety and Emerging Contaminants (Challenge 3).

The [10 Grand Water Challenges for Wisconsin](#) are:

1. Agricultural Water Management (legislative focus)
2. Industrial Water Engineering and Technology
3. Water Quality Safety and Emerging Contaminants (legislative focus)
4. Great Lakes Management and Restoration
5. Water Infrastructure: Collection, Distribution, Treatment
6. Water Business and Finance
7. Watershed Management and Restoration
8. Water Security, Protection and Resilience
9. Healthy Recreational and Transportation Water Use
10. Aquaculture/Aquaponics/Water Food Systems

Strategic Priorities

From the list of state legislative directives/priorities, the Freshwater Collaborative has compiled the following list of how the Freshwater Collaborative will accomplish the directives and create a pipeline to jobs. See Appendix for detailed definitions.

- Community Engagement
- Student Recruitment
- Student Retention/Learning
- Collaborative Research
- Collaborative Curriculum
- Industry Partnerships
- Internship Placement
- Career Placement
- Broadening Perspectives in the Water Sector
- Growing and Strengthening the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin

Funding Levels and Program Terms

Up to \$4,250,000 is available for this RFP funding from the 2023-2025 biennial budget. Projects may have up to a five-year term and must demonstrate impact to the state legislative directives every year. Proposals with a five-year budget will automatically roll into the next biennial budget contingent on continuity of legislative funds. PIs will be required to submit progress reports via Qualtrics every year. The Freshwater Collaborative reserves the right to revoke or discontinue funds if demonstrable progress is not shown.

In addition, it is imperative that the Freshwater Collaborative further demonstrate that it is leveraging state funding to increase the funding UW System receives from other funding sources, such as federal grants, private investment and/or definitive University commitment. Grant recipients should be prepared to report on how they leveraged or matched funds from either the Freshwater Collaborative or outside sources (i.e., federal grants, industry, etc.). For example, the results from a Freshwater Collaborative-funded research grant helped a faculty member receive a large NSF grant, or a donor makes a gift to your university because of a project or course that is being funded by the Freshwater Collaborative. Another example would be a faculty member receives a research grant from a federal agency and then writes a course development grant to the Freshwater Collaborative based on their research. University commitment can be demonstrated by in-kind support, covering the costs for

analytical instrumentation and expenses, research funding, release time, or other mechanisms. Consult with the business and/or financial manager for your administrative unit for the options available at your institution.

Project Eligibility

Preference will be given to proposals that clearly enhance the vision, visibility, economic importance, and sustainability of the Freshwater Collaborative. Preference will be given to collaborative, multicampus projects that engage undergraduate students in courses, research, hands-on experiences, and internships. Preference also will be given to projects that expand student enrollment in new markets and respond to Wisconsin's Grand Water Challenges.

Proposals can be for either continued funding to enhance existing Freshwater Collaborative projects or for funding of new projects that will expand cross-campus collaborations. A list of previously funded projects can be found here: https://issuu.com/uw-milwaukee/docs/fcw_annual_report_2022

Proposals must reflect comprehensive water programming and initiatives on your campus, not one-off projects, and how they fit into the overall mission of the campus and the Freshwater Collaborative.

All proposals must align with Freshwater Collaborative's core values of honesty, integrity, respect, innovation, equity, and personal accountability. Projects also must include collaborations and efforts to increase diversity and inclusion of people under-represented in the water sector (including but not limited to: Black, first-generation college, Hmong, Indigenous, Latinx, LGBTQIA, low-income, people with disabilities, people identifying as women, and rural populations).

This RFP encourages a wide array of projects that focus on different aspects of freshwater in Wisconsin. Ideal proposals will address the following elements:

1. Collaboration Among UW System Universities

The Freshwater Collaborative seeks to fund purposeful collaborations with impact, including interdisciplinary collaborations, collaborations among students and faculty/staff, collaborations with external partners, and collaborations among campuses. Preference will be given to multi-campus projects that engage researchers, students, and people from multiple disciplines and sectors.

2. New Student Opportunities

The Freshwater Collaborative seeks to respond to workforce demand and emerging water career opportunities for students, to serve as pathways to these careers. As a result, preference will be given to proposals designed to increase new student enrollment at UW System universities and expand Wisconsin's water workforce.

