

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

F27AS00009 2027 Multistate Conservation Grant Program Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number

F27AS00009

## Table of Contents

BASIC INFORMATION.....	1
ELIGIBILITY .....	3
Cost Sharing Requirement .....	4
GET READY TO APPLY .....	4
Required System Registrations .....	4
PROGRAM OVERVIEW .....	5
Program Goals.....	5
Program Description .....	5
Legislative Authority .....	6
Type of Award .....	7
PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION .....	7
Application Content and Format.....	7
Application Documents.....	7
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES .....	13
Address to Request Application Package .....	13
Submission Dates and Times .....	13
Submission Instructions .....	13
APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.....	14
Eligibility Review .....	14
Merit Review.....	15
Review and Selection Process.....	16
Risk Review .....	18
AWARD NOTICES .....	18
POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION .....	19
Administration and National Policy Requirements .....	19
Reporting.....	19

### BASIC INFORMATION

**Announcement Type:** Initial

**Funding Opportunity Number:** F27AS00009

**Assistance Listing Number(s):** 15.628

**Estimated Total Program Funding:** \$11,000,000

**Expected Number of Awards:** 45

**Award Ceiling:** \$1,000,000

**Award Floor:** \$0

- Estimated Traditional Multistate Conservation Grant (T-MSCG) Funding: \$6,000,000 available, with a per-application request ceiling of \$625,000.
- Estimated R3 Multistate Conservation Grant (R3-MSCG) Funding: \$5,000,000 available, with a per-application request ceiling of \$1,000,000.

### **Cost Sharing Required?**

No

### **Closing Date Explanation**

You must first submit your Grant Proposal, including a Project Narrative, Budget Narrative and Budget Table (without Federal forms), through the [AFWA MSCGP Portal](#) by **Tuesday, July 14, 2026, no later than 11:59 PM ET.**

If your Grant Proposal is selected for further consideration, you will be invited via email **in late September 2026** to submit a complete **Grant Application** through a Directed Announcement posted in GrantSolutions.gov. The complete Grant Application will consist of a Project Narrative, Budget Narrative, Budget Table, Required Statements, Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) and Federal forms. The deadline for submitting a complete Grant Application in GrantSolutions will be identified in the Directed Announcement. Grant Applications should not be submitted in Grants.gov.

U.S. states and local governments may be required under [Executive Order 12372](#), [Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#) to submit their application to their State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for review. For more information, see the [Intergovernmental Review SPOC List](#).

**OMB Control Number:** [1018-0100](#)

### **Have Questions?**

**Karen A. Bennett**, Fish and Wildlife Biologist | Multistate Conservation Grants Coordinator, Office of Conservation Investment, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | phone: 703-615-3226 | email: [karen\\_bennett@fws.gov](mailto:karen_bennett@fws.gov)

### **Executive Summary**

Multistate Conservation Grants (MSCG) are authorized under 16 U.S.C. 669h-2 and 16 U.S.C. 777m, providing funding for wildlife restoration and sport fish restoration projects and recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) projects that address regional or national priority needs of State fish and wildlife agencies and their partners that are beyond the scale, scope, and capabilities of a single State. The priority needs, also known as Strategic Priorities, are identified annually by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) with input from State fish and wildlife agencies and their partners. Recipients awarded Traditional Multistate Conservation Grants (T-MSCG) may use the funds for wildlife or sport fish projects involving research, restoration, conservation and management of wild birds, wild mammals, sport fish, and their habitats. These funds may also be used for projects providing for public use and benefit from

these resources, including hunter safety and education, aquatic education, and recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) projects and other purposes consistent with the enabling legislation. Recipients awarded R3 Multistate Conservation Grants (R3-MSCG) may use the funds for hunting and target shooting R3 projects that promote a national hunting and target shooting recruitment program, including related communication and outreach activities. Multistate Conservation Grants are awarded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the FWS and AFWA work cooperatively to manage the grant program.

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible Applicants

State governments

Public and State controlled institutions of higher education

Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education

Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education

Private institutions of higher education

Others (see text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility" for clarification)

### Additional Information on Eligibility

**Eligible applicants** also include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or a State or group of States, for the purpose of carrying out the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Watching. For purposes of the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP), 'States' include the 50 U.S. States; the District of Columbia (eligible under Sport Fish Restoration only); the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands; and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Canadian provinces and other non-U.S. jurisdictions are not eligible applicants and are not counted when determining whether a project benefits more than 50 percent of the States in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service region or regional association of State fish and wildlife agencies.

