



2023 Multistate Conservation Grant Program Announcement

****Submission Deadline: 5:00pm Eastern Time on May 18th, 2022****

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is Soliciting Initial Proposals for the 2023 Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP)

Before applying for the Multistate Conservation Grant, please carefully review all information and instructions contained in this announcement. The following sections are included:

Application Procedures

Initial Proposals

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THE INITIAL PROPOSAL

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Please apply online at <https://afwamscgp.smapply.io/> (AFWA Portal). Read carefully all the instructions before you start your application.

Step 1. Create an Account (AFWA Portal)

New applicants (first time users of this software) can create an account by clicking the "Register" button on the top right. Returning applicants, please sign in by entering your e-mail and password using the "Sign In" button on the top right.

Step 2. Complete the Eligibility Form

Fill out a brief eligibility form. Upon completion, if you are eligible, Multistate Conservation Grant Program will display.

Step 3. Submit a Complete Application

Proceed to complete the application. Please complete all application requirements using the online application system.

Review application carefully before submitting. Once you submit, you can't go back to make changes!

The Initial Proposal Instructions

Applicant Information

1. **Full Legal Name of Organization**
2. **Organization Website URL**
3. **Lead Applicant's Contact Information**
 - a. Title
 - b. First Name & Last Name
 - c. Street Address, City, State, Postal Code
 - d. Email
 - e. Phone Number
4. **Name and Affiliation of Co-Investigators(s)/Partner(s) (if applicable)**
5. **Have you applied for MSCGP funding before?**
6. **If yes, was/were your previous Proposal (s) funded?**
7. **Date(s) of Previous Applications(s) from the most recent three years (if applicable)**

Program Eligibility

1. **Organization Information.** Please indicate the appropriate classification of your organization. If you are a Nonprofit, please indicate the type:
Applicant Classification:
 - a. 12 – Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
 - b. 13 – Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
 - c. 00 – State governments
 - d. 06 – Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
 - e. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or a State or group of States, to carry out the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. The State governments' designation refers to Agencies with lead management responsibility for fish and wildlife resources in each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia (Sport Fish Restoration only), Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, or a group of these agencies.
2. **Beneficiary Information.** Please choose one of the following categories that best describes the geographic scope of the project:
 - a. Project benefits at least 26 states. **Please list all states that will benefit—using states' abbreviations.**
 - b. Project benefits a majority (over 50%) of the States in a [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region](#). Please list the Regions and States in each Region that will benefit (use State abbreviations).
 - c. Project benefits a majority (over 50%) of the States belonging to a regional association of State fish and wildlife agencies (click each of the Associations for the state members, [WAFWA](#), [MAFWA](#), [NEAFWA](#), [SEAFWA](#)). Please indicate the regional fish and wildlife association that will benefit and list each region's States (use State abbreviations).

3. **Primary Strategic Priority Addressed:** Please write the Strategic Priority addressed, e.g., 2/C Relevancy & Inclusion & Participation - Implementing and/or Expanding Internal and External Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts
4. **Terms and Conditions.** Use of MSCGP Grants - All applicants must ensure that their proposed project does not fund, in whole or in part, an activity that promotes or encourages opposition to the regulated hunting or trapping of wildlife or taking of sport fish. If you accept these terms, please state, "I agree with the above terms and conditions."

Project Information

1. **Project Title.** Please provide a short, descriptive name of the proposed project (<20 words)
2. **Project Length.** Please indicate whether the project will be one, two, or three years.
3. **Funding Source:** Maximum Award - \$ 1,000,000 Minimum Award - \$ 50,000

SFR _____ \$ **WR:** **T** _____ \$ **WR: R3** _____ \$

SFR \$ - Funding portion requested for sportfishing restoration (DJ) projects, including R3 anglers and boaters grants (your grant may address Priority 1-6), e.g., research projects, boating access development, aquatic education, fish and wildlife habitat improvements, and other purposes consistent with the enabling legislation

\$ WR:

T (Traditional) - Funding portion requested for wildlife restoration (PR) grants that don't address R3 projects (Your grant may address Strategic Priority 1-5), e.g., research projects, hunter safety and education, wildlife habitat improvements, and other purposes consistent with the enabling legislation.