3. Experiential Learning

The Freshwater Collaborative seeks to support hands-on learning that will grow a student's network across Wisconsin and provide workforce training with a focus on learning goals associated with the 10 Grand Water Challenges. Ideally, student experiences will contain at least three of the following:

- Field experience
- Lab experience
- Computer experience (possibly for data analysis, design work, etc.)
- Connections to career and networking opportunities
- Testing towards a credential
- Growing awareness of water career opportunities

- Incorporates high-impact practices
- Internships
- Undergraduate research and conference presentation

Award Types

Awards will support student engagement and learning programs. Proposals can address more than one award type. Award types are:

- 1. Student Learning Opportunities.** Experiential learning opportunities for high school or undergraduate students. Examples include:
 - a. Spring Break or Winterim trip related to freshwater
 - b. Student fieldwork development
 - c. Freshwater camp to recruit prospective students
 - d. Collaborative projects with community and industry partners focused on advancing freshwater initiatives with students
 - e. Supplies, materials, and safety/protective equipment for student fieldwork
 - f. Can include student stipends, scholarships, or costs to cover differential tuition between campuses
- 2. Academic Program Development:** Supports the collaborative creation of academic programs for the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin to include experiential learning opportunities for students. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. Developing new academic programs, curricula, and/or courses
 - b. Enhancing or amplifying courses to include experiential learning opportunities for students
 - c. Planning logistics for collaborative programs and/or courses within the UW System
- 3. Collaborative Research:** This can be research that is collaborative and/or has the potential for future cross-functional collaboration (must be discussed in proposal) with other institutional departments on campus or with other campuses. Examples include:
 - a. Interdisciplinary water research
 - b. Cross-campus water research
 - c. Engaging students as data collectors and research assistants
 - d. Community engaged water research
 - e. Can include student stipends or salary
- 4. Career Pathways:** Examples include:
 - a. Growing internship programming at multiple campuses
 - b. Job placement opportunities
 - c. Industry, policy, and non-profit partnerships

Proposal Submission Requirements

For proposals that involve multiple universities, one university with the lead PI must submit ONE joint proposal on behalf of all the universities involved, with secondary PIs listed for all other universities involved. The lead PI will be the primary contact for the Freshwater Collaborative for questions and reporting/evaluation. Secondary PIs will be the contacts for UW System for allocating funds. Each of the collaborating institution's contributions/involvement must be clearly described in the Project Narrative.

Steering Committee representatives must sign off on all proposals prior to submission to ensure that the

Freshwater Collaborative representative at each university is aware of all proposal submissions. Proposals must be submitted following your institution's policy for proposal submissions. In the case of the comprehensives, this means working with your institution's Office of Sponsored Programs.

The Office of Socially Responsible Evaluation and Education (SREED) has developed several indicators per award type (See Appendix). Campuses are expected to review SREED indicators and be prepared to complete a yearly data report based on these indicators via a Qualtrics survey. Project leads will receive communications about the deadline for submitting their data report. For questions about the data reporting process, email rfp-questions@uwm.edu.

The proposal must include the following items for each proposed project. Application, including downloadable forms, are available at: <https://freshwater.wisconsin.edu/rfp3-2023/>

- **Project Narrative:** Describes how the proposal supports your university's long-term vision of engagement in the Freshwater Collaborative and statewide collaborations in water and how this proposal connects to other currently funded and/or proposed Freshwater Collaborative-funded projects at your institution or across the state. You will be asked to provide project goals, timeline, and impact information. Timeline can be up to five years.
- **Budget:** Identify the anticipated expenses and provide a timeline for using funds. List any grants, matching funds from the campus, planned external award requests, or other financial sources. Faculty course-buyouts and summer salary are allowable costs. Indirect costs are not allowable. Allowable personnel are limited-term employees, adjunct instructors, graduate assistants, and hourly students. A budget for each institution must be submitted within the joint proposal (e.g., if three universities are participating in the program or course, the single joint proposal must include three separate budgets).
- **Endorsement Page:** Obtain the signatures of the applicant and collaborators, applicant's supervisor or department chair, the steering committee member, and the provost and/or academic affairs representative. These signatures demonstrate campus support and buy-in for the proposed project. *To ensure accurate financial and academic methods proposed are feasible, we ask that your financial and academic representative who would support/oversee the administrative management of this project review and sign your proposal.*
 - **Endorsement Page for UW-Madison:** Applicant must use the WISPER electronic routing application to secure department and dean/director/division-level authorizations. Division-authorized WISPER records should be routed to WISPER user RUSSELL SCHWALBE in department 34-0200. Please set the "submission method" field in the WISPER record to "internal routing only." The record does not need to be routed through the Research and Sponsored Programs office.
 - **Endorsement Page for UW-Milwaukee:** Applicants do not need to complete a WISPER record. Work to secure appropriate department and dean/director/division-level authorizations.
- **Other supporting documents** may include letters of support, brochures, or program information.

