

NASDA-EPA
Historically Underserved
Farmer Grant Program



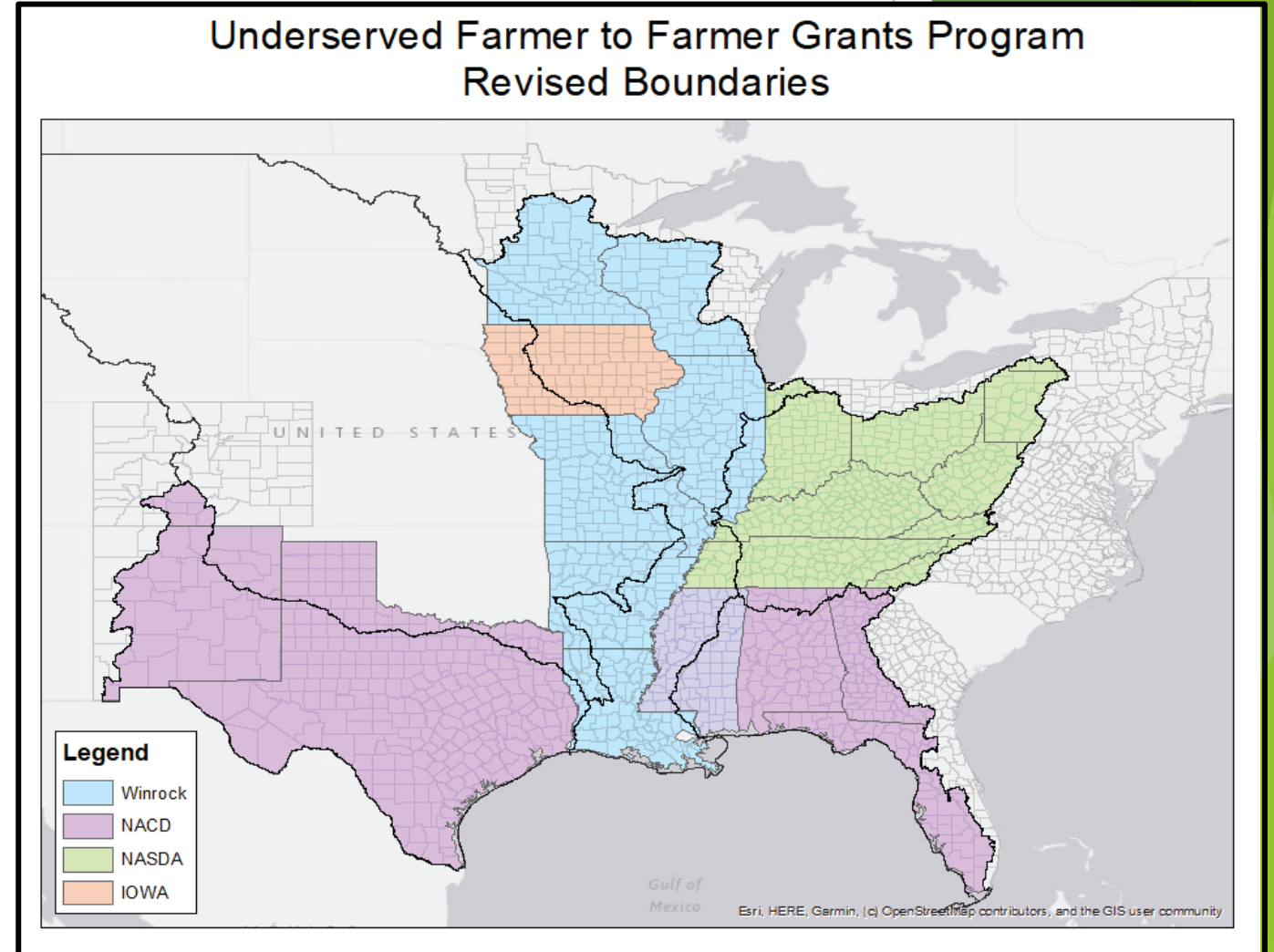
Executive Summary

- ▶ The NASDA Foundation has been awarded a **\$3 million** cooperative agreement by the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Gulf of Mexico Division**.
- ▶ We will fund up to **16 sub-awards** to organizations in **EPA's Ohio-Tennessee Region**, to help **underserved farmers** improve water quality, habitat resilience and information exchange to benefit the ecosystems within the Gulf of Mexico Watershed.
- ▶ Projects are expected to average **\$125,000** in total funds (\$225,000 maximum; \$75,000 minimum), with a duration of up to **3 years**.
- ▶ The **two-phase application process** (pre-application, full application) will open in March **2023**.

