

Apply for Grants

Guidelines for the Grant Program are as follows:

1. Only project proposals submitted by and in the name of state wildlife agencies and regional state fish and wildlife agency associations shall be eligible for funding under the Grant Program. Project proposals from organizations other than state wildlife agencies and regional state fish and wildlife agency associations will not be accepted.

2. Recipients that previously received funding and have met all prior reporting requirements are eligible to apply for grant funding again in 2012-2013.

3. A total of \$500,000 will be available to qualified state wildlife agencies for the purpose of supporting projects designed to put **more hunters in the field**. The amount of funding that selected applicants may be awarded shall be at the sole discretion of NSSF. NSSF reserves the right to suspend and/or terminate the Grant Program, adjust the total amount of funding available under the Program and correct any errors made in awarding Program funds, at any time.

4. All projects must help NSSF's goal of increasing hunting participation AND must address at least one of the following focus areas in your proposal:
 - A) Electronic Outreach & Promotions: Leveraging social media to increase hunting recruitment and/or retention. There are many electronic tools available to reach out to your audience today. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and electronic newsletters to name a few, can all be used as a constant reminder of what is happening within your state and prompt your target audience to take action. Electronic newsletters, such as NSSF's "Pull the Trigger", or emails can alert to instant online renewals, show "how-to" videos to sight in your firearms before hunting in the field, etc. Taking advantage of social media can reach audiences from youth to adults. It is important to reach out to your license holders. Do you currently update your database? Are you collecting emails to communicate electronically, which is cost-effective and time-saving? Do you have programs such as Constant Contact to deliver electronic messages to your customers? All the above questions can help you in the

direction of communicating with your lapsed, current or potential new hunters.

- B) Increase Hunter Access & Awareness: A research study was produced in 2009 by Responsive Management and National Shooting Sports Foundation titled “Issues Related to Hunting Access in the United States: National Results” conducted under a Multi-State Conservation Grant. This needed research looked into the effectiveness of access programs and data for future programs that can help guide the future use of funding access programs. It is critical to identify how access in your state can be enhanced before the problem becomes worse. There are several access efforts that are working such as GIS mapping, paper maps, Walk-in access programs, lease programs, etc. Not only is it important to implement access efforts, it is equally important to spread awareness of available access sites and programs. Proposals that leverage state funds or federal funds such as the USDA’s Voluntary Public Access program are welcome and encouraged. Oregon Division of Fish and Wildlife is an excellent example of creating an user-friendly, on-line map for hunters: www.OregonHuntingMap.com Once the map was completed, it was promoted to boost hunting renewals in the state. The map was extremely successful in less than a year of launching, creating nearly 9,400 additional hunter days boosting Oregon’s economy \$1.4 million; created nearly \$53,000 ODFW’s revenue; and finally, the map helped to recruit 662 new hunters.
- C) Promoting & providing next steps to create a life-long hunter: Many states have apprentice licenses to offer to the new hunter to safely hunt with a licensed mentor. It is important to promote this opportunity as well as following through to encourage the next step: hunter education. “Follow-through” services can include leading hunter education graduates directly to license purchasing opportunities (web sites, toll free numbers, etc.), helping them acquire basic hunting equipment, or helping them learn where to hunt and the local rules and regulations. Any efforts that help encourage new hunters to take the field will be considered
- D) Looking outside of your agency - Expanding partnerships: The NSSF encourages states to reach out to retailers, ranges and even sportsman’s clubs who would benefit from increased hunting or exposure to the hunting market. These natural partners often have communication, advertising and equipment expertise not available to many state agencies and can help your programs become more effective. These resources can help create an additional dimension to your program plans.

5. The following types of projects **are not eligible** for Grant Program funding:

- a. Projects including activities other than hunting with a firearm.
 - b. Projects that include the purchase of land.
 - c. Projects that focus specifically on the management of wildlife habitats or ecosystems.
 - d. Projects that involve building new or improving existing structures.
 - e. All other projects that are not directly related to the above-stated project eligibility requirements as determined by the NSSF.
6. Projects must be completed by **March 1, 2013**. Grant recipients shall also be required to submit midterm and final written reports regarding their projects. Midterm progress reports shall be due by **October 5, 2012**; final written reports shall be due **March 12, 2013**.
 7. Be advised that grant awards shall be disbursed as follows: 50% after April 1, 2012 contingent upon NSSF receipt of signed agreement; the remaining 50% within a reasonable time following NSSF's receipt and satisfactory review of both Grantee's progress and final written reports.

Please seriously consider this schedule prior to submitting a grant proposal to be sure that your department can cover up-front costs.

