

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Funding Opportunity

F26AS00005_FY 2026_National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program_Notice of
Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity Number

F26AS00005

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BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: F26AS00005

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.614

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$20,000,000

Expected Number of Awards: 24

Award Ceiling: \$1,000,000

Award Floor: \$50,000

Cost Sharing Required?

Yes

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM, ET, on the listed application due date.

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

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

Have Questions?

National Coastal Program Contact:

Chris Darnell

703-358-2236

chris_darnell@fws.gov

National Office of Conservation Investment Contact:

Paul Van Ryzin

720-498-0335

paul_vanryzin@fws.gov

Regional Contacts:

Service Region	Eligible States / Territories	Coastal Program / Ecological Services / Migratory Birds Contacts	Office of Conservation Investment Contacts
R1 - Pacific	American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawai'i, Oregon, Washington	Kaitlyn_Landfield@fws.gov Teal_Waterstrat@fws.gov Tyler_Porter@fws.gov	Chris_Swenson@fws.gov

R2 - Southwest	Texas	Woody_Woodrow@fws.gov Scott_Williams@fws.gov Adriana_Leiva@fws.gov	Brian_Hobbs@fws.gov
R3 - Midwest	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin	Jessica_Collier@fws.gov	Amanda_Kamps@fws.gov
R4 - Southeast	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands	Jason_Ayers@fws.gov	Matthew_E_Thomas@fws.gov
R5 - Northeast	Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia	Mark_Cookson@fws.gov	Jason_Rasku@fws.gov
R7 - Alaska	Alaska	Mike_Daigneault@fws.gov	Jonathan_Snyder@fws.gov
R8 - Pacific Southwest	California	Colleen_Grant@fws.gov	Julie_Hana@fws.gov (Northern California Coast and Northern San Francisco Bay) Justin_Cutler@fws.gov (Central California Coast and Southern San Francisco Bay) Shawn_Milar@fws.gov (Southern California)

Executive Summary

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program supports the long-term conservation of coastal wetland ecosystems for the benefit of coastal communities, fish and wildlife and their habitats, and the recreating public. The Program provides eligible State and Territory agencies

with cost sharing awards for projects that protect and restore valuable coastal wetland resources. Projects may include acquisition of a real property interest in a coastal wetland ecosystem and the restoration, enhancement, or management of coastal wetlands.

Coastal wetlands are valued because they protect against flooding, help maintain water quality, and provide habitats for fish and wildlife. Coastal environments are also important economically, generating billions of dollars annually through recreational and commercial fishing, boating, and tourism.

The Program is co-administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program and the Office of Conservation Investment. For more information, visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's [National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants Home Page](#).

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

State governments

Additional Information on Eligibility

Eligible Recipients

Participation is limited to State and Territory agencies designated as eligible by the Governor. The eligible agency is usually a natural resource or fish and wildlife agency. If you are uncertain of your eligibility, please contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment. For contact information, see Basic Information in this announcement above.

Eligible States and Territories are those bordering the Great Lakes, and those bordering the Atlantic, Gulf (except Louisiana), and Pacific coasts. Louisiana is not eligible because it receives separate funding through the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 3955 (b)(1)).

The complete list of eligible States and Territories is: Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Hawai'i, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Eligible Activities

Eligible and ineligible activities are described in [50 CFR 84.20](#).

Activities to create wetlands where they did not previously exist are ineligible ([50 CFR 84.20\(b\)\(3\)](#)). For each project site, evidence verifying the current or historic presence of a wetland is required. This may include information from the Service's [National Wetlands Inventory](#), earlier Geographic Information System data, or historic information.

Activities to acquire and/or restore upper portions of watersheds where benefits to the coastal wetland ecosystem are not significant and direct are also ineligible ([50 CFR 84.20\(b\)\(8\)](#)). A proposal must include sufficient information demonstrating that targeted lands or waters meet the definition of a coastal wetland ecosystem ([50 CFR 84.11](#)).

In accepting Federal funds, you must comply with all applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies. If your application is selected for an award, you must provide evidence of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and other applicable Federal laws or regulations.

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

Yes

Additional Information on Cost Sharing

Exceptions for Certain Territories: In accordance with an October 12, 2022, [Policy Advisory Notice from the Department of the Interior](#) (Reference No. 2023-001) and [48 U.S.C. 1469\(a\), Amendment of Subsection \(d\)](#), the Service's Regional Directors shall waive cost sharing requirements described in this announcement in any grant to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Qualifying Funds and Participation Rates: If your jurisdiction has a fund for acquiring coastal wetlands, other natural areas, or open space, you may be reimbursed up to 75 percent of the total project cost. You must provide a description of the fund in sufficient detail for us to make an eligibility determination, or a statement that eligibility has been previously approved and there has been no change in the fund. If your State or Territory has not established such a fund or you do not include information on the fund in your application, the Federal share of your award may not exceed 50 percent of the total project cost. Other resources that are related to the project but not designated as cost sharing in your budget are not included in the total project cost when calculating the maximum Federal participation rate.

Cost Sharing from Third Parties: You may meet your minimum required cost share or match through contributions from one or more third parties. A third party is any individual or organization other than the applicant / recipient, such as a partner or subrecipient. Cost sharing must meet the criteria in [2 CFR 200.306\(b\)](#). As the primary award recipient, you are responsible for the full amount of cost sharing that you commit to a project, including any amount provided by one or more third parties.

Indirect Costs as Cost Sharing: You may attribute some or all of your allowable indirect costs as voluntary committed cost sharing or match; however, you may only charge to the Federal award the indirect costs calculated against the allowable direct costs charged to the Federal award.