Other Grant Awardees

- ▶ **Iowa Department of Natural Resources**
- ▶ **National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)**
- ▶ **Winrock International (Wallace Center)**

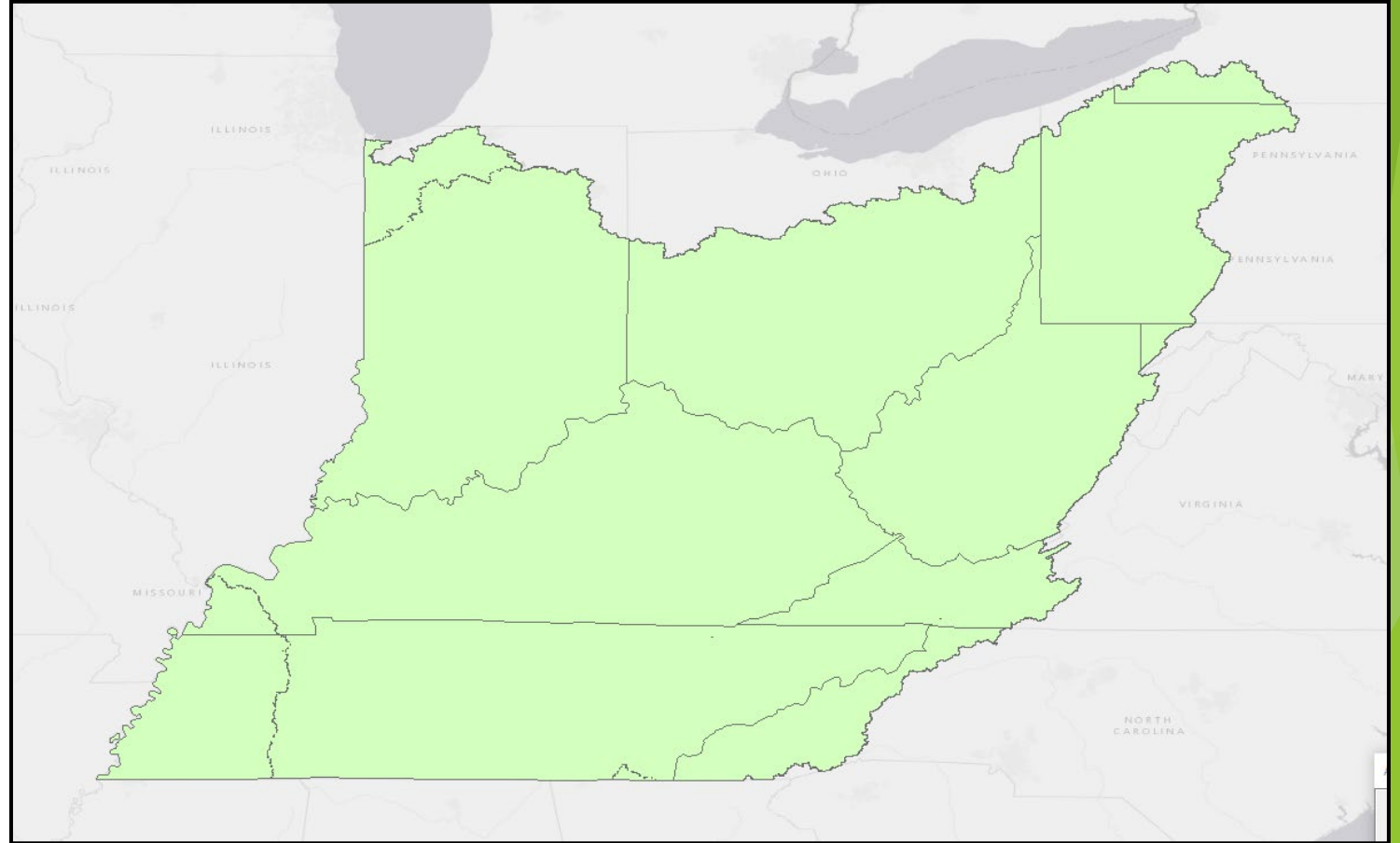
NASDA is collaborating with the other awardees to meet EPA's goal of reducing nonpoint pollution in the Gulf of Mexico.



EPA Water Quality Enhancement Program

Ohio/Tennessee Region

- Kentucky
- Tennessee
- Indiana (Most)
- Ohio (Most)
- North Carolina (Western)
- Virginia (Western)
- West Virginia (Western)
- Pennsylvania (Western)
- Maryland (Garrett County)
- New York (Allegany, Cattaraugus & Chatauqua Counties)



Sub-Awards

- ▶ NASDA will fund **sub-awards** to organizations who work directly with **underserved farmers** to:
 - ▶ Provide **technical assistance** to protect and improve water quality and habitat, and
 - ▶ **Implement programs** to prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution, including nutrients and plastic pollution.
- ▶ NASDA will work with an independent third-party organization, **Grant Partners**, with experience designing, building, deploying, and managing federal sub-award grant programs utilizing **Fluxx Software**.

