U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FWS - Refuges

F23AS00069 Youth Engagement, Education, and Employment
Fiscal Year: 2023
F23AS00069

Due Date for Applications: **09/10/2023**

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A. Program Description

Authority:

Public Lands Corps Act – Public Lands Corps program (16 U.S.C. 1723), Fish and Wildlife Act – Community partnership enhancement (16 U.S.C. 742f(d))

Assistance Listing Number:

15.676

Background, Purpose and Program Requirements:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS, Service) is the premier government agency dedicated to the conservation, protection, and enhancement of fish, wildlife and plants, and their habitats. We are the only agency in the federal government whose primary responsibility is the conservation and management of these important natural resources for the American public. The Service's origins date back to 1871 when Congress established the U.S. Fish Commission to study the decrease in the nation's food fishes and recommend ways to reverse that decline. The Service is committed to building and retaining a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the ethic, age, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and language diversity of contemporary America. The Service operates a variety of programs that promote wildlife conservation and public land management under the Public Lands Corps Act (PLC, FWS Youth Corps) through engagement, employment, and education of our nation's diverse youth and veterans.

Service programs operating under the Public Lands Corps Act have been designated as covered programs under Justice40 (Executive Order 14008). The Service strives to meet the Federal Government's goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal Investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. The categories of investment are: climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation of reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure.

The Public Lands Corps (PLC) Program is authorized by Congress under Title 16 USC Sec. 1721-1726; Public Law 109-154, Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005 (amends the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993)1, and all subsequent amendments. Guidance authorizes U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) HQ, Regional, and field offices to (1) establish PLC Programs (2) certify participants who meet the PLC eligibility requirements for the PLC non- competitive hiring authority status, and (3) ensure consistent program standards throughout the Service. The purpose of Service PLC Programs is to provide work and education opportunities for youth (defined as ages 16-30 inclusive, and up to age 35 for veterans) participants in the areas of natural and cultural resource conservation, development, and scientific research. Participants perform work on our nation's public lands by providing additional, unique capacity designed to boost the impact of the Service for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the American people.

The PLC Program allows the Service to establish partnerships with Partner organizations

(Partners), generally defined as "qualified youth or conservation corps," using financial assistance/cooperative agreements or MOUs, to employ the next generation of conservationists in paid PLC projects and internships. Partners must be designated as an official member of the FWS Youth Corps (formerly 21CSC Youth Corps) in order to certify Participants. FWS Youth Corps application information is available in the attachments to this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The purpose of this NOFO is not to establish new partnerships. Unsolicited partnership applications or projects that are not collaboratively developed between an existing FWS Youth Corps member and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be returned as ineligible.

***Applicants seeking technical or financial assistance from a Service PLC Program are requested to consult with a local Service office BEFORE developing or submitting an application (see Agency Contacts at the end of this announcement or visit U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (fws.gov)

The PLC Program's goals are to:

- Perform, in a cost-effective manner, appropriate conservation projects on eligible lands where such projects will not be performed by existing government employees.
- Assist governments and Indian tribes in performing research and public education tasks associated with natural and cultural resources on eligible lands.
- Expose young people to public service while furthering their understanding and appreciation of the Nation's natural and cultural resources.
- Stimulate interest among the Nation's youth in the Service and conservation careers by exposing them to conservation, scientific research, and other professionals in the Service, and offering them non-competitive hiring eligibility for Federal positions for which they qualify upon meeting program requirements.
- Allow PLC participants the opportunity to seek forbearance on Stafford loans2.

Qualifying PLC participants, who have met program requirements, may become eligible for PLC non-competitive hiring authority status that is valid for up to for two (2) years and can be used to apply for permanent, temporary and term federal positions for which they qualify. The Service operates many PLC programs under the FWS Youth Corps that offer the possibility of non-competitive hiring authority status. Programs such as:

Public Lands Transportation Fellows Program (PLTFP)
The Public Lands Transportation Fellows program (PLTF) provides fellowships to outstanding graduates in a transportation-related field to work directly with staff of Federal Land Management Agencies on key visitor transportation issues. The PLTF program began in 2012 and was modeled after the very successful Transportation Scholars program managed by the National Park Foundation (NPF) that serves the National Park Service (NPS).
The PLTF program gives recent graduates (sometimes current students) in a transportation related engineering, planning, or resource management program a unique opportunity for career development and public service. Successful applicants are placed at a federal land unit facing a transportation issue to facilitate a transportation planning or implementation project. A fellow is assigned to work directly with staff at a unit or headquarters/region/field office. The assigned

projects help the land units develop transportation solutions that preserve valuable resources and enhance the visitor experience. The program has three goals, which are to:

1. Encourage emerging transportation professionals to pursue their career serving federal lands.
2. Provide much needed transportation expertise to FMLA units and regions to help them address critical transportation issues.
3. Support the development, implementation, and evaluation of viable alternative transportation for visitors to FLMA's.

