Paperwork Reduction Act Statement. We are collecting this information in accordance with Migratory Bird Joint Ventures CFDA.gov profile section Authorization 15.637. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding]. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. We estimate that it will take applicants under this program about 50 hours to complete an application. We estimate it will take recipients under this program about 250] to complete required reporting and 250 for required recordkeeping. All burden estimates include the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather data needed and complete and review the submission. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 6 Division of Migratory Birds and State Programs

Migratory Bird Joint Ventures
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.637

Notice of Funding Opportunity

I. Description of Funding Opportunity

This funding opportunity is developed through the North American Waterfowl Management via Migratory Bird Joint Ventures. These activities are identified through Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 15.637.

Migratory Bird Joint Ventures (JVs) support the following DOI Priorities:

1. Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt: The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP or Plan) is an international accord signed by the U.S. and Canada in 1986 and by Mexico in 1994. For the past 32 years the Plan has helped to sustain abundant waterfowl populations across North America by conserving priority landscapes. Through innovative partnerships combining sound-science, boots-on-the-ground conservation delivery, and public and policy engagement, the Plan has world-wide recognition as a model to effectively achieve continental-scale wildlife conservation. The habitat goals of the Plan are primarily implemented by JVs —a network of regional, self-directed partnerships involving Federal, State, and local governments; corporations; individuals; and non-government conservation groups. By catalyzing partnerships through a voluntary, non-regulatory approach, JVs leverage a diversity of conservation expertise, create collaborations at a variety of scales, and make conservation entities stronger through a focus on improving effectiveness and efficiency in others. This partnership approach is a "win-win" endeavor that addresses the needs of birds and other wildlife, while also providing benefits to working lands, agriculture, and rural communities.

2. Utilizing our natural resources: JV partnerships utilize voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs to implement sustainable conservation practices that support birds and other wildlife, while also providing benefits to agriculture, forestry, and other working lands through outcomes that include improved forage quality, reduced risk of wildfire and invasive species, and improved forest health and timber value.

3. Restoring trust in local communities: JVs are regional, self-directed partnerships involving Federal, State, and local governments; corporations; individuals; and non-government conservation groups. In conjunction with partners and local habitat projects, JVs address local, regional, and continental goals for sustaining waterfowl and other migratory birds working locally with communities to conserve habitat for the benefit of birds, other wildlife, and people.

4. Generating additional revenues to support DOI & National Interests: FWS does not fund the entire scope of JV operations, and JV partners are expected to contribute funding towards one or more of these categories. JV partners have historically provided more than $30 for every federally appropriated dollar to support the JV partnerships.

5. Striking a regulatory balance: JV partnerships address the priorities of "Striking a regulatory balance" by confronting conservation needs and concerns voluntarily and locally, potentially negating the need for more burdensome administrative rules and regulations.

The activities completed through this Cooperative Agreement will support RWBJV partnership activities. The agreement that will result from this funding opportunity will provide financial support from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the recipient to support the RWBJV partnership with implementation of projects that will be directly linked to migratory bird habitat conservation as described in the RWBJV Implementation Plan and associated bird plans. To successfully implement migratory bird habitat conservation the RWBJV partnership is implementing the Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) business model. This business model is built on four interrelated critical elements. Critical elements of the SHC framework include: Biological Planning, Conservation Design, Research/Monitoring/Evaluation, and Implementation/Project Delivery. When implemented these elements provide a feedback mechanism that refines conservation delivery through time. This agreement will facilitate funding to support the critical elements of the SHC business model.

This agreement will support the biological planning element through; collection of survey and census data relevant to priority species, analysis of survey and census data to develop and refine population objectives, assessment and development of population based habitat goals, collection and analysis of geospatial data to document habitat/landscape conditions, development of biologically driven spatially explicit habitat models for species of concern, development of GIS data that inventory habitat conditions and occurrence of priority species.

