







**Wisconsin Certified Sites Program**  
2025 Program Materials



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# Program Overview

# Program Overview



**As companies make decisions about where to locate, the timeline for making those decisions is getting tighter.** Recognizing this trend, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) implemented the Wisconsin Certified Sites Program to help communities proactively assess and prepare properties for industrial development.

Site Selection Group (SSG) has been engaged by WEDC to evaluate properties and assess the strengths and weaknesses of a property for development. **SSG's philosophy to product development is to take a comprehensive approach**, understanding the community assets and surroundings to make meaningful recommendations to improve the property within the context of which it operates. To that end, SSG has also been engaged to do a high level, property-specific, labor and target industry analysis to complement the review of the site's physical characteristics.

**The goal of the program is to gauge the potential for corporate investment at the property, make recommendations for development for the community to consider, and to gather detailed site information for WEDC and the community to effectively market the property. Another key aspect of the program is to ensure appropriate due diligence files are available to support industrial recruitment.** WEDC requires that participating sites meet all program requirements within eighteen (18) months of their selection for participation or WEDC reserves the right to cease all certification activities.

**The program is designed to be similar to a real corporate project.** The following pages include instructions for submission, an outline of evaluation guidelines, and a list of required attachments. SSG is excited to partner with WEDC and your community on this exciting product development initiative. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our team at any point in the process if you have questions.

# Instructions for Submission

# Accepted Site Instructions for Submission

- Upon being selected to participate in the program, please complete the *RFI Questionnaire* (Excel file attached) and provide the **Required Attachments**, listed in this document beginning on Slide 10. **Note:** *SSG realizes that Due Diligence Documentation may not be entirely complete at the time of the submission. While these reports are **required** to achieve certification, they are not required to be complete prior to the site visit and SSG will work with community to ensure any outstanding documentation is submitted following the site visit.*
- SSG is requesting an electronic copy only of the *RFI Questionnaire* and *Required Attachments*. These can be uploaded to Dropbox (or similar FTP site) and SSG will download the files – no need to send hard copies!
- Please submit all items in the order requested in separate files, with the appropriate file names (see Slide 11).
- Please send a link to your electronic submission **no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>**, to:

**Sarah Bownds**  
[sarah.bownds@wedc.org](mailto:sarah.bownds@wedc.org)  
 (608) 210-6769

**Andrew Ratchford**  
[aratchford@siteselectiongroup.com](mailto:aratchford@siteselectiongroup.com)  
 (864) 759-0324

**Rod McCants**  
[mccants@siteselectiongroup.com](mailto:mccants@siteselectiongroup.com)  
 (214) 271-0583

- SSG will then conduct a desktop evaluation of the *RFI Questionnaire* and *Required Attachments* and contact the community to clearly outline expectations for the site visit (attendees, agenda, schedule, etc.).
- Please submit any relevant past work completed on the property or community (e.g., target industry analyses, workforce analyses, due diligence reports, etc.). SSG will incorporate existing work and consider the property in the broader context of the ED organization’s goals and strategies.
- **Please see the schedule at right for critical dates and mark your calendars accordingly.**

2025 Wisconsin Certified Sites Program	
Schedule	Dates
RFI and Program Materials Sent	Thursday, May 8 <sup>th</sup>
Deadline for RFI Submission	Tuesday, June 10
Site Visits	Week of July 7 <sup>th</sup> or the following
Site Assessment and Strategy Report	August 2025

# Certification Process Flow

## SITE AND COMMUNITY READINESS EVALUATION PHASE

## CERTIFICATION COMPLETION PHASE



Documentation Complete?	Certified Sites	Submittal
Green	Documentation/Criteria has been met	
Yellow	Outstanding documentation - follow-up needed	
Red	Documentation/Criteria CANNOT be met	
Certified Site Requirement		Submittal/Documentation
Green	Proposed property must be clearly identified and delineated	Aerial photograph with clear and consistent property boundaries shown throughout submission documentation
Green	Required	KMZ/KML file that has the property boundaries outlined
Yellow	Required	Complete RFI Questionnaire
Green	Required	General Location Map
Green	Required	Map of Adjoining Businesses Nearby
Green	Entire site must be wholly controlled by a single owner with documented willingness to sell and industrial user	Title attorney opinion or title insurance must be submitted that shows clear title to the property (the title search must encompass at least the prior 50-year history). Documentation must indicate: The owner has a saleable interest in the property; Any restrictions on the use of the property covenants or easements; and any liens that may exist against the property.
Green	Current asking price for sale or lease of the land must be indicated	Letter from property owner/option holder stating that site is for sale and asking price

