

# Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership

## FY2024 Request for Proposals for National Fish Habitat Partnership Funds

### Application and Selection Guide

#### Summary:

The Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership (MSBSHP), ([www.matsusalmon.org](http://www.matsusalmon.org)) is announcing its annual invitation for fish habitat conservation project proposals for Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) [National Fish Habitat Partnership](#) (NFHP) funding opportunities. As one of 20 federally recognized National Fish Habitat Partnerships ([www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org)), MSBSHP is eligible to solicit projects for potential project funding made available to grantees through the passage of [America's Conservation Enhancement Act](#) (ACE Act) and with oversight and direction of the NFHP Board.

The MSBSHP was officially recognized as a national fish habitat partnership in 2008, one of the first four FHPs in the country. It was formed to provide a broad-based coordinated response to increasing impacts on salmon habitat from human use and development in the Mat-Su Basin. Utilizing a collaborative, cooperative and non-regulatory approach that brings together diverse stakeholders, the Partnership has over 65 partner organizations that include federal, state, local and Tribal governments, non-profit, business, fishing interests and more. Partners share a common vision for thriving fish, healthy habitats and vital communities co-existing in the Mat-Su Basin.

This guidance includes information for preparing and submitting a project proposal through the Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership. The MSBSHP Steering Committee is currently seeking project proposals that address the conservation activities and priorities identified in the Partnership's [2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan](#). With the passage of the [ACE Act](#), there are new timelines and modifications to our request for proposals (RFP) this year. Please read carefully.

Project proposals are due via email by 11:59pm (AKST) on Monday, **February 20, 2023**.

Applicants need to prepare and submit a project proposal that describes their project and its benefits for fish habitat. **A complete application submission includes both a Project Summary (Attachment 1 on page eight), and a Full Project Description (Attachment 2 page 10). Note, the Project Summary is completed online at [this link](#), with full applications submitted via email.**

Proposals submitted through this outreach request will be elevated to the MSBSHP Steering Committee, scored relative to the Partnership's Conservation Action Plan, NFHP allocation methodology and the ACE Act, and then routed to the NFHP Board for their review and potential selection based upon available FY24 NFHP funding opportunities. Accepted projects are further

submitted to the Department of Interior for final approval and funding subject to approved federal budgets.

NFHP funds can be used for on-the-ground habitat projects and related project assessment, design, monitoring and outreach activities. Eligible projects may include riparian or instream habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration; barrier removal or construction; range-wide population or watershed habitat assessments to prioritize and plan habitat conservation; and habitat-related community outreach and education actions.

Note that the signing of the ACE Act in October of 2020 introduces some new requirements for this RFP. For instance, **individual projects must meet a 1:1 non-federal match (cash or in-kind) requirement** – with the exception of Tribes who are exempt. Find a list of eligibility requirements on page 6.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *Who may apply for funding?*

Any individual or organization can apply who has the capacity to receive federal funds and satisfy funding reporting requirements. Go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) to learn more about federal funding requirements, additionally an overview of granting requirements is included in Appendix A included at the end of this document. If you want to become a [Mat-Su Salmon Partnership](#) partner, download the application from the website [www.matsusalmon.org](http://www.matsusalmon.org) and send to Jessica Speed ([jessica.speed@tu.org](mailto:jessica.speed@tu.org)). Click here to view [Partnership member list](#). MSBSHP partnership is not a requirement under this opportunity.

### *What types of projects may be funded?*

Projects eligible for funding are those that focus on objectives listed within the Partnership’s [2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan](#), with those addressing higher priority objectives receiving higher scores. The priority objectives for this year’s RFP have been identified by the Steering Committee and guided by the latest science, including through a science data gap analysis. The Partnership Science and Data Committee has identified two priority data gaps it hopes will be addressed by proposals in the RFP process. Scoring criteria for FY24 objectives is as follows:

Points	Priority	Objectives that Address: *Find more detail in the Partnership’s 2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan, pg. 6
20	High	CS2. Alteration of Riparian Areas CS3. Climate Change CS4. Culverts that Block Fish Passage CS5. Filling of Wetlands CS9. Loss or Alteration of Water Flow or Volume

		FY23 Priority Data Gaps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anadromous Waters Catalog (CS1, Obj. 1.1)</li> <li>• Floodplain Mapping (CS2, Obj.2.1)</li> </ul> *See priority data gap details below.
15	Medium	CS8. Large-scale Resource Development CS7. Aquatic Invasive Species CS6. Impervious Surfaces CS1. Overarching Applied Science Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obj. 1.2 – Habitat Quality</li> <li>Obj. 1.3 – Surface and Groundwater Studies</li> <li>Obj 1.4 – Water Quality Monitoring</li> </ul> CS11. Motorized Off-road Recreation
10	Low	CS10. Loss of Estuaries and Nearshore Habitats CS12. Wastewater Management

\*"CS" refers to "Conservation Strategies, and "Obj." refers to "Objective" found in the Partnership's [2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan](#).