Conservation design activities supported will include: development of integrated migratory bird habitat plans; acquisition of hydrology and elevation data to evaluate wetland function; support of GIS and modeling capacities (staff/hardware/software); development of decision support tools to guide existing conservation programs; evaluation of existing programs to determine eligibility across the landscape; refinement and development of new programs that will address unmet conservation needs. In addition to programmatic activities, funds for development, printing, and distribution of educational and outreach materials will be provided. These communication materials will inform about the RWB region, describe habitat management practices, inform about conservation programs, highlight project success, and provide general information about the RWBJV and the goals, programs, and objectives of the RWBJV.

Research, inventory, and monitoring projects will be supported to inform and refine conservation actions. Project categories will include: collection of species occurrence data; inventory of habitat conditions; and analysis of biotic and abiotic data to understand annual habitat variability. In addition monitoring and inventory data will be collected to develop and refine population goals and habitat targets for the region. Research and monitoring projects that provide a quantitative assessment of restoration, management, and habitat enhancement practices completed in the RWB region will also be supported. In addition, projects that document annual habitat conditions assess climatology and habitat relationships, and document landscape scale changes in habitat conditions will be coordinated.

To facilitate project delivery (implementation), the following actions will be supported: engineering technical assistance to guide successful wetland restoration activities, providing coordination and technical assistance in planning, designing, and installing wetland habitat projects; providing construction funds for mutually agreed upon projects; funding to support new and innovative conservation programs that address habitat limitations.

To ensure effective operations, funding will also be provided to support office support, partnership management, grant development and administration.

II. Award Information

The intent of this funding opportunity is to award a single source Cooperative Agreement with the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF). This Cooperative Agreement would be a continuation of an existing Cooperative Agreement between the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture (RWBJV) and the NCF. This Single Source Award is being awarded in accordance with Department of the Interior Policy 505 DM 2 B [4: Unique Qualifications], which allows for award without competition to an applicant. This recipient and project meet this criterion due to the fact that NCF is highly-experienced with 15 years of working with the RWBJV to develop conservation actions that meet the goals and objectives of the RWBJV Implementation Plan. During this time the NCF has provided office support and financial management and oversight of both federal and nonfederal grant funds awarded to the RWBJV.

The purpose of this agreement is to further the implementation of conservation actions as identified in the 2013 Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Implementation Plan and associated bird conservation plans. The tasks to be performed under this agreement are as follows: Office Management, Financial Oversight, Biological Planning, Conservation Design, Implementation of Conservation projects, Research/Inventory/Monitoring, and Communication/Outreach activities to facilitate wetland and grassland conservation within the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture administrative boundary.

This project should be considered a Cooperative Agreement with substantial involvement by the FWS Project Officer. The FWS Project Officer will work closely with personnel from the Nebraska Community Foundation to develop work plans for projects; develop strategic direction on where to focus conservation efforts; develop conservation planning tools to help target conservation actions; review and approve expenditures associated with proposed modifications or sub-grants prior to award, work with the recipient to ensure project actions contribute to successful completion of the scope of work, and to conduct partner workshops. Consequently, the FWS Project Officer will serve as an integral partner with Nebraska Community Foundation via this Cooperative Agreement.

Estimated Total Program Funding: $2,000,000
- Expected Number of Awards: 5
- Award Ceiling: $2,000,000
- Award Floor: $30,000

III. Basic Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Applicants:

Applicants must be an existing or potential partner of the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, and must agree to support Joint Venture goals and objectives. Project must fall within scope of the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Management Board's approved Implementation Plan, operation structure, and supporting conservation documents and plans. Projects must contribute to overall Rainwater Basin Joint Venture goals and objectives. Project must be cost-effective. Projects that leverage grant funds with partner funds or in-kind services that enable successful partnership operation and conservation delivery will receive preference. U.S. non-profit, non-governmental organizations with 501(c)(3) Internal Revenue Service (IRS) status must provide a copy of their status determination letter received from the IRS if applying.

Federal law 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 System for Award Management (SAM). See Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 25 for more information. 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 at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. For technical difficulties, contact Dun & Bradstreet by email at: govt@dnb.com, or by calling the Government Customer Resource Center at voice phone: 866-705-5711 or TTY line: 877-807-1679 (hearing impaired customers only). 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 at 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 their information 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 directly to a United States bank account must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.