**CERTIFICATION TRACKER**

WEDC requires that participating sites meet all program requirements within eighteen (18) months of their selection for participation or WEDC reserves the right to cease all certification activities.

# Evaluation Guidelines



# Evaluation Guidelines

The Wisconsin Certified Sites Program evaluates properties at varying levels of development - from raw land, to developed industrial parks, to brownfield development. A property does not need to meet all of the following Evaluation Guidelines to participate in the program, but the below will be used as the lens through which SSG evaluates the property. These guidelines are typical of a corporate site selection project. **Please note that properties previously certified under the Wisconsin Certified Sites Program are not eligible for participation in the 2025 round of the program.**

## PROPERTY AVAILABILITY

1. The property should be at least 20 acres of contiguous, developable land available for sale or lease (with a documented price and terms) to prospective industrial investors. If the property is only available for lease, the lease term should be a minimum of 25 years. The community should either own the property or have an exclusive option on the property.

## PROPERTY DEVELOPABILITY

2. The developable acreage for each property must be clearly defined. "Developable" acres are those that have no impediments to development, or mitigation for any known impediments can be accomplished in less than 90 days. The property's developable acreage should:
  - Be located outside of the 100- and 500-year flood zone.
  - Be free of recognized environmental conditions that would impact the development of a site or use of an existing building.
  - Be free of wetlands **or** be able to be mitigated within 90 days.
  - Be free of state and federal threatened, and endangered species **or** be able to be mitigated within 90 days.
  - Be free of areas of archaeological or historical significance **or** be able to be mitigated within 90 days.
  - Have soils compatible with industrial development.

# Evaluation Guidelines

## ZONING

3. The property should be zoned appropriately or be able to be rezoned for industrial use within 90 days (if applicable). The surrounding properties should also be compatible with industrial uses.

## TRANSPORTATION

4. The property should be directly served or be able to be served by a road(s) that is compatible with standards for tractor-trailer access (80,000 pounds / 20,000 pounds per axle).
5. To market the property as rail-served, the property should be served or be able to be served within 18 months by rail.

## UTILITY ADEQUACY

6. Electric: The property should be served or be able to be served by electric infrastructure. For improvements needed, cost and schedule estimates should be included with the submission. Sites should be able to support a minimum of 1MW of capacity with improvements.
7. Natural Gas: The property should be served or be able to be served by natural gas infrastructure. Sites should be able to support a minimum of 10 mcf/hr of capacity with improvements.
8. Water: The property should be served or be able to be served by water infrastructure and a public water system. Sites should be able to support a minimum of 75,000 GPD of capacity with improvements.
9. Wastewater: The property should be served or be able to be served by wastewater infrastructure and a public wastewater treatment plant. Sites should be able to support a minimum of 75,000 GPD of capacity with improvements.
10. Telecom: The property should be served or be able to be served by fiber telecommunications infrastructure.

# Required Attachments

# Required Attachments

To assist SSG in efficiently reviewing all the critical materials, please submit items in the order listed below. Please submit electronic attachments as separate files, clearly labeling each file with the Attachment number and title listed below. For example, the first attachment should be named "1 – RFI Questionnaire", and the second attachment "2 – General Location Map", etc.