\*Priority Data Gaps for FY24 RFP Process:

- 1) **Anadromous Waters Catalog:** By 2023, increase existing catalogued miles of anadromous waters by 10% (approximately 475 stream miles). Adding streams to the Anadromous Waters Catalog provides basic protections afforded under state law. Efforts to catalog anadromous fish should identify life stage information and document non-anadromous fish.
- 2) **Floodplain Mapping/Riparian Areas/Meander Belt Mapping: an accurate survey of flood plains, riparian areas and meander belts could help planners understand potential impacts from proposed developments.** Riparian areas are those transition areas between a stream bed and upland, including the floodplain of a stream/river. Meander belt is another term for the floodplain area of a stream and includes inactive channels that may be used in the future if the stream meanders to another path. Recommendation: focus activity on the identified 35 priority water bodies in the Mat-Su, and fastest growing areas (e.g. core area).

We encourage members to address these identified priority strategies and data gaps, which will receive additional points in the scoring process (see score sheet Attachment 3). The Steering Committee additionally encourages all projects to address climate change and applied science.

ACE Act requirements are specified for any project that includes land acquisition. Specifically, State of Alaska approval is required, and project proposers are required to provide an assessment demonstrating all other Federal, State, and local authorities for the acquisition of real property have been exhausted. See ACE ACT (congress.gov), page 28 noted under "Limitations."

The NFHP Board has approved the following FY24 National Conservation Priorities; of which all MSBSHP goals and objectives noted above qualify:

- Conserve waters and habitats where all processes and functions are operating within their expected range or natural variation
- Conserve hydrologic conditions for fish
- Conserve physical and living habitats and features that support viable and sustainable species and/or populations in impacted or at-risk systems
- Reconnect fragmented fish habitats
- Conserve water quality for fish
- Support the structure and function of Fish Habitat Partnerships
- Enhance recreational, commercial, subsistence, and traditional fishing opportunities when conducting projects that conserve fish habitat

Education and outreach projects that are relevant to the priority projects listed under the MSBSHP 2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan noted above are encouraged.

***What types of projects may NOT be funded?***

Projects that fall under permit compliance, mitigation, and political advocacy are not eligible.

***What are the funding limits for a proposal?***

There are no set minimums or maximums but funds are all subject to availability. While total federal funding appropriations are unknown at this time, it is envisioned that funding for this region may be within \$150,000 to \$250,000 and be available to cover 3-7 regional projects ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000, but larger projects will be considered. If you are submitting a higher dollar request, the Partnership Steering Committee recommends you articulate phased, or alternative options so that your project can still proceed if a lower funding amount is all that can be provided.

Approved projects through the NFHP Board and Department of Interior processes are expected to be announced in the fall of 2023. Successful applicants will be notified after funding is allocated, which may not be known until federal budgets are approved and this is likely to occur in the spring of 2024. It is highly recommended to speak with the MSBSHP Coordinator, listed below, prior to proposal submittal to discuss projects for applicability, feasibility, and general application assistance.

***What period of performance is allowed?***

One and two-year projects are encouraged, as previously Fish Habitat Partnerships have been evaluated and received NFHP funding eligibility based upon previous successful project completion under these timelines; however, no specific criteria is specified recognizing some important and highly valued projects may require additional time. Also, applicants should be aware that in order to accommodate challenges faced in the timeline of receiving notice of award, setting up project contracts and completing all work associated with the project additional time may be necessary. For example, and going by recent years, FY24 projects may be able to begin receiving project funds in early 2024; however due to complications of federal budget allocations and contract development these funds may not be fully awarded until summer or early fall of 2024. We recognize this

complicates the ability of on-the-ground projects to advance very far the first-year funding is available. Applicants are encouraged to discuss funding award and project timelines with the MSBSHP Coordinator in preparation of their proposal.

### ***What is cost sharing and is it required?***

For this project application, cost sharing refers to a ratio of matched or leveraged contributions for the proposal compared to the funding request. **A 1:1 (federal to nonfederal) cost share is required<sup>1</sup>** as total funds allocated under the ACE Act require a 1:1 federal to nonfederal match. Special consideration for projects led by Tribes is awaiting official language from national level, contact the MSSHP Coordinator with questions.

Cost sharing may be increased by broadening the number and contributions of partners involved in a proposal. Proposals demonstrating cost-sharing must include a distinction within their budget of funds that *match* and funds that *leverage* potential NFHP funds. Applicants are requested to list all sources of project cost-sharing including federal sources. Proposals with higher cost sharing will be scored at incrementally higher levels based on cost sharing amounts (e.g., 1:3, 1:2, 1:1).

