

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program: Fiscal Year 2019 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Notice Overview

Federal Agency Name

Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) and National Wildlife Refuge System, Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation

Funding Opportunity Title

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number

15.614

Announcement Type

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2019

Funding Opportunity Number

F18AS00114

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

We are collecting this information in accordance with the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act, Title III, Section 301, P. Law 101-646, 104 Stat. 4778, November 29, 1990 (16 U.S.C. 3951-3956). Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to evaluate your application for potential award of Federal funding through this program and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. We estimate that it will take you about 37 hours to complete an initial application, 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and 8 hours to prepare and submit performance reports, including time to maintain records, and gather information. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

OMB Control Number

1018-0109 (Expires: 11/30/2018)

Submission Deadline and Other Information

Eligible State applicants can continuously apply for funding up to the application deadline. The deadline for receipt is Friday, June 29, 2018, at 11:59 p.m. PDT. The Service recommends that you submit your application early enough to address any unforeseen technical complications, and verify that all documents have been received by your Regional WSFR Office before the deadline. The Service will not consider applications received after the deadline.

We expect to announce the selected projects by January 2019.

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I. Description of Funding Opportunity

The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (Title III, Section 301, Public Law 101-646, 16 U.S.C. 3951-3956) (Act) established the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant (NCWCG) Program to acquire, restore, and enhance wetlands in coastal areas through competitive matching grants to eligible State agencies. The Program is funded by revenues collected from excise taxes on sport fishing equipment, electric motors and sonar, import duties on fishing tackle, yachts and pleasure craft, and a portion of gasoline tax attributable to motorboats and small engines. Revenues are deposited into and appropriated from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The primary goal of the NCWCG Program is the long-term conservation of coastal wetland ecosystems. The *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act* (P.L. 114-94) authorizes funding for the NCWCG Program through Fiscal Year 2021.

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

WSFR's mission is to work through partnerships to conserve and manage fish and wildlife and their habitats for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations. WSFR's vision is of healthy, diverse, and accessible fish and wildlife populations that offer recreation, economic activity, and other societal benefits, in addition to sustainable ecological functions. WSFR's guiding principle is that society benefits from conservation-based management of fish and wildlife and their habitats and opportunities to use and enjoy them. The NCWCG Program aligns with WSFR's mission, vision, and guiding principle, and supports three of the Secretary of the Department of the Interior's priorities including:

- 1) Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt through land acquisition promoting protection and enhancement of high-priority coastal wetland ecosystems;
- 2) Utilizing our natural resources by allowing fish- and wildlife-based recreation and public use and enjoyment, as appropriate;
- 3) Restoring trust with our local communities through partnering with eligible State agencies on local projects.

The Final Rule establishing the requirements for participation in the NCWCG Program was published in the Federal Register July 30, 2002 (67 FR 49264). The program regulations are in [50 CFR 84](#). Additional information about the NCWCG Program is available online [here](#).

II. Award Information

The NCWCG Program provides eligible State agencies with grants to protect and restore valuable coastal wetlands resources. Projects can include:

- 1) Acquisition of a real property interest (e.g., conservation easement or fee title) in coastal lands or waters (coastal wetlands ecosystems) from willing sellers or partners for long-term conservation;
- 2) Restoration, enhancement, or management of coastal wetlands ecosystems; or
- 3) A combination of acquisition, restoration, enhancement, and management.

All projects must ensure long-term (at least 20 years) conservation of coastal resources. Applications are scored and then ranked based on criteria published in 50 CFR 84.32.

Award Amount

The Service expects that approximately \$17 million will be available for grants through the NCWCG Program in FY 2019. Awards typically range from \$125,000 (there is no specific minimum) to a maximum of \$1,000,000.

Funding Restrictions

Eligible Activities

- 1) Acquisition of a real property interest in coastal lands or waters from willing sellers or partners (coastal wetlands ecosystems), provided that the terms and conditions will ensure the real property will be managed for long-term conservation; and
- 2) The restoration, enhancement, or management of coastal wetlands ecosystems, provided that restoration, enhancement, or management will be administered for long-term conservation.

Ineligible Activities (including but not limited to)

- 1) Projects that primarily benefit navigation, irrigation, flood control, or mariculture;
- 2) Acquisition, restoration, enhancement or management of lands to mitigate habitat losses;
- 3) Creation of wetlands where wetlands did not previously exist;
- 4) Enforcement of fish and wildlife laws and regulations, except when necessary for the accomplishment of approved project purposes;
- 5) Research;
- 6) Planning as a primary project focus;
- 7) Operations and maintenance, including long-term invasive species management;
- 8) Acquisition and/or restoration of upper portions of watersheds where benefits to the coastal wetlands ecosystem are not significant and direct; and
- 9) Projects providing less than 20 years of conservation benefits.