**Eligible species** include wild birds, wild mammals, or sport fish. Sport fish are defined as aquatic, gill-breathing, vertebrate animals with paired fins, having material value for recreation in the marine and fresh waters of the United States.

**Eligible activities** for T-MSCG funding include projects involving research, surveys, restoration, conservation, management, habitat improvement, and providing for public use and benefit from these resources, including R3 activities and other purposes consistent with the enabling legislation. Fishing or boating R3 activities are only eligible for T-MSCG funding. Hunting and target shooting R3 activities, including related communication and outreach activities, are also eligible for R3-MSCG funding.

**Eligible projects** must address one of the **2027 AFWA Strategic Priorities**.

**Eligible projects** must demonstrate a benefit to:

- At least 26 States; OR
- A majority (over 50%) of the States in a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region; OR

- A majority (over 50%) of the States belonging to a regional association of fish and wildlife agencies.

For benefit-counting purposes, ‘States’ refers only to the jurisdictions defined under ‘Eligible applicants,’ and does not include Canadian provinces or other non-U.S. partners that may participate in regional associations. The District of Columbia may be included as a benefiting State only when the project involves activities eligible under Sport Fish Restoration.

Proposals must list the regions and abbreviations for all States that will benefit and briefly describe how the project will benefit the region and States identified. Please review the FWS regions at <https://www.fws.gov/about/regions> and the regional associations of fish and wildlife agencies at <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-acts/regional-associations>.

## Cost Sharing Requirement

### Cost Sharing Required?

No

## GET READY TO APPLY

### Required System Registrations

#### Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Before applying, all **applicants** except individuals applying as a natural person **must be registered in SAM.gov**. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

**The SAM.gov registration process can take several months. If your organization is not already registered in SAM.gov, begin the registration process as soon as possible.**

**To register in SAM.gov**, go to the [SAM.gov website](#) and use the available resources to complete registration.

- **Financial assistance registrants** must review and certify compliance with the SAM.gov “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications”.
- **Already registered?** You already have a Unique Entity ID. Before applying, check that your “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications” on SAM.gov is complete. Remember to renew your registration every year to keep it active while you have an award or application in progress. You can update your registration whenever you need, including during renewal.
- **Need help?** For additional information and contact information on the [SAM.gov Help page](#).

This program may allow an applicant to apply while their SAM.gov registration is in progress, with prior approval. For more information, refer to the point of contact identified in the Basic Information section above.

### GRANTSOLUTIONS

This program accepts applications through GrantSolutions.gov. You must register with GrantSolutions. See [Submission Instructions](#).

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Program Goals

- The goal of the Multistate Conservation Grant funding opportunity is to support projects that address regional or national priority needs of State fish and wildlife agencies and their partners that are beyond the scale, scope, and capabilities of a single State. The priority needs, also known as Strategic Priorities, are identified annually by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies with input from State fish and wildlife agencies and their partners. Eligible proposals funded under this opportunity may address Strategic Priorities related to traditional wildlife or sport fish projects involving research, restoration, conservation, management, and enhancement of wild birds, wild mammals, sport fish, or their habitats or projects providing for public use and benefit from these resources. Eligible proposals funded under this opportunity may also address Strategic Priorities related to hunter, target shooter or angler recruitment, retention and reactivation, also known as R3.

### Program Description

Multistate Conservation Grants support projects that address regional or national priority needs of State fish and wildlife agencies and their partners that are beyond the scale, scope, and capabilities of a single State. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) work cooperatively to manage the program. Priority needs of State fish and wildlife agencies, referred to as Strategic Priorities, are identified annually by AFWA through an open process that solicits input from State agencies, regional associations of fish and wildlife agencies, conservation organizations, industry partners, universities, and other organizations interested in regional or national conservation and R3 priority needs. The Strategic Priorities are used to guide proposal development and project selection. Eligible proposals funded under this opportunity address AFWA Strategic Priorities related to: 1) research, restoration, conservation, management, and enhancement of wild bird, wild mammal and/or sport fish populations and/or their habitats and projects providing for public use and benefit from these resources, or 2) recruitment, retention and reactivation, also known as R3, of hunters, target shooters or anglers.

AFWA coordinates a technical review process to score, rank and select projects it recommends to the FWS for funding. AFWA's list of recommended projects is called the "Priority List of Projects." The draft list is reviewed by AFWA's National Grants Committee and approved by the majority of State fish and wildlife agency directors during the Business Meeting at the AFWA Annual Meeting held in the fall annually. AFWA sends the Final Priority List of Projects to the FWS Director for review by October 1 annually. The Priority List of Projects will be reviewed and approved by the FWS Director. The final award selections may require additional review and approval by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The FWS Office of Conservation Investment reviews the applications for eligibility, completeness and allowable costs, awards grants, and manages awards directly with grant recipients.