**Match:** Match is non-federal funding or in-kind contributions. In-kind can be equipment, staff, supplies and volunteer time provided to the project if there are no federal ties to those funds. State agency funds can be used for the nonfederal match if labor and/or materials are not being charged to another federal grant. Once the grant funds are matched with nonfederal funds/in-kind, an unlimited amount of federal contributions to the project are allowed.

**Leverage:** Leverage refers to other contributions to a project and includes Federal, and non-federal funding that can be financially valued, but is not counted in the match. It also includes in-kind contributions or cash.

### ***When are proposals due?***

Proposals can be submitted from the date of this announcement to **Monday, February 20, 2023 11:59 pm Alaska time.**

### ***How do I submit a MSBSHP project proposal for funding?***

Submit a Project Summary (Attachment 1) online and email the full proposal to the MSBSHP Coordinator at [jessica.speed@tu.org](mailto:jessica.speed@tu.org) on or before the due date. Ensure you receive confirmation of receipt of your proposal by the deadline.

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<sup>1</sup> *Special note: Projects led by a Tribe have unique non-federal match considerations per the ACE Act. Any funds provided to a project in this case can be considered non-federal. Contact the MSBSHP Coordinator for additional details, interpretations from the ACE Act are still underway. Also, 5% of the total NFHP funding appropriation is set aside specifically for Tribal led projects.*

### ***Is there a format for a NFHP proposal?***

Yes. Please see Attachment 1- Project Summary and Attachment 2- Full Project Description, for project formatting guidelines. You are advised to draft your responses in the Project Summary worksheet in Attachment 1 and to copy/paste those responses into the online application form.

### ***What project criteria are expected?***

The following is a check list of project components necessary for applicants to address in order to be eligible to receive NFHP funding and include the most current interpretations from the ACE Act. These have been included and addressed in the Project Summary template in **Attachment 1**:

- Capabilities and experience of project proponents to implement successfully the proposed project;
- Fulfills a local or regional priority that is directly linked to the strategic plan of the Partnership;
- Addresses the national priorities established by the Board;
- Is supported by the findings of the habitat assessment of the Partnership and aligns or is compatible with other conservation plans;
- Identifies appropriate monitoring and evaluation measures and criteria;
- Provides a well-defined budget linked to deliverables and outcomes;
- Leverages other funds to implement the project (note 1:1 nonfederal match requirement indicated above);
- Addresses the causes and processes behind the decline of fish or fish habitats;
- Includes an outreach or education component that includes the local or regional community.

### ***What is expected for outreach?***

All projects require an outreach component, whether it is informing the public at a community meeting or creating a small article or news release in the local paper. All funded projects are also encouraged to present results through an oral presentation or poster at the annual Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium. An abstract describing activities and accomplishments with pictures of the project for the Partnership's website will be required as part of agreement submittals for all funded projects. In addition, annual progress and final reports submitted to USFWS are requested to be sent to the MSBSHP Coordinator to help the Partnership track progress toward goals in the Strategic Action Plan.

### ***Are support letters required?***

Landowner support letter(s) are required for any easement or restoration activity proposed. If your project is selected for funding, a signed landowner consent letter is required for on-the-ground restoration projects (template in Attachment 4) as well as a separate list of partners and their contact

information. Any additional support letters from partners for non-easement or restoration projects are encouraged but not required.

### ***What about project monitoring?***

Post-project monitoring is required and is scored as part of the selection process under 2. Technical Merit (G) found on the scoresheet. Applicants should review Appendix 12 of the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Strategic Action Plan for monitoring guidelines and discuss with the Partnership Coordinator if there are any questions.

### ***What criteria are used to accept and score proposals?***

The MSBSHP Steering Committee will use the scoring criteria listed in Attachment 3 to evaluate proposals which fall under four main categories: Resource Benefits, Technical Merit, Budget, and Timeline for Completion. **Please carefully review the criteria and point system** and note that there may be some modification to the scoring system used as a result of continued interpretation of the ACE Act and project requirements for NFHP funding.

### ***How will proposals be selected?***

Proposals shared through this outreach request will be elevated to the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee, scored relative to the Partnership's Strategic Action Plan, NFHP allocation methodology and ACE Act requirements (scoring spreadsheet included as Attachment 3) and routed to the NFHP Board for their review and potential selection based upon available FY24 funding opportunities. **The Steering Committee expects to complete the selection process by March 31, 2023** and may reach out to project proposers for additional clarity in project submissions. NFHP Board selected projects are due to the Department of the Interior under the ACE Act by July 1 annually.

### ***When will final project selections be made and funding become available?***

Funding for local projects is subject to federal agency budgets, and the NFHP program receiving federal funding in FY24. It is anticipated that for any approved projects, applicants can expect to be notified the status of their proposal in the fall of 2023. Funding appropriations to selected projects are anticipated to be available in the spring of 2024, however, final contracts may not be awarded until summer or fall of 2024. For additional information on receiving federal awards please review **Appendix A**.