Additional Eligibility Information

The primary purpose of the NCWCG Program is to help eligible State agencies physically acquire, restore, enhance, and/or manage coastal wetlands ecosystems. Recreation and outreach/education activities necessary for meeting these purposes that are proposed for the project performance period are eligible for Program funding up to a combined maximum of 10 percent of project costs, including the Federal share and required match. Such activities must be "site-specific" and "substantive" to receive points under Ranking Criterion 12 (50 CFR

84.32(a)(12)(i)). Any proposed recreation or outreach/education activities must be described and justified in the proposal.

Planning and related activities are ineligible as a primary project focus (50 CFR 84.20(b)(6)), but may be allowable as a minimal component of project plan development. Monitoring necessary for meeting Program purposes that is proposed for the grant performance period is eligible, such as evaluating results of project activities and measuring impacts on targeted resources (50 CFR 84.12(b)). Research is not eligible for Program funding. Planning, engineering, design, and monitoring costs necessary for completion of site-specific project objectives during the grant performance period are eligible for Program funding up to a combined maximum of 30 percent of project costs, including the Federal share and required match. Any proposed activities involving planning, engineering, design, or monitoring must be described and justified in the proposal.

Contact your WSFR Regional Office for more detailed guidance on specific proposed costs involving recreation, outreach/education activities, planning, design, or monitoring (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts).

Review 50 CFR 84.20 for more information.

III. Basic Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Applicants

Participation is limited to State agencies or entities designated as eligible by the Governor of a coastal State. It is usually a State natural resource or fish and wildlife agency. If you are uncertain of your agency's eligibility, please contact your Regional WSFR Office (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts). The Regional WSFR Offices maintain the list of eligible agencies in each coastal State in the eight [Service Regions](#).

Eligible coastal States are States bordering the Great Lakes (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin); States bordering the Atlantic, Gulf (except Louisiana), and Pacific coasts (Alabama, Alaska, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington); and American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Louisiana is not an eligible coastal State for this Program as provided in the Act (50 CFR 84.21).

Federal law mandates that all entities applying for Federal financial assistance must have a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). See Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 25 for more information.

DUNS Registration

Request a DUNS number [here](#). For technical difficulties, contact Dun & Bradstreet by calling the Government Customer Resource Center at voice phone: 866-705-5711 or TTY line: 877-807-1679 (hearing impaired customers only). Obtaining a DUNS number is absolutely free for all

entities doing business with the U.S. Government. Once assigned a DUNS number, entities are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet.

Entity Registration in the System for Award Management (SAM)

Register in [SAM](#) online. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that their information is up to date and in sync with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Foreign entities who wish to be paid directly to a United States bank account must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.

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

Excluded Entities

Applicant entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program. The Service conducts a review of the SAM exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award.

Cost Sharing or Matching

The maximum Federal cost share for the NCWCG Program is 75 percent of total project costs in States that have a fund established and used for acquiring coastal wetlands, other natural areas, or open spaces. Projects in States that do not have such a fund are limited to a maximum 50 percent Federal cost share. In accordance with 48 U.S.C. 1469(a), the Regional Director will waive the first \$200,000 of match required as per this NOFO in any grant to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the territories of American Samoa, Guam, or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The maximum Federal cost share of 75 percent is based on total project costs, i.e., the amount requested from the NCWCG Program plus the amount of non-Federal cost share. Other funds that are related to the project or are part of a larger project but are not Federal or designated as cost share are not included in total project costs when calculating the maximum Federal cost share.

Cost share requirements are detailed in 50 CFR 84.46. The requirements allow for in-kind contributions for all or part of the required non-Federal match.

To receive points under ranking Criterion 11 (50 CFR 84.32 (a)(11)), however, at least some of the non-Federal match must be provided in cash. Direct costs identified in the SF-424 are only considered to meet the definition of cash match if they are provided in the form of U.S. currency. See Attachment A. *Clarification of Select Ranking Criteria in 50 CFR 84.32 and General Program Questions* for more information.

To apply for a 75 percent Federal cost share, the applicant must provide either a description of the State trust fund that supports a request for a 75 percent Federal share (in sufficient detail for the Service to make an eligibility determination), or a statement that eligibility has been previously approved and there has been no change in the fund.

Note: If you propose to use the value of donated land as all or a portion of the non-Federal share, you should explain in the Project Statement why the land is necessary to accomplish the project objectives. Applicants should include information on both (a) parcels proposed for acquisition/restoration with NCWCG Program funds, and (b) match parcels in adequate detail for each ranking criterion so reviewers can make informed scoring decisions.

You must document in the application all third-party matching funds, or those supplied by organizations or individuals other than the State applicant, with a signed letter of financial commitment from an authorized representative of the match provider. The letter must detail the amount of matching funds or value of donated land and/or services. The State is responsible for ensuring availability of the full amount of the non-Federal match given on the SF-424.

Other

Although only eligible State agencies can apply for and receive grants through this Program, we encourage partnering with tribes, Federal agencies, other State agencies, non-governmental organizations, local governments and others. Please note that any contributions from Federal sources cannot be used or counted as non-Federal match unless authorized by Federal statute (such as Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program or REPI funds).