Note: The official U.S. government website address for SAM is www.sam.gov. There is NO COST to register in or access SAM.gov. There are third-party vendors who charge a fee in exchange for registering entities in SAM; please be aware that you can register to do business with the U.S. government FOR FREE directly in SAM at www.sam.gov.

C. Excluded Entities

Applicant entities or their key project personnel 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. The Service conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award.

D. Cost Sharing or Matching:

Cost sharing or matching funds are not required. There are no restrictions on the types of costs (e.g., in-kind contributions) that are acceptable as cost sharing when cost share is provided. There are no pre-award requirements for submission of letters or other documentation to verify commitments to meet cost-sharing requirements if an award is made.

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 form. As these are discretionary funds for a single source award the NCF will submit the Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance

Do not include other Federal sources of funding, requested or approved, in the total entered in the "Federal" funding box on the Application for Federal Assistance form. Enter only the amount being requested under this program in the "Federal" funding box. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the total funding entered in the "Other" box.

B. Project Summary

This Cooperative Agreement will support activities outlined in the project titled "Conservation of Wetlands and Grasslands in the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture". This cooperative agreement will provide financial assistance to support Office Management, Financial Oversight, Biological Planning, Conservation Design, Implementation of Conservation projects, Research/Inventory/Monitoring, and Communication/Outreach activities to facilitate wetland and grassland conservation within the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture administrative boundary. The RWBJV is a diverse partnership that has a proven track record of leveraging federal and non-federal funds to complete all elements of the SHC business model. These actions will result in tangible conservation deliverables that will support bird conservation within Bird Conservation Regions 11 and 19 in Nebraska. This area is often referred to as the RWBJV Administrative Area and described as the mixed-grass prairie portion of Nebraska. As part of this partnership the NCF provides office support, completes disbursements, implements a rigorous procurement policy to comply with OMB super circular requirements, and ensures proper auditing to ensure project components are within the scope of the Cooperative Agreement and in compliance with federal regulations.

Elements that will be completed as part of this Cooperative Agreement are outlined in the Project Narrative portion of this document.

C. Project Narrative

1. **Statement of Need:** The RWB has been designated as a critical migration stopover site for migratory waterfowl by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) in 1992. The RWBJV partnership was formed shortly after to address habitat deficiencies that were impacting populations of waterfowl in the Rainwater Basin. In 2001 the Rainwater Basin was recognized as a Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) landscape of critical importance. With that designation the RWBJV partners expanded their focus to also provide habitat for shorebirds. In 2013, the RWBJV revised their implementation plan to incorporate all migratory bird species that rely on this region. As a result grassland birds and waterbirds conservation benchmarks were established.

   This implementation plan identified nine geographic focus areas with unique habitat objectives for each landscape. In highly altered landscapes like the RWB where over 90% of RWB wetlands have been drained or significantly modified restoration and enhancement were prioritized to ensure this region will adequately meet habitat requirements for the millions of waterfowl and other wetland dependent species that annually use this region. In grassland dominated landsacpes like the Sandhills and Central loess hills that support an estimated 15.0 million grassland nesting birds grassland enhancement was prioritized.

   Conservation of wetland and grassland resources will be imperative to support desired population levels in this region to contribute to the population sustainability priority bird species identified in the four national and international bird plans. The RWBJV partnership structure provides a venue for agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private landowners to come together to address natural resource issues through projects that improve migratory bird habitat.

   There has been a long standing collaboration between the NCF and the RWBJV. The NCF is a nonprofit (501(c)(3)), charitable organization providing office support, financial management, strategic development, and education/training services to communities, organizations and donors throughout Nebraska since 1993. The Recipient is committed to assisting the RWBJV to accomplish its objectives through cooperative efforts. Since NCF became a partner the RWBJV has increased financial leverage from $1.0 million annually to nearly $10.0 million annually. These funds include a combination of USFWS funds as well as outside granting sources including the Nebraska Environmental Trust, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and others. The conservation impact of these funds has ranged from 1,000 acres to nearly 90,000 acres yearly depending on the types of projects that are completed.

   It is in the best interest of the NCF to work with the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partners to develop ways to increase the number, quality, and distribution of wetlands throughout the Rainwater Basin, as well as monitor and evaluate the success of these efforts. Both parties are interested in working together in accomplishing the goals of the RWBJV through management and restoration practices that protect, restore, and enhance wetland and grassland habitat throughout the RWB.