All maps should show a scale, a directional arrow, clear boundaries of the site (boundaries should clearly show only the property being proposed for evaluation), and a date. All letters should be on the appropriate letterhead and include a date and a signature. A "Map Guide" instructional document and example is available online at [Certified Sites in Wisconsin | WEDC](#). These documents demonstrate maps that meet WEDC Certified Sites guidelines. Additionally, these documents clearly delineate between requirements and best practices. An editable copy of the Map Guide is also available for participants to use in their map development.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1. RFI Questionnaire** – (please complete and submit this excel file that includes several tabs as one collated excel file – please do not PDF.)
- 2. General location map** – A statewide map indicating where the site is located in the state.
- 3. KML/KMZ of Property Boundary** – please provide a KML/KMZ boundary file (accessible by Google Earth) outlining the property boundaries. *Note: KML/KMZ files allow site selectors to quickly and accurately load your site's boundaries into a geographical information software (GIS). Many site selectors and corporates ask for this as part of their site intake.* [Instructional Video Link](#)
- 4. Aerial photograph** - with property boundaries clearly identified.
- 5. USGS Historical map** - with property boundaries identified.
- 6. General transportation map** - including roads, rail, ports, and commercial service airports within a 45-mile radius of the property. The 45-mile radius must be visually represented on the map.
- 7. Map of adjoining and nearby businesses** - with businesses identified (if applicable).
- 8. Topographic map** - with property boundaries and clearly defined contour intervals of 2 ft. or less

# Required Attachments

## PROPERTY AVAILABILITY

- 9. Property availability** - Documentation that ensures that the property is available. This should be one of the following:
- An appropriate real estate listing agreement authorizing an agent to offer the property for sale;
  - An exclusive option to purchase; **-or-**
  - If the property owner is also the applicant, a letter from the owner (or its authorized representative) indicating the intent to sell or lease the property for industrial uses.
- 10. Owner letter with price** - Letter from the owner or controlling entity stating a price and conditions of a sale or lease. (This letter can be combined with documentation in Attachment 9, if applicable.) This letter will require annual updates to reflect changing price and contract conditions.
- 11. Deed Packet** - The deed packet should include deeds documenting current ownership, all easements and property subdivisions.
- 12. County tax parcel map** - with tax parcel identification numbers depicting the location and property boundaries.

## SITE DEVELOPABILITY

- 13. FEMA flood map(s)** - with panel number indicated and property boundaries identified.
- 14. National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map** - with property boundaries identified.
- 15. County soil survey** - with property boundaries identified.

## TRANSPORTATION

- 16. Site Access and Route to Interstate Map(s)** – Map(s) indicating the route from the property to the closest interstate, as well as depicting road access to the site. These maps can be combined or individual maps.
- 17. Rail** (if applicable) - Map of existing rail infrastructure, letter of support from the rail provider, and/or proposed costs and timing of rail spur extension/development

# Required Attachments

## ZONING

- 18. Zoning map** - Map illustrating the current zoning for the property and surrounding area with property boundaries identified. If there is no zoning in the jurisdiction, attach a comprehensive or long-range plan and/or map.
- 19. Zoning description** - If there is zoning in the jurisdiction, provide the property's current zoning description and outline the acceptable uses. If the zoning for the area surrounding the property is different from the zoning for the property itself, a description of allowable uses under current zoning classifications for the surrounding property should also be submitted.
- 20. Codes, Covenants, and Restrictions (CCRs)** – Copy of (or draft form) Codes, Covenants, and Restrictions (CCRs). **SSG strongly recommends community establish CCRs, but it is not a requirement for the program.**

## UTILITIES

- 21. Infrastructure map(s)** - Infrastructure map(s) with property boundaries identified indicating the following:
  - The location and voltage of the nearest electric infrastructure serving the property.
  - The location and size of the nearest natural gas distribution line(s) serving the property.
  - The location and size of the nearest water line(s) serving the property.
  - The location and size of the nearest wastewater line(s) serving the property.
  - The location of the nearest telecommunication infrastructure serving the property.