IV. Application Requirements

You can apply for this Program in the [Grants.gov Workspace](#) by entering Funding Opportunity Number F18AS00114 on the [Search Grants](#) page. If you have trouble applying, you can contact one of the Service WSFR Offices (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts).

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

Standard Form (SF)-424

A completed Application for Federal Assistance form (SF-424). Do not include other Federal sources of funding, requested or approved, in the total entered in the "Federal" funding box on the Application for Federal Assistance form. Enter only the amount being requested under this program in the "Federal" funding box. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the total funding entered in the "Other" box.

Project Summary

Briefly summarize the project in one page or less. Include the title of the project, geographic location, and a brief overview of the need for the project. Goals, objectives, specific project activities, anticipated outputs and outcomes can also be included in this section.

Project Statement (7 Page Limit)

Applicants applying for awards on a project-by-project basis are required to provide a project statement containing the elements required by 50 CFR 80.82 and listed below. You may

combine your responses as necessary; separate headings or sections for responses to each element are not required.

As noted, some responses are not required within the Project Statement, and may be provided within other sections of your application.

Identify and describe:

Need

The need for the proposed project(s) within the purpose of the Program.

Objectives

Discrete, quantifiable, and verifiable objectives to be accomplished during a specific time period. Objectives reference specific outcomes to be accomplished in order to reach the stated goal(s). The project objectives should be specific, measurable, attainable within the period of performance, realistic, and time-bound. *Note: 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 lands.*

Approach

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

- a. Any organizations that will act as a sub-recipient and their role(s) in meeting the project objectives; for any key personnel, describe the education, experience and skills that make them qualified to carry out the proposed project;
- b. What organization will hold title to the real property being acquired or restored?
- c. How will long-term management (20 years or longer) of acquired or restored lands be accomplished, e.g., through long-term support provided by an endowment?
- d. What type of ownership interest is involved, e.g., fee-simple, easement, combination, etc., and the related acres?
- e. What organization (or individual) will manage the real property interest?
- f. 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? Please provide successful examples of this restoration approach in similar nearby ecosystems, if available.
- g. Is the project ready to implement? For example, in the case of acquisitions, have the landowners supplied willing seller letters to attach to the proposal? For restorations, 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 and can they be attached to the proposal?

Expected Results

Expected results or benefits from accomplishing the objectives.

Project Location

Maps or other geographic aids may be attached. Please include GPS Coordinates in degrees, minutes, and seconds, if available (maps and other diagrams may be provided separately from the Project Statement).

Useful Life

Propose a useful life for each capital improvement with a value greater than \$100,000 identified in this application and reference the method used to determine it (for more information, see [the Service Manual Chapter on useful life](#)). Please note that budget-related responses may be provided in the Budget Narrative.

Program Income

Estimate the amount of program income that the project is likely to generate, if any. Indicate the method of applying and disposing of the program income. Please note that budget-related responses may be provided in the Budget Narrative.

Allocation of Costs

Identify the method used for allocating costs in multipurpose projects and facilities. Please note that budget-related responses may be provided in the Budget Narrative.

Other Federal Grants

Describe any relationship between this project and other work funded by Federal grants that is planned, anticipated, or underway.

Timeline

Describe significant milestones in completing the project and any accomplishments to date.

Compliance

For projects conducted in the United States, a description of the activity in sufficient detail so WSFR staff are able to evaluate compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and all other applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies.

Project Statement

Provide information in the Project Statement that shows the proposed activities are eligible for funding and substantial in character and design.

State Trust Fund

Include either a description of the State trust fund that supports or justifies your request for a 75 percent Federal share in sufficient detail for the Service to make an eligibility determination, or a statement that eligibility has been previously approved by the Service and no change has occurred in the fund.

Relationship to Other Projects

List other current, interrelated coastal acquisition, restoration, enhancement and management actions, the agencies involved, the relationship to the proposed grant, and how the application fits into comprehensive natural resource plans for the area.

Public Involvement and Interagency Coordination

A description of public involvement or interagency coordination on coastal wetlands conservation projects that has occurred or is planned that relates to the application (specify the organizations or agencies involved and dates of involvement).

Budget Form

Complete the Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) form, Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF-424C) form, or submit the equivalent or greater level of information in another format through the [Grants.gov Workspace](#). You may use the SF-424A if your project does not include construction or land acquisition and the SF-424C if the project includes construction or land acquisition. When developing your budget, keep in mind that financial assistance awards and sub-awards are subject to the Federal cost principles in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, as applicable to the recipient organization type. Links to the full text of the Federal cost principles are available on the Internet [here](#).

Note on Multiple Federal Funding Sources: If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program *separately* from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding on the budget form. For example, enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program's CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number for this Federal program is 15.614.