Potential Sub-Awardees Include

- ▶ Beginning Farmer Organizations
- ▶ Conservation Districts
- ▶ Institutions of Higher Learning
- ▶ Local State Government Agencies
- ▶ Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) & non-profit organizations as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 200 with influence on underserved farmers.
- ▶ Tribal Nations
- ▶ Veteran Farmer or Rancher Groups

Environmental Results

- ▶ The overall environmental goal of our project plan is to add a significant contribution of effort and data toward exceeding the long-term performance goal of *EPA's Draft Strategic Plan, Goal 5, Objective 5.2, Protect and Restore Waterbodies and Watersheds*:

“By September 30, 2026, increase by an additional 41,000 square miles the area of watersheds with surface water meeting standards that previously did not meet standards from the July 7, 2021 baseline.”

- ▶ Some of the measurable environmental outcomes and outputs will include **improved water quality** (reductions in excess nutrients, turbidity, total suspended solids; improvements in dissolved oxygen, pH, and temperature); **habitat enhanced, protected, and restored**; **pollutant load reductions** (nutrients, sediment) in the Gulf of Mexico watershed; and **nitrogen, phosphorus, or sediment discharge avoided**.

Eligible Activities

- ▶ **Outreach and technical assistance**
- ▶ **Financial assistance**
- ▶ **Collecting and analyzing data**
- ▶ **Sharing results and lessons learned**
- ▶ **Organizational planning to expand reach with underserved farmers**

As long as they advance:

- Water quality initiatives,
- Habitat restoration, or
- Sustainable forest management

Process Details

- ▶ We plan to implement a Two-Phase Application Process with:
 - 1) An initial phase focused on a **project summary**, **organizational capability**, and a **risk assessment** of applicants.
 - 2) Applications that pass the first phase will be invited to submit a full application, including the **technical aspects of proposed projects**.
- ▶ This program **does not require matching funds**; proposed project can be funded at 100%.
- ▶ Funds from this program may be **combined with other programs**, if there is documentation of no duplication of payment.
- ▶ NASDA will **reimburse sub-awardees** for eligible expenses on a **quarterly basis**. If necessary, **up to 50% of project costs may be advanced** with the remainder being reimbursed upon completion of the project.

Phase 1 Pre-Applications & Evaluation Criteria

- ▶ Proposed projects must meet the goals and requirements of the **NASDA-EPA Historically Underserved Farmer Grant Program**.
- ▶ Must have a **System for Award Management** and a **Unique Entity Identifier**.
- ▶ **Prior experience** in managing sub-awards including audit and monitoring results.
- ▶ Ability to **report** on activities on a **quarterly basis**.
- ▶ Ability to protect data from **cybersecurity** issues.
- ▶ Competency of sub-awardees to generate **Environmental Measurement Data**.
- ▶ Ability to develop and implement a **Quality Assurance Project Plan**.

Phase 2 Full Applications & Evaluation Criteria

- ▶ Project provides significant benefits to **historically underserved farmers, including limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers.**

USDA's definition of Underserved Farmers

- ▶ Projects must comply with the **Clean Water Act Section 104(b)(3).**
- ▶ The **scorecard criteria** will be developed with input from EPA staff, project advisory committee, and NASDA.

2022-23 Timeline

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
November 11, 2022	EPA formal announcement
November 2022 - January 2023	Development of Grant Program Goals
February/March	Promotion and Outreach
March 1-30	Phase 1: Pre-Application Period
March	Establish the Advisory Committee
April	Phase 1 Application Evaluation
May	Phase 2: Full Application Period
June	Final Evaluation of proposals and selection of Sub-Awardees
July	Sub-Award announcements
August	Project Start Date

Advisory Committee

- ▶ NASDA will establish a **four (4) member** project advisory committee, who will be compensated for their time.
- ▶ This committee will be made up of individuals with subject matter experience in **water quality improvement** and **providing habitat resilience technical assistance**, as well as experience in working with **underserved farmers**.
- ▶ We would expect this advisory committee to meet virtually **2–3 times** between April and June 2023.
- ▶ Most importantly, this committee will assist in the **review and selection of sub-award projects**.
- ▶ NASDA is **requesting recommendations** from State Departments of Agriculture in the project region for this Advisory Committee.

Next Steps



Further development of NASDA-EPA Grant Landing Page:

www.nasda.org/epa



On-line Application

RFA available in PDF

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