Information on awarded projects is published annually in the Federal Register. Lists of past awards are also available from the FWS (see "Awarding Officer Contact") and from AFWA. Please visit [Partner with a Payer website](#) to view Multistate Conservation Grant abstracts for the current year

and one year prior. Visit [AFWA's Multistate Conservation Grant web page](#) for additional application information and lists of past grant awards and associated reports.

Recipients are encouraged to prioritize projects in support of the celebration of America's 250th birthday (America250). This may include, but is not limited to, projects that recognize and honor the nation's founding, history, and cultural heritage.

The **2027 Multistate Conservation Grant Program Strategic Priorities** are listed below. All grant proposals must address one or more of these priorities. Eligible, science-driven projects under Priorities 1 and 2 must directly support the implementation of established national or regional conservation plans for eligible wild birds, wild mammals, and/or sport fish. These plans must already have been reviewed and approved by State fish and wildlife agencies.

Projects must be multi-jurisdictional in both participation and impact, with active involvement from multiple State fish and wildlife agencies. To meet eligibility requirements, a project must benefit at least 26 States, more than half the States in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service region, or more than half the States in a regional association of fish and wildlife agencies.

More detailed information about each Strategic Priority – including rationale, definitions, and potential proposal topics – is available on AFWA's website: <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-informs/multi-state-conservation-grants-program>.

1. Landscape Scale Habitat Connectivity
  - A. Integrating State Connectivity Needs into Working Lands Conservation
  - B. Addressing Adaptive Management from Existing Connectivity Plans
  - C. Building Support for Connectivity Strategies Among Key Partners and Stakeholders
2. Management and Applied Research
  - A. Applied research to Address Priority Knowledge Gaps
  - B. Science-Based Management Tools, Techniques, & Interventions
  - C. Multistate Coordination to Implement Existing or Newly Established Plan
  - D. Fish & Wildlife Health Science & Management
3. Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation (R3)
  - A. Marketing and Engagement
  - B. Hunting, Fishing, and Target Shooting Access and Infrastructure
4. AFWA Priorities Identified in AFWA Funding Principles (submitted by ExCom)
  - A. National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Watching
  - B. AFWA Facilitated National Priorities
    - i. Management of the Multistate Conservation Grant Program
    - ii. Professional Development and Capacity Building for Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Program Delivery
    - iii. National Conservation Coordination

## **Legislative Authority**

The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 777 et seq.) and the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 669 et seq.) as amended by the Wildlife and

Sport Fish Restoration Programs Improvement Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-408, 114 STAT. 1766 §113 and 114 STAT. 1722 §122) authorize the Secretary of the Interior to make up to \$6,000,000 available annually to fund Multistate Conservation Grants. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will cite this traditional portion of funding as Traditional Multistate Conservation Grants (T-MSCG). In addition, the Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow’s Needs Act (Modernizing PR Act, 16 U.S.C. 669) amended the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to, among other measures, authorize the FWS to make up to \$5,000,000 available annually to fund Multistate Conservation Grants for hunter and target shooter recruitment activities that promote a national hunting and target shooting recruitment program, including related communication and outreach activities. The FWS will cite this portion of funding as R3 Multistate Conservation Grants (R3-MSCG).

## Type of Award

Projects will be funded through G (Grant).

## PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

### Application Content and Format

#### Application Documents

Applicants must submit the following forms with their application as specified below. Instructions for accessing and submitting application forms are provided in the [Submission Instructions](#) section of this document below. For instructions on completing form fields, see the form instructions on the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#).

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
<b>SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance</b>  Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative’s signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in <a href="#">Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying</a>	Required from all applicants
<b>SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs</b>	Required for non-construction projects
<b>SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities</b>	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds <u>and</u> the applicant has used or plans to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
<b>Project Abstract Summary</b> (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award purpose;</li> <li>• Activities to be performed;</li> </ul>	Required from all applicants

