

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Bird Habitat Conservation**

**JOINT VENTURE FLEX-FUND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):
IMPROVING THE SCIENCE FOUNDATION FOR BIRD CONSERVATION**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: [15.637]

Notice of Funding Availability and Application Instructions

I. Description of Funding Opportunity

The goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Joint Venture (JV) Office is to assist partners in implementing effective science-based bird conservation projects in the Prairie Pothole (PPJV) and Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes (UMRGLJV) Joint Venture regions. Each JV has an Implementation Plan and conservation strategies identifying bird habitat, monitoring, and research needs with an emphasis on JV focal species. These plans and associated research and monitoring needs can be found at www.ppjv.org and www.uppermissisgreatlakesjv.org.

Following are themes prominent in the UMRGLJV Implementation Plan: 1) Test model assumptions and build / refine models predicting how populations of priority breeding species (JV focal species) respond to habitat change; 2) Improve understanding of migration and wintering habitat selection, migration chronology, and human influences on migrating and wintering bird populations to better predict habitat needs and target conservation areas; 3) Assess bird densities and vital rates relative to estimates used in JV models predicting carrying capacity for breeding birds in quality habitats; and 4) evaluate habitat carrying capacity for priority migrating and wintering bird populations (JV focal species and guilds).

II. Award Information

Due to the limited funds available, consideration will only be given to proposals requesting less than \$50,000.00 USD. The period of performance for the majority of projects funded under this program is one year, starting on the date the award is signed by the USFWS. Though “out-year” (future) funding for multi-year projects cannot be guaranteed, continued funding of multiple-year projects will be conditionally approved once they are first selected. Each proposal must include: applicant contact information, a detailed scope of work including justification, objectives or hypotheses, scope and location, clearly-explained project methods, anticipated outcomes, management implications, literature cited, proposed project timeline, a budget table identifying partners and match, a task timeline, and project-cost details. The linkage between proposed research/monitoring projects and a JV Implementation Plan must be clearly stated. Upon completion, a professional project report with abstract, detailed background, methods, results, discussion, and management implications is required, and annual interim reports are required for multiple-year projects. Past and present recipients of awards under this program are eligible, but must submit new proposals to compete for funding each year. This program uses grant agreements as the primary assistance instrument.

III. Basic Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Applicants:

Federal, state, county, city/township, and county governments, federally-recognized Native American tribal governments, state and public controlled institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, and non-profit organizations having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service are eligible to apply.

Federal law (2 CFR Part 25, Central Contractor Registry and Data Universal Numbering System) mandates that all entities applying for Federal financial assistance must have a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and have a current registration in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). The CCR functionality was consolidated into the System for Award Management (SAM) in September 2012. Exemptions: The SAM registration requirement does not apply to individuals submitting an application on their own behalf and not on behalf of a company or other for-profit entity, State, local or Tribal government, academia or other type of organization.

A. DUNS Registration

Request a DUNS number online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. U.S.-based entities may also request a DUNS number by telephone by calling the Dun & Bradstreet Government Customer Response Center, Monday – Friday, 7 AM to 8 PM CST at the following numbers:

U.S. and U.S. Virgin Islands: 1-866-705-5711

Alaska and Puerto Rico: 1-800-234-3867 (Select Option 2, then Option 1)

For Hearing Impaired Customers Only call: 1-877-807-1679 (TTY Line)

Once assigned a DUNS number, entities are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet.

B. Entity Registration in SAM

Register in SAM online at <http://www.sam.gov/>. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that SAM is up to date and in synch with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Foreign entities who wish to be paid to a bank account in the United States must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.

Entities that had an active record in CCR have an active record in SAM. Such entities do not need to do anything in SAM unless a change in business circumstances requires updates to your Entity record(s) or the Entity record is due to expire. SAM will send notifications to migrated Entity users via email 60, 30, and 15 days prior to expiration of the Entity record. To update or renew your Entity records(s) in SAM your Entity user(s) will need to create a SAM User Account and link their account(s) to your migrated Entity record(s). Entities migrated from CCR can find complete instructions on accessing their SAM Entity records online at <http://www.sam.gov/>.