Budget Narrative

In a separate narrative titled "Budget Narrative," explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the SF-424 Budget Object Class Category totals were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. The justification for each budget category should be a brief general description of the costs that make up that category, yet provide enough detail to demonstrate that the applicant has a financial plan for implementation of the proposed objectives. For example, under personnel costs include the total number of staff and the various job titles (classifications) anticipated to be charged to the project. Describe any item that requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost (e.g., equipment and other capital expenditures, pre-award costs, etc.; see 2 CFR 200.407). If federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, provide a list of that equipment, including the Federal funding source. Also include:

- 1) In-Kind Match – Include the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to arrive at the total;
- 2) Program Income, if any – Include the source, amount, and the requested method of crediting the program income (e.g. deductive or additive); and

- 3) When applicable, for any organization charging indirectly, a copy of a current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). You may submit a copy of your agency's NICRA annually to your Regional WSFR Office.

Letters of Commitment (No Page Limit)

All letters of financial commitment are due with the application by the June 29, 2018, 11:59 PM (PDT) deadline. We will not consider letters received after the deadline. Omission of letters of commitment may negatively impact scoring of your proposal. Include:

- 1) Signed letter(s) of financial commitment from an authorized representative of all third-party match provider(s) detailing the amount of matching funds or value of donated land and/or services.
- 2) In projects with land acquisition, we encourage you to include a letter or statement that describes current negotiations regarding the potential sale of the property to help reviewers determine the feasibility of the proposed project compared with other projects.

Required Indirect Cost Statement

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

"We are:

- 1) A U.S. State or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is attached (or on file with the Regional WSFR Office);
- 2) A U.S. State or local government entity receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We are required to prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation to support those costs;
- 3) A [insert your organization type; U.S. States and local governments, please use one of the statements above or below] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: "A copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement is attached. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made." or "A copy of our current, approved rate agreement is attached."];
- 4) A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made;
- 5) A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, in the event an

award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] of [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs)]. However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68]. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing immediately if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.

- 6) A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization's indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, in the event an award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing immediately if we do establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service; or
- 7) A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.”

All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

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

For more information on indirect cost rates, see the Service's [NICRA guidance document](#).

Entities that do not have a NICRA must first have an open, active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget

(OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your cognizant agency, your indirect cost rate will be negotiated by the Interior Business Center (IBC). For more information, contact the IBC at:

Indirect Cost Services
Acquisition Services Directorate, Interior Business Center
U.S. Department of the Interior
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 7-400
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 916-930-3803
Email: Through [Interior Business Center's web form](#)
Internet address: [Interior Business Center - Indirect Cost Negotiation Services](#)

Single Audit Reporting Statements

As required in [Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F](#), all U.S. States, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit Report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. All U.S. State, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government and non-profit applicants must provide a statement indicating whether your organization was required to submit a Single Audit Report for the organization's most recently closed fiscal year and, if so, state whether that report is available on the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website](#) and provide the EIN under which that report was submitted. Include these statements in a section titled "Single Audit Reporting Statements."

Assurances

If a current copy is not on file with your WSFR Regional Office, include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form. Use the Assurances for Construction Programs (SF-424D) for construction and land acquisition projects. Use the Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) for all other projects. The form includes a statement that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program. Signing this form does not make you or your organization subject to laws that are otherwise not applicable to you or your organization. Changing, crossing out, or making notations on the form before signing has no impact on the applicability of law. Eligible State agencies may submit a copy of the Assurances form annually to their Regional WSFR Office.

Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Under [Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352](#), an applicant or recipient must not use any federally-appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this proposal and the Federal share exceeds \$100,000, complete and submit the SF LLL,

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

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

Required Overlap/Duplication Statement

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

Responses to Ranking Criteria (20 Page Limit)

Provide a description with appropriate documentation of how the proposed project addresses each of the 13 numeric ranking criteria in 50 CFR 84.32 (see section VI. Application Review, for ranking criteria). We recommend that you address each ranking criterion individually with a brief statement or table.

If land is proposed as match, include information on both the parcels proposed for acquisition/restoration with NCWCG Program funds and the match parcels in adequate detail

for each ranking criterion so reviewers can make informed scoring decisions. Activities provided as cost share including land acquisition are part of the project and must be eligible activities.

Drawings/Maps/Photographs (No Page Limit)

We recommend that you include and identify drawings or photographs of the proposed project that characterize the following:

- a. Existing state of the project area;
- b. Proposed project area (in one or more maps, photographs, or images);
 - i. Detail which areas will be part of the grant funded activities, delineating the project boundaries;
 - ii. Detail which areas are part of the cost share, if applicable;
 - iii. Detail what restoration activities will take place and where, if applicable;
 - iv. Detail which areas, if any, are part of a larger effort that will be funded outside of this grant and cost share application;
 - v. Detail wetland types (please include National Wetlands Inventory, State Wetlands Map, or other wetland delineation, if available); and
 - vi. Any other information that will assist reviewers to identify project components or factors involved with ranking.
- c. Two maps of the project location: a map of the State showing the general location of the application and a map of the project site.