R3 \$ - Funding portion requested for R3 (PR only) grants for Wildlife Restoration projects (Hunting and Shooting Sports related) from the recent PR Modernization act (your grant may address Strategic Priority 6) - can only use the funds for making hunter recruitment and recreational shooter recruitment projects that promote a national hunting and shooting sports recruitment program, including related communication and outreach activities.

Please refer to NOFO for more details on how to allocate your funding

4. **Total Funding Requested:** _____ \$ (Year 1) _____ \$ (Year 2) _____ \$ (Year 3)

MSCGP grants are traditionally approved for one year of funding. Applicants whose projects are expected to last for more than one year are encouraged to let the Grants Committee know that they will apply for a subsequent year(s) of funding for the project and will need to report on progress made in the first year as part of the justification for subsequent / supplemental funding. Subsequent funding is not guaranteed and will depend on the project's merits, available funding and progress made to date.

Under special circumstances the Grants Committee will consider approving multiple years of funding (multi-year funding). The criteria for multiyear funding established by the National Grants Committee is included in the application package. Please note that there is a very high bar to justify multi-year funding and most applicants will be requested to apply for one year of funding at a time.

Problem and Needs to be addressed: The summary is the first opportunity to impress the importance of your Proposal to the reviewers. Be sure to describe the need for the project as it relates to the Strategic Priority, alternatives in the absence of MSCGP support, as well as the benefits from addressing the problem and/or needs. Please make sure that the Technical Review Teams' members reviewing the Initial Proposal will see clearly, from the first page, the importance of allocating funds to your Proposal.

Summary of Proposed Solution: The summary is the first opportunity to outline your project idea. Briefly describe how this project meets the needs of the Strategic Priority. Then, briefly describe how your proposed solution will address the problem or needs stated above, including the objectives/methods you will use and how your proposed approach is superior to other possible approaches. Please make sure that the Technical Review Teams' members reviewing the Initial Proposal will see, from the first page, the merits of your proposed approach to state fish and wildlife agencies. If selected to submit a full grant proposal, that will be your opportunity to explain your approach's technical issues and merits in detail.

Implementation, Outreach, and Communication of the results: Briefly describe how you will implement your project's results or products, plus enhance the usefulness, quality, and communication of the project's results, both during and after the project completion?

Budget

A detailed budget is not necessary at the Initial Proposal phase, but you will still need to have a very close estimate for the Full Grant Proposal. Major changes on the budget (higher than IP) during Full Grant Proposal are not encouraged. Please refer to Notice of Funding Opportunity for the budget requirements if you are invited to submit a Full Grant Proposal.

Please note within your narrative the total costs budgeted to subrecipients or contractors and how many subrecipients or contractors are planned to work on your project and how much each is to be awarded for their part of the project.

Applicants intending to act as a fiscal agent (a pass through) for another organization must clearly state that they are acting as a fiscal agent and why it is necessary. Fiscal Agents must also clearly show in the budget what costs (if any) they are charging to the grant.

A sample table is included in the Initial Proposal template attached to this document. Please be sure to include the following information:

- Salaries and benefits (If State employees are part of the team, they must not be getting paid from the state with Federal funds for their normal salary. If they get paid from the state with State funds, they can be paid with Federal funds from the grant. You should document this if you move to FGP phase)
- Enter the amount of funds that are estimated for personnel costs for each Federal program. Personnel costs generally include the salaries or wages of employees expected to perform the activities of the proposed project during the award period of performance. Depending on the project type, personnel costs are often the largest budget category of cost of a Federal award. Please review 2 CFR 200.430 "Compensation - personal services" and 2 CFR 200.431 "Compensation - fringe benefits" when determining what personnel costs may be allowable to charge to a Federal award, as well as the standards for adequate documentation.
- Project related expenses (such as: travel, communications, supplies, consultants etc.)
Travel costs include expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence/meals, and other related items *incurred by employees* who are in travel status on official business of the applicant. Please review 2 CFR 200.474 "Travel costs" to better understand the circumstances that may affect the allowability of

travel costs to be charged to a Federal award and the requirements for obtaining prior approval from the Service.