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expected deliverables or outcomes;</li> <li>• Intended beneficiaries; and</li> <li>• Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Required Statements - Include the following statements in one document on organization letterhead:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Certification Statement for Nongovernmental Organizations:</b> Any nongovernmental organization that applies for a grant shall submit with the application a certification that the organization will not use the grant funds to fund, in whole or in part, any activity of the organization that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife, to recreational shooting activities, or to the regulated taking of fish.</li> <li>• <b>Single Audit Reporting Statement:</b> Indicates whether the organization was required to submit a Single Audit (<a href="#">2 CFR 200.502</a>) report for the most recently closed fiscal year, whether that report is available and where it can be found.</li> <li>• <b>Indirect Cost Statement:</b> Indicates whether the organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement and its status, whether all costs will be charged directly, or whether the organization is eligible to use a de minimis rate.</li> <li>• <b>Pre-award Costs:</b> Indicated whether pre-award costs are requested per <a href="#">2 CFR 200.458</a>.</li> <li>• <b><a href="#">Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement</a></b></li> <li>• <b><a href="#">Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosure</a></b></li> </ul>	Required from all applicants
<b><a href="#">Project Narrative</a></b>	Required from all applicants
<b><a href="#">Budget Narrative and Budget Table</a></b>	Required from all applicants
<b>Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)</b>	Required if the applicant has a NICRA.

### Project Narrative

Applicants must submit a **Project Narrative** containing the required elements as outlined below and in the specific format required by AFWA and found on [AFWA's MSCGP website](#).

The Project Narrative must provide sufficient information that reviewers will use to verify proposed activities and species are eligible for funding and that the proposed project is

substantial in character and design. A proposed project qualifies as **substantial in character and design** if it:

- a. Describes a need consistent with the Wildlife Restoration Act or Sport Fish Restoration Act;
- b. States a purpose and sets objectives, both of which are based on the need identified in the proposal;
- c. Uses a planned approach, appropriate procedures, and accepted principles of fish and wildlife conservation and management, research, or education; and
- d. Is cost-effective.

Applicants are encouraged to review the technical scoring criteria under “Application Review Information” to ensure their Project Narrative addresses these criteria.

The Project Narrative should include the following information:

- **Project Title.** Be descriptive but brief.
- **Organization Type.** Identify the Organization undertaking the project as defined under “Eligibility.”
- **Grant Recipient Contact(s).** You must identify one primary contact and any additional contacts (secondary contacts) who will have access to GrantSolutions if a grant is awarded. You must identify who will serve as the project's Principal Investigator and Authorizing Official in GrantSolutions. All contact information including mailing address, email and phone number must be provided.
- **Beneficiary Information.** Choose one of the following categories that best describes the geographic scope of the project. For benefit-counting purposes, ‘States’ refers only to the jurisdictions defined in this document under ‘Eligible applicants’ and does not include Canadian provinces or other non-U.S. partners that may participate in regional associations. The District of Columbia may be included as a benefiting State only when the project involves activities eligible under Sport Fish Restoration. Please review the FWS regions at <https://www.fws.gov/about/regions> and the regional association of fish and wildlife agencies at <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-acts/regional-associations>.  
**List the regions and abbreviations for all States that will benefit and briefly describe how the project will benefit the region and States identified.**
  - Project benefits at least 26 States; OR
  - Project benefits a majority (over 50%) of the States in a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region; OR
  - Project benefits a majority (over 50%) of the States belonging to a regional association of fish and wildlife agencies.
- **Strategic Priority.** Identify one of the [2027 AFWA MSCGP Strategic Priorities](#) addressed by the project.
- **Need.** Identify and describe the specific concern, problem, or issue to be addressed or opportunity to be leveraged by the project, including the consequences of not addressing the need, and how the proposed project fulfills the purposes of the relevant Acts (Wildlife Restoration Act or Sport Fish Restoration Act).
- **Purpose.** In one or two sentences, briefly state the purpose of the project based on the need and include a brief description of the desired outcome of the proposed project.