Cost Sharing and Project Scoring: To receive points under Criterion 11 ([50 CFR 84.32 \(a\)\(11\)](#)), at least some of your non-federal cost sharing or match must be provided in cash. Cash match is provided in the form of U.S. currency. Some examples include a cash contribution for the purchase of real property, a direct payment to a contractor, or funds allocated for employee salaries and benefits.

Real Property as Cost Sharing: If you propose to use the value of donated real property as all or a portion of your non-federal cost sharing, you must justify in the Project Narrative why the property is necessary for accomplishing the project objectives. Include information on all parcels proposed for acquisition or restoration regardless of whether these activities are supported with requested Program funding or cost sharing.

Letters of Commitment: You must document cost sharing provided by any third party with a signed letter of financial commitment from an authorized representative. The letter must detail the dollar value of donated cash, real property, equipment, and/or in-kind services.

Valuing Volunteer Services: When assigning a value to volunteer services, you must explain in your Project Narrative and/or budget narrative why the volunteer activity is necessary and reasonable, and reference the compensation rate(s) for an equivalent agency position or justify typical costs in the labor marketplace for similar work in your area.

Non-Federal Sources with Exception: Contributions from Federal sources are not eligible for use as cost sharing unless authorized by Federal statute (such as the Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program or REPI funds).

GET READY TO APPLY

Required System Registrations

Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

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

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

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

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

GRANTS.GOV

This program accepts applications through [Grants.gov](#) so once you receive your UEI return to Grants.gov to [register](#) with Grants.gov. Please allow 30 days to register and set up a Workspace in Grants.gov. See [Submission Instructions](#) section below for additional details.

GRANTSOLUTIONS

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

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- The primary goal of the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is the long-term conservation of coastal wetland ecosystems.

The Program accomplishes this goal by helping eligible States and U.S. Territories protect, restore, and enhance their coastal wetlands and expand or improve opportunities for public recreation and education. Results are measured in acres protected, restored, and enhanced.

Program Description

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program supports the long-term conservation of coastal wetland ecosystems for the benefit of coastal communities, fish and wildlife and their habitats, and the recreating public.

The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (Title III, Section 301, Public Law 101-646, 16 U.S.C. 3951-3956) established the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation (NCWC) Grant Program to acquire, restore, and enhance wetlands in coastal areas through competitive cost sharing awards to coastal State and U.S. Territory agencies. Coastal wetlands are valued because they protect against flooding and help maintain water quality for millions of people in the United States while providing habitats for fish and wildlife. Coastal environments are also important economically, generating billions of dollars annually through recreational and commercial fishing, boating, and tourism.

Supported projects must ensure conservation activities endure and provide benefits for at least 20 years. Eligible activities include any combination of real property acquisition and the restoration, enhancement, or management of coastal wetlands ecosystems or their components.

The NCWC Grant Program is funded by revenues collected from excise taxes on sport fishing equipment, electric motors, import duties on fishing tackle, yachts and pleasure craft, and a portion of the gasoline tax attributable to motorboats and small engines. Revenues are deposited into and appropriated from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

The Final Rule establishing the requirements for participation in the NCWC Grant Program was published in the Federal Register on July 30, 2002 ([67 Federal Register \(FR\) 49264](#)). The Program regulations are in [Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\), Part 84](#). Applications are scored and ranked based on criteria in [50 CFR 84.32](#).

The NCWC Grant Program is co-administered by the Service's Coastal Program and the Office of Conservation Investment. Additional information about the Program is available [here](#).

Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects

This program has Federal funding for infrastructure projects. Buy America preferences apply to Federal awards for infrastructure projects in the United States. Reference [2 CFR Part 184 - Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Project](#) for further guidance.

All iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in a project must meet Buy America requirements unless waived. For an extensive list of Q&As on these requirements, see the [FWS Financial Assistance Wiki](#). If you need further guidance specific to products or

materials you will use in your project, contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment (see Basic Information above).

Legislative Authority

Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (Title III, Section 301, Public Law 101-646, 16 U.S.C. 3951-3956)

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through G (Grant).

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Application Content and Format

Application Documents

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

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying	Required from all applicants.
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required for non-construction projects. You may also submit the same or more detailed information in a customized budget table.
SF-424C: Budget Information – Construction Programs	Required for construction and real property acquisition projects. You may also submit the same or more detailed information in a customized budget table.
SF-429 (Cover Page & Attachment B), Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish Real Property Note: The SF-429 forms are only available in the Grants.gov Forms Repository . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required if requesting to acquire, improve, or furnish real property.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds <u>and</u> you have used or plan to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award purpose, • Activities to be performed, • Expected deliverables or outcomes, • Intended beneficiaries • Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award) 	Required from all applicants.

Project Narrative

Submit a Project Narrative of **no more than seven pages** addressing the elements listed below (see also [50 CFR 84.22\(c\)](#)). You may combine your responses as necessary; separate headings or sections for responses to each element are not required. Only your responses to the following requirements in this Project Narrative subsection are included within the page limit, unless otherwise indicated. Your Project Narrative must be formatted to fit on an 8.5” x 11” document, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and sides and page numbers at the bottom of the page (starting with the Project Narrative). Font size should be no less than 12 point.

Need: The need for the proposed project within the purpose of the NCWC Grant Program.

Objectives: The Service created TRACS Standard Objectives for collecting performance information to report accomplishments. Your Project Narrative must use one or more of the Standard Objectives in the [TRACS Performance Matrix](#). Contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment if you have questions about the use of Standard Objectives in your Project Narrative. Refer to the Training Portal for [example project statements](#) that utilize Standard Objectives.

Expected Results: Expected results or benefits from accomplishing the objectives.