Proposal Review and Selection Process

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee of at least five external and internal reviewers with academic and legislative experience who will make funding recommendations to the Freshwater Collaborative Executive Director. The review committee may request additional information, clarifications, and/or edits before making a determination on proposals. The Executive Director will make final decisions on

the awards. **We strongly encourage all applicants to read the scorecard below, which the review committee will use to evaluate the proposals.**

The scorecard for review is as follows:

MISSION	(20)
Meets Freshwater Collaborative priorities	5
Demonstrates collaboration as defined by Freshwater Collaborative RFP	10
Details how work broadens perspectives in the water sector	5
IMPACT	(30)
Describes intended impact at campus, community, and state level and demonstrates how this impact will be made.	10
Demonstrates community engagement through the creation of new partnerships in freshwater science, industry, and community	10
Addresses 10 Grand Water Challenges of focus	10
FEASIBILITY & SUSTAINABILITY	(20)
Clearly states goal, target audience, and desired outcome and how the proposal will meet stated needs	5
Provides evidence that there is campus support and campus resources supporting the project and aligns with overall strategy of institution	10
Demonstrates stakeholder buy-in in the initiative. This includes letters of support, an established relationship, and/or ethical and sufficient incentives. Project can continue without grant funds.	5
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT	(30)
Details student recruitment plan	5
Provides hands-on experiences to students	10
Demonstrates consideration and details support for accessibility and retention for all students, including marginalized groups, non-traditional students, students with disabilities, and other groups who may have barriers to participation	10
Provides opportunities that prepare students for water-related careers. This can include career development workshops, networking opportunities with employers, conference presentations, and scientific communication with communities and other groups of interest.	5
TOTAL:	100



Once the review process has been completed and the award is determined, the award letter will be emailed to PIs, Offices of Sponsored Programs/Research, and appropriate administrative staff. The award letter will include details on 113 funds disbursement and data reporting.

Program Contact

Please direct all questions to rfp-questions@uwm.edu.

APPENDIX

Data Report Indicators

The table below lists the campus-level performance indicators for each funding award type: Student Learning Opportunities, Academic Program Development, Collaborative Research and Career Pathways.

PIs will complete one Qualtrics survey per proposal to collect data related to these indicators. This survey will have a custom list of questions specific to the award types indicated in the proposals. All proposals, regardless of award type, will report on indicators in the “All Award Types” section. For example, if a proposal received a student experience and career pathways award, the PI and project team would be responsible for sharing data in the indicators listed in the “All Award Types,” “Student Experience,” and “Career Pathways” sections.

PIs will be expected to submit data reporting plans based on the following indicators.

AWARD TYPE	INDICATORS
All Award Types	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name of 10 Grand Water Challenge(s) addressed by project. 2. Number of students that participated in the project. This includes breakdown by UW institution and by high school, undergraduate, and graduate. 3. Number of students who received scholarships, stipends, or direct financial support to participate in the project. 4. Impact of student experience on student learning and engagement with freshwater. 5. Student recruitment methods and approximate number of students reached with project recruitment efforts. 6. Counties that directly benefited from the project. 7. Departments at each UW institution involved with the project. 8. Number of collaborations and partnerships involved with the project. 9. Names of partnering UW entities, for-profit, non-profit, governmental organizations, K-12, private universities and colleges, and community organizations. 10. Description of collaboration and collaborative activities with partners. 11. Description of how the project linked economic and workforce development with higher education.
Student Learning Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description of student experience developed and/or enhanced with Freshwater Collaborative funds. This includes major goals of the project, main activities, accomplishments, duration, and the semester that the experience was offered.