2. **Project Goals and Objectives:** The purpose of this Agreement is to continue a long-standing partnership between the RWBJV and the NCF. This partnership will provide financial support from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service NAWMP for the NCF to support the RWBJV with migratory bird habitat conservation. To successfully implement migratory bird habitat conservation the RWBJV partnership is implementing the Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) business model. This business model is built on four interrelated critical elements. Critical elements of the SHC framework include: Biological Planning, Conservation Design, Research/Monitoring/Evaluation, and Implementation/Project Delivery. When implemented these elements provide a feedback mechanism that refines conservation delivery through time. This agreement will facilitate funding to support the critical elements of the SHC business model.

   This agreement will support the biological planning element through; collection of survey and census data relevant to priority species, analysis of survey and census data to develop and refine population objectives, assessment and development of population based habitat goals, collection and analysis of geospatial data to document habitat/landscape conditions, development of biologically driven spatially explicit habitat models for species of concern, development of GIS data that inventory habitat conditions and occurrence of priority species.

   Conservation design activities supported will include: development of integrated migratory bird habitat plans; acquisition of hydrology and elevation data to evaluate wetland function; support of GIS and modeling capacities (space/hardware/software); development of decision support tools to guide existing conservation programs; evaluation of existing programs to determine eligibility across the landscape; refinement and development of new programs that will address unmet conservation needs. In addition to programmatic activities, funds for development, printing, and distribution of educational and outreach materials will be provided. These communication materials will inform about the RWB region, describe habitat management practices, inform about conservation programs, highlight project success, and provide general information about the RWBJV and the goals, programs, and objectives of the RWBJV.

   Research, inventory, and monitoring projects will be supported to inform and refine conservation actions. Project categories will include: collection of species occurrence data; inventory of habitat conditions; and analysis of biotic and abiotic data to understand annual habitat variability. In addition monitoring and inventory data will be collected to develop and refine population goals and habitat targets for the region. Research and monitoring projects that provide a quantitative assessment of restoration, management, and habitat enhancement practices completed in the RWB region will also be supported. In addition, projects that document annual habitat conditions assess climatology and habitat relationships, and document landscape scale changes in habitat conditions will be coordinated. Goal is to continue to collect waterfowl use data and the aerial photography associated with the Annual Habitat Survey.

To facilitate project delivery (implementation), the following actions will be supported: engineering technical assistance to guide successful wetland restoration activities, providing coordination and technical assistance in planning, designing, and installing wetland habitat projects; providing construction funds for mutually agreed upon projects; funding to support new and innovative conservation programs that address habitat limitations. Wetland restoration will be completed using a variety of techniques (filling concentration pits, removing surface drains, re-contouring waterways, restoring watershed hydrology, etc.). Grassland wetland restoration will include enhancement through removal of eastern red cedar and establishment of grazing infrastructure to maximize grassland conditions for grazing and grassland birds. The goal is to impact 5,000 acres annually.

To ensure effective operations, funding will also be provided to support office management, overhead, and grant development and administration. This will include implementation of a federal procurement policy that is compliant with the Office of Management and Budget super circular. Fund disbursement will also be completed to ensure participating landowners and contractors are paid in a timely manner for conservation actions completed. The goal will be to meet all granting goals and objectives and outlined in the different funding sources provided to the NCF for the RWBJV.

3. **Project Activities, Methods and Timetable:** As described above project activities are described for each of the project goals and objectives. All of the biological planning, conservation design, and research/inventory/monitoring activities will not require review to ensure compliance with National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. However the implementation projects will require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. To ensure compliance with these statutory regulations the RWBJV partners will coordinate with the appropriate Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and USFWS staff for project review, permitting, and compliance.

   All activities outlined in the project goals and objectives section will be ongoing once the Cooperative Agreement is awarded. The recipient shall submit progress and financial reports to the RWBJV Project Officer per the reporting table listed in the official award.