- **Objective(s).** Identify the project objectives that support resolving the need. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.
- **Approach(es).** Describe the methods that will be used to achieve each stated objective. Include details addressing all the following: what activities will be carried out, how, where (include specific locations, maps or GIS data, as applicable), when (specify dates or date ranges), and by whom. Include a description of stakeholder involvement, if applicable. Sufficient information must be provided to support environmental compliance review requirements. Note: Although environmental compliance laws are primarily applicable to projects carried out in the United States, projects carried out on the high seas are subject to compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and projects outside the United States on any property on the UNESCO World Heritage List or the in-country equivalent of the U.S. National Register of Historic Places are subject to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- **Results or Benefits Expected.** Describe the intended results, expected benefits, and outcomes if the project objectives are completed and the identified need is resolved or significantly improved by your project. Benefits can be described regarding the improved State of fish and wildlife resources, users, the economy, and/or society once your project has been completed. Address how the project benefits will be continued after project completion beyond the life of the grant by describing the anticipated, extended use/life of the project's results, products, or services after the project is completed and how this extended use/life will be sustained.
- **Deliverables.** Identify and describe deliverables that will be produced by the project, preferably in a bulleted list. Deliverables may include, but are not limited to, designed reports, peer-reviewed publications, photo and video collections, marketing templates, toolkits, and presentations and webinars. Also, describe how deliverables will be disseminated to intended users. All deliverables made available for distribution in digital or hard copy format must include acknowledgment of the Federal award number and MSCG program logos, which will be provided by the FWS if you receive an award.
- **Timeline.** Identify time frames within which key project tasks and activities will be carried out and milestones reached. A timeline may be presented as a list or chart. The timeline will help reviewers determine whether the project Objective(s) and Approach(es) are realistic for the grant period. Grants are traditionally approved for one year of funding.

NOTE: Applicants whose projects are expected to take more than one year to complete are encouraged to describe the need and intent to apply for a subsequent year(s) of funding for the project. Subsequent year(s) funding is not guaranteed and will depend on project merits, available funding, and progress made to date upon applying for the subsequent year(s) of funding. Grant recipients will be required to report on progress made in the first year as part of the justification for subsequent year(s) of funding. Under special circumstances, the National Grants Committee coordinated by AFWA will consider recommending multiple years of funding. The criteria for multiyear funding established by the National Grants Committee are included in AFWA's Multiyear Proposal Criteria found on the [AFWA MSCGP website](#). Please note there is a very high bar to justify multi-year funding, and most applicants will be requested to apply for one year of funding at a time.

- **Monitoring.** Describe how you will monitor your project's progress according to the proposed timeline and milestones. Significant developments must be disclosed and communicated with AFWA and the FWS as soon as recognized. Significant developments are defined as problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective(s) of the grant, or 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.
- **Evaluation.** Describe how you will assess the effectiveness of your project outputs (e.g., project deliverables) in achieving the desired project outcomes (e.g., increased recruitment). Describe how your project outputs will benefit the geographic scope you selected under “Beneficiary Information.”
- **Qualifications of Key Personnel.** Provide a description of personnel working on the project. Include details about their role in the project, relevant expertise and skills, as well as their significance to the project.

### **Budget Narrative**

Applicants must describe and justify items and costs listed in their budget. The budget narrative must identify the following cost items: total estimated costs, non-Federal cost share, third-party contributions, and any pre-award costs. Total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including required and voluntary cost share and third-party contributions.

Budget items must be:

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Compliant with [2 CFR §200 Subpart E](#) cost principles

Indirect Costs: Applicants must indicate in their budget narrative how they will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- **De Minimis Rate:** If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).
- **Negotiated Rate:** State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

Data and Evaluation Costs: Applicant budgets may include costs related to data and evaluation as relevant per 2 CFR §200.455.

Refer to 2 CFR 200.455(c) for a description of costs related to data and evaluation.

The Budget Narrative and Budget Table must:

- Include the specific content required by AFWA, which can be found at the [AFWA MSCGP website](#), including all Object Class Categories found on the SF-424A [i.e., Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, Equipment, Supplies, Contractual, Other (may include e.g., subawards, participant support costs), Indirect, Program Income], and identify, describe and justify costs comprising the total for each “Object Class Category.”

- For those Object Class Categories that do not apply to your project proposal, include those categories in the Budget Narrative and Budget Table and indicate “not applicable.”
- For Indirect Costs, specify the rate being applied and indicate whether it is a negotiated rate or the de minimis rate, as described above. Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) rates may not be used, as this program issues grants only, and CESU rates are allowable only under Cooperative Agreements.
- Describe the need for proposed items that require prior approval under 2 CFR 200.407, including but not limited to, anticipated subawards, contracts, travel and equipment.
- If known at the time of application, include an estimated number of subawards and the dollar amount anticipated for each subaward.
- If equipment previously purchased with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source.
- Though cost-sharing is not required, identify any third-party cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project and describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit completion of 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.
- Recipients may not earn or keep any profit resulting from any financial assistance awards; see 2 CFR 200.307 for information about Program Income.
- Please note the prohibitions on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment in 2 CFR 200.216.
- Indicate the total amount of funding requested under each funding source:
  - Traditional Multistate Conservation Grants – Sport Fish Restoration (T-MSCG SFR)
  - Traditional Multistate Conservation Grants – Wildlife Restoration (T-MSCG WR)
  - R3 Multistate Conservation Grants – Wildlife Restoration (R3-MSCG)

**Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures:**

If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per [2 CFR 1402.112](#). Refer to [2 CFR 200.112](#) Conflict of Interest and [2 CFR 200.113](#).

**Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:**

Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal proposal or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping proposal was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

## Other Required Information

# SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

## Address to Request Application Package

**Applicants selected to submit a complete Grant Application in GrantSolutions.gov will be notified by AFWA via email in late September 2026.** The email will include a link to the Directed Announcement and instructions listing all required documents and any special instructions for revising the project proposal prior to submitting the Grant Application in GrantSolutions.gov.

## Submission Dates and Times

**Closing Date for Applications:** 07/14/2026

### Closing Date Explanation

You must first submit your Grant Proposal, including a Project Narrative, Budget Narrative and Budget Table (without Federal forms), through the [AFWA MSCGP Portal](#) by **Tuesday, July 14, 2026, no later than 11:59 PM ET.**

If your Grant Proposal is selected for further consideration, you will be invited via email **in late September 2026** to submit a complete **Grant Application** through a Directed Announcement posted in GrantSolutions.gov. The complete Grant Application will consist of a Project Narrative, Budget Narrative, Budget Table, Required Statements, Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) and Federal forms. The deadline for submitting a complete Grant Application in GrantSolutions will be identified in the Directed Announcement. Grant Applications should not be submitted in Grants.gov.

## Submission Instructions

### Apply Through GrantSolutions

To apply through [GrantSolutions](#), follow these steps:

- 1. Register your organization.** Send an e-mail to [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov) with:
  - Subject: New Organization Request
  - Entity name (organization or individual applying as a natural person)
  - Entity type
  - SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (not required for individuals)
  - Employer Identification Number (individuals, do not include your SSN)
  - Address
  - Contact details (First and last name, e-mail, phone)This information should be the same as entered on the entity's SAM.gov profile.
- 2. Assign system user roles.** Follow the [GrantSolutions "Recipient user" registration instructions](#). Submit a separate Recipient User Account Request form for each official to be assigned a system role. At minimum, the Authorizing Official (ADO) and Principal Investigator/Program Director (PI/PD) must be assigned.

3. **Log in.** GrantSolutions requires users to log in through Login.gov. Each user must create a [Login.gov](#) account. For instructions, see the [GrantSolutions Training Resources web page](#).
4. **Find and apply to this Funding Opportunity.** After logging in, click on either the “Begin an application” link (first time applicants) or the “Funding Opportunity” link to go to the “Competing Announcements-Application Kits” list screen. Search the list for this Funding Opportunity’s title and number. Click on the associated “Apply” link. Follow the prompts from there. Required applications forms are provided with the Funding Opportunity in GrantSolutions unless otherwise indicated on the Required Forms table above.
5. For detailed instructions, see the [GrantSolutions Training Resources web page](#).
6. **Need help?** Find help topics and contact information on the [GrantSolutions Contact Us page](#).

## APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### Eligibility Review

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see [Application Documents](#) above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. The Federal agency may remove an application if it does not pass the eligibility review.

Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO (program determination); and (5) the proposed project is in compliance with all applicable executive and secretary orders, including the President’s executive order on Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the executive order and Secretary order on Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History. If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from further review.

AFWA will coordinate with the FWS to conduct an initial eligibility screening before proposals are subject to technical review and associated scoring and ranking. The following eligibility standards must be met to be considered in the review and selection process:

**Eligible species** include wild birds, wild mammals, or sport fish. Sport fish are defined as aquatic, gill-breathing, vertebrate animals with paired fins, having material value for recreation in the marine and fresh waters of the United States.

**Eligible activities** for T-MSCG funding include research, restoration, management or habitat improvement, or projects providing for public use and benefit from these resources, and other purposes consistent with the enabling legislation. R3 activities for fishing or boating are only eligible under T-MSCG funding. Eligible activities for R3-MSCG funding are hunter recruitment and target shooting recruitment activities that promote a national hunting and target shooting recruitment program, including related communication and outreach activities.

**Eligible projects proposals** must address one of the [2027 AFWA Strategic Priorities](#).

**Eligible projects** must demonstrate a benefit to:

- At least 26 States; OR
- A majority (over 50%) of the States in a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region; OR
- A majority (over 50%) of the States belonging to a regional association of fish and wildlife agencies.