Youth Conservation Corps

The Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) is summer youth employment program that engages young people in meaningful work experiences on public lands while developing an ethic of environmental stewardship and civic responsibility. YCC programs are generally 8 to 10 weeks long. Participants are paid the minimum wage for a 40-hour work week. Most YCC opportunities are non-residential programs that provide paid daytime work. The Service anticipates entering into cooperative agreements with multiple organizations to accomplish crew-based YCC projects in fiscal year 2022. For Service Regions that operate YCC programs through financial assistance, collaborative projects must be submitted through GrantSolutions prior to the Application Due Date of this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Youth Conservation Corps

Career Discovery Internship Program

Founded in 2008, the Career Discovery Internship Program (CDIP) was created in partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to help prepare the next generation of wildlife professionals and managers by:

1. Introducing culturally and ethnically diverse college freshman and sophomores to conservation careers in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service);
2. Giving field staff the experience of working with culturally and ethnically diverse employee; and
3. Increasing the diversity of the applicant pool for conservation-based jobs.

These internships provide a diverse group of youth with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field. Interns are paid a living wage and, in some cases, are also provided with room and board for the duration of their service. CDIP interns are assigned to Service field stations for a summer of hard work and experiential education. Before beginning their assignment, interns attend a week-long training and orientation program. During this time, interns receive a variety of training units including an introduction to the Service and SCA, cultural and intergenerational awareness training, mentor/mentee training to name a few. The interns also engage in simulations and Service challenges designed and facilitated by Service and SCA staff. Interns also meet their designated mentor for the summer, who is a Service employee. Service challenges are usually management issues common to daily life on a Service field station, with topics considering public relations, invasive species, and resource conservation. The interns close their week with a presentation on their solutions to these challenges.

New and emerging Programs

The Indian Youth Service Corps Program (IYSC)

The IYSC Program is a program established within the Public Lands Corps Act that offers Tribes and other partner organizations the opportunity to enter into agreements with the Secretary of the

Interior, Agriculture, or Commerce to do one or more of the following, for the benefit of Tribal members:

- Establish conservation crews to carry out appropriate conservation projects on eligible service lands; or
- Place individuals in resource assistant positions; or
- Place individuals in apprenticeships.

The purpose of the IYSC is to:

- Perform, in a cost-effective manner, appropriate conservation projects on eligible service lands where such projects will not be performed by existing employees;
- Assist governments and Indian tribes in performing research and public education tasks associated with natural and cultural resources on eligible service lands.
- Expose Indian young men and women to public service while furthering their understanding and appreciation of our Nation's natural and cultural resources.
- Expand educational opportunities by rewarding individuals who participate in national service with an increased ability to pursue higher education or job training; and
- Stimulate interest among our nation's Indian young men and women in conservation careers by exposing them to conservation professionals in land-managing agencies.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Management Program
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Management Program's goals include:

- Provide enough fuels work to employ a module of 6 or more for 3 or more months.
- Provide project leadership to introduce each treatment, present goals, objectives, ensure a safe work environment, quality control monitoring, and ensure FWS policies are being followed.
- Provide a short project description for each treatment including the scope of the project, objectives, required equipment, required qualifications, etc., to allow the FWS Youth Corps program to develop a cost estimate and bid, and ensure qualification compliance.
- Provide logistical support when logistical options are limited.
- Provide educational opportunities to FWS Youth Corps staff about the FWS, our refuges, ecology, wildland fire management, etc.

Resource Assistant Programs
In addition to PLC non-competitive hiring authority programs, the Service operates Direct Hire programs such as the Directorate Fellows Program (DFP).