**Contact for more information:** MSBSHP Coordinator – Jessica Speed (907)575-7818, email: [jessica.speed@tu.org](mailto:jessica.speed@tu.org)

### ***Are there any reporting requirements?***

Yes, there will be an annual progress and financial status reports with each project approved. Performance milestones will also be established for all projects. Specific reporting requirements will be described in the cooperative agreement with the selected applicant.

## Attachment 1 – Project Summary

Complete Attachment 1 online at [this link](#). Note: You can use the below template to pre-draft your responses to the RFP. Copy & paste these responses into the form at the above link.

Organization:	
Point of Contact:	
E-mail:	Phone Number:
Project Title (95 characters maximum):	
Project Start Date:	Project End Date:
Funding Request:	Non-federal match:
Other cost share contributions (leverage):	Project Total:
Project Location ( <i>please provide written location and one set of GPS coordinates in decimal format to 3 decimal places, if project will occur at multiple sites, only include the primary work location such as a main office or the primary work site</i> ):	
Project Summary (700 characters maximum):	
<b><i>Project Description</i></b>	
Resource Issue (Problem or Need) that Project Will Address (700 characters maximum):	
Conservation Actions & Project Outcomes (700 characters maximum):	
Project Methods (700 characters maximum):	
Measurable Goals & Objectives of the Project (700 characters maximum):	
Monitoring plan comparing pre and post project results and activities that allow for effective evaluation of project success (700 characters maximum):	



Outreach & Education (700 characters maximum):
Additional Outcomes/Benefits to Fish, Including Species Benefited (700 characters maximum):
<b><i>Additional Information</i></b>
Projects Linkage to a Specific Goal or Objective in the Partnership’s Strategic Action Plan Conservation Strategies:
Public Access – Describe How the Project Increases Public Access (250 words) <i>(The ACE Act places an emphasis on restoration efforts that will improve recreational fishing opportunities and public use of fish resources. Improvements in public access as a component of projects are also encouraged. Public access includes visual access as well as physical access. Please describe to what extent your project improves, sustains, or provides public access on an ongoing basis, for cultural purposes, or during special events)</i>
Describe how the Project Benefits Fishing Opportunities for the Public (250 words) <i>The ACE Act places an emphasis on restoration efforts that will improve recreational fishing opportunities. Describe how the project benefits salmon in a manner that leads to increased fishing opportunities for the public. (250 words)</i>
Key Project Personnel and their Relevant Experience:
Project Partners:
Is This Project Being Implemented by a Tribe or with Tribal Funds as a Source of Match?  Yes or No

## **Attachment 2 –Full Project Description**

\*Please use the following format for Mat-Su Salmon Partnership NFHP Proposals. Project description should be 3 to 8 pages in its entirety, using a readable font size (11 – 12).

**Cover Page:** (optional)

**Date:**

**Project title:**

**Geographic Location (including description and latitude and longitude):**

**NFHP funds requested:**

**Cost Sharing provided (match + leverage):**

**Project point of contact:** Organization name, contact name, title, phone number(s), and e-mail address.

### **Project abstract**

The project abstract describes the type and duration of activity that will take place with the NFHP funds. This should be a quarter to one-half page in length.

### **Detailed Project narrative**

The project narrative clearly identifies the issues the proposal will correct or help solve for the benefit of fish habitat. It must articulate the following information:

#### **1. Resource Benefits:**

- (A) Objectives – Which specific MSBSHP 2019 Strategic Action Plan priority objectives and/or data gaps identified on pages 2 and 3 of the application guidelines does your project address? State what will be accomplished with the funding. Assessment, education or other non-on-the-ground projects proposals should clearly relate to habitat conservation outcomes and state how they address strategic priorities of the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership.
- (B) Assessment of need and collaboration – Describe collaboration and coordination with partners and the need for the project in relation to broader plans. How does the proposal relate to and support broader landscape issues and larger initiatives (e.g. watershed plans, recovery plans, and multi-year projects, in addition to linkages to the FHP strategic plans). Lacking this information, a project may appear to be a localized treatment of symptoms that does not address root causes of habitat decline. Indicate if project is time sensitive.
- (C) Benefits – Describe benefits to specific species, short term and long-term resource benefits for Mat-Su Salmon and their habitat and social and economic benefits to Mat-Su communities. Indicate whether additional recreational access and/or additional fishing opportunities are provided through results of your project.
- (D) Indicate number of impacted acres, miles of stream or shoreline, or other quantifiable measures.