4. **Stakeholder Coordination/Involvement:** The RWBJV partnership includes multiple federal agencies (Natural Resources Conservation Service, FWS, United States Geological Service, Farm Service Agency) State agencies (NE. Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, NE Department of Environmental Quality), and local agencies (Multiple Natural Resources Districts), and several Non-governmental Agencies (The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever). All of these partners have worked closely in supporting the NCF as the recipient of the

several Cooperative Agreements in the past. This diverse partnership, including the recipient, has a long and rich history to protect and restore habitat for millions of migratory waterfowl, wetland dependent species, and other at-risk wildlife species native to the Rainwater Basin area. Over the past five years the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture partnership has worked with the NCF to complete over 650 wetland and associated upland conservation projects. The NCF has a proven record as a dedicated partner that has the capabilities and structure to administer the funds granted by the RWBJV. This includes filing all appropriate reports by deadline and serving as the contract administrator. Over the past years the NCF has worked cooperatively with the RWBJV and partners to ensure that all financial transactions were properly documented and completed in a timely manner.

To help ensure active engagement with the stakeholders the RWBJV annually holds an information Seminar that is open to the public to highlight the different project and activities that have been completed. This seminar annually draws 200 people with representation from landowners, agency representatives, and interested citizens. The RWBJV also has a webpage and eNewsletter that provide updates about ongoing projects and activities that are supported by the funding made available through the cooperative agreement.

5. **Project Monitoring and Evaluation:** The RWBJV has a Private Lands Workgroup, Conservation Planning Workgroup, Technical Committee, and Management Board. Each of these committees and workgroups has a representative from the different partners and have a role in monitoring project success. The Conservation Planning Workgroup will be involved in the review of the research, inventory, and monitoring projects. This review will ensure robust methods are used in data collection, appropriate analytical techniques are used, and results and interpretations are relevant and can be applied to guide conservation delivery. The main monitoring benchmarks will be collection of waterfowl use data following the waterfowl monitoring protocols that was developed by USGS. This survey samples 330 wetlands annually and collects information on the number of birds using the wetlands. The Annual Habitat Survey collects aerial photography that is then used to map the distribution and abundance of ponded habitat over hydric soil footprints every spring around the peak of snow goose migration.

   The Private Lands Workgroup and Public Lands Workgroup will oversee project development on public and private lands and ensure all permits are obtained and projects are developed using the best management practices. The Technical Committee will review workgroup efforts but also provide the financial oversight and assist the FWS project officer with ensuring funds are being spent on project elements that are in-line with goals and objectives described in the Cooperative Agreement and within the project documentation related to each project. The goal will be to do 20 private lands projects annually to positively impact 450 acres of playa wetlands and 5,000 acres of sandhills grasslands.

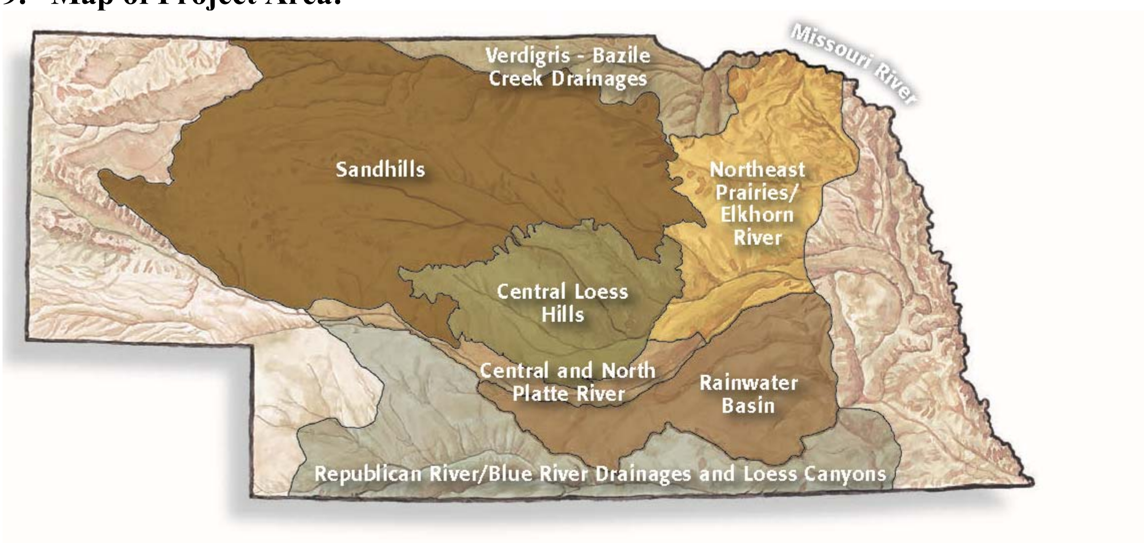
The Region 6 Project Officer will coordinate with each of the above described workgroups and USFWS personnel to ensure successful implementation of project goals and objectives. Timing and communication is critical throughout this entire process, so we will monitor progress continually throughout the agreement period. The RWBJV will receive monthly financial reports and annual progress reports. Additionally, NCF will share the results of their audit to ensure that objectives are being met and appropriate financial oversight is being administered.