Application Process

*Grant proposals must be received by NSSF no later than 5pm (EST) on **February 1, 2012**.*

Proposals must be submitted in both hard copy and electronic format as follows:

- One original and four (4) copies of the proposal; and
- CD-ROM in Microsoft Word format and/or PDF format containing a copy of the proposal.
- Proposals sent by e-mail will not be accepted.

Proposals must be sent to:

Melissa Schilling
Manager, Recruitment & Retention
11 Mile Hill Road
Newtown, CT 06470-2359
Telephone: (203) 426-1320

- Selected grant recipients shall be notified in writing during the last week of February.

Proposal Review and Selection Process

Grant awards are not final and shall be non-binding on the NSSF until written contracts are signed with grant recipients. Grant proposals shall be evaluated for eligibility and ranked by a committee of the NSSF. Awards shall only be made to applicants with proposals that comply with all RFP guidelines listed in Section II, fully address all of the issues found in Section V and who, in the sole judgment of the NSSF, propose activities that best promote hunter recruitment, participation and retention objectives.

(All decisions of NSSF are final and non-reviewable.)

Grant recipients shall be required to sign a written Grants Condition Acknowledgement Agreement with the NSSF immediately following notification of acceptance. Grant recipients shall also be required to execute and submit all other necessary documentation (e.g., reports) as directed during the term of the grant to ensure their commitment to the Grant Program.

The NSSF reserves the right, at any time, to cancel or amend this Review and Selection Process, reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, waive minor irregularities in proposals, or to allow applicants to correct minor irregularities, if the best interests of the Grant Program will be served by doing so.

Grant Proposals

Grant proposals **must** be prepared in the following format and must fully address **all** of the sections below. Applicants shall limit the executive summary to one page and the narrative portion of their proposals to six pages or less, excluding budgets and resumes. To assist you in formulating your proposal, included below are special considerations and examples of how to approach a question (provided in parentheses).

Executive Summary:

Title: A short descriptive name of the proposed project.

Applicant's Name & Contact Information: Identify the name of the party applying for the grant. Also, please identify one individual in applicant's organization to whom all

correspondence regarding this grant should be sent. **Please include name, title, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address.**

Funding Requested: Total request of funds

Area of Focus: State the focus area(s) chosen for your proposal.

Objective: Provide a concise statement of the purpose(s) of the project in quantified and measurable terms.

Summary Statement: A 400-word or less summary describing how and why the expected results of the project will meet the purpose of the Hunting Heritage Partnership Grant Program through the state wildlife agency's methodologies and evaluation or regional state fish and wildlife agency association's methodologies and evaluation.

Narrative:

1. **Title:** Use the same title listed in the Executive Summary; A short descriptive name of the proposed project.

2. **Applicant's Name & Contact Information:** Identify the name of the party applying for the grant. Also, please identify one individual in applicant's organization to whom all correspondence regarding this grant should be sent. Please include name, title, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address.

3. **Mission, goals and objectives:** Your proposal should state clearly defined mission, goals and objectives related to hunting recruitment and retention. Your programs also should reflect goals set by your parent agency/organization and by national and state bodies, as applicable.

a. Mission: Why is this program in existence? What is it trying to do? A mission statement offers broad explanation about what this program should contribute.

(Example: One grantee identified the need to increase hunter recruitment and retention to maintain and increase support for wildlife conservation and hunting, as well as stabilize funding of conservation programs through license sales.)

b. Goals: Why are you doing this program? Goals define how the program will help achieve the broader mission.

(Example: In 2006, the same grantee identified the need to pursue a Hunting

Heritage Partnership Grant to test and evaluate a pilot program designed to increase hunting recruitment and retention among youth.)

c. Objectives: What specifically do you want to accomplish? Objectives must be measurable, and generally - although not always - set up on a relatively short time frame.

(Example: This grantee's pilot program identified the following objectives:

- 1.** Identify kids who are interested in hunting but don't have social support for hunting in their immediate family.
- 2.** Pair kids with hunting mentors at youth pheasant hunt and workshop events.
- 3.** Provide opportunities for kids to hunt again beyond this single-day event.
- 4.** Determine whether this process results in them likely to become "regular" hunters over time.)

4. **Approach:** Describe the process to be followed to meet project objectives including:
 - a. A description of techniques and methods to be used;
 - b. A description of how the applicant will monitor project progress; and
 - c. A description of how the applicant will measure project progress in achieving objectives.
5. **Project Time Schedule:**
 - a. What is the time schedule for fulfilling the objectives of the project?
 - b. Identify key milestones of the project and provide the dates that they will be achieved during each quarter of the Grant Program. Remember that all projects must be completed by March 1, 2013!
6. **Evaluation component to measure effectiveness:** Your evaluation should include the following considerations, when possible. Evaluations should:
 - a. Be based on program goals and objectives. (Don't measure outputs or outcomes that you were not specifically trying to achieve.)
 - b. Identify simple program outputs such as numbers of participants and feedback (but don't stop there!)
 - c. Investigate program's learning outcomes (behavior changes, etc.) when appropriate.
 - d. Encourage use of multiple and varied assessment methods whenever possible.