**2. Technical Merit**

- (E) **Methodology** – Clearly describe proposed methods and approach and identify whether funds will be used for engineering/design work, for construction or other purposes. Project proposals that propose the use of potentially controversial techniques, such as bank hardening by installing rip-rap, should explain why those techniques are appropriate in the specific situation.
- (F) **Implementation** - Proposed timeline, end date and a table containing schedule and description of milestones for the proposal that can be used to monitor project progress.
- (G) **Monitoring Plan** - A description of monitoring activities used to compare pre and post project results. Use Appendix 12 of the Strategic Action Plan for guidelines if applicable. For projects that require maintenance, include a description of ownership and maintenance responsibility.
- (H) **Applicant Qualifications** - Name and describe the qualifications and experience of key personnel and lead organization that will be responsible for the project. Please describe qualifications of project advisors, consultants and other project partners (organizations and/or individuals). Also describe or give examples of past similar work that exemplifies your people or organization’s ability to carry out this project, including past experience with federal funds and their success in completing federally funded projects in the past. *Note: projects that engage multiple partners are more likely to successfully reach 1:1 (federal to nonfederal) match.*
- (I) **Outreach** – Describe proposed public outreach activities.

**3. Budget table and narrative:**

The budget table should be a simple line-item budget designed so that reviewers can understand how funds will be spent. Line items typically include salary, contractual, equipment/supplies, and direct or indirect costs.

<b>Budget Item (Examples Below<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>NFHP Request</b>	<b>Non-federal Contributions Cash/In-kind (Match)</b>	<b>Other Contributions (Federal or non- federal) (Leverage)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Salary</b>				
<b>Travel</b>				
<b>Equipment/Supplies</b>				
<b>Contractual</b>				

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to SF424 series for applicable budget line items for your project <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424-instructions.html>

<b>Sub Total</b>				
<b>Administrative Overhead</b>				
<b>Total:</b>				

**TOTAL BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**Total Budget (NFHP Request + non-federal match contributions + other project contributions/leverage (federal and non-federal):**

(J) Budget Narrative - The budget narrative should state what entity will receive funding and implement the project. It should include discussion of each budget line item including direct cost items such as salaries, equipment, consultant services, subcontracts and travel, as well as cost sharing information (both match and leverage). Clearly identify whether the funds will be used for engineering/design work only, construction only, both, or some other activity. Applicants may cover new administrative costs but cannot include administrative costs incurred before project award.

Narrative should discuss the cost of the project compared to similar conservation activities in that area. While habitat project costs vary widely, project descriptions should at least address how improvements to the quality and quantity of habitat are good investments of funds, using a quantitative and frugal approach where possible.

Matching cost share should indicate who the funder is, if cash or in-kind support as well as status (secured, pending or unknown), and anticipated award date. Multi-year projects should have a breakdown of tasks and costs by year.

(K) Cost-Share Ratio - Cost share can be composed of both Federal and non-Federal sources and in-kind contributions, salary or cash. Indicate ratio of cost-share to funds requested. This includes volunteer hours and leveraged funds.

(L) Project Timeline for Completion - Describes the start and end dates for the project, and describes clear obtainable means to achieve goals, objectives, and conservation strategies including project implementation steps and tasks within proposed timelines (additional points will be awarded to projects completed in 1-2 years as this may be a scoring criteria used to evaluate MSBSHP for future NFHP funding eligibility)

**Additional information:**

Additional information might include photos, maps of project sites, design drawings, letters of support etc. These items do not count in the 8 page maximum proposal narrative limit.

### **Attachment 3 – Criteria Used to Score FY2024 NFHP Projects for the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership**

The scoring criteria form can be found [here](#) and is attached in an excel spreadsheet form to inform project applicants on the criteria and weighting anticipated to score projects by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee. New information on interpretations from the ACE Act and requirements for NFHP funded projects are anticipated during the call for project proposals. As a result, the scoring criteria may change.

Eligibility Must be able to answer "yes" to each of the following questions:

- Does proposal address one or more goals and objectives from the MSSHP Conservation Action Plan; indicate specific goals and objectives addressed
- Does project provide measurable benefits towards maintaining or restoring fish habitat?
- Proposal identifies appropriate monitoring and evaluation measures and criteria?
- Proposal provides a well-defined budget linked to deliverables and outcomes?
- Proposal includes outreach or education component?
- If proposal includes land acquisition, letters of approval from landowners including the State of Alaska are included?

**Attachment 4 – Landowner Consent Template:**

As relevant, landowner consent will be required with full proposals.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as [one of] the owner[s] of the property (street, location) with the MSB Tax ID numbers ((( Blank ))); ((( Blank ))); and ((( Blank ))), I agree to participate in the project being proposed and/or consent to the ((( restoration project, inspection, appraisal, and/or survey))) of the property being offered for consideration under the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership. I agree to allow members of the (((Blank Organization))), NFHP Program representatives, State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game or their designated staff to inspect the property at any mutually agreeable time for the purposes of this proposal. I understand I shall be notified in advance of all inspection visits.