- Supplies are defined at 2 CFR 200.94 to include all tangible personal property other than those described as equipment at 2 CFR 200.33. Examples of supplies include paper, pens and pencils, computing devices (if the acquisition cost is less than the definition of equipment), and office furniture. Please review 2 CFR 200.314 to better understand the requirements for the use and disposition of supplies acquired on a Federal award.
- Equipment (purchases of tangible, personal property **over \$5,000.00** that will be used for a year or more) Under Federal financial assistance, equipment is defined at 2 CFR 200.33 to include tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of greater than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level of the non-Federal entity, or \$5,000. General purpose equipment is further defined at 2 CFR 200.48 to include equipment which is not limited to research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities such as motor vehicles, office equipment, printing equipment, and HVAC equipment. Special purpose equipment is defined at 2 CFR 200.89 to include equipment that is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Examples of special purpose equipment includes x-ray machines, microscopes, surgical instruments, fish stocking trucks, and electrofishing boats. Please review 2 CFR 200.439 “Equipment and other capital expenditures” to better understand the circumstances that may affect the allowability of equipment costs to be charged to a Federal award and the requirements for obtaining prior approval from the Service. Applicants should also review 2 CFR 200.436 concerning charging depreciation costs of previously acquired equipment to a Federal award.
- Contracts are defined at 2 CFR 200.22 to mean those legal instruments by which the applicant purchases and obtains property or services needed to carry out a project or program under a Federal award. Contracts do not include those legal instruments, even if the applicant considers it a contract, when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a Federal award or subaward at 2 CFR 200.92.
- Other Costs included in this category may differ from applicant to applicant. They may include, but are not limited to, subawards, rental costs of buildings and facilities, printing costs, conference costs, employee training, participant support costs, recruitment costs, and relocation costs. Applicants should exercise discretion to ensure that the types of costs included here are not already included in other budget cost categories or in your organization’s Federally-negotiated indirect cost rate. Applicants should review the Cost Principles at 2 CFR 200 Subpart E to better understand the circumstances that may affect the allowability of costs included in the “Other” budget category to be charged to a Federal award and any requirements for obtaining prior approval from the Service.

Indirect Cost:

1. NGOs can charge their rate (including the 10% de-minimis) against ALL contracted funds (unless they are a NGO that has a NICRA that says otherwise or is mute on this), but, restricted to only charging their rate against the first \$25K per subaward – Appendix IV part 200
2. States can charge their rate against ALL subaward funds (unless their NICRA says otherwise or is mute on this), but, restricted to only charging their rate against the first \$25K per subcontract - Appendix VII, Part 200
3. Qualifying Universities’ can charge their rate against ALL contracted funds (unless their NICRA says otherwise or is mute on this), but restricted to only charging their rate against the first \$25K per subaward – Appendix III, Part 200

If your organization has a NICRA, look at the language in the BASE section of the NICRA about subawards or subcontracts? Is there any language about this? If not, the appendix information above in 1, 2, and 3, must be followed.

It's the applicant's responsibility to know what the NICRA says (or doesn't say) and follow it, so AFWA and WSFR receive budgets that are correctly calculated specific to subawards and/or subcontracts.