Under the authorization of the Public Land Corp Act, Resources Assistant Program, the Department of the Interior established policy for bureaus to implement the Direct Hire Authority, Resources Assistant Internship Program (DHA/RAIP) in 2012. The key requirements of the program are:
(1) students must be enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs; and
(2) mandated targeted recruitment to ensure the full representation of women and participants from historically Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific Islander and Native American schools or other schools with diverse student populations; and
(3) design a rigorous project for a minimum of least 11-weeks for candidates selected to

participate in the program.
The DFP program is designed with the intent of creating a pipeline of diverse talented individuals who would qualify and be eligible for hiring into permanent entry level science positions. The FWS, DFP was implemented in 2014 with a focus on recruiting diverse students pursuing biological science, natural resources management or related degrees that support FWS conservation mission. The FWS, DFP has provided a cohort of well-qualified, motivated folks who are eligible for direct hiring authority. Since its inception, the DFP has provided 11-week rigorous fellowships for hundreds of students with exemplary talent, approximately 200 of whom have joined our workforce.

B. Federal Award Information

B1. Total Funding

Estimated Total Funding
$18,000,000

B2. Expected Award Amount

Maximum Award
$2,000,000

Minimum Award
$5,000

B3. Expected Award Funding and Anticipated Dates

Expected Award Funding
$47,000

Expected Award Date
November 15, 2022

B4. Number of Awards

Expected Number of Awards
280

B5. Type of Award

Funding Instrument Type
CA - Cooperative Agreement

C. Eligibility Information

C1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible Applicants

00 – State governments
01 – County governments
02 – City or township governments
04 – Special district governments
06 – Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
07 – Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
11 – Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
12 – Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
13 – Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
20 – Private institutions of higher education
25 – Others (see text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility" for clarification)

Additional Information on Eligibility

Other Organizations that have established Public Lands Corps Act eligibility as FWS Youth Corps member organizations such as 501(c) 4 or 501(c) 5 nonprofit organizations that are labor unions, neighborhood associations, or other types of eligible organizations, including those that reach or represent potentially underserved communities. FWS Youth Corps eligibility information is included in the attachments to this NOFO.

C2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

Yes

Percentage of Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

25

C3. Other

Foreign Entities or Projects:

State Sponsors of Terrorism: This program will not fund projects in countries determined by the U.S. Department of State to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism and therefore are subject to sanctions restricting receipt of U.S. foreign assistance and other financial transactions.

Office of Foreign Assets Control Sanctions: This program will not fund projects in countries subject to comprehensive sanction programs administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Asset Control without proper licenses.

In-Country Licenses, Permits, or Approvals: Entities conducting activities outside the U.S. are responsible for coordinating with appropriate U.S. and foreign government authorities as necessary to obtain all required licenses, permits, or approvals before undertaking project activities. The Service does not assume responsibility for recipient compliance with the laws, regulations, policies, or procedures of the foreign country in which they are conducting work.

Excluded Parties:

The DOI conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The DOI cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible,

prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

D. Application and Submission Information

D1. Address to Request Application Package

Program Website Link

D2. Content and Form of Application Submission

SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

All applicants must submit the Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This form is available with the announcement on Grants.gov and in GrantSolutions. The form must be complete and signed by an Authorized Representative. For all applicants except individuals and commercial entities, the Authorized Representative's signature on a standard application form submitted to the Service represents their certification that the entity's financial management system meets 2 CFR §200.302 financial management requirements. The non-Federal entity's financial management system must be sufficient to:

1. Permit the preparation of required reports;
2. Trace funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that the entity has used such funds per Federal statutes, regulations, and terms and conditions of the Federal award;
3. Provide for the requirements in 2 CFR §200.302(b); and
4. Comply with §200.334 Retention requirements for records, §200.335 Requests for transfer of records, §200.336 Methods for collection, transmission, and storage of information, and §200.337 Access to records.

If this application requests more than $100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature on or submission of the SF-424 form in GrantSolutions also represents their certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying.

When completing the SF-424 Application form, enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in Box 18a, Estimated Federal Funding. Include any other Federal sources of funding in Box 18e. Estimated Other Funding and identify any such sources and amounts in the required Budget Narrative (see below). For individuals applying as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name), do NOT include your Social Security Number on this or any other document to be submitted with your application! When completing the SF-424 Application form, individuals must enter in Box 8b. Employee/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN) the substitute number "444-44-4444." Individuals may register in SAM.gov but are not required to have a SAM.gov registration. For individuals without a SAM.gov registration enter in Box 8c. the substitute Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) "KA5HQCLKUVW1".