6. **Description of Entities Undertaking the Project**: Due to the variety of activities associated with the goals and objectives associated with this Cooperative Agreement the appropriate entity will be identified based on the desired outcomes. To complete the research/inventory/monitoring components request for proposals will be developed and proposal will be solicited from universities and government entities that have expertise to inform the research question. When restoration projects will be completed the government procurement protocol will be followed to ensure both price competition and fair opportunities.

7. **Sustainability:** The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture was formed in 1992 and has long track record delivery on-the-ground projects since its inception. The NCF and RWBJV have had active Cooperative Agreements since 2000. This long-term relationship has resulted in hundreds of projects implemented and built a strong partnership. Because of this strong partnership this high probability that activities will continue into the future.

8. **Literature Cited:** None

9. **Map of Project Area:**



Map showing the geographic focus areas in the RWBJV Administrative Area.

D. Budget Form

Complete the 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 SF 424C if the project includes construction or land acquisition. The budget forms are available on the Internet at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1. When developing your budget, keep in mind that financial assistance awards and subawards are subject to the Federal cost principles in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, as applicable to the recipient organization type. Links to the full text of the Federal cost principles are available on the Internet at http://www.ecfr.gov/.

Note on Multiple Federal Funding Sources: If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program on the budget form *separately* from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding. Enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form, and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program's CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number for this Federal program appears on the first page of this funding opportunity.

E. Budget Justification

In a separate narrative titled "**Budget Justification**", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the SF 424 Budget Object Class Category totals were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost.

If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, provide a list of that equipment, including the Federal funding source.

Required Indirect Cost Statement: Recipients that do not have an approved indirect cost rate cannot charge indirect costs to their Federal award. All applicants except individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate must include in the budget justification narrative one of the following statements and attach to their application any required documentation identified in the applicable statement:

"We are:

1. A tax-exempt public charity in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is 2.06%. A copy of our current, approved rate agreement is attached.

All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. Accepting a flat *de minimis* rate as a condition of award is an approved rate.
- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
- Recipients may not charge to their Service award any indirect costs calculated against the portion of total direct project costs paid by any other Federal funding source or non-Federal partner.
- Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to transfer unallowable indirect costs to amounts budgeted for direct costs or to satisfy cost-sharing or matching requirements under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Applicants who are individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

For more information on indirect cost rates, see the Service's **Indirect Costs and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements** guidance document on the Internet at https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html.

Negotiating an Indirect Cost Rate with the Department of the Interior: Entities that do not have a NICRA must first have an open, active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your cognizant agency, your indirect cost rate will be negotiated by the Interior Business Center (IBC). For more information, contact the IBC at:

Indirect Cost Services
Acquisition Services Directorate, Interior Business Center
U.S. Department of the Interior
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 7-400
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-930-3803
Email: Through https://www.doi.gov/ibc/contactus/ibcfeedback web form
Internet address: https://www.doi.gov/ibc/services/finance/indirect-cost-services

F. Single Audit Reporting Statements: As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F, all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. All U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government and non-profit applicants must provide a statement regarding if your organization was/was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the organization's most recently closed fiscal year and, if so, state if that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/) and provide the EIN under which that report was submitted. Include these statements at the end of the Project Narrative in a section titled "**Single Audit Reporting Statements**".