*Please note that Attachment 1 – RFI Questionnaire will require participation from various stakeholders including Electric, Natural Gas, Water, Wastewater, and Telecom utilities, please coordinate with the appropriate utility providers to ensure accurate information.*

*Multiple utility demand scenarios are represented in the RFI. At least one scenario (minimum scenarios) must be completed in the RFI for certification. **Completed RFI questionnaires are required to achieve certification.***

# Due Diligence Documentation

DOCUMENTATION	PROGRAM REQUIREMENT
<b>Documentation of Control/Ownership</b>	<p>Documentation that ensures that the property is available. This should be one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An appropriate real estate listing agreement authorizing an agent to offer the property for sale;</li> <li>• An exclusive option to purchase; -or-</li> <li>• If the property owner is also the applicant, a letter from the owner (or its authorized representative) indicating the intent to sell or lease the property for industrial uses.</li> </ul>
<b>Title Search</b>	<p>Title attorney opinion or title insurance must be submitted that shows clear title to the property (the title search must encompass at least the prior 50-year history). Documentation must indicate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The owner has a saleable interest in the property.</li> <li>Any restrictions on the use of the property covenants or easements; and</li> <li>Any liens that may exist against the property</li> </ol>
<b>Phase I Environmental Site Assessment</b>	<p>A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment report by a qualified professional that meets all US Environmental Protection Agency standards in effect at the time the assessment was conducted, specifies if “Recognized Environmental Conditions” (REC’s) were found, and definitively recommends no further action. If any environmental conditions or concerns were identified by the Phase 1 ESA or other studies, the actions conducted as follow-up and results must be specified. For instance, a Limited Phase II ESA may be recommended and need to be completed prior to certification. SSG will discuss with community as issues arise on a case-by-case basis. Such a report requires a field survey. <b>Report should have been completed within the past five (5) years and cover the entirety of the acreage evaluated during the certification process.</b> Sites that have an approved Wisconsin DNR work plan such as a Remedial Action Plan or commensurate arrangement with another state agency may be deemed exempt from the 5-year age requirement subject to review.</p>
<b>Wetlands Delineation</b>	<p>Report by a qualified professional which delineates all streams, bodies of water, wet-lands, floodplains, and other features of the site that may be covered by the “Waters of the United States” Rule. Please note that such features are defined not by just permanent or periodic flowing or standing water, but also by the presence/absence of certain vegetation, soil types, and physical or hydrological conditions. If such water features are present on or close to the site, the report must provide preliminary indication of their impact on future development. Such a report requires a field survey. <b>Report should have been completed within the past five (5) years and cover the entirety of the acreage evaluated during the certification process.</b></p>
<b>Jurisdictional Determination letter from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</b>	<p>Desirable but not essential for delineation to have been approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers; in any case, proof that request for a Jurisdictional Determination (JD) letter has been submitted must be provided. Proof of submittal to the Corps will be sufficient for certification, and once the JD letter is received, please send to SSG. <b>The expiration of certification will be determined upon the JD request documentation. Once/If a JD letter is received, SSG can extend the expiration of certification to match the date of that JD letter.</b> If a JD is not warranted due to the lack of jurisdictional features, a letter on letterhead may be submitted from a qualified professional outlining the reasons for which a JD is not required.</p>

# Due Diligence Documentation

DOCUMENTATION	PROGRAM REQUIREMENT
<b>Threatened and Endangered Species Survey</b>	Endangered Resources Review (ERR) by DNR or a Certified Reviewer. If any concerns are identified by the ERR, follow-up studies may be recommended. SSG will discuss with community as issues arise on a case-by-case basis. Should WDNR deem an ERR to be unnecessary, such a notice including reasons for why the ERR is unnecessary and a description or map of the site reviewed should be provided on signed WDNR letterhead.
<b>Archaeological and Historical Investigation</b>	A report by a qualified professional documenting appropriate study of the site to determine presence of cultural resources, historic significance of the site, and other similar findings in accord with all current US and state laws, regulations, and standards. Such a report requires a field survey including shovel tests. <b>Report should have been completed within the past five (5) years and cover the entirety of the acreage evaluated during the certification process.</b>
<b>Geotechnical Assessment</b>	Geotechnical Exploration should include one boring or sounding per 50 developable acres, but no less than five borings or soundings on total acreage. Borings must be at least 25 feet in depth. The study should also indicate the Seismic Site Class per the current International Building Code (IBC). Such a report requires a field survey. <b>Report should have been completed within the past 15 years and cover the entirety of the acreage evaluated during the certification process.</b>
<b>Master Site Plan</b>	Master Site Plan that illustrates the location of park access roads, rail, easements, utilities (existing and proposed), and proposed lot locations, boundaries, and sizes (total and developable acreage). The Master Site Plan should take into consideration and illustrate the location of development limitations, such as wetlands, floodplains, and permanent easements. Total Lot acreage, total developable acreage, and total acreage should be listed.
<b>ALTA Survey</b>	Boundary survey covering the entire acreage of the property that adheres to standards developed by the American Land Title Association (ALTA) and the National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS).
<b>Fire Insurance Classification Rating</b>	Fire Insurance Classification Rating Letter
<b>FAA Flight Plan</b>	FAA produced flight path map or letter from FAA indicating maximum building height on site (if site is less than two (2) miles from airport.)