Project Abstract Summary (OMB Number 4040-0019)

Applicants must complete and submit the Project Abstract Summary form. The Project Abstract Summary form must provide a brief award description. The description must be in plain

language that the public can understand without viewing the full application proposal. It should include a brief, simple description of the project purpose, activities to be performed, deliverables and expected outcomes, intended beneficiaries, and subrecipient activities, if known at the time of submission.

Do not include personally identifiable, sensitive, or proprietary information in the award description as this is available to the public. Use only English characters, numbers, punctuation, and standard symbols. Use of non-English, non-standard characters (also referred to as special or extended ASCII characters) will result in the award description failing to be reported correctly to USASpending.gov. Award descriptions are limited to 4,000 characters or less. Applicants should check the length of the award description and proofread for proper grammar and spelling.

For applicants applying through Grants.gov: Applicants must download and complete the Grants.gov "Project Abstract Summary" form from the full text announcement. To submit the Grants.gov "Project Abstract Summary" form with the application, applicants must add the form as an attachment to the Grants.gov "Attachments" form that is included in the application package.

For applicants applying through GrantSolutions-Grants Management Module (GS-GMM): Applicants must enter the information in the Project Abstract Summary screen. Do not upload a document in place of entering the information directly into GS-GMM Project Abstract Screen.

Project Narrative

- **Project title:** Should include information on type of placement, position identifier, and host location of project.
- **Description of entity(ies) undertaking the project:** Information should include contact information for Service Project Officer.
- **Summary of position objectives, duration of placement in weeks, and expected number of PLC project hours.** Position objectives must meet the requirements of an appropriate conservation project. An appropriate conservation project means any project for the conservation, restoration, construction, or rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic, archeological, recreational, or scenic resources, in accordance with 16 USC 1722.
- **Summary of training, safety, housing, and transportation project contributions.**
- **Sufficient information to support environmental compliance review requirements.** Note: For projects that the following conditions are true, no additional environmental compliance is required:

1. **Categorical Exclusion (Cat-Ex)**: The project/action has been determined to meet Fish and Wildlife Service categorical exclusion (B)(8) and no extraordinary circumstance applies.
2. **Section 7 Endangered Species Act:** A Section 7 Endangered Species Act (ESA) review was conducted. The Section 7 ESA determination for this award is: No Effect: Project is in the U.S., but no eligible species or designated critical habitat exist in project area.
3. **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106:** A Section 106 NHPA review was conducted. The NHPA circumstance for this award is: Project is in the U.S. The undertaking has no potential to cause effects on historic features.

Note: while the environmental compliance laws are primarily applicable to projects carried out in the U.S., projects carried out on the high seas are subject to compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and projects outside the U.S. 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

SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
Applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A Budget Information form for Non-Construction Programs or Projects. All required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov or in GrantSolutions. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 200. Applicants must show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. In "Section A – Budget Summary" on the SF-424A form enter the funding requested from this Federal program in the first row. Identify any other Federal funding sources and amounts in the required Budget Narrative (see below). In the SF-424A "Contractual" category total, do not combine estimated subawards and contractual costs. Use the "Contractual" category to reflect estimated contractual costs only. Enter estimated subaward costs in the SF-424A "Other" category. Provide a separate description and total estimated costs for both contractual and subaward costs in the required Budget Narrative (see below).

Budget Narrative
Applicants must include a budget narrative that describes and justifies requested budget items and costs. In your budget narrative, describe how the SF-424 Budget Information, "Object Class Category" totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, generally describe how estimates were determined by identifying what type of staff will support the project and how much time they will contribute to the project (in hours or workdays). Describe any proposed items of cost that require prior approval under the Federal award cost principles, including any anticipated subawarding, transferring, or contracting out of any work under the award. Provide a separate description and total estimated costs for both contractual and subaward costs. If equipment previously purchased with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source. Identify any third-party cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project 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. Please note the prohibitions on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment in 2 CFR 200.216. The Department of the Interior's Unmanned Aircraft web page provides a list of approved unmanned aircraft and related equipment and software.