C. Excluded Entities

Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program

Cost Sharing or Matching:

All proposals should have a minimum 1:1 match of non-Federal dollars to Joint Venture request, and the partners providing secured match must be identified.

IV. Application Requirements

To be considered for funding under this funding opportunity, an application must contain:

- A.** A completed, signed, and dated **Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)**. The SF-424 form is available online at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>.

B. Project Summary

Briefly summarize the project, in one page or less. Include the title of the project, geographic location, and a brief overview of the need for the project, goal(s), objectives, specific project activities, beneficiaries, and expected outcomes consistent with this funding opportunity. As applicable, describe how you/your organization has coordinated with and involved other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project, and detail if/how they will be involved in conducting project activities and/or disseminating project results.

C. Project Narrative

- 1. Statement of Need:** Describe why this project is necessary (significance/value) and include supporting information. Summarize previous or on-going efforts (of you/your organization, and other organizations or individuals) relevant to the proposed work.
- 2. Project Goals and Objectives:** State the long-term goal(s) of the project. Objectives are the specific steps to be taken to reach the stated goals. State the objectives of the project, which must be specific, measurable, and realistic (attainable within the project's proposed period of performance). State the anticipated outcomes and/or benefits of the project.
- 3. Project Activities, Methods and Timetable:** State the proposed project activities, and describe how they relate to the stated project objectives. The proposed project activities narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the proposed activities and the proposed project costs. For projects being conducted within the United States, the narrative must provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. For projects being conducted on the high seas, the narrative should provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project compliance with Section 7 of Endangered Species Act. Provide a detailed description of the method(s) to be used to carry out each activity. Provide a timetable indicating roughly when activities or project milestones are

to be accomplished. Include any resulting tables, spreadsheets or flow charts within the body of the proposal narrative (do not include as separate attachments). The timetable should not propose specific dates but instead group activities by month for each month over the entire proposed project period.

4. **Anticipated Products/Outputs:** Describe any expected project products/outputs (examples include: management plans, brochures, posters, training manuals, number of people trained, workshops held, hours of training provided, patrols conducted). Once identified, describe the intended impact of the products/outputs on the target resource. Detail if/how products will be distributed to resource managers, researchers and other interested parties. Detail any applicability of the project methods/activities/outcomes to other projects.
 5. **Project Monitoring and Evaluation:** The project must incorporate a monitoring and evaluation plan that will allow proponent to ascertain the quality of benefits and outputs and to ensure that the benefits/outputs reach the intended beneficiaries. Describe how you/your organization (or others) will monitor project progress and measure the project's impacts. Include details on how you/your organization will assess progress towards reaching objectives, and, as applicable, how project participants and beneficiaries will participate in these activities.
 6. **Description of Organization(s) Undertaking the Project:** Provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all cooperating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for individual within your organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis. This is the person commonly referred to as the Project Officer or Project Manager. If eligibility for funding is based in whole or in part on the qualifications of key personnel, provide brief (1-2 pages) *curricula vitae* for key personnel, identifying their qualifications to meet the project objectives. ***Do not include Social Security numbers, the names of family members, or any other personal or sensitive information on the curricula vitae!***
 7. **Sustainability:** As applicable, detail which of the proposed project activities are expected to continue beyond the life the proposed project period, and the expectation of how and at what level these future activities will be funded.
 8. **Literature Cited**
 9. **Map of Project Area:** Map should clearly delineate the project area.
- D. A completed **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)** or **Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF-424C)** form. Use the SF-424A if your project does not include construction and the 424C if it does include construction. The budget forms are available online at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>.