AWARD TYPE	INDICATORS
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Extent to which student experience incorporates diverse perspectives, including under-represented groups in the water sector.
<p>Academic Program Development</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description of academic program developed and/or enhanced with Freshwater Collaborative funds. This includes major goals of the project, main activities, and accomplishments. 2. For courses, details on title, format, frequency, first term and year the course will be offered, and UW campuses offering the course. 3. Details of syllabus completion and submission to the Freshwater Collaborative. 4. Percent of new and/or enhanced course content about grand water challenges. 5. Percent of new and/or enhanced course content incorporating diverse perspectives, including under-represented groups in the water sector. 6. Number and names of degrees/minors/ certificates that require the course. 7. Number and names of degrees/minors/ certificates that list the course as an elective option.
<p>Collaborative Research</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description of collaborative research project. This includes major goals of the project, main activities, and accomplishments. 2. Name of collaborative research project and projected start and end dates. 3. Name of targeted counties that directly benefit from collaborative research project. 4. Name of targeted industry partner(s) that directly benefit from and/or contribute to undergraduates research project. 5. Name of publicly published (include citation), presented findings, and plans for future presentations and/or publications. For presentations, this includes the name of the event or conference.
<p>Career Pathways</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description of career pathways program. This includes major goals of the project, main activities, and accomplishments. 2. Number of new partnerships formalized between industry partners and FCW and name of partnering entity. 3. Extent to which new partnership(s) encompass diverse perspectives, including under-represented groups in the water sector.

Definitions of Strategic Priorities

In collaboration with UW Campuses, UW System, Wisconsin State Legislature, and freshwater organizations and industry, the Freshwater Collaborative has established the following approaches for supporting the strategic priorities:

Community Engagement	Building relationships with communities and identifying how the Freshwater Collaborative and campuses can help meet community freshwater needs. This also needs to consider issues and challenges that impact community access to freshwater.
Student Recruitment	The Freshwater Collaborative is looking to recruit from all communities, including those currently underrepresented in the water sector with a local, regional, national, and international scale.
Student Retention/Learning	Freshwater Collaborative programming needs to engage students through hands-on water training that offers them real-world experience that prepares them for their future career prospects.
Collaborative Research	Freshwater Collaborative–supported research should tackle the 10 Grand Water Challenges and offers hands-on real-world problem solving and learning to students. The Freshwater Collaborative will focus these undergraduate research experiences on cross-campus collaborations to expand the possibilities for growth for each student.
Collaborative Curriculum	Courses should be offered at more than one campus, possibly at all 13. Funds can be used for planning and working through the logistics of sharing courses (i.e., financials, student credit hours, etc.). Funds can also be used for the costs of running the courses. The vision includes courses that utilize the expertise of faculty from across the state to enhance the existing freshwater learning experience and could become a part of future certificate programs.
Industry Partnerships	Linking the Freshwater Collaborative, its curricula, and its students to industry gives a pathway to fund and tackle the 10 Grand Water Challenges through research and development and in-the-field applications.
Internship Placement	Internship placements can be made by growing current campus career services programming and hosting a regional water and environment career fair.
Career Placement	Career placements can be made by growing our internship programming and secured because students will have work

	<p>experience in freshwater science, policy, etc., and have a marketable skillset and demonstrated competency (i.e., fieldwork, research, internship, project-based skillset, etc.).</p>
<p>Broadening Perspectives in the Water Sector</p>	<p>Broadening Perspectives in the Water Sector needs to be incorporated into all things above. This focuses on under-represented populations in the water sector (including Black, first-generation college, Hmong, Indigenous, Latinx, LGBTQIA, low-income, people with disabilities, people identifying as women, and rural populations).</p>
<p>Growing & Strengthening the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin</p>	<p>All projects must address this as part of the application and must answer how the outcome of the proposal promotes the value of the Freshwater Collaborative and why it should receive the State’s support.</p>

Timeline for RFP #3

12/22/22	Send RFP #3 guidelines for review and comment
1/15/23	Review comments, modify RFP as necessary
2/1/23	Publish RFP #3
4/3/23	RFP #2 Proposal deadline Review Committee gathers for preliminary meeting
5/22/23-5/24/23	External reviewers meet and discuss evaluation of proposals
6/1/23	Send out request for revisions
6/7/23-6/14/23	Revisions due
6/14/23-6/21/23	Final decisions made Award/Rejection letters compiled
6/30/23	Notify recipients of funding awards from RFP #3