I also understand that the project being proposed may not happen if the application does not meet the needs or qualifications of the National Fish Habitat Plan and is subject to availability of funds and ranking priority.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix A**

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Fish Habitat Partnership Program (NFHP) Application & Award Requirements October 2021**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will issue awards selected for funding under this program. Prior to award, entities selected for funding must complete all requirements and submit all documentation to the USFWS as described in this document.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act Statement**

#### ***OMB Control Number: 1018-0100, Expiration Date: 7/31/2021***

We are collecting this information in accordance with this program's authorizing legislation. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. The information you provide will be used as the basis for award and to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to a collection of information, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. We estimate that it will take you on average about 40 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, USFWS, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

### **Program Authority**

Awards under this program are made under the authority of the America's Conservation Enhancement Act—National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships ([Pub. L. 116-188 \[S. 3051\], 134 Stat. 924-938](#)).

Awards are made under the Assistance Listing Number and Title [15.608, "Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance"](#).

### **System for Award Management Registration and Unique Entity Identifier Requirements**

Entities selected for funding under this program must register in the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#) to do business with the federal government as a financial assistance recipient, which includes completion of the SAM.gov "Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations". Once registered in SAM.gov, recipients must maintain an active registration by renewing their registration at least annually through the life of their Federal award(s). The USFWS is prohibited from making an award until the anticipated recipient's required SAM.gov registration is complete. Entities already registered in SAM.gov should review their registration to confirm they are registered as a financial assistance recipient, which includes completion of the SAM.gov "Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations".

Before registering in [SAM.gov](#), all entities must obtain a unique entity identifier (UEI). Through April of 2022, UEIs are issued as Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) numbers by Dun & Bradstreet (D&B).

Requesting a DUNS number takes about 10 minutes. Receiving a DUNS number takes 1-2 business days when using the [D&B web form](#). For more information, see the [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) web page.

By April of 2022, the federal government will stop using the DUNS number to uniquely identify entities. At that point, entities doing business with the federal government will request a Unique Entity Identifier in [SAM.gov](#). For more information on this transition, see the U.S. General Service Administration’s [UEI Transition Update](#) web page. If seeking a UEI after April 2022, refer to the [SAM.gov website](#) for current instructions.

Please note there is no cost to obtain a UEI or register in SAM.gov. While there are third-party vendors who will charge a fee for assisting you with meeting these requirements, please be aware that you can obtain a DUNS number from [D&B](#) and register in [SAM.gov](#) for free. Help is also available for free from the system Help Desk. We recommend using the links in this document to access and bookmark the [D&B web form](#) and the [SAM.gov website](#). Using a web browser keyword search to find these sites may lead you to an unofficial third-party website made to look like the official site.

The only exception to the SAM.gov registration and UEI requirements is for individuals receiving funds as an individual unrelated to any business or organization they may own, operate, or work within.

### Grants Management System Registration Requirement

The USFWS uses [GrantSolutions](#) to manage our financial assistance program. Applicants selected for funding under this program must register in and conduct award business with the USFWS in GrantSolutions. To complete the application process and receive an award, your organization and organization officials must be established in GrantSolutions.

To register your organization in GrantSolutions, send an email to [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov) with the following information:

Subject: New Organization Request

- Organization name
- Point of contact first and last name, email, and phone number
- Organization type
- EUI (through April of 2022, provide your DUNS number)
- Organization EIN
- Address

Organizational details should match those in the organization’s SAM.gov registration. To establish organization official accounts and user role(s), complete a [Recipient User Account Request Form](#) for each official and email it to [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov). At a minimum, registered organizations must assign the “Authorizing Official” and the “Principal Investigator/Program Director” roles. Use the following role matrix to determine the appropriate role(s) to assign to organization officials.

**Table: Recipient GrantSolution (GS) Role to Task Matrix**

Task	Authorizing Official (ADO)	Principal Investigator, Program Director (PI/PD)	Support Specialist (GSS)	Financial Officer (FO)	Financial Support Staff (FSS)
Enter Applications, Amendments, Reports View Awards, View and Create Notes	X	X	X	X	X
Submit Applications, Amendments	X	X			
Submit Reports	X	X		X	



For more information, see the [GrantSolutions Recipient Training and FAQs](#) web page. For GrantSolutions registration, submission, and other assistance contact their Customer Support by telephone at 1-866-577-0771 or by email at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov).

## **Grants Payment System Registration Requirement**

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system. Entities selected for funding under this program must be registered to receive payments from the USFWS in the ASAP system. The USFWS cannot obligate award funds until this registration is complete. For ASAP registration instructions, see the USFWS [ASAP Payments Wiki](#).