When developing your budget, keep in mind the following:

- Cost Principles: Financial assistance awards and subawards are subject to OMB Circulars A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (2 CFR Part 230), A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (2 CFR Part 220), and A-87, Cost Principles for States and Local Governments (2 CFR Part 225), as applicable to the recipient organization type. These OMB circulars are available online at <http://www.doi.gov/pam/financialassistance/resources/index.html>.
- Federally Funded Equipment: Applicants cannot attribute equipment paid for by the U.S. Federal Government under another award as matching or in-kind contributions. ***Do not include this type of equipment in your budget!*** Instead, provide a separate list of any equipment paid for by the U.S. Federal Government that will be used for the project, including the name of the Federal agency that paid for the equipment.
- Indirect Costs: An applicant without an established indirect cost rate agreement with a Federal agency may not charge indirect costs to Federal financial assistance awards and must charge all costs directly. Individuals submitting an application on their own behalf and not on behalf of a company or other for-profit entity, state, local or tribal government, academia or other type of organization must charge all costs directly.

If indirect costs are included on proposed budget, the applicant must submit copy of their most recently submitted/approved indirect cost rate agreement. Non-profit organizations that have received, or expect to receive, the greatest amount of Federal funding in direct awards from the Department of the Interior, should go to <http://www.aqd.nbc.gov/Services/ICS.aspx> for online guidance and tools for submitting an indirect cost rate agreement proposal to the Department of the Interior. Organizations may also contact the National Business Center directly at:

Indirect Cost Services
Acquisition Services Directorate, National Business Center
U.S. Department of the Interior
2180 Harvard Street, Suite 430
Sacramento, CA 95815
Phone: 916.566.7111 Fax: 916.566.7110
Email: ics@nbc.gov

All other types of applicants except individuals should contact the USFWS program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity with any questions on how to establish an indirect cost rate agreement with a Federal agency.

E. Assurances

Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available online at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)** if your project does not involve construction. Use the **Assurances for Construction Programs (SF-424D)** if it does involve construction.

F. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, applicants must complete and submit with their application the SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form (available online at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SFLLL-V1.1.pdf>) when they have made payment or have agreed to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or loan. Recipients may not use funds awarded under a Federal grant or cooperative agreement to conduct such lobbying activities.

G. Statement Regarding A-133 Single Audit Reporting: Following OMB Circular A-133 (http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/a133/a133_revised_2007.pdf), domestic entities expending \$500,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a year must submit an A-133 Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. State if your organization was/was not required to submit an A-133 Single Audit report last year (either your organization is a non-U.S. entity or a domestic entity that did not spend \$500,000 USD or more in Federal funds last year). If your organization was required to submit an A-133 Single Audit report last year, state if that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<http://harvester.census.gov/sac/>).

Application Checklist

- ☐ A complete, signed and dated SF 424-Application for Federal Assistance
- ☐ Project Summary and Narrative text and attachments
- ☐ A complete SF-424A or SF-424C Budget Information form
- ☐ If Federally funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment as described in section D above
- ☐ If indirect costs are included in proposed budget, a copy of the organization's current approved indirect cost rate agreement or proposal
- ☐ Signed and dated SF-424B or SF-424D Assurances form
- ☐ If applicable, completed SF-LLL form
- ☐ Statement regarding applicability of and compliance with OMB Circular A-133 Single Audit Reporting as described in section G above

Failure to provide complete information, as outlined above, may cause delays, postponement, or rejection of the application.

V. Submission Instructions

Proposals may be submitted through Grants.gov, or as otherwise described in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

To submit a proposal in Grants.gov:

Go to the Grants.gov Apply for Grants page (http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp) for an overview of the process to apply for grant opportunities on Grants.gov. In order to apply for a grant, you/your organization must complete the Grants.gov registration process. Registration can take between three to five business days or as long as two weeks if all steps are not completed in a timely manner.

Important note on Grants.gov application attachment file names: Please do not assign application attachments file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. Assigning file names longer than 20 characters will create issues in the automatic interface between Grants.gov and the USFWS' new financial assistance management system.

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW

Criteria:

Both JV Implementation Plans identify priority evaluation needs to fill information gaps and test assumptions used in plan development. Proposals for monitoring and applied research that improve JV conservation decision tools at larger scales (e.g., Bird Conservation Region) will be given higher grant priority. In addition, projects to address conservation priorities in State Wildlife Action Plans (<http://teaming.com/state-wildlife-action-plans-swaps>), and for JV focal species, should be highlighted. Proposals related to coordination, outreach, planning, and bird habitat restoration / enhancement contributing toward goals identified in the JV plans will also be considered, if adequate funds are available. All submissions should explain how the outcome of proposed projects is regional in scope.