In a separate narrative titled "Budget Justification," explain and justify the per participant/unit costs of the project. Describe the specific costs that are included/covered by the per participant/unit costs. The Budget Justification must include a breakdown of the required 25% Public Lands Corps Act non-Federal Entity Cost Share (if applicable).

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

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.112, applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

a. *Applicability*.
    1. This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.
    2. In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by sub recipients, the conflict of interest provisions in 2 CFR§200.318 apply.

b. *Notification*.
    1. Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass- through entity in accordance with 2 CFR §200.112.
    2. Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by sub recipients.

c. *Restrictions on lobbying*. Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under a grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to 43 CFR §18 and 31 USC §1352.

d. *Review procedures*. The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict of interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement, and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.

Enforcement. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR §200.339, Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR §180).

Uniform Audit Reporting Statement

All U.S. states, local governments, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non- profit organizations expending $750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System, in accordance with 2 CFR 200 subpart F. U.S. state, local government, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non- profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.

Certification Regarding Lobbying

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

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities" form if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than $100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

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

D3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration:

This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as an individual (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own, operate, or work within), or any entity with an exception to bypass SAM.gov registration with prior approval from the funding bureau or office in accordance with bureau or office policy. All other applicants are required to register as a financial assistance recipient in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). A Federal award may not be made to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not

completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. Federal award recipients must also continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s). Entities already registered in SAM.gov should review their registration to confirm that they are registered as a financial assistance recipient, which requires completion of the SAM.gov "Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations". See the "Submission Requirements" section of this document below for more information on SAM.gov registration.

Applicants can register on the SAM.gov website. The "Help" tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov "Register with SAM" page also provides detailed instructions. Applicants can contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been made to the entity's IRS information. If applicable, foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

D4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications
09/10/2023

Application Due Date Explanation
Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM., ET, on the listed application due date. Awards are issued on a rolling-basis throughout the year.

D5. Intergovernmental Review

An intergovernmental review may be required for applications submissions from a U.S. state or local government prior to submission. Applicants must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the state's process under Executive Order 12372. The State Single Point of Contact list is available on the OMB Office of Federal Financial Management website.

D6. Funding Restrictions

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

Indirect Costs: Organizations
The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior (DOI) is

your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center (IBC) will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the IBC by phone 916-930-3803 or using the IBC Email Submission Form. See the IBC Website for more information.
Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients may not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Required Indirect Cost Statement to be submitted by Organization:

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

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

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

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

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

- We are an organization with a current negotiated indirect cost rate. In the event we receive an award, we will charge indirect costs per our current negotiated rate agreement. Attached is a copy of our current rate agreement.
- We are an organization with a negotiated indirect cost rate that has expired. Attached is copy of our most recently negotiated rate agreement. If we receive an award, we will

submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the Service a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.

- We are an organization that has never negotiated an indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate], which is charged against [insert a complete description of the direct cost base used to distribute indirect costs to the award]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the Service a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.
- We are an organization that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate. In the event an award is made, we elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. We understand we must use this methodology consistently for all Federal awards until such time as we negotiate a different rate with our cognizant agency. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if during the award period we establish a rate that changes the methodology used to charge indirect costs to the award. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.
- We are an organization submitting a [insert either "Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program" or "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network"] project proposal, which has an indirect cost rate cap of [insert rate; CRU is currently 15%; CESU is currently 17.5%]. In the event we receive an award, we understand that if we have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate agreement we must charge the capped indirect cost rate to the same base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand we must request prior approval from the awarding program to use the 2 CFR 200.1 Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) base instead of our approved base and that we must submit such requests with our application, including a calculation showing how use of the MTDC base results in an overall reduction in the total indirect costs recovered. If we do not have current negotiated (including provisional) rate, we understand we must charge the capped indirect cost rate against Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. If we have never negotiated a rate, we understand we must use the de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC.
- We are an organization that will charge all costs directly.