Application Checklist

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Project Summary
- Project Statement (7 page limit)
- Completed SF-424A, SF-424C, or equivalent budget information
- Budget Narrative
- Any required Letters of Commitment must identify specific financial or other commitments and be signed by an authorized entity with budgetary authority
- When applicable, provide a copy of your organization's current NICRA
- Indirect Cost Statement
- Single Audit Reporting statement
- Completed SF-424B or SF-424D Assurances form (if a current version is not on file with the Regional WSFR Office)
- If applicable, provide a completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure, when applicable
- Required Overlap/Duplication Statement
- Responses to Ranking Criteria (20 Page Limit)
- Drawings/Maps/Photographs (No Page Limit)

Applications should be formatted to print on 8.5" X 11" paper, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides, and page numbers at the bottom of the page. Fonts should be legible, i.e., preferably 12 point Arial, Times New Roman, or other commonly used font. Please number your pages starting with the Project Statement.

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

V. Submission Instructions

Submission Deadline

Grant application packages are due to your Regional WSFR Office (see Section VIII, Agency Contacts) on or before Friday, June 29, 2018, by 11:59 PM (PDT). The Service recommends that you submit early enough to address any unforeseen technical complications. All letters of financial commitment are due with the application by the deadline. The Service will not consider applications or letters received after the deadline.

Intergovernmental Review

Before submitting an application, U.S. State and local government applicants should visit [this website](#) to determine whether their application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 “Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs.” E.O. 12372 was issued to foster intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on State and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The E.O. allows each State to designate an entity to perform this function. Applicants may contact the State’s designated entity for more information on the process the State requires to be followed when applying for assistance. States that do not have a designated entity have chosen not to participate in the review process.

Electronic Submission Instructions

- 1) Go to [Grants.gov Workspace](#).
- 2) Click the “Apply for a grant using Workspace” button and read the instructions provided.
- 3) The following are items that need to be done before a grant application package can be submitted electronically through Grants.gov Workspace:
 - a. Applicants must register as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and have a user ID and password. The applicant can register [here](#);
 - b. Applicants must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view files on the web. You can download Adobe Acrobat Reader [here](#).
- 4) Standard forms such as the SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-424C, and SF-424D are fillable forms in Grants.gov Workspace.
- 5) All forms and attachments mentioned above must be submitted through the Grants.gov Workspace application.

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

Applicants are also encouraged to email a single file in PDF format comprising their entire application package as a backup. The file should include required documents in the following order: Standard Forms (SF-424, SF-424C, SF-424D), Budget Narrative, Project Statement,

response to ranking criteria, maps and photos, and letters of financial commitment. The file should be emailed to the appropriate Regional WSFR contact (see contact information in section VIII, Agency Contacts) by the deadline. Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with their Regional WSFR contact and State Coastal Wetlands Program staff prior to submission to ensure applications are eligible and complete.

For further information or questions on electronic submission, contact your Regional WSFR Office.

VI. Application Review

Scoring Criteria

Criteria for reviewing and ranking projects were established in the final rule for administering the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (67 FR 48264; 50 CFR 84). Attachment A clarifies select ranking criteria in 50 CFR 84.32 and answers general questions. A brief summary of each ranking criterion is given below. The questions that follow each criterion are intended to prompt applicants to provide supporting information describing how the proposed project addresses each criterion.

Criterion 1: Wetlands conservation

How will the project reverse coastal wetland loss or habitat degradation in decreasing or stable coastal wetland types?

Criterion 2: Maritime forests on coastal barriers

How will the project significantly benefit maritime forests on coastal barriers?

Criterion 3: Long-term conservation

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.

Criterion 4: Coastal watershed management

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

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 State-listed species.

Criterion 6: Benefits to fish

How will the project provide, restore or enhance important fisheries habitat?

Criterion 7: Benefits to coastal-dependent or migratory birds

How will the project provide, restore, or enhance important habitat for coastal-dependent or migratory birds?

Criterion 8: Prevent or reduce contamination

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

How will the project leverage other ongoing coastal wetlands conservation efforts in an area or provide additional impetus for conservation?

Criterion 10: Partners in conservation

Will the project receive financial support, including in-kind match, from private, local or other Federal partners? (see Attachment A, 50 CFR 84.32 (a)(11) (Criterion 10))

Criterion 11: Federal share reduced

Does the application add to the non-Federal share of the project by contributing additional cash? (see Attachment A, 50 CFR 84.32 (a)(11) (Criterion 11)) (Includes only cash above the minimum required match and REPI funds contributed as cash.)

Criterion 12: Education/outreach program or wildlife-oriented recreation

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

Please summarize how any other factors not covered in the previous criteria make this proposed project or site particularly unique and valuable. Other factors may include but are limited to the following examples (see 50 CFR 84.32(a)(13)):

- a. Projects providing significant benefits to rare or threatened habitat types, biodiverse habitats, rare and declining species, and/or the local community;
- b. Projects that are particularly cost-effective;
- c. Projects that assist in the prevention or control of invasive species; or
- d. Projects that provide important cultural or historical resource benefits.

