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NFWF Big Game Liaison Webinar Recording

0:01

Hi everybody.

0:01

My name is Chelsea Murphy and I am here today to talk to you all about the Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

0:14

Thank you so much for joining me on today's webinar.

0:18

I am a representative of the field liaison team for the national programs under NFWF.

0:25

So today we are here to discuss this funding opportunity through NFWF.

0:30

I am, throughout the webinar, hopefully going to help you clarify which funding option is best for you and your project.

0:37

There are two funding options under this year's The Big Game program, which we'll get into a little bit more detail here in the webinar.

0:45

I'm also going to help provide context around what makes a complete and competitive application and offer you all resources and contacts to help strengthen your proposal before a submission at the end of this webinar, I'm going to play you a video.

1:00

The video was produced by SWCA environmental Consultants.

1:04

They are the federal compliance liaisons on behalf of Option B of this program.

1:10

They're going to walk you through Option B is federal compliance means the idea is by talking about these needs early in the process that it will set you up for having a more successful project that is not delayed by receiving compliance if you are awarded funding under this program.

1:32

So throughout this or this webinar, we really want to give you all a chance to learn more about who we are as liaisons and how we can help support you throughout the application process.

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1:44

So on today's agenda, I'm going to give you a little bit of an introduction on the the field liaison team.

1:50

I'm going to give you an overview of the Western Big Game program as a whole.

1:54

We're going to talk about the funding options under the program this year and the eligibility criteria for each.

2:01

We'll also give a quick review of the evaluation criteria and how NFWF goes about the reviews of these applications.

2:12

I'm also going to give you hopefully some helpful tips on do's and don'ts in the application and how to develop a competitive proposal.

2:20

And then we will give you some resources for additional applicant support throughout this process.

2:26

So you will be able to get a hold of myself and others as you're developing your project proposal to help answer questions, to provide additional support.

2:38

So who is the national program field liaison team?

2:43

We are here to help applicants understand the Western Big Game program, the options, funding options under that program.

2:51

We're also here to help workshop project ideas and help you shape them into program of the line proposals.

2:58

We are here to also provide some post award assistance.

3:03

So if you are funded under the big game program, we will be here as your continuing liaison throughout the grant period of performance.

3:13

So we were are here to help you with administration needs, compliance needs, technical needs, etcetera.

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3:20

And then if you are not awarded funding under this program, we are here to help get debriefs of your application review so that you can have some good takeaways to help improve future applications.

3:33

So what we don't do is we don't write your book for you.

3:36

Sorry.

3:37

We don't provide early and detailed review, complete review of your application and we don't conduct technical project work.

3:47

However, we do have a lot of resources at our disposal.

3:51

So if you do have a technical question in a particular discipline, let's say cultural resources for example, then we can offer you guidance and direction from a culture resources expert for your project to get you going and point you in the right direction.

4:08

So our team is made-up of a couple different organizations.

4:12

So again, my name is Chelsea Murphy.

4:14

I'm the project manager on behalf of ECT, which is the field liaison group for the national NFWF national programs.

4:23

We have a counterpart Native American Fish and Wildlife Society.

4:27

They are a field lead on team specific for tribal organizations and Native nations.

4:34

We have SWCA as part of the team, SWCA again as providing the federal compliance portion of the national programs at NFWF and then with my team at ECT.

4:47

You may, if you reach out for support during this application phase, you may reach myself or Amy Faust or Sam Joseph.

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4:54

We are really here to help provide you support during, during your application.

4:59

And then if you become a grantee, you would interact some more with our ECT field liaison staff and our partner Whitetail, who is also providing field liaison staff to the grantees under the national programs.

5:13

So what is the Western Big Game program?

5:16

This is a competitive NFWF of grant program with the purposes of supporting conservation of big game seasonal habitat and migration corridors.

5:25

The intent of this program is to support implementation of boots on the ground work for habitat restoration, enhancement and connectivity projects for big game, with a focus on priority winter ranges, stopover areas, and movement pathways that are identified by your state Fish and Game departments or your tribal wildlife agencies.

5:51

So if you applied to this program in the past, you'll notice that in 2026, there was a few changes, The most notably being that there are now 2 distinct funding options in 2026, Option A and Option B.

6:04

These options differ in three main ways.

6:06

One is the applicant eligibility for each option is slightly different, the geographic focus areas are slightly different, and the match requirements are different.

