

## Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute Call for Pre-Proposals

25 October 2023

The Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute (WRPI) is a National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funded initiative. The goal of WRPI is to initiate community-based research, extension, and education projects that engage existing and new local partners in the development of novel solutions to the challenges faced by rural communities and tribal nations in Wisconsin. The following priority thematic areas were developed through discussions with rural community stakeholders:

- Community/tribal economic development
  - Attracting workers to rural and tribal communities by addressing
    - housing shortages,
    - daycare availability,
    - quality of K-12 education, and
    - other quality of life issues
  - Leadership development
  - Civic engagement and volunteerism
- Health and nutrition
  - Access to health care
  - Mental health
  - Supporting local food systems to create markets for local producers and improved nutrition in rural and tribal communities.
- Agriculture and natural resources:
  - Preparing farmers, tribal land managers, and their workforce for issues such as
    - digital agriculture
    - automation
    - response to changing climate
    - environmental quality
    - economic sustainability
  - Forest management for recreation and forest products.

The total budget for this second phase of funding is \$4.5M with the term of funding from March 2024 through December 2026. We expect to fund 2 to 4 projects and recommend that projects include a PI or co-PI that is funded by the Division of Extension to ensure effective and ongoing connections with rural partner groups.

To apply enter the following project pre-proposal information into this [google form](#) by end of day **December 1st**.

- Project Title
- Project Lead (name, title affiliation)
- UW project team members (names, titles, affiliations)
- Rural community or tribal nation partner organizations

- Provide a brief description of your idea identifying the research question and outreach activity or K-12 education component.
- How does this idea contribute to one or more of the priority themes?
- What sector of the rural or tribal community will benefit and how will they benefit?
- What specific future funding opportunities would this work support?
- Approximate budget

Following are the criteria that will be used to award funding:

- Match with one or more rural or tribal community priorities
- Strong rural or tribal partner engagement
- Soundness and novelty of the idea/program
- Probability of Impact
- Size of impact/sectors/number of people affected
- Transferability to larger scale impact
- Match to UW Mission and capabilities
- Mutual support of state or local agency efforts
- Degree of campus and partner cross-disciplinarity
- Prospects for further funding

The CALS and Extension WRPI leadership team will review the pre-proposals and select projects and request a more detailed full proposal from selected applicants with a goal of making funding decisions by the end of February 2024. If you have questions about the submission process, contact Travis Olson. If you have questions about the scope or structure of proposals contact Patrick Robinson or Doug Reinemann.

An informational session will be held on to answer questions on Monday November 6<sup>th</sup> from 4 pm to 5:30 pm: Meeting ID: 958 4128 8247 Passcode: 277663

<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/95841288247?pwd=M09YR2lWYldPSFp4dDZ3bkZZZ0ljdz09>

For your reference and to give you an idea of the types and scope of rural partners already engaged, here are the currently funded projects:

### **The Rural Livability Project**

In many rural areas of Wisconsin, access to grocery stores, pharmacies, banks, healthcare and other critical institutions and services is becoming increasingly challenging. At the same time, rural communities are seeing changes to their economic foundations as well as declines in civic engagement. These factors can make it difficult for rural residents to reliably meet their needs, reducing the livability of their communities. The aim of this project is to identify the key assets needed to sustain rural communities, and to find the best ways forward in developing community economic development policies and strategies to support rural livability. This project will help communities identify their local challenges along with the assets that can be mobilized to support a stronger future.

*Project leader:* Tessa Conroy, Professor and Extension Specialist, CALS

### **Promoting Family-Centered and Family-School-Community Mental Health Support for Children in Rural Wisconsin Communities**

The U.S. is experiencing a crisis in children's mental health, and there is a dearth of mental health resources for children in rural areas. This project aims to build capacity for sustained and integrated family-centered and family-school-community mental health support for children in rural Wisconsin communities. Researchers will work with community partners to plan and enhance readiness; provide training to education and human service professionals, school staff and community members; support supervision of those professionals and help evaluate the effectiveness of mental health services. School and community partners are in rural counties across the state.

*Project leaders:* Andy Garbacz, School of Education; Robert Nix, School of Human Ecology; Jen Park-Mroch and Angela Flickinger, Institute for Health and Well-Being, Division of Extension

### **Connecting Cultural Values and Indigenous Research Towards Food System Resilience**

The tribal nations within the boundaries of Wisconsin increasingly face environmental challenges that threaten Native food systems and community resilience. At the same time, Wisconsin Tribes are developing and implementing innovative food system transformation efforts to enhance community food security, access to culturally-appropriate foods and a return to traditional food economies. This project aims to engage tribal nations and a broad network of partners to co-create an understanding of high-priority, Indigenous-led research, education and outreach projects to help Wisconsin Tribes sustain and expand food sovereignty in the face of the state's environmental challenges. The 28-person team will focus on five areas: Indigenous crop and livestock; community food systems and nutrition; wild rice; maple sugaring; and evaluation, communications and public participation.

*Project leaders:* Tricia Gorby, Natural Resources Institute Director, Division of Extension; Dan Cornelius, Outreach Program Manager, UW Law School's Great Lakes Indigenous Law Center and College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

### **Community Health Workers to Support Whole Family Health and Well-Being**

Health inequities in rural areas are difficult to address because of limited access to healthcare and public health services and infrastructure constraints. Within rural communities, additional barriers exist for people with limited income and people of color, resulting in patterns of poorer health outcomes. This project will leverage UW–Madison Division of Extension's Health & Well-Being Institute's expertise and community assets to establish a network of Extension-based Community Health Workers (CHW), public health workers who are trusted members of a community, who can respond to emerging needs in rural communities using a whole family lens. Researchers will recruit, hire, train and supervise CHWs from rural and tribal communities in Wisconsin, providing workforce development and strengthening leadership among rural and tribal members.

*Project leaders:* Amber Canto, Health and Well-Being Institute Director, Division of Extension; Larissa Duncan and Zoua Vang, Professors and Extension Specialists, School of Human Ecology