Review and Selection Process

Project selection is a seven-step process:

- 1) **Application acceptance** - The Service will accept applications via [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) [Workspace](#) until Friday, June 29, 2018, at 11:59 PM (PDT). States may revise and resubmit applications until the application deadline. We encourage applicants to communicate with the Service Regional WSFR Office at least six weeks in advance of

- the deadline if requesting a pre-deadline review; however, we cannot guarantee pre-deadline application review due to limited staff availability.
- 2) **Pre-Ranking review** – The Service will conduct a pre-ranking review of proposals to verify eligibility. We may identify errors or other deficiencies in your proposal. During this period, a Service representative may contact the project officer you identify on your SF-424 to clarify information or address any minor errors or omissions.
 - 3) **Application ranking** – After the pre-ranking review, a panel of Service program specialists will review and rank eligible proposals using criteria in this announcement. Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the program office point of contact the “Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification” form. For a copy of this form, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below. Following ranking, you may be asked to revise the project scope and/or budget.
 - 4) **Application selection** - The review panel recommends a ranked project list to the Assistant Director for WSFR, who recommends a final list of projects to the Service Director. The Service Director makes final selections. Additional review by the Department of the Interior may be required before notification.
 - 5) **Risk/Overlap/Duplication Assessment** - Each fiscal year, for every entity receiving one or more awards in that fiscal year, the Service conducts a risk assessment based on eight risk categories as required in 2 CFR 200.205. The result of this risk assessment is used to establish a monitoring plan for all awards to the entity in that fiscal year. The Service’s risk assessment form is available for review on the Internet [here](#). Prior to approving an award with a Federal funding amount that exceeds or is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, as adjusted (see 2 CFR 200.88), the Service must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (see the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity and Information System](#) or FAPIIS) to determine if, at a minimum, the information found in the system for the applicant demonstrates a satisfactory record of Federal award performance and integrity and business ethics (see 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2)). The Service must also report to FAPIIS if an applicant subject to this review is found not qualified for a particular award due to its prior record of integrity or performance under Federal awards (see 2 CFR 200.212). The Service also reviews the selected applicant’s statement regarding potential overlap or duplication in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel and makes a determination regarding Service funding. Depending on the circumstances, modification of the application, other pending applications, or an active award may be necessary, or the Service might choose to not fund the proposed project.
 - 6) **Pre-Award Notification**– If selected, the Service Regional WSFR Office will notify successful applicants of the award and the process needed to receive a grant, including satisfactory completion of compliance requirements. Applicants are encouraged to submit all required documentation to the Service Regional WSFR Office within six months of receipt of the pre-award notification.

- 7) **Award Notification** - When compliance requirements are met, the Regional Office will send a notice of award letter to the recipient agency detailing the terms and conditions of the award.

VII. Award Administration Information

Award Notices

Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the notice of award. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests.

Domestic Recipient Payments

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

Transmittal of Sensitive Data

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

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Applicable executive orders must be satisfied before the Service can approve an award and make funding available. In accepting Federal funds, applicants must comply with all applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies. Evidence of compliance with the NEPA, NHPA, ESA, Clean Water Act (CWA), and other Federal laws must be provided if selected for award.

All financial assistance awards are subject to Federal financial administration requirements. The Regional WSFR Offices will work with applicants to ensure that all financial arrangements comply with these requirements.

To find out more about these rules, including administrative requirements and cost principles, please review 2 CFR 200. These regulations apply to all recipients.

Award Terms and Conditions

Acceptance of a financial assistance award from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the notice of award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. The Service's standard award terms and conditions are available [here](#). If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section (Section VIII).

Recipient Reporting Requirements

Final Reports

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

Interim Reports

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

Recipients must use the Standard Form 425, Federal Financial Report for financial reporting, available on the Internet on [WSFR's Financial Assistance Wiki Forms Page](#).

Performance reports must contain: 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work; 2) a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and 3) any other pertinent information relevant to the project results.

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

- Problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation; and/or

- Favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

The Service will specify in the notice of award letter the required reporting frequency applicable to the award.

Financial and performance reporting requirements and retention and access requirements are specified in [2 CFR Part 200 \(Subpart D\)](#) and in the Service Manual Chapters of Financial and Performance Reporting Guidance, [516 FW 1](#) and [516 FW 2](#). Electronic submission of performance information using the Wildlife TRACS system may be required, as detailed in the terms and conditions of the award letter.