Approach: Clearly describe the approach or activities to be used in meeting the objectives, including specific procedures, methods, schedules, key personnel, and cooperators. Please include (if applicable):

1. Any organization that will act as a subrecipient and their role(s) in meeting the project objectives. For any key personnel, briefly describe the education, experience, and skills that qualify them to carry out the proposed project (do not include resumes or curriculum vitae);
2. What organization will hold title to real property being acquired or restored?
3. What type of ownership interest is involved (e.g., fee simple, easement, combination, etc.), and what are the parcel sizes in acres?

4. What organization or individual will manage the real property interest?
5. How will you ensure the long-term conservation (20 years or longer) of acquired or restored areas (e.g., through long-term support provided by an endowment)?
6. What will be involved in the restoration? Why did you choose that approach? How likely is the proposed restoration technique to succeed? How much maintenance is involved, who will conduct it, and who will support it? Provide examples of your success in implementing the proposed restoration approach in similar, nearby areas, if available.
7. Is the project ready to implement? For example, for real property acquisition have the landowners supplied willing seller letters? For restoration projects, are the landowners willing to allow and maintain the proposed restoration, and have required permits been obtained or initiated? Are restoration designs completed or underway? Attach any relevant documents that address these elements. Copies of seller letters, permits, and designs should be referenced but in provided separately from the Project Narrative and are not included in the page limit.
8. If your objectives include management of lands for recreational as well as conservation purposes, you must demonstrate that any anticipated recreational activities will not degrade habitat values of targeted real property.

Project Location: Provide GPS coordinates in decimal degrees. Justify the eligibility of your project by demonstrating that targeted real property meets the definition of a coastal wetland ecosystem ([50 CFR 84.11](#)). Reference to a coastal Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) alone does not establish eligibility. In addition to this justification in the Project Narrative, you should attach separate maps, drawings, diagrams, and/or photos as applicable, which are not included in the page limit. See Other Required Information below.

Timeline: Describe significant milestones within the performance period of your project, including dates you expect to begin and complete all compliance-related activities. Describe any accomplishments to date.

Compliance: For projects conducted in the United States, describe the anticipated Federal compliance requirements, including those involving the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and all other requirements in applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies. Describe any compliance activities for your project that have already been completed or are currently underway.

Trust Fund: Include either a description of the trust fund that supports or justifies your request for a 75 percent Federal share in sufficient detail for eligibility determination, or a statement that eligibility has been previously approved, and no change has occurred in the fund. If you do not support or justify eligibility of the fund, you may be deemed ineligible for the 75 percent Federal share.

Relationship to Other Projects and/or Other Federal Grants: If applicable, list other current, interrelated coastal conservation efforts, the agencies or other partners involved, the relationship to the proposed project, and how your project fits into comprehensive natural resource plans for the area. Identify any relationship between the proposed project and other work funded by State or Federal grants that is planned, anticipated, or underway. Please note that you must also provide an Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement regardless of whether you describe other current, interrelated conservation actions in your Project

Narrative. The Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement is not included within the seven-page limit for your Project Narrative and should be included in your application separately. For more information, see below in this Section under the heading “Required Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement.”

Public Involvement and Interagency Coordination: Provide a description of public involvement and any interagency coordination on coastal wetland conservation projects that has occurred or is planned that relates to your project. Specify the organizations or agencies involved and dates of involvement.

Budget Narrative

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

Budget items must be:

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

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

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

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

See Cost Limits and Restrictions below for special requirements and limits applicable to data and evaluation costs.

If applicable, include information in your Budget Narrative on:

1. **Program Income, if any** – Include the source, estimated amount, and the requested method of crediting the program income (e.g. deductive, additive, cost sharing).
2. **Equipment**, including any tangible personal property (includes information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by you or your subrecipient(s) for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. You and your subrecipients must follow the requirements at [2 CFR 200](#) when acquiring equipment under an award, with emphasis on [200.313](#), [200.317](#) through [200.326](#), and [200.439](#).
3. **Useful Life** – Propose a useful life for each capital improvement that costs at least \$25,000 to build, acquire, or install, and reference the method used to determine the useful life of a capital improvement with a value greater than \$100,000.

4. Contingency Costs – Contingency costs estimated using broadly-accepted cost estimating methodologies are allowable but must be separately identified in your budget; they must comply with the Federal Cost Principles, they must be necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of your project objectives, and they must be verifiable from your financial records ([2 CFR 200.433](#)). Explain how any contingency costs were calculated and why they are necessary to improve the precision of your budget estimates.

Pre-Award Costs

Preliminary or “pre-award” costs may be allowable, but only with the approval of your Regional Office of Conservation Investment. Pre-award costs may include costs necessary for preparing the grant proposal, such as feasibility surveys, engineering design, biological reconnaissance, appraisals, or preparation of compliance documents such as environmental assessments ([50 CFR 84.47\(c\)](#)).

Cost Limits and Restrictions

The primary purpose of the NCWC Grant Program is to help eligible agencies acquire, restore, enhance, and/or manage coastal wetland ecosystems. A detailed list of eligible and ineligible activities is provided in the program regulations ([50 CFR 84.20](#)).

Recreational, educational, and public outreach activities necessary for meeting these purposes are eligible but limited to a combined maximum of 10 percent of the total project cost. Such activities must be site-specific and substantive ([50 CFR 84.32\(a\)\(12\)\(i\)](#)). Any such activities must be described in detail and justified in your application.

Planning and related activities are ineligible as a primary focus but may be allowable as a minor component of a project ([50 CFR 84.20\(b\)\(6\)](#)). Monitoring and related data collection that is necessary for meeting Program purposes are eligible activities, such as evaluating results of project activities and measuring impacts on targeted resources ([50 CFR 84.12\(b\)](#)). The combined costs for planning, engineering, design, permitting, and monitoring may not exceed 30 percent of the total project cost. Any such activities must be described and justified in your application.