For benefit-counting purposes, ‘States’ refers only to the jurisdictions defined under ‘Eligible applicants,’ and does not include Canadian provinces or other non-U.S. partners that may participate in regional associations. The District of Columbia may be included as a benefiting State only when the project involves activities eligible under Sport Fish Restoration.

**Proposals must list the regions and abbreviations for all States that will benefit and briefly describe how the project will benefit the region and States identified.** Please review the FWS regions at <https://www.fws.gov/about/regions> and the regional associations of fish and wildlife agencies at <https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-acts/regional-associations>.

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see [2 CFR 25.200](#) and [2 CFR 25.110](#)) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer [2 CFR 25.205](#) for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, the Federal agency will notify the applicant in writing.

## **Merit Review**

Once proposals have been submitted to AFWA, they will be distributed to the respective Technical Review Teams (TRT) based on the Strategic Priority the applicant selected in the AFWA MSCGP Portal. There are four TRTs, one for each of the AFWA Strategic Priorities. TRTs review and score their assigned Grant Proposals using the technical scoring criteria described below.

Each Grant Proposal will be scored by each TRT reviewer based on 6 technical scoring criteria categories. Each category includes 1 to 4 review questions. Each criteria category has a maximum point value shown below. Each proposal may receive a maximum score of 100 points from each reviewer. Scores will be compiled from each TRT reviewer, an average score will be calculated for each proposal, and then proposals will be ranked within the assigned TRT from highest to lowest score. Additional detail about each criteria category's scoring levels and descriptors is available on [AFWA's MSCGP website](#) under “Scoring Criteria”.

### **Criteria Category 1 - Need:**

Maximum Points = 10

1. How well does the proposal meet regional or national priority needs, including how well it describes direct support for the implementation of established national or regional conservation plans that have been reviewed and approved by State fish and wildlife agencies?

**Criteria Category 2 - Multiple States Benefits and Applicability:**

Maximum Points = 15

2. Does this proposal clearly describe benefits and applicability to multiple States?

**Criteria Category 3 - Feasibility and Technical Merit:**

Maximum Points = 25

3. Are the objectives specific, measurable, and time-bound?
4. Does the proposal incorporate the most relevant scientific knowledge and/or best practices?
5. Is the Approach section described in sufficient detail to unambiguously outline what the investigators are planning to do?
6. How likely is it that the described approach will achieve the stated goals and objectives within the proposed timeline?

**Criteria Category 4 - Innovation:**

Maximum Points = 15

7. Does the proposal demonstrate innovation in addressing known challenges facing State fish and wildlife agencies and their partners?

**Criteria Category 5 - Impact on Conservation / R3 Efforts and Longevity:**

Maximum Points = 20

8. Are the proposal's deliverables clearly defined and realistic to achieve within the proposal's scope?
9. Will the proposed proposal result in dependable, practical deliverables for State fish and wildlife agencies and their partners?
10. How reasonable is the proposal's plan for the longevity of the deliverables?

**Criteria Category 6 - Budget:**

Maximum Points = 15

11. Based on your expertise, do the budgeted costs appear reasonable and appropriate in relation to the activities planned?

**Review and Selection Process**

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct
- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs

- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly
- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, DOI may choose to not make an award.

Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO; and (5) the proposed project is in compliance with all applicable Executive and Secretary Orders, including the President's Executive Order on Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the Executive Order and Secretary Order on Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History. If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered nonresponsive and eliminated from further review.

Once AFWA receives proposals, AFWA will coordinate with the FWS to conduct an initial screening to determine eligibility. Proposals that meet eligibility criteria will be subject to a comprehensive technical review process coordinated by AFWA:

1. **Technical Review Team (TRT) Assignment:** Each proposal will be assigned to one Technical Review Team (TRT) corresponding to one of the 2027 AFWA Strategic Priorities.
2. **Proposal Review:** Members of the assigned TRT will thoroughly review the proposals submitted to their team. Each member will evaluate and score the proposals based on established technical scoring criteria.
3. **Score Compilation:** AFWA will compile the scores provided by the TRT members for each proposal.
4. **Ranking Proposals:** Proposals will then be ranked within each TRT based on their average scores.

Each TRT will discuss and recommend proposals for further consideration in the process. AFWA may request that applicants revise their budget to adjust the amount of funding requested or the type of funding requested (i.e., T-MSCG or R3-MSCG). AFWA reserves the right to make such changes to requested funds. Applicants will be made aware if any proposed changes are suggested for their submitted proposal(s) after the conclusion of the proposal selection process.