Budget and MDC Calculation Sample

	MSCGP Funds Requested	MDC (States)	MDC (NGO/Univers)
Personnel	\$ 65,700.00	\$ 65,700.00	\$ 65,700.00
Fringe (___ %)	\$ 42,500.00	\$ 42,500.00	\$ 42,500.00
Travel	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Supplies	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
Equipment			
*Contractual			
Contractor #1	\$10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Contractor #2	\$ 27,660.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 27,660.00
**Other (specify)			
Subaward #1	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Subaward #2	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Non-Staff Travel	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Printing/Publishing	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
<i>(Review the Cost Principles at 2 CFR 200 Subpart E what "other" costs you can include)</i>			
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$ 241,360.00	\$ 238,700.00	\$ 224,360.00
Total Direct Costs	\$ 241,360.00		
***Indirect Costs (20 % on MDC)		\$ 47,740.00	\$ 44,872.00
Total Expenses	\$ 286,440.00 (if States) \$ 269,232.00 (if NGO)		

Qualifications

Instructions (try to keep it at a paragraph per individual):

- A brief abstract of relevant qualifications for the Primary Investigator/Project Coordinator.
- A brief abstract of relevant qualifications for the most important team members.

Criteria for Multi-Year Multi-State Conservation Grants (MSCGs)

These criteria were reviewed and adopted by the National Grants Committee during the 2021 AFWA Annual Meeting

The National Grants Committee has convened numerous discussions regarding the potential merits and challenges of obligating multi-state conservation grant funds across multiple years. Aside of the five-year obligations towards the national Survey, at present, project proponents are instructed to apply for one year's funding only. With a growing recognition regarding potential benefits of multi-year projects, the following draft criteria is being presented to advance the discussion.

Multi-year proposals should be considered the exception and as such, will be held to a high standard. Obligating funds to projects for future years absent opportunity to competitively review future proposals, warrants a high standard. Multi-year proposals will be considered if there is a demonstrated and clearly articulated adherence to the criteria below.

- Inability to complete the outlined work within an annual funding cycle
- Ongoing and continuous efforts for which permanent dedicated capacity is needed
- Merits of the project are broadly supported by technical review teams and the National Grants Committee
- Proposals shall not request funding more than three years in duration
- Annual funding amounts obligated to each year will not be more than 25% of total fund availability by category (WR, SFR, R3) so that adequate funds remain for proposals in subsequent years.
- Previously awarded multi-year obligations will be included as part of the 25% calculation for each year's determination of multi-year fund availability.

Evaluation of Proposals

The Association judges every Proposal on its merits and how well it addresses one or more of the Association's Strategic Priorities. The following items should be addressed in the Project Statement and/or supporting budget information:

Project Quality

1. Are the project objectives clearly defined, achievable, measurable, and connected to specific goals, milestones/deliverables, and timelines (i.e., a work plan) for completion?
2. Will/can the proposed objectives and methodology produce the desired outcomes identified in the Strategic Priority under which this Proposal was submitted?
3. What is the anticipated, extended use/life of the project's results/products/services after the project is completed, and are they clearly stated in the Proposal?

Responsiveness to Strategic Priority

1. Does the proposal take into consideration the most relevant and most current science and or other technical components of the priority?
2. How well does the Proposal address the specific needs of the Strategic Priority and the overall MSCGP?

Practical Relevance to the mission of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Are there clear and identifiable benefits to mission fulfillment of state fish and wildlife agencies?

Project Value

Is the project budget detailed enough and 'reasonable' when compared to the proposed benefits as well as other projects submitted under the priority? Are there alternative sources of funding if the proposal requires multiple year funding?

Applicant's Qualifications

How well-suited are the project personnel/team's experience and background to successfully conduct this project?

Possible Overlap with other proposals

Please name the Proposals that have possible overlaps with this Proposal in this cycle

Possible Improvements

What can the Applicant change to improve this proposal in the next phase?

Other Comments

Please note: Any attempt to discuss a Proposal with a National Grants Committee member or technical reviewer outside of a committee meeting is considered lobbying and is strictly prohibited.