Costs for research are not eligible ([50 CFR 84.20\(b\)](#)).

Contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment for more detailed guidance on these limits and requirements.

Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures:

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

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:

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

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

Other Required Information

Responses to Ranking Criteria (20-Page Limit): Provide a description with appropriate documentation that justifies how the proposed project addresses each of the 13 numeric ranking criteria in [50 CFR 84.32](#). Address each criterion individually with a brief statement in table format. If a real property interest is proposed as match, include information on both the parcel(s) proposed for acquisition or restoration with Program funds and the match parcel(s) in adequate detail for each ranking criterion, so reviewers can make informed scoring decisions. Activities provided as cost sharing including real property acquisition are part of the project and must be eligible.

Drawings/Maps/Photographs (No Page Limit): Please include and identify drawings or photographs of the proposed project that provide the following information. Maps and other diagrams should be provided separately from the Project Narrative and are not included in the page limit.

- Existing state or conditions of the project area;
- Proposed project area and project site(s) in one or more maps, photographs, or images:
 - Detail which areas will be part of the grant funded activities, delineating the project boundaries;
 - Detail which areas are valued and used as cost sharing, if applicable;
 - Detail what restoration activities will take place and where, if applicable;
 - Detail which areas, if any, are part of a larger effort that will be funded outside this project;
 - Detail wetland types (include National Wetlands Inventory, State wetlands map, or other wetland delineations, if available); and
 - Provide any other information that will assist reviewers to identify project components or factors used in project scoring and ranking.
- Two maps of the project location: a map of the State or Territory showing the general location of the project and a map of the project site(s).

Letters of Commitment: You must document cost sharing provided by any third party with a signed letter of financial commitment from an authorized representative. The letter must detail the dollar value of donated cash, real property, equipment, and/or in-kind services.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Address to Request Application Package

To request a copy of the application package in another format, contact:

Paul Van Ryzin
720-498-0335
paul_vanryzin@fws.gov

If you need immediate assistance, please call our customer service center at 1-800-344-9453. If you have a hearing impairment or a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

Submitting your application early will help you address any unforeseen technical complications. All letters of financial commitment must be included with the complete application by the due date. To ensure submission of your application, email a copy of your entire application in PDF format to your Regional Office of Conservation Investment point of contact (see Basic Information above). Applications or letters received after the due date will not be considered.

Early and frequent communication with your Regional Office of Conservation Investment and/or Coastal Program staff can help you avoid potentially disqualifying errors or omissions in your application.

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 07/18/2025

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM, ET, on the listed application due date.

Submission Instructions

Apply Through Grants.gov

To apply through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), please follow the instructions in the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Before applying, ensure that at least one person at your organization is registered and has the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only the AOR can submit the application. If you need more users, they must create their own Grants.gov account. Follow these steps below to apply:

- *Create a Workspace:* Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- *Complete a Workspace:* Invite participants to the workspace so you can collaborate on the application. Required applications forms are included in the Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Package and can be completed in the Workspace, unless noted otherwise in the Required Forms table above. Check for errors before submission.
- *Submit a Workspace:* An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab
- *Track a Workspace Submission:* After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application.

The system generates a date and time stamp and sends it to the applicant's AOR via email as proof of submission. Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not

encrypt, zip, or password-protect any files. Only registered individuals in SAM as both a user and an AOR can submit applications. Please allow 30 days to register in Grants.gov.

Application System Technical Support: For Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms, and application packages, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or by email at Support@grants.gov.

Apply Through GrantSolutions

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

1. **Register your organization.** Send an e-mail to help@grantsolutions.gov with:
 - Subject: New Organization Request
 - Entity name (organization or individual applying as a natural person)
 - Entity type
 - SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (not required for individuals)
 - Employer Identification Number (individuals, do not include your SSN)
 - Address
 - Contact details (First and last name, e-mail, phone)This information should be the same as entered on the entity's SAM.gov profile.
2. **Assign system user roles.** Follow the [GrantSolutions "Recipient user" registration instructions](#). Submit a separate Recipient User Account Request form for each official to be assigned a system role. At minimum, the Authorizing Official (ADO) and Principal Investigator/Program Director (PI/PD) must be assigned.
3. **Log in.** GrantSolutions requires users to log in through Login.gov. Each user must create a [Login.gov](#) account. For instructions, see the [GrantSolutions Training Resources web page](#).
4. **Find and apply to this Funding Opportunity.** After logging in, click on either the "Begin an application" link (first time applicants) or the "Funding Opportunity" link to go to the "Competing Announcements-Application Kits" list screen. Search the list for this Funding Opportunity's title and number. Click on the associated "Apply" link. Follow the prompts from there. Required applications forms are provided with the Funding Opportunity in GrantSolutions unless otherwise indicated on the Required Forms table above.
5. For detailed instructions, see the [GrantSolutions Training Resources web page](#).
6. **Need help?** Find help topics and contact information on the [GrantSolutions Contact Us page](#).

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Eligibility Review

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

Use the following list to ensure your application is complete. Some of the items may not apply to your application or agency. If you are unsure whether you need to submit any item, contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment.

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Project Abstract Summary Form (OMB Form Number: 4040-0019)
- Project Narrative (7-page limit)
- Responses to Ranking Criteria (20-page limit)
- Drawings/Maps/Photographs (no page limit)
- SF-424A or SF-424C budget information form (you may provide additional detail in a customized budget table)
- If applicable, a completed Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish form (SF-429B) for real property acquisition activities, including those acquired with Program funds and any proposed as cost sharing
- Budget Narrative, including how you will charge any indirect costs and your indirect cost rate
- If applicable, a Conflict of Interest Disclosure
- Any required third party letter(s) of commitment identifying the dollar value of financial or other cost sharing commitments with signature by an authorized entity with budgetary authority
- If applicable, a completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form
- Required Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement
- If applicable, any other attachments or appendices

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

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

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

Merit Review

Applications are scored and ranked based on criteria published in [50 CFR 84.32](#). Brief descriptions of each of the 13 criteria are provided below.