## **Intergovernmental Review**

For U.S. state and local government applicants, a state intergovernmental review may be required prior to submission per [Executive Order 12372](#). To determine if this review is required, state and local government applicants must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC). The SPOC list is available on the [OMB Office of Financial Management's web page](#).

## **Application Requirements**

The USFWS will issue awards to the applicants selected for funding under this program. To receive an award, applicants selected for funding must submit a complete application package to the USFWS in GrantSolutions. Once selected projects are approved by the NFHP Board and Secretary of the Interior, applicants selected for funding will be sent additional instructions, a GrantSolutions Directed Announcement identification number where all application documentation must be submitted, and a submission deadline.

Application packages submitted to the USFWS in GrantSolutions must reflect the applicant's final, approved project scope and budget and include the following standard forms, documentation, and statements, as described below. The GrantSolutions Directed Announcement will provide all required standard forms unless otherwise indicated below. Submission in GrantSolutions of the standard forms requiring signature is the equivalent of a wet or digital signature.

### ***SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form***

All applicants must submit the Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. The form must be complete and signed by an Authorized Representative. The Authorized Representative's signature on this form represents their certification to the USFWS that the entity's financial management system meets [Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(2 CFR\) §200.302](#) financial management requirements. The non-Federal entity's financial management system must be sufficient to:

1. Permit the preparation of required reports
2. Trace funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that the entity has used such funds per Federal statutes, regulations, and terms and conditions of the Federal award
3. Provide for the requirements in [2 CFR §200.302\(b\)](#), and
4. Comply with the records retention and access requirements in [2 CFR §§200.334-337](#).

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

When completing the SF-424 Application form, enter only the amount requested from this Federal

program in Box 18a, Estimated Federal Funding. Include any other Federal sources of funding in Box 18e. Estimated Other Funding and identify any such sources and amounts in the required [Budget Narrative](#).

### ***SF 424D, Assurances for Construction Programs form***

For construction projects, applicants must submit as signed and dated SF-424D, “Assurances for Construction Programs” form.

### ***SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs form***

For non-construction projects, applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A, “Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs” form. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to [Federal award cost principles in 2 CFR 200](#). Show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. In “Section A - Budget Summary”, enter the funding requested from this Federal program in the first row. Enter funding requested or received from any other Federal program(s) for this project in subsequent row(s). Enter each Federal program’s Assistance Listing Number in the corresponding fields on the form. For this program’s Assistance Listing Number, see the [Program Authority](#) section of this document.

### ***SF-424C, Budget Information for Construction Programs form***

For construction projects, applicants must complete and submit the SF-424C “Budget Information for Construction Programs”. Show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding.

### ***SF-429, Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish Real Property forms***

For projects that include acquisition of real property, applicants must complete and submit the SF-429, “Real Property Status Report (Cover Page)” and the SF-429-B, “Real Property Status Report Attachment B (Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish)” forms. These forms are required when real property will be acquired under the award with Federal funds, with recipient cost share or matching funds, or as a third-party in-kind contribution. The SF-429 forms will not be available in GrantSolutions. Applicants must download the forms from the Grants.gov Post-Award Reporting Forms web page and then complete and submit them as attachments to the application in GrantSolutions.

### ***Project Narrative***

Applicants must upload their final approved project narrative in GrantSolutions. Project narratives must provide enough information to support completion of required environmental compliance reviews.

### ***Budget Narrative***

Applicants must provide a budget narrative that describes and justifies requested budget items and costs. Describe any [items of costs that require prior approval](#) under the [Federal award cost principles](#), including any subawarding, transferring, or contracting out work anticipated under the award. Describe how the SF-424 Budget form “Object Class Category” totals were determined. If equipment previously purchased with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source. Identify any third-party cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project. For in-kind contributions, identify the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to determine the total value. See [2 CFR §200.306](#) for more information.

## ***Indirect Costs Information and Statement***

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization they may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, you must not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

For all other entities, the Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the Office of Management and Budget. If the Department of the Interior is your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center (IBC) will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the IBC by phone 916-930-3803 or using the [IBC Email Submission Form](#). See the [IBC website](#) for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved indirect cost rate during the award renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients may not shift unallowable indirect costs under this award to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation. For more information on indirect costs, see [2 CFR §200.414](#) and the USFWS "[Indirect Cost Guidance](#)".

All organizations must submit the applicable statement from the list of options below and attach required documentation, as described in the applicable statement.

**U.S. state or local government entities receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding** must include the following statement in their application and attach a copy of their most recently negotiated rate agreement:

- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Our current indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. Attached is a copy of our most recently negotiated rate agreement/certification.