G. **Assurances:** Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1. Use the **Assurances for Construction Programs (SF 424D)** for construction and land acquisition projects. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)** for all other projects. The form includes a statement that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program. Signing this form does not make you or your organization subject to laws that are otherwise not applicable to you or your organization. Changing, crossing out, or making notations on the form before signing has no impact on the applicability of law.

H. **Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities:** Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as 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 connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this proposal AND the Federal share exceeds $100,000, complete and submit the **SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** form available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

I. **Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Applicants must notify the Service in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that are known at the time of application or that may arise during the life of this award, in the event an award is made. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the recipient, the recipient's employees, or the recipient's subrecipients in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the applicant, the applicant's employees, or the applicant's future subrecipients in the matter. Applicants must notify the Service in writing in their application if any key project personnel, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are known to be related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in or assiciated with the program to which you are applying for funding or who otherwise may be involved in the review and selection of the application. Upon receipt of such a notice, the Service program, in consultation with their Ethics Counselor, will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the applicant to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in the project not being select for funding.

J. Required Overlap/Duplication Statement: Applicants must provide a statement that addresses if there is any overlap between the proposed project and any other active or anticipated projects in terms of activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If any overlap exists, applicants must provide a description of the overlap in their application. Applicants must also state if the proposal submitted for consideration under this program is/is not in any way duplicative of any proposal that was/will be submitted for funding consideration to any other potential funding source (Federal or non-Federal). If such a circumstance exists, applicants must detail when the other duplicative proposal(s) were submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when funding decisions are expected to be announced. If at any time a proposal is awarded funds that would be duplicative of the funding requested from the Service, applicants must notify the Service point of contact for this funding opportunity immediately.

Application Checklist

- ☐ **Evidence of non-profit status**: If a non-profit organization, a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.
- ☐ **SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance**: A complete, signed and dated SF 424, SF 424-Mandatory, or SF 424-Individual form.
- ☐ **Project summary**
- ☐ **Project narrative**
- ☐ **Timetable**
- ☐ **Single Audit Reporting statement**: If a U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government, or non-profit organization, statements regarding applicability of and compliance with Single Audit reporting requirements.
- ☐ **SF 424 budget form**: A complete SF 424A or SF 424C Budget Information form.
- ☐ **Budget justification**
- ☐ **Federally-funded equipment list**: If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment.
- ☐ **Indirect cost statement**
- ☐ **NICRA**: When applicable, a copy of the organization’s current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
- ☐ **SF 424 Assurances form:** Signed and dated SF 424B or SF 424D Assurances form.
- ☐ **SF LLL form:** If applicable, completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form.

- ☐ **Conflict of Interest disclosure,** when applicable.
- ☐ **Overlap/Duplication statement**

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

V. Submission Instructions
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: July 24, 2018

Intergovernmental Review: Before submitting an application, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the following website (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/) to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs." E.O. 12372 was issued to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on state and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The E.O. allows each state to designate an entity to perform this function. The official list of designated entities is posted on the website. Contact your state's designated entity for more information on the process the state requires to be followed when applying for assistance. States that do not have a designated entity listed on the website have chosen not to participate in the review process.

To submit an application by e-mail:
Format all of your documents to print on Letter size (8 ½" x 11") paper. Format all pages to display and print page numbers. Scanned documents should be scanned in Letter format, as black and white images only. Where possible, save scanned documents in .pdf format. E-mail your application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms MUST be signed by your organization's authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text "Completed by Grants.gov upon submission" or "Completed on submission to Grants.gov". Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.

VI. Application Review Information
Criteria: To be considered for funding, applications must be from a well-qualified entity to conduct the scope of work activities safely, cost-efficiently and has the capabilities and structure to administer the funds granted by the RWBJV. The entity must support creating a conservation stewardship, has relationships with communities, is able to generate additional revenues to support DOI & National Interests and has self-regulation and transparency procedures in place. The entity has to have past performance experience of filing all appropriate reports by deadlines and serving as the contract administrator to ensure that all financial transactions are legitimate and completed in a timely manner. The entity must annually complete an audit to ensure adequate financial oversight.