D7. Other Submission Requirements

The Service uses the GrantSolutions system to manage financial assistance applications and awards. Applicants must register in and conduct any subsequent award business with the Service in GrantSolutions. To apply, your organization and organization officials must be established in GrantSolutions. To register your organization in GrantSolutions, send an email to help@grantsolutions.gov with the following information:

Subject: New Organization Request

- Organization/Individual Name

- Point of Contact first and last name, email, and phone number
- Organization Type
- SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (not required for individuals or Service-waived entities)
- Organization Employer Identification Number (Applicants that are INDIVIDUALS DO NOT include your social security number)
- Address

Organizational details should match those in the organization's SAM.gov registration. To establish organization official accounts and user role(s), complete a Recipient User Account Request Form for each official and email it to help@grantsolutions.gov. The GrantSolutions entity user roles are: Authorizing Official (ADO); Principal Investigator/Program Director (PI/PD); Support Specialist (GSS); Financial Officer (FO); and Financial Support Staff (FSS). All roles can do the following: enter applications, amendments, and reports, view awards, and view and create notes. The ADO and the PI/PD roles can also submit applications, amendments, and reports. The FO role can also submit reports. At a minimum, registered organizations must assign someone to the ADO and PI/PD roles. For more information, see the GrantSolutions Recipient Training and FAQs web page. For GrantSolutions registration, submission, and other assistance contact their Customer Support by telephone at 1-866-577-0771 or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov.

E. Application Review Information

E1. Criteria

A. Priority ranking factors. Field staff will give highest funding priority status to proposed projects that meet more of the following conditions (sequence of listing does not imply order of preference):

- Recruitment for the proposed conservation project will involve targeted recruitment to maximize applications from racially and ethnically underrepresented groups.

Examples of targeted recruitment groups:
[ ] Indian Youth Service Corps/Tribal Colleges and Universities (IYSC/TCU)
[ ] Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
[ ] Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)
[ ] Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPSIS)
[ ] Broad-based Recruitment among the disadvantaged (for all groups)

- Project will take place in a Justice40 community identified as disadvantaged or will involve targeted recruitment from a Justice40 community. See Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.
- Projects that will instill in the enrollee a conservation ethic and a sense of public service
- Projects that provide job skills and training that could lead to a position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or similar natural resource position.

- Climate Change and Climate Resiliency. Projects that seek to offset or combat climate change through design and resiliency. Carbon sequestration benefits will be considered where applicable.

B. Secondary ranking factors. Field staff will give special consideration to proposed projects that meet more of the following conditions (sequence of listing does not imply order of preference):

- From a review of the project narrative has the applicant demonstrated a clear understanding of the requirements of the position?
- Do the project activities and training opportunities provide sufficient opportunity for the participant to develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to compete for Service positions or comparable natural resource positions?
- Does the funding allocated to the support of the participant provide adequate funding to address economic barriers, provide adequate housing, and meet transportation needs?
- Does the applicant have in place a process for identifying and recruiting candidates from disadvantaged communities?
- Does the applicant have sufficient staff and organizational capabilities to recruit, place, and manage the proposed project?

E2. Review and Selection Process

Prior to award, the program will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the program may request modification to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or the FWS may choose not to fund the selected project.

Prior to award, the program will conduct and document a review of the proposed budget to ensure figures are calculated correctly, proposed costs are clearly linked to the project narrative and seem necessary and reasonable, no obviously unallowable costs are included, costs requiring prior approval are identified and described, indirect cost are applied correctly, and any program match or cost share requirements are addressed.

The program may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Bureau is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prior to award, the program will evaluate the risk posed by applicants as required in 2 CFR §200.206. Prior to approving awards for Federal funding in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), the Bureau is required to review and consider any information about or from the applicant found in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System. The Bureau will consider this information when completing the risk review. The Bureau uses the results of the risk evaluation to establish monitoring plans, recipient reporting frequency

requirements, and to determine if one or more of the specific award conditions in 2 CFR §200.208 should be applied to the award.

***Applicants seeking technical or financial assistance from a Service PLC Program are requested to consult with a local Service office BEFORE developing or submitting an application (see Agency Contacts at the end of this announcement or visit U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (fws.gov).

Through Service Public Lands Corps Act programs, the Service and FWS Youth Corps members work collaboratively to develop and implement PLC conservation projects for the benefit of the public. Conservation projects are developed collaboratively with our FWS Youth Corps partners by local staff or at the program level and are reviewed by program Grant Specialists to determining eligibility, allowability of costs, and environmental compliance. Primary ranking factors specified in this NOFO will be evaluated by the Project Officer in consultation with Regional Youth Coordinators and could impact selection of project for funding or funding levels. Secondary factors will be evaluated by the Regional Coordinator of the project or staff designated by the Regional Coordinator or the Grants Management Officer.