The results of the proposals selected by the TRTs will be referred to as the Draft Priority List of Projects. The Draft Priority List of Projects will be forwarded to the AFWA National Grants Committee (NGC), comprised of directors of State fish and wildlife agencies, before the NGC meets. The NGC will review the Draft Priority List of Projects and the associated proposals.

Once the NGC has the Draft Priority List of Projects for review, no additional proposal scoring will take place by the NGC or any other entity. However, the NGC will discuss the proposals at a meeting and will vote to support the Draft Priority List of Projects or vote to revise and finalize the list. The resulting Final Draft Priority List of Projects will be introduced to a meeting of the

State fish and wildlife agency directors coordinated by AFWA. After any discussion or changes, the State fish and wildlife agency directors will vote on the Final Draft Priority List of Projects. If a majority of the members approve the proposed Final Draft Priority List, it becomes the Priority List of Projects.

The Priority List of Projects will be sent to the FWS for an internal review to assess eligibility, compliance with Executive Orders, alignment with current priorities of the FWS, substantiality in character and design, compliance with environmental regulations, and completeness of Federal forms. The final selection of awards by the FWS must include only projects on the Priority List of Projects; however, projects may be removed or adjusted by the FWS. The FWS Director, or their designee, will determine the final approved selection of awards. The final award selections may require additional review and approval by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Once the final selections have been approved, the FWS Office of Conservation Investment will notify the successful applicants of their award(s) and any requirements for receiving the award.

### **Risk Review**

Prior to making an award, the applicant will be assessed for their level of risk per [2 CFR 200.206](#). This assessment includes the applicant's financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past award performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential for challenges. If an award will be made, special conditions may be applied to the award corresponding to the assessed risk. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$350,000), a review of the applicant's eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records will also be performed per [2 CFR 200.206](#).

### **AWARD NOTICES**

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per [2 CFR 200.211](#). The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the program allows pre-award costs per [2 CFR 200.458](#), beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

**Anticipated Project Start Date:** 01/01/2027

**Anticipated Project End Date:** 12/31/2027

- If the Grant Proposal you submit to AFWA does not meet eligibility requirements, you will be notified by AFWA via email within 30 days after the Grant Proposal due date.
- The applicants will be notified of their application status (selected, not selected, or revision requested) by AFWA via email in late September 2026.
- If the Grant Proposal you submit to AFWA is selected for further consideration, you will be invited to submit your complete Grant Application through a Directed Announcement posted in GrantSolutions.gov. Prior to submitting a Grant Application in GrantSolutions, AFWA may instruct you to make revisions to your Project Narrative, Budget, Budget Narrative and/or Budget Table based on Technical Reviewer or FWS comments and feedback.

- AFWA will finalize and approve a *Priority List of Projects* that it recommends for funding in late September 2026.
- The FWS Director reviews, approves and signs the Priority List of Projects. The final award selections may require additional review and approval by the Department of the Interior.
- Once the Priority List of Projects is approved, the FWS can complete a final review of each Grant Application for eligible activities, allowable costs and environmental compliance. You may be asked for additional information or corrections during the review process, including information to support environmental compliance.
- Once the FWS completes review of a Grant Application, a Notice of Award will be issued to the applicant in GrantSolutions.gov.
- The FWS anticipates awards will be issued by January 2027; however, the responsiveness of applicants to the FWS' request for information can delay the review and the date Notices of Award can be issued.

## POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

### Administration and National Policy Requirements

For award administration and national policy requirements, see the [DOI General Terms and Conditions](#). Infrastructure projects require the use of American iron, steel, manufacture products, and construction materials per [2 CFR 184](#).

See the [FWS General Award Terms and Conditions](#) for national policy requirements for FWS awards. Special terms and conditions will be detailed in award notices.

### Reporting

The recipient's Notice of Award will detail all reporting requirements, including frequency, due dates, and instructions for requesting extensions. In general, but not limited to, recipients must:

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting,
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).

- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) and 2 CFR 170 requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation, and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts and consortiums equal to or over \$30,000 to SAM.gov.

**Acknowledgments:**

Presentations, reports, books, publications, multimedia and other products and deliverables must acknowledge funding support from the FWS and display a wordmark including the statement:

"This Project was funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant (*Insert Federal Award Number*) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and jointly administered with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies."

**Other Information**

For more information, see the FWS' [Multistate Conservation Grants home page](#). Also, visit [Partner with a Payer website](#) to view Multistate Conservation Grant abstracts for the current year and one year prior. Visit [AFWA's Multistate Conservation Grant web page](#) for [reports of past grants](#) and additional application information.