Criterion 1: Wetlands conservation	Maximum Points: 7
How will the project reverse coastal wetland loss or habitat degradation in decreasing or stable coastal wetland types? Reference project location information provided in your Project Narrative. Include a citation for your wetland type determinations and reference	

any maps, diagrams, or other information demonstrating that targeted lands or waters meet the definition of a coastal wetland ecosystem ([50 CFR 84.11](#)).

Criterion 2: Maritime forests on coastal barriers	Maximum Points: 7
How will the project significantly benefit maritime forests on coastal barriers?	

Criterion 3: Long-term conservation	Maximum Points: 7
How will the project ensure long-term conservation of coastal wetland functions? The project must provide at least 20 years of conservation benefits to be eligible. Reference any published data, modeling, design features, and/or similar information supporting the expected longevity of natural resource benefits resulting from project activities.	

Criterion 4: Coastal watershed management	Maximum Points: 3
How will the completed project help accomplish the natural resources goals and objectives of one or more formal, ongoing coastal watershed management plan or effort?	

Criterion 5: Conservation of threatened and endangered species	Maximum Points: 5
How will the project benefit any federally listed endangered or threatened species, species proposed for Federal listing, recently delisted species, or designated or proposed critical habitat in coastal wetlands? Describe any expected benefits to your State listed species.	

Criterion 6: Benefits to fish	Maximum Points: 5
How will the project provide, restore, or enhance important fisheries habitat?	

Criterion 7: Benefits to coastal-dependent or migratory birds	Maximum Points: 5
How will the project provide, restore, or enhance important habitat for coastal-dependent or migratory birds?	

Criterion 8: Prevent or reduce contamination	Maximum Points: 5
How will the project prevent or reduce input of contaminants, or remove existing contaminants from the coastal wetlands and associated coastal waters?	

Criterion 9: Catalyst for future conservation	Maximum Points: 4
How will the project leverage other ongoing coastal wetland conservation efforts in an area or provide additional impetus for conservation?	

Criterion 10: Partners in conservation	Maximum Points: 4
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Will the project receive financial support, including in-kind cost sharing or match, from private, local, or other Federal partners?
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Criterion 11: Federal share reduced	Maximum Points: 5
Does the application add to the non-federal share of the project by contributing additional cash? See 50 CFR 84.32 (a)(11) .	

Criterion 12: Education/outreach program or wildlife-oriented recreation	Maximum Points: 3
Does the proposed project include a site-specific, substantive outreach/education program? Does it provide recreational opportunities that are consistent with the conservation goals of the site?	

Criterion 13: Other factors	Maximum Points: 4
<p>Please summarize how any other factors not covered in the previous criteria make your proposed project or site particularly unique and valuable. Other factors may include but are not limited to the following examples (see 50 CFR 84.32(a)(13)). You must provide evidence supporting the expected benefits.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Projects providing significant benefits to rare or threatened habitat types, biodiverse habitats, rare or declining species, and/or the local community;2. Projects that are particularly cost-effective;3. Projects that assist in the prevention or control of invasive species;4. Projects that provide important cultural or historical resource benefits;5. Projects that provide other benefits.	

Review and Selection Process

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct
- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs
- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly
- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

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

After reviewing your application for completeness and eligibility, a panel of Service program specialists scores eligible applications using criteria published in this announcement.

Applications that do not meet application requirements or are not substantial in character and design as determined by the review panel may be rejected, even if Program funds are available. Any funds not awarded in a fiscal year carry over to the next fiscal year, are combined with new

funds, and are distributed nationally through competitive awards. The Service Director makes the final project selections. 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 the Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification form. For a copy of this form, contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment.

Frequently Asked Questions and Clarification of Select Ranking Criteria

The purpose of this attachment is to provide clarification of certain criteria in [50 CFR 84](#) and to answer frequently asked questions. General questions and answers are listed first, followed by questions and answers specific to the ranking criteria.

Are lands proposed for cost sharing purposes used in calculating points for scoring criteria?

Yes. Because lands that are used for cost sharing purposes are part of the project area, reviewers consider both lands being proposed for acquisition/restoration with grant funds and lands proposed for contribution as cost share when assigning points using the criteria. Therefore, information on both parcels proposed for acquisition/restoration and cost sharing parcels should be described in adequate detail for each ranking criterion, so reviewers can make informed scoring decisions.

Does land used for all or part of the non-federal cost share need to be necessary and reasonable?

Yes. All non-federal cost sharing must be necessary and reasonable for achieving project objectives, land acquisition included. Please explain how the cost share parcel(s) relate to the overall project and provide detailed information about the cost share parcel(s) for all scoring criteria.

If a project includes a conservation easement, what information is helpful for reviewers?

You should describe the general terms of the conservation easement, including the length of the conservation easement, who will hold it, allowable and prohibited uses, and plans for long-term monitoring and stewardship of the easement. This information helps reviewers understand the conservation benefit(s) of the conservation easement.

Who holds title to land acquired under this program or contributed as cost share?

Title to real property acquired or contributed as cost sharing or match will vest upon acquisition in the recipient or subrecipient, as directed in [2 CFR 200.306](#) and [2 CFR 200.311](#). A Notice of Federal Participation must be recorded for all acquired real property and real property contributed as cost sharing.

Should letters of support that are not financial commitment letters or those detailing scientific information specific to a project be included in an application?