**U.S. state or local government entities receiving \$35 million or less in direct Federal funding** must include the applicable statement from this list:

- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving \$35 million or less in direct Federal funding. We prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and documentation per 2 CFR 200, Appendix VII. Our current indirect cost rate is [insert rate], which is charged against [insert a complete description of the direct cost base used to distribute indirect costs to the award].
- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving \$35 million or less in direct Federal funding. We have not prepared an indirect cost rate proposal and documentation per 2 CFR 200, Appendix VII and elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. We understand we must use this methodology consistently for all Federal awards until we choose to establish a rate per 2 CFR 200. We understand we must notify the USFWS in writing if we establish a rate that changes the methodology used to charge indirect costs during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the USFWS.

**All other organizations** must include the applicable statement from this list and any related documentation in their application. Please note, an organization with a current negotiated (including provisional) rate may not elect to charge the 10% de minimis rate of Modified Total Direct Costs during the period covered by their current negotiated rate.

- We are an organization with a current negotiated indirect cost rate. In the event we receive an award, we will charge indirect costs per our current negotiated rate agreement. Attached is a copy of our current rate agreement.
- We are an organization with a negotiated indirect cost rate that has expired. Attached is copy of our most recently negotiated rate agreement. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the USFWS a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.
- We are an organization that has never negotiated an indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate], which is charged against [insert a complete description of the direct cost base used to distribute indirect costs to the award]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the USFWS a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.
- We are an organization that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate. In the event an award is made, we elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. We understand we must use this methodology consistently for all Federal awards until such time as we negotiate a different rate with our cognizant agency. We understand that we must notify the USFWS in writing if during the award period we establish a rate that changes the methodology used to charge indirect costs to the award. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the USFWS.
- We are an organization that will charge all costs directly.

### ***Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement***

Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, “There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel”. If any overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application regarding activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. When overlap exists, your statement must end with “We understand that if at any time we receive funding from another source that is duplicative of the funding we are requesting from the USFWS in this application, we will immediately notify the USFWS in writing.”

### ***Uniform Audit Reporting Statement***

All U.S. states, local governments, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the entity’s fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse’s Internet Data Entry System](#), in accordance with [2 CFR 200 subpart F](#). U.S. state, local government, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non- profit applicants must include in their application a statement indicating if

your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available on the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#) website.

### ***Conflict of Interest Disclosure***

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation at [2 CFR §1402.112](#), applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission. In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and their subrecipients, the conflict of interest provisions in [2 CFR §200.318](#) apply. Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with [2 CFR §200.112](#). Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the USFWS Project Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported to them by subrecipients. The USFWS will examine each disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the award and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR §200.339](#), Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also [2 CFR §180](#)).

### ***Disclosure of Lobbying Activities***

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. If the Federal share of this application or subsequent award is more than \$100,000 and your organization made or agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this application or subsequent award, your organization must complete and submit the [SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities"](#) form. For more information on when additional submission of this form is required, See [43 CFR 18](#).

### **Review of Risk Posed by Applicants**

Prior to award, the USFWS will evaluate risk posed by applicants selected for funding per [2 CFR §200.206](#) and use the results to establish award monitoring plans, set award reporting requirements, and determine if one or more specific award conditions in [2 CFR §200.208](#) should be applied to the award. We document our risk assessments on the USFWS "[Financial Assistance Recipient Risk Assessment](#)" form.

Prior to approving awards for Federal funding above the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), we must review and consider any information about or from the applicant found in the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System](#). We will consider this information when completing the risk review.

### **General Award Terms and Conditions**

For the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to USFWS awards, see the [USFWS General Award Terms and Conditions](#). The USFWS will describe all program- and project-specific special award terms and conditions in the Notice of Award.

## **Award Reporting Requirements**

This section describes the USFWS award recipient reporting requirements.

### ***Financial Reports***

Recipients must use the [SF-425, Federal Financial Report](#) form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a final financial report. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The USFWS will describe all financial reporting requirements and schedules in the Notice of Award.

### ***Performance Reports***

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals was not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. Final performance reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim performance reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

For awards that include construction, onsite technical inspections and certified percentage of completion data may be relied on to monitor progress. Additional performance reports for construction activities may be required only when considered necessary. Awards that include both construction and non-construction activities require performance reporting for the non-construction activities. The USFWS will describe all project-specific performance reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

Reports to Partnerships and Reports to the Board will be made available at the Partnership or Boards request.

### ***Significant Development Reports***

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the USFWS in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

### ***Real Property Status Reports***

Recipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. Recipients must use the [SF-429-A form](#) to report on the status of real property acquired under the award. The USFWS will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required standard form or data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, in the Notice of Award.

## ***Conflict of Interest Disclosures***

Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award.

Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award.

Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. For more information, see the [U.S. Office of Government Ethics website](#). The USFWS will examine each disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, the USFWS will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the USFWS may result in any of the remedies for noncompliance described in [2 CFR §200.339](#), including termination of the award.

## ***Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance***

If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the [System for Award Management](#) and made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System](#)) about certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).