Other Mandatory Disclosures

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

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

VIII. Agency Contacts

The NCWCG Program is administered jointly by the Division of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration and the National Wildlife Refuge System, Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation. National level program information can be obtained by contacting:

Service Headquarters

Chris Darnell
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 The National Refuge System - Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning
 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: NWRS
 Falls Church, VA 22041
 703-358-2236
Chris_Darnell@fws.gov

(or)

Paul Van Ryzin
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program
 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: WSFR

Fall Church, VA 22041
703-358-1849
Paul_VanRyzin@fws.gov

For project specific information and application details, contact your Regional WSFR Office:

Region 1

American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington:

Jim Duffy
USFWS-WSFR
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181
503-231-2096
James_Duffy@fws.gov

Region 2

Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas:

Kelly Oliver-Amy
USFWS-WSFR
P.O. Box 1306
500 Gold Avenue, SW, Room #8514
Albuquerque, NM 87103
505-248-7457
Kelly_Oliver-Amy@fws.gov

Region 3

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin:

Casey Nelson
USFWS-WSFR
5600 American Blvd. West, Suite 990
Bloomington, MN 55437-1458
612-713-5143
Casey_Nelson@fws.gov

Region 4

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the U.S. Virgin Islands:

Marilyn Lawal
USFWS-WSFR
1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 240
Atlanta, GA 30345-3319
404-679-7277
Marilyn_Lawal@fws.gov

Region 5

Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia:

Shelley DiBona

USFWS-WSFR

300 Westgate Center Drive

Hadley, MA 01035-9589

413-253-8509

Shelley_DiBona@fws.gov

Region 7

Alaska:

Doug McBride

USFWS-WSFR

1011 East Tudor Road, MS 261

Anchorage, AK 99503

907-786-3631

Doug_McBride@fws.gov

Region 8

California and Nevada:

Becky Miller

USFWS-WSFR

2800 Cottage Way Room W-1729

Sacramento, CA 95825

916.978.6185

Becky_Miller@fws.gov

Attachment A: Clarification of Select Ranking Criteria in 50 CFR 84.32 and General Program Questions

Sections of this attachment have been revised for FY 2019– Please Read

The purpose of this attachment is to provide clarification of certain criteria in 50 CFR 84. General questions are listed first, followed by questions specific to ranking criteria.

General Questions and Answers

Are lands proposed for match purposes used in calculating points for ranking criteria?

Yes. Because lands that are used for match 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 match when assigning points for ranking criteria. Therefore, information on both parcels proposed for acquisition/restoration and match parcels should be described in adequate detail for each ranking criterion so reviewers can make informed scoring decisions.

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

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

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

Applicants 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 match?

Title to real property acquired or contributed as match will vest upon acquisition in the grantee or sub-recipient, respectively, as directed by 2 CFR 200.306 and 2 CFR 200.311.

Should applicants include letters of support that are not financial commitment letters or those detailing scientific information specific to a project?

Given the volume of material reviewers must read, letters of general support for a project should not be included in the application package. However, letters of financial commitment from third-party sources are required.

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

“Maximum Federal share” refers to the percentage, i.e., 75% or 50%, of Federal dollars of the project costs, not the maximum grant amount from the NCWCG Program, i.e., \$1 million. For example, if total project costs are \$1,333,334, the maximum Federal share would be either \$1,000,000 (75%) or \$666,667 (50%), depending on whether or not the State has a designated fund. If the applicant only provides the minimum non-Federal share (25% or 50% 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 submitted to the Service for consideration in the national competition must be in final format by the due date specified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The only application changes that will be accepted after the due date are those that will not impact the project scoring or project scope, such as small corrective or clarifying statements, unless additional information is requested by the Service. Regional Office and/or Headquarters representatives may also request that the applicant make modifications to an application after the due date to correct inconsistencies within an application or change any other error that would cause the National Review Panel difficulty in accurately assessing the application during review. If an application contains ineligible activities, the entire application is ineligible.

Who determines if an application is eligible?

Service Regional WSFR personnel determine whether an application meets eligibility criteria for the program and whether it should be considered for scoring by the National Review Panel. If Regional personnel have questions regarding the eligibility of a project, they consult with the Headquarters WSFR Office to ensure consistent application of Service policy. The Headquarters WSFR Office will reexamine an application’s eligibility if questions arise. If deemed ineligible, we will not consider the application for funding.

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

Must a score of 7 be given for all applications that result in over 50% of the project area conserving, restoring, or protecting decreasing coastal wetlands types?

Yes. Applications that document that over 50% of the project area will be, upon project completion, decreasing coastal wetlands types will receive the full 7 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](#).

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 7 points) for projects that document that, upon project completion, a

minimum of 50% of the project area will be a combination of decreasing and stable types of wetlands, and for projects that are less than 50% wetlands.

For land acquisition projects, will ranking be based on just the wetland portion of a parcel or the entire parcel?

Project ranking will be based on the entire parcel 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 what is considered to be a maritime forest for the purpose of the NCWCG Program is found in the program regulations in the Definitions section, 50 CFR 84.11.

How will this criterion be scored?