Given the volume of material reviewers must read, letters of general support for a project should not be included in the application package unless they also include essential information about the project. However, letters of financial commitment from third party cost sharing sources are required.

Does “maximum Federal share” under 50 CFR 84, including 84.32 (a)(11) and 84.46 (h), refer to the maximum Federal percentage of the total project cost, i.e., 75 percent or 50 percent, or the maximum grant amount from the NCWC Grant Program, i.e., \$1 million?

“Maximum Federal share” refers to the percentage, i.e., 75 percent or 50 percent, of the Federal share of the total project cost, not the maximum grant amount from the NCWC Grant Program, i.e., \$1 million. For example, if the total project cost is \$1,333,334, the maximum Federal share

would be either \$1,000,000 (75 percent) or \$666,667 (50 percent), depending on whether you have a designated fund. If you only provide the minimum non-federal share (25 percent or 50 percent of total project costs), no points will be awarded for reducing the Federal share ([50 CFR 84.32 \(a\)\(11\), Criterion 11](#)).

What changes are allowed to an application after its submission?

Applications must be in final form by the due date specified in this announcement. The only changes that will be accepted after the due date are those that will not impact the project scoring or project scope, such as minor corrective changes or clarifying statements. Service representatives may request that you make modifications to an application after the due date to correct inconsistencies within your application that would cause the review panel difficulty in accurately assessing your application.

Who determines if an application is eligible?

Regional Office of Conservation Investment personnel determine whether an application meets eligibility criteria and should be scored by the review panel. The Headquarters Office of Conservation Investment staff will review an application's eligibility if questions arise. If deemed ineligible, the application will not be considered for funding, and you will be notified of this finding.

What is the policy for retroactively reimbursing an applicant for expenses incurred prior to the official start date of a project?

If you incur costs before the project performance period, they can only be reimbursed if included in your application and approved by your Regional Office of Conservation Investment.

Preliminary or "pre-award" costs may include costs necessary for preparing the grant proposal, such as feasibility surveys, engineering design, biological reconnaissance, appraisals, or preparation of grant documents such as environmental assessments for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act or other Federal laws or regulations (see [50 CFR 84.47\(c\)](#) and [2 CFR 200.458](#)). Pre-award costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the beginning of the period of performance of the award. If you are unsure whether pre-award costs may be reimbursable or allowable as match, contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment.

50 CFR 84.32 (a)(1) (Criterion 1):

Must a score of seven points be given for all applications that result in over 50 percent of the project area conserving, restoring, or protecting decreasing coastal wetlands types?

Yes. If you document that over 50 percent of the project area will, upon project completion, conserve decreasing coastal wetlands types you will receive the full seven points. You may find specific guidance on how reviewers score this criterion at [50 CFR 84.32 \(a\)\(1\)](#). Information on coastal wetland types is available [here](#). You may contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment or Coastal Program staff for additional information about wetland types in your area.

Should a graduated scale be used to further delineate applications?

The program regulations in [50 CFR 84.32 \(a\)\(1\)](#) provide guidance on the use of intermediate scores (i.e., less than seven points) for applicants who document that, upon project completion, a minimum of 50 percent of the project area will be a combination of decreasing and stable types of wetlands, and for those that are less than 50 percent wetlands.

For real property acquisition projects, will scoring be based on just the wetland portion of a parcel or the entire parcel?

Project scoring will be based on the entire acquisition parcel(s) and any parcel(s) used as cost sharing, unless the parcel will be officially subdivided.

50 CFR 84.32 (a)(2) (Criterion 2):**What qualifies as a maritime forest?**

A thorough description of a maritime forest for the purpose of the NCWC Grant Program is published in the program regulations in the Definitions section, [50 CFR 84.11](#).

How will this criterion be scored?

To receive the maximum seven points for this criterion, your project must significantly benefit maritime forests meeting following criteria: 1) are located on coastal barriers (see definition of “coastal barrier” in [50 CFR 84.11](#)) along the mainland coast from Delaware to Texas, and 2) are broad-leaved forests. Maritime forests are primarily characterized by a closed canopy of various combinations of live oak, upland laurel oak, pignut hickory, southern magnolia, sugarberry, and cabbage palm. Intermediate scores of less than seven points may be awarded for applications in which the significance of the benefit to maritime forests is unclear, or for applications in which it is unclear if the forest meets the definition of a maritime forest.

50 CFR 84.32 (a) (Criteria 5, 6, and 7):**What information should I include about threatened and endangered species such as fish and coastal-dependent or migratory birds in responses to criteria 5, 6, and 7?**

You should include the information requested in the ranking criteria. It is important to note if species have been observed within the project boundary or only in the general vicinity. Provide this information in table format. The column headings can include: common name, scientific name, conservation status (Federal listing, delisted within the last five years, State listing, etc.), observed within project boundary, habitat type provided, restored, or enhanced (nesting, breeding, feeding, nursery areas), etc. See criteria language for additional information.

50 CFR 84.32 (a)(10) (Criterion 10):**Do non-federal partners’ financial contributions need to be included on the SF-424 as cost sharing to receive points for this criterion?**

Yes, your application must identify financial support, including in-kind cost sharing, from any third-party that is providing non-federal cost sharing as indicated on the SF-424. You must document all third-party cost sharing, i.e., resources supplied by organizations or individuals other than your agency, with a signed letter of financial commitment from an authorized representative of the provider. The letter of financial commitment must detail the amount of cash or the value of donated real property and/or services. You are responsible for ensuring the full amount of the non-federal match as identified on the SF-424. All of these items must be submitted with the application by the due date. Please note that if a third party provides cost sharing, and the letter of financial commitment is missing and/or late, the cost sharing will not be considered, which may negatively impact eligibility and scoring of your application.