Projects that do not meet initial approval through Merit Review can be returned to the FWS Youth Corps member for revision and rescored without penalty.

E3. CFR – Regulatory Information

See the Service's General Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. The Service will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their notices of award.

E4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

November 14, 2022 – September 30, 2023.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F1. Federal Award Notices

Awards will be sent electronically through GrantSolutions. A second copy will be sent by the Grants Management Officer to both the Service Project Officer and the FWS Youth Corps Project Officer.

F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See the DOI Standard Terms and Conditions for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to DOI awards.

See the Service's General Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards.

Buy America Provision for Infrastructure: Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials.
As required by Section 70914 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58), on or after May 14, 2022, none of the funds under a federal award that are part of a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure may be obligated for a project unless all the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States, unless subject to an approved waiver. Recipients conducting infrastructure projects under the award must include related requirements all subawards, including all contracts and purchase orders for infrastructure work or products under this program. For the full text term applicable to infrastructure and related waiver request standards and procedures, see the Service's General Award Terms and Conditions.

Program specific Award Terms and Conditions will be shared with the FWS Youth Corps member during the Risk Assessment phase and will be attached to the Notice of Grant Award (NGA).

F3. Reporting

Financial Reports

All recipients must use the SF-425, Federal Financial Report form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

See FWS Youth Corps application and annual recertification attachment for additional reporting requirements.

Non-Construction Performance Reports

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

Construction Performance Reports

For construction awards, onsite technical inspections and certified percentage of completion data may be relied on to monitor progress for construction. Additional performance reports for construction activities may be required only when considered necessary. However, awards that

include both construction and non-construction activities require performance reporting for the non-construction activities. See 2 CFR§200.329 for more information. The USFWS will describe all performance reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

Significant Development Reports

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

Real Property Reports

Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Bureau will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required standard form or data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, in the Notice of Award when applicable.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Per 2 CFR §1402.112, non-Federal entities and their employees must take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements. In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by subrecipients, the provisions in 2 CFR §200.318 apply. Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with 2 CFR §200.112. Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Service Project Officer identified in their notice of award in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that reported by subrecipients. The Service will examine each disclosure to determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, work with the applicant or recipient to develop an appropriate resolution. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the 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 receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions 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 for noncompliance described in 2 CFR §200.339, including suspension or debarment.

Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance

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

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

G1. Program Technical Contact

For **programmatic technical assistance**, contact:

First and Last Name:
Deborah Moore

Telephone:
(703) 358-2386

Email:

deborah_moore@fws.gov

G2. Program Administration

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First and Last Name:
Patrick Schulze

Telephone:
(703) 358-2567

Email:
patrick_schulze@fws.gov

G3. Application System Technical Support

For Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages, contact:
Grants.gov Customer Support
Numeric Input Field: 1-800-518-4726
Support@grants.gov

For GrantSolutions technical registration, submission, and other assistance contact:
GrantSolutions Customer Support
1-866-577-0771
Help@grantsolutions.gov

H. Other Information

Payments
Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

OMB Control Number: 1018-0100
Per the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA; 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) collects information in accordance with program authorizing legislation to conduct a review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Privacy Act Statement: This information collection is authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5701 et seq. The information provided will be used to administer all Service financial assistance programs and activities including to: (1) determine eligibility under the authorizing legislation and applicable program regulations; (2) determine allowability of major cost items under the Cost Principles at 2 CFR 200; (3) select those projects that will provide the highest return on the Federal investment; and (4) assist in compliance with laws, as applicable, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. This information may be shared in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the routine uses listed in INTERIOR/DOI-89, Grants and Cooperative Agreements: FBMS - 73 FR 43775 (July 28, 2008). Furnishing this information is voluntary; however, failure to provide all requested information may prevent the Service from awarding funds.

Estimated Burden Statement: We estimate that it will take you on average about 40 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual times for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. Direct comments regarding the burden estimates or any other aspect of the specific forms to the Service Information Clearance Officer, USFWS, U.S. Department of the Interior, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: PRB (JAO/3W), Falls Church, VA 22041-3803, or by email to Info_Coll@fws.gov.