(The more ways you can look at something the more comprehensive your evaluation will be.)

e. Consider the evaluation in initial planning stages as a key project component, not tacked on at the end as an afterthought.

(Example: As part of grantees project, two sets of surveys allowed coordinators to note successes and areas needing improvement. Below are some suggestions for performing an evaluation:

1. Exit surveys: The first, called exit surveys, were given to youth, parents, and all volunteers at the end of the Indiana Youth Pheasant Hunt and Workshop events to gauge initial successes, challenges and recommendations.
2. Post-hunting season survey: A second survey took place at the end of the hunting season, to assess a variety of factors, attitudes and behaviors to gauge the program's success as a recruitment tool.
3. Final report: As part of the project's final report, Indiana broke the project into its key components and identified success, challenges and recommendations for each one. This captures additional recommendations to improve future programs.

If, by assessment of these criteria, the grantee discovers that this program was successful, the entire program could easily be expanded. Armed with these results, the grantees can decide upon next steps for recruitment and retention efforts.)

7. **Outline budget needs, resources, support, resources and staffing:** As you plan your effort, you should outline all core elements of your project and ensure that it has adequate agency support, as well as resources and staffing to achieve your goals.
 - a. A budget should identify all the variables you need to cover. Look at what is feasible to cover over the life of the project. This will help avoid planning a project that takes more staff and resources than your agency/organization can fund. Include an itemized budget showing cost justifications where necessary. "Matching" funds or "cost-share" funds are encouraged to include in your itemized budgets and are awarded extra points when committee reviews proposals. Grant funds shall not be used for any unrelated, unnecessary or indirect expenses (e.g. salaries, overhead, office supplies, etc.) NSSF shall have final approval of all submitted budgets. If you have any questions about your budgets, please ask.
 - b. Show how staff from related fields (wildlife, law enforcement, education, information, etc.) is ready to work together to reach project goals. Consider the placement and involvement of qualified, committed and knowledgeable staff qualified to carry out parts of the project.

- c. If you plan on using any outside consultants, list all outside help with associated cost.
- d. Include information for payment process to correctly transfer funds via check.

(Example: Name of state fish and wildlife agency, c/o: xxxxx, Address, city, state, zip)

- e. Be integrated with similar, ongoing efforts, whenever possible. Integrating your new project with similar, ongoing efforts ensures that opportunities for and effects on participants are frequent and sustainable over time.

(Example: A clearly defined budget made sure that one DNR's project was feasible for the long haul. The project tapped key members from the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Division of Law Enforcement, and contractor's staff.)

8. **Previous Work Conducted:** Provide an overview of past projects conducted by the agency that were directly related hunter recruitment, retention, access or any other project similar in scope, especially if it was in partnership with NSSF.

9. **Outline involvement of stakeholders whenever possible:** Partners and stakeholders can be key to program development, from initial planning to evaluation. Use them whenever possible. Successful programs bring a coalition of stakeholders together to design, implement and evaluate a program that meets their mutual needs. Stakeholders have some interest in the program being developed. They care about the program and are willing to commit to it.

Diverse stakeholders lend a variety of perspectives to the program, helping shape the focus and audience for maximum benefit. Their participation also helps achieve buy-in early in the process, so the program is more likely to be used. During evaluation, stakeholders can offer input about what information to gather, how to gather it, and how to share it with important audiences.

List all outside help, such as, consultants, universities, research agencies, etc.

(Example: One project tapped stakeholders from state conservation organizations, hunter education volunteers, and hunting-related businesses. These stakeholders were identified as folks who would support hunter recruitment and retention

efforts long-term. Stakeholders completed evaluations to better guide the improvement and development of future efforts.)

10. **Resumes:** Include a resume or curriculum vitae ("CV") of key personnel. Resumes or CVs must not exceed one page per individual and are in addition to the five page requirement for the proposals.

11. **Incorporate best information and research available:** When developing your proposals, make room for needed research:

a. Allow for collection and examination of existing research.

b. Provide opportunities for staff to become familiar with existing research.

c. Develop new research (or identify needed research) as appropriate.

d. Encourage staff to incorporate findings into the project.

Note: See section "Supporting Research" for a list of existing research that might be helpful to you in developing your HHP project.