Are points awarded for more than one State or Territory agency’s participation in a proposed project?

In general, applications will only receive credit for one State or Territory agency. The exception is when an application includes multiple States/Territories. In these instances, the application may receive points for each additional State or Territory that is participating in the proposed project. Partnering entities that receive partial funding from a State or Territory may be considered non-state partners if they also receive non-state or -territory funding; such entities and the nature of their funding should be described in detail in the Project Narrative and/or letter(s) of commitment. Entities that are not generally considered a State or Territory agency due to

receipt of non-state or -territory operational funding (such as University Extension) may receive credit as a non-state or -territory partner.

What documentation is required to receive points for this criterion for non-federal partners?

A signed letter of financial commitment of cost sharing resources from an authorized representative of any third party provider must accompany the application to receive points. You are ultimately accountable for third-party commitments of financial support.

What documentation is required to receive points for this criterion for Federal partners?

A signed letter committing project resources that are necessary and reasonable to completing the project objectives from an authorized representative of the Federal partner(s) must accompany your application to receive points. Federal partners providing technical assistance or other non-monetary contributions prior to the performance period may be considered partners; however, the substantive nature of such contributions must be explained in detail in your Project Narrative. Entities whose involvement is not necessary or reasonable to complete the project objectives will not be counted as partners for this criterion.

50 CFR 84.32 (a)(11) (Criterion 11):

Can in-kind services or contributions be used to meet cost sharing requirements?

Yes. In-kind services can be used for part or all of your required cost share (i.e., 25 or 50 percent of the total project cost). However, you will not receive points for this criterion unless you have an additional cash match.

Can bargain land sales receive points for this criterion?

No. Only cash contributions that exceed the required minimum cost share are considered when scoring for Criterion 11. Cash is a liquid asset and can be tracked easily through audit procedures. Federal regulations and guidance clearly identify a landowner's acceptance of a reduced price for his or her property as an in-kind service or contribution, not cash. As such, these "bargain sales" cannot be used to receive points for decreasing the Federal share.

Is the value of my agency's staff time given in the project budget considered cash match?

Yes. Funds you may allocate to staff salaries and benefits for activities in support of project objectives are considered to be cash match for scoring purposes. Staff services contributed by another State or Territory agency or other third party are considered in-kind cost share, although another State or Territory agency may contribute cash to your agency for the project. See [2 CFR 200.306](#) for more guidance on cost sharing or matching. Contact your Regional Office of Conservation Investment prior to the deadline for additional guidance as needed.

How are points calculated when scoring on Criterion 11?

A maximum of five points may be awarded for Criterion 11. Each five percent provided in cash over the required cost sharing equals one point up to a total of 25 percent over the required match for a total of five points. The following examples assume that you are eligible to receive the maximum 75 percent Federal share.

Example 1:

Total project cost:	\$1,333,334
NCWC Grant Program Request:	\$1,000,000
Non-Federal Cost Share:	\$333,334

Non-Federal cost share may consist of in-kind, cash, or a combination of in-kind and cash,

although only cash over the minimum required match counts for scoring purposes. Total required non-federal match is determined by dividing the NCWC Grant Program request by three ($\$1,000,000/3 = \$333,334$). The amount of non-federal cost share in this example does not exceed the minimum required match; therefore, zero points would be awarded.

Example 2:

Total project cost:	\$1,500,000
NCWC Grant Program Request:	\$1,000,000
Non-Federal cost share (in-kind):	\$333,334
Non-Federal cost share (cash):	\$166,666

Total required non-federal cost share is determined by dividing the NCWC Grant Program Request by three ($\$1,000,000/3 = \$333,334$). The minimum required non-federal cost share is met with in-kind contributions in total. Cash match over the minimum required non-federal cost share is divided by the minimum required non-federal cost share ($\$166,666/\$333,334$), giving 50 percent; therefore, five points would be awarded (one point for each 5 percent, with a maximum of 5 points for 25 percent or more cash over the minimum required non-federal cost share).

Example 3:

Total project cost:	\$1,360,000
NCWC Grant Program Request:	\$1,000,000
Non-Federal cost share (in-kind):	\$300,000
Non-Federal cost share (cash):	\$60,000

The minimum required non-federal cost share is partially met with in-kind resources and partially met with cash. Total required non-federal match is determined by dividing the NCWC Grant Program request by three ($\$1,000,000/3 = \$333,334$). Then, in-kind cost share is subtracted from this amount ($\$333,334 - \$300,000 = \$33,334$) to determine the amount of cash that would be used to fulfill the minimum required non-federal cost share. To determine cash over the minimum required amount, subtract the cash used to meet the minimum requirement from the total amount of cash ($\$60,000 - \$33,334 = \$26,666$). Cash over the minimum required non-federal cost share is then divided by the minimum required non-federal cost share ($\$26,666/\$333,334$), giving eight percent. One point would be awarded for this criterion (one point for each 5 percent over the minimum required non-federal cost share).

Can applications from Territories subject to the match waiver described in 48 U.S.C. 1469(a) (including the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands) receive points on Criterion 11?

Yes. Jurisdictions subject to the waiver that provide any amount of cash match will receive the maximum five points for Criterion 11.

Can the in-kind contribution of a landowner accepting an offer below market value for the sale of a property be used for the required cost share?

Yes. The in-kind contribution of a landowner accepting a reduced price for his property is called a bargain sale. The difference between the market value as established by the appraisal and the

actual sale price may be used as part of or all of the required cost share. Bargain sale cost sharing is considered in-kind and not cash match.

Can Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI) funds be used as cash in meeting the required cost share?

Yes. In keeping with the intent of 10 U.S.C. 2684(a)(h), REPI funds may be considered non-federal cash for use in cost sharing.