In order to receive the maximum 7 points for this criterion, the project must significantly benefit maritime forests which meet the following descriptions: 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. Examples of 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 7 points are acceptable (1) for applications in which the significance of the benefit to maritime forests is unclear, or (2) for applications in which it is unclear if the forests meet the strict 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 ranking 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. It is recommended that applicants supply this information in table format. The column headings can include: common name, scientific name, 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 ranking 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 match to receive points for this criterion?

Yes, to be considered a non-Federal partner for this criterion, the application must receive financial support, including in-kind match, from a third-party that is listed as non-Federal match on the SF-424. You must document all third-party matching funds, i.e., those supplied by

organizations or individuals other than the State applicant, with a signed letter of financial commitment from an authorized representative of the match provider. The letter of financial commitment must detail the amount of matching funds or value of donated land and/or services. The State is responsible for ensuring the full amount of the non-Federal match as listed on the SF-424. All of these items must be submitted with the application by the due date identified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Please note that if a third-party provides match, and the letter of financial commitment is missing and/or late, the match will not be considered, which may negatively impact scoring of the proposal.

Can applications receive points for more than one State agency's participation in a proposed project?

In general, applications will only receive credit for one State agency. The exception to this practice will occur when an application includes multiple States. In these instances, the application may receive points for each additional State that is participating in the proposed project. Partnering entities that receive partial funding from a State may be considered non-State partners if they also receive non-State funding; such entities and the nature of their funding should be described in detail in the Project Statement and/or letter of commitment.

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

A signed letter of financial commitment of matching funds or in-kind match from an authorized representative of any third-party match provider or partner(s) must accompany the application to receive points. Applicants 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 the 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 the Project Statement and/or letter of commitment. Entities whose involvement is not necessary or reasonable to complete the project objectives will not be counted as partners for this criterion.

Can the Service be considered a partner for purposes of scoring on this criterion?

Yes. If the Service is providing in-kind resources or other assistance to complete project objectives, it may be considered a partner. The nature of the resources or assistance provided should be described in a letter of commitment. If the Service provides only a letter expressing general facts and information about the project without committing resources, it would not be considered a partner.

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

Can in-kind services or contributions be used as the required State match?

Yes. In-kind services can be used for part or all of the State’s required minimum cost share (i.e., 25% or 50%). However, the applicant will not receive points for this ranking criterion unless they have an additional cash match.

Can in-kind services or contributions, including bargain land sale, be used to score points for this criterion?

No. We only consider cash contributions that exceed the required minimum match when scoring points for Criterion 11. Cash is a liquid asset and can be tracked easily through audit procedures and also serves as a proxy for the State’s commitment toward a project. 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, so-called “bargain sales” cannot be used to receive points for decreasing the Federal share.

How are points calculated when scoring on Criterion 11?

A maximum of 5 points are available for Criterion 11. Each 5 percent provided in cash match over the required match equals 1 point up to a total of 25 percent over the required match for a total of 5 points.

Example 1:

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

Total required non-Federal match is determined by dividing the NCWCG 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 minimum required non-Federal cost share).

Example 3:

Total project cost:	\$1,360,000
NCWCG 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 and partially met with cash. Total required non-Federal match is determined by dividing the NCWCG Program Request by three ($\$1,000,000/3 = \$333,334$). Then, in-kind cost share is subtracted from this amount ($\$333,334 - \$300,000$) or $\$33,334$ to determine the amount of cash match that would be used to fulfill the minimum required non-Federal match. To determine cash match over the minimum required match, subtract the cash match used to meet the minimum required match from the total amount of cash match ($\$60,000 - \$33,334 = \$26,666$). Cash match over the minimum required non-Federal cost share is then divided by the minimum required non-Federal match ($\$26,666/\$333,334$), giving eight percent. One point would be awarded for this criterion (one point for each 5 percent over minimum required non-Federal cost share).

Can applications from Commonwealths and territories subject to the match waiver described in 48 U.S.C. 1469(a) receive points on Criterion 11 (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 five points when scoring on Criterion 11.

Can the in-kind contribution of a landowner accepting an offer below market value for his property be used for the required State match?

Yes. The in-kind contribution of a landowner accepting a reduced price for his property can be used as part of or all of the State's required cost share of 25% or 50%.

Can Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI) funds be used as cash match?

Yes. In keeping with the intent of the Congressional language codified in 10 USC 2684a(h), REPI funds are considered as non-Federal cash match.

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

Are costs associated with Education and Outreach eligible?

Yes, provided that total costs unrelated to protection and restoration of the site are limited to 10 percent of the total project costs including NCWCG Program Federal share and the required match.

50 CFR 84.32(b)(4) (Additional considerations):

Please clarify the phrase, 'provides lands...as part of the State matching share.'

The purpose of this tie-breaking factor is to encourage applications which include the donation of lands owned by a third party as part of the overall project. Such donations increase the overall acreage of land managed by the State agency, increasing the likelihood that the land will be managed to conserve the natural resources and increase the management options for the grant property.