Review and Selection Process:
This Single Source application package will be reviewed by the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Coordinator in conjunction with the Migratory Bird Program Analyst and Deputy Chief, based on the criteria listed above. Reviewers also will consider applicant risk and past performance.

Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the program office point of contact the "Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification" form. For a copy of this form, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Each fiscal year, for every entity receiving one or more awards in that fiscal year, the Service conducts a risk assessment based on eight risk categories. The result of this risk assessment is used to establish a monitoring plan for all awards to the entity in that fiscal year. The Service's risk assessment form is available on the Internet at http://www.fws.gov/forms/3-2462.pdf.

Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the program office point of contact the "Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification" form. For a copy of this form, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Prior to award, the Service reviews the selected applicant's statement regarding potential overlap or duplication in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel and makes a determination regarding Service funding. Depending on the circumstances, modification of the application, other pending applications, or an active award may be necessary, or the Service might choose to not fund the proposed project.

Each fiscal year, for every entity receiving one or more awards in that fiscal year, the Service conducts a risk assessment based on eight risk categories. The result of this risk assessment is used to establish a monitoring plan for all awards to the entity in that fiscal year. For a copy of the Service's risk assessment form, go to https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html.

Prior to approving an award with a Federal funding amount that exceeds or is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, as adjusted (see 2 CFR 200.88), the Service must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS; https://www.fapiis.gov/fapiis/index.action) to determine if, at a minimum, the information found in the system for the applicant demonstrates a satisfactory record of Federal award performance and integrity and business ethics (see 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2)). The Service must also report to FAPIIS if an applicant subject to this review is found not qualified for a particular award due to its prior record of integrity or performance under Federal awards (see 2 CFR 200.212).

VII. Award Administration

Award Notices: Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). 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 accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document 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. 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 award, the Service 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, 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 B.) who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP must maintain current banking information in SAM. Domestic applicants exempt from the SAM registration requirement who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP will be required to submit their banking information directly to the Service program. However, ***do NOT submit any banking information to the Service until it is requested from you by the Service program!***

Transmittal of Sensitive Data: Recipients are responsible for ensuring any sensitive data being sent to the Service is protected during its transmission/delivery. The Service strongly recommends that recipients use the most secure transmission/delivery method available. The Service 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 Service strongly encourages recipients sending sensitive data in paper copy to use a courier mail service. Recipients may also contact their Service Project Officer and provide any sensitive data over the telephone.

Award Terms and Conditions: Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the notice of award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. The Service's Standard Award Terms and Conditions are available on the Internet at https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Recipient Reporting Requirements:
Financial and Performance Reports: 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.

Final Reports: Recipients are required to submit final financial and performance reports no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date, whichever comes first. For awards lasting 12 months or less, the final reports will be the only financial and performance reports required, except in unusual circumstances or if waived.

Interim Reports: For awards that last longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim financial and performance reports no less frequently than annually and no more frequently than quarterly, except in unusual circumstances or if waived. Requiring a higher frequency of reporting than annual reporting will be based on the Service's assessment of higher or other unusual circumstance. Quarterly and semiannual interim reports are due within 30 calendar days of the reporting period end date. Annual interim reports are due within 90 calendar days of the reporting period end date.

Recipients must use the Standard Form 425, Federal Financial Report for financial reporting, available on the Internet at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1.

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.

Significant Developments Reports: Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the following types of conditions become known:

- 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.
- 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.

The Service will specify in the notice of award document the reporting and reporting frequency applicable to the award.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Recipients are responsible for notifying the Service Project Officer in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the recipient, the recipient's employees, or the recipient's subrecipients in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under this award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the Recipient, the Recipient's employees, or the Recipient's subrecipients in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the Service Project Officer in consultation with their Ethics Counselor will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the Recipient, the Recipient's employee(s), or the Recipient's Subrecipient(s) that could reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of this award.

Other Mandatory Disclosures: The non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment. (See also 2 CFR Part 180, 31 U.S.C. 3321, and 41 U.S.C. 2313.)

2 CFR Part 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters is applicable to awards with a total Federal share of more than $500,000, except those to individuals and foreign public entities.

VIII. Agency Contacts

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