50 CFR 84.32 (a)(12) (Criterion 12):

Are costs associated with education, recreation, and outreach eligible?

Yes, provided that total costs unrelated to protection and restoration of the site do not exceed 10 percent of the total project cost.

50 CFR 84.32 (b)(13) (Criterion 13):

Are there other factors that are used in scoring applications?

Yes, the following Other Factors describe important benefits that are not described in the previous criteria. You must provide evidence supporting the expected benefits.

1. Projects providing significant benefits to rare or threatened habitat types, habitats supporting a high level of biological variety, rare or declining species, and/or the local community;
2. Projects that are particularly cost-effective;
3. Projects that assist in the prevention or control of invasive species;
4. Projects that provide important cultural or historical resource benefits;
5. Projects that provide other benefits.

50 CFR 84.32(13)(b) (Criterion 13 Additional considerations):

What factors are used in the event of a tie?

The following considerations are factored into the ranking process if two or more proposals have the same point totals. The tie-breaking factors are:

1. The project would prevent the destruction or degradation of habitat from a pending sale of a property, from adverse effects of current activities such as draining of wetlands, or from natural processes such as erosion at excessive rates;
2. The project would protect unique habitat with a significant level of biological variety;
3. The project has lower costs per acre conserved; and
4. The recipient or third party will acquire new real property as cost sharing as opposed to using real property already owned by the recipient or third party.

Please clarify the phrase, “provides real property as cost sharing.”

The purpose of this tie-breaking factor is to encourage applications that include the contribution of additional real property owned by a recipient or third party as part of the overall project. Such contributions increase the overall acreage of land managed by the recipient agency or third party, increasing the likelihood that the land will be managed to conserve the natural resources and increase the management options for the real property.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the program assesses the risk posed by the applicant per [2 CFR 200.206](#). If an award will be made, the program may apply special conditions corresponding to the risk assessed. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), the program reviews eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records per [2 CFR 200.206\(a\)](#). The program also assesses financial management capabilities,

project delivery experience, staffing resources, past performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential challenges.

AWARD NOTICES

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

Anticipated Project Start Date: 01/01/2026

Anticipated Project End Date: 12/01/2028

If your project is selected for funding, your Regional Office of Conservation Investment will notify you of the pending award and the process needed to receive funds, including satisfactory completion of compliance requirements. Please submit all required compliance documentation within three months of notification of your award, if possible. When compliance and other requirements are met, you will receive a notification via GrantSolutions detailing the terms and conditions of the award. The notification will include specific instructions on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information or forms required and where to submit payment requests.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and National Policy Requirements

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

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

Reporting

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

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting,
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and

- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation through SAM.gov and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts, and consortiums over \$30,000 to the [FFATA Subaward Reporting System \(FSRS\)](#).

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, you 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 you are required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment, and you request payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance.

You must submit all performance reports in [TRACS](#) and GrantSolutions as described in the terms and conditions provided in the notice of award. You should complete your performance reports in TRACS first. Once completed, TRACS will generate a performance report that you can upload in GrantSolutions.

Your performance report information must provide quantitative outputs for the approved Standard Objectives, and narrative responses to the following questions as applicable:

1. What progress has been made towards completing the objective(s) of the project?
2. Describe and justify any changes in the implementation of your objective(s) or approach(es).
3. If applicable, please share if your project resulted in any unexpected benefits, promising practices, new understandings, cost efficiencies, management recommendations, or lessons learned.
4. For survey projects only: If applicable, does this project continue work from a previous award? If so, how do the current results compare to prior results? (you may elect to add attachments such as tables, figures, or graphs to provide further detail when answering this question).
5. If applicable, identify and attach selected publications, photographs, screenshots of websites, or other documentation (including articles in popular literature, scientific literature, or other public information products) that have resulted from this project that highlight the accomplishments of the project.
6. Is this a project you wish to highlight for communication purposes?

Construction Performance Reports

For construction awards, onsite technical inspections and certified percentage of completion data may be relied on to monitor progress. 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. Performance reporting requirements are described 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 Office of Conservation Investment in writing as soon as they become aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair their ability to meet the objective(s) 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 provide notification 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 an 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 Office of Conservation Investment will include 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.

Real property interests may include, but are not limited to, fee simple, fee with exceptions to title, easements, water rights, and mineral rights. Leaseholds acquired by a recipient or subrecipient must also be reported regardless of their status as real or personal property under State or Territorial law. The real property and leaseholds to be reported are those that required a Notice of Federal Participation to be recorded in the public recorder's office of the local jurisdiction. They include real property and leaseholds that were:

1. Purchased for a financially assisted project with Federal funds or non-federal cost-sharing or matching funds;
2. Acquired previously by the recipient or subrecipient for another purpose, but committed to the financially assisted project as an in-kind contribution; or
3. Accepted by the recipient or subrecipient as an in-kind contribution from a non-federal third party for the financially assisted project.

If your award includes real property or facility acquisition or construction, you are responsible for entering information in the TRACS inventory module and for creating real property/facility record(s). Real property/facility records help ensure your periodic requirement to submit reports on the status of real property acquired or facilities constructed under a Federal award is met. The Director, Office of Grants Management, has approved the Service's use of TRACS as an alternate equivalent format for the collection of data needed for the OMB approved form, *Real Property Status Report SF 429-A* (2 CFR 1402.329(d)(4)). If the real property will be held for less than 15 years, reports must be submitted annually. If the real property will be held for 15 years or more, the first report will be due within a year of the end of the period of performance,

and subsequent reporting on a schedule determined at a later date. Reports for real property held for 15 years or more will be due at least once every five years but could be required more often.

Other Information

For more information, see the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's [National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program Home Page](#).