***Please note that all due diligence documentation must cover the entirety of the acreage evaluated during the certification process. For instance, if property is 100 total acres, but due diligence documentation only covers 50 acres, only 50 acres will be eligible for certification. Please let SSG know if you have any questions on this prior to completion of due diligence studies.***



# Next Steps: 2025 Key Dates

2025 Wisconsin Certified Sites Program	
<i>Schedule</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Program Webinar	Monday, March 17 <sup>th</sup>
Letter of Interest Due	Friday, May 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Program Materials Distributed	Thursday, May 8 <sup>th</sup>
Deadline for RFI Submission	Tuesday, June 10 <sup>th</sup>
Site Visits	Week of July 7 <sup>th</sup> or the following
Site Assessment and Strategy Report	August 2025

### ***How to Apply***

Interested applicants must submit a [Letter of Interest](#) and supporting documents by **Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>**. Applicants will be notified of the invitation to proceed with certification by the week of May 8<sup>th</sup>.

# Fee Structure

Wisconsin Certified Sites		
Phase	Fee Structure	Scope of Services
<b>Technical Site Readiness &amp; Community Preparedness Evaluation</b>	<p><b><u>Community Contribution</u></b> \$7,500 per site</p> <p><b><u>WEDC Contribution</u></b> \$7,500 per site + additional funds for management and marketing of the program</p>	<p><b>Deliverables Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desktop Site Review</li> <li>• On-site visit</li> <li>• Executive Summary</li> <li>• Strategic Development Plan</li> <li>• Technical Site Readiness Evaluation</li> <li>• Target Industry Assessment</li> <li>• Labor Assessment</li> <li>• Competitive Assessment</li> <li>• Certification process coordination</li> <li>• On-going support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Due Diligence Documentation</b> (Community's responsibility)</p>	<p><b>NOT INCLUDED IN THIS COST BREAKDOWN AND VARIES DRASTICALLY BY SITE</b></p> <p>(It is important to get a quote for these due diligence studies early in the process to understand the total cost of certification. Procurement processes should begin as soon as your site is accepted into the program)</p>	<p><b>Due Diligence Documentation Required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of control and ownership</li> <li>• Title Search/Title Insurance (50-year history)</li> <li>• Phase I Environmental Site Assessment</li> <li>• Wetlands Delineation and Jurisdictional Determination request/letter from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</li> <li>• Threatened and Endangered Species Survey</li> <li>• Archaeological and Historical Investigation</li> <li>• Geotechnical Assessment</li> <li>• Master Conceptual Plan</li> <li>• Alta Survey</li> <li>• Fire Insurance Classification Rating</li> <li>• FAA Flight Plan (if applicable)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Total Program Cost to Applicant</b></p>	<p><b>\$7,500 + Costs of Due Diligence</b></p>	<p>Communities are responsible for \$7,500 (paid to SSG) + costs of due diligence for the certification program. WEDC matches the \$7,500 per site fee, provides overall program management-level funding support, and covers SSG's travel expenses.</p>

**BOTTOM LINE TO APPLICANT:**  
**\$7,500 + Costs of Due Diligence**