Review and Selection Process:

Proposals receiving the highest ranks via the review of the Joint Venture Technical Committee will be given highest consideration for available funding, in the order of their ranks.

VII. Award Administration

Award Notices: Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before a final award can be made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a Notice of Award document. Notice of Award documents are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (FedEx, DHL, Airborne Express). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or receiving the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the USFWS. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by e-mail, within 30 days of the final review decision.

Domestic Recipient Payments:

Prior to an award being issued to you/your organization, the USFWS program office will contact you/your organization to either enroll in the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system or, if eligible, submit to the USFWS program a request to obtain approval from the Department of the Interior to be waived from using ASAP.

Domestic applicants subject to the SAM registration requirement (see Section III above) who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP must enter and maintain current banking

information in SAM. Domestic applicants exempt from the SAM registration requirement (see Section III above) who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP will be required to submit their banking information directly to the USFWS program. However, ***do NOT submit any banking information to the USFWS until it is requested from you by the USFWS program!***

Recipients are responsible for ensuring any sensitive data being sent to the USFWS is protected during its transmission/delivery. The USFWS strongly recommends recipients use the most secure transmission/delivery method available. The USFWS recommends the following digital transmission methods: secure digital faxing; encrypted emails; emailing a password protected zipped/compressed file attachment in one email followed by the password in a second email; or emailing a zipped/compressed file attachment. The USFWS strongly encourages recipients sending sensitive data in paper copy to use a courier mail service. Recipients may also contact their USFWS Project Officer and provide any sensitive data over the telephone.

The Notice of Award document from the USFWS will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests.

Foreign Recipient Payments:

Foreign recipients receiving funds to a bank outside of the United States will be paid electronically through U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) system.

Foreign recipients receiving funds electronically to a bank in the United States will be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) through the Automated Clearing House network. Foreign recipients who wish to be paid to a bank account in the United States must enter and maintain current banking information in SAM (see Section III above).

The Notice of Award document from the USFWS will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests.

Standard Award Terms and Conditions:

Acceptance of a Federal Financial Assistance award from the Department of the Interior (DOI) carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions of award. The text of all standard award terms and conditions are available online at <http://www.doi.gov/pam/TermsandConditions.html>. Acceptance is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by DOI and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated either directly or by reference in the following:

- Program legislation/regulation
- Special terms and conditions
- Code of Federal Regulations/Regulatory Requirements, as applicable:
 - 2 CFR Part 25 Central Contractor Registration and Data Universal Numbering System

- 2 CFR Part 170 Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation
- 2 CFR Part 1400 Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)
- 2 CFR Part 1401 Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)
- 2 CFR Part 175 Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000
- 43 CFR 12(A) Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs
- 43 CFR 12(C) Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local
- 43 CFR 12(F) Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, other Non-Profit and Commercial Organizations
- 43 CFR 18 New Restrictions on Lobbying
- 305 DM 3, Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities and 217 FW 7, Scientific Integrity and Scholarly Conduct. Grant and cooperative agreement recipients must ensure quality project results. Results must consist of unbiased assessments through proper management and enforcement of scientific integrity standards, which includes avoiding conflicts of interest as defined in USFWS policy 212 FW 7 (complete text available online at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/212fw7.html>).

Recipient Financial and Performance Reporting Requirements:

Interim financial reports and performance reports may be required. Interim reports will be required no more frequently than quarterly, and no less frequently than annually. A final financial report and a final performance report will be required and are due within 90 calendar days of the end date of the award. Performance reports must contain: 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work; 2) a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and 3) any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. The USFWS will specify the performance reporting frequency applicable to the award in the Notice of Award document.

VIII. Agency Contacts

Barbara Jones, Joint Venture Coordinator, Barbara_Jones@fws.gov

Andrew Forbes, Assistant Joint Venture Coordinator, Andrew_Forbes@fws.gov

Greg Soulliere, Joint Venture Science Coordinator, Greg_Soulliere@fws.gov.