6:17

So let's first talk before we get into the differences about the similarities.

6:21

So for both funding priorities for both option A&B defining priorities are generally the same.

6:28

So these are habitat restoration, enhancement connectivity and movement and long term habitat protection.

6:37

So all of your proposals for either option air Option B, they must outline specifically how your project will address the state fishing game or Fish and Wildlife department priorities as identified in state action plans or specific priority projects on tribal lands that align with your tribal wildlife agencies.

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7:02

The examples that you see underneath each of these headings for the the funding priorities outlined here are just examples that you are likely going to have more flexibility for example, than just fence work under connectivity and movement based on your state plans or your native nation priorities.

7:18

But I just want to mention one more time that the that the require, there is a requirement under this program that your project gets to implementation and does boots on the ground work during your grant period of performance.

7:36

We can go a little bit more into that and the differences between option A&B, but for both there is a requirement that implementation is done during your period of performance.

7:48

So let's talk about eligible activities.

7:49

So these are the same for both options A&B.

7:52

So the first is vegetation management and again these are examples in the bullets below, but this vegetation management could include removal of encroaching trees from sagebrush ecosystems, post fire rehabilitation and then invasive species management.

8:11

Another eligible activity is wildlife friendly fence, so modifying existing fencing with smooth wire fencing, for example.

8:20

And then the last eligible activity that we have here is the voluntary conservation management agreement.

8:26

So protecting priority habitat stopover areas of migration corridors and reducing those bottlenecks.

8:35

So when you apply, make sure to show that your project is designed and ready to implement or pretty close to getting ready to implement and that again, it directly advances, advances established state or tribal conservation priorities within your that priority area.

8:55

So as a tip reviewers when they review your application, they are really assessing the readiness of your project.

9:02

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So that shovel readiness that we talked about as well as the relevance of your project to the state action plans or your tribal wildlife agency priorities.

9:14

So now we're going to talk a little bit about the differences between these two funding sources.

9:19

So a quick note before we get into the slide is that myself as part of the ECT field liaisons, we're really supporting applicants pursuing Option B.

9:28

Although we are also here to help answer questions about Option A, but we'll most likely point you in the direction of the NFWFWIT staff for the big game program to really dig into your Option A questions.

9:40

So for both option A and option B1, thing to note is that both need if you propose on either of these options that your project needs to be located within Secretarial Order 3362 focal areas or your native nation priority areas.

10:00

This these projects should be between one to three years long and you are required to use the NFWF metrics which can be found on the NFWF website for the Big Game program.

10:11

These are standard NFWF metrics.

10:14

And again, one more thing is that you need to make sure that your projects align with the state or tribal wildlife priorities.

10:21

So please look at your state action plans or speak to your tribal wildlife agencies about their priorities for Big Game.

10:31

So some key differences here.

10:32

So the funders are a little bit different between Option A&B.

10:36

The eligibility criteria is more limited with Option B.

10:40

So the only eligible applicants under Option B are state governments and federally recognized tribes were under option A.

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10:47

There's a wider variety of eligible applicants.

10:51

The geographic scope is a little bit different.

10:54

So if you look on this map here, the solid, the solid States and the solid blue color, those are option A geographic focus in these 11 western states.

11:05

And then for Option B, it includes the 11 western states plus these additional states that are in this hash here on on the map.

11:16

The priority for both Option A and Option B is for implementation ready projects, although there is a little bit more flexibility when it comes to planning under Option B.

11:30

So planning is eligible under Option B, planning projects, but you have to have some sort of implementation that is underway during your period of performance in order to be eligible for Option B.

11:44

So planning is possible, but you also need to make sure you include some implementation in your project.

11:51

There is a strong preference under Option A for projects that can be completed in around 2 years.

11:58

Whereas an Option B, there's an emphasis on projects that are aligned with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies or WAFWA connectivity priorities and we'll get into that here on the next slide and what those are.

12:13

OK, so policy framework.

12:14

So let's talk a little bit about Secretarial Order 3362 and then the WAFWA priorities.

12:20

You will have access to PDF of these slides, which will include these links that you can see here highlighted.

12:30

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So if you want an either way to get to some of this information, please look at our PDF slide deck of the webinar that we're giving today that will help you get to some of these links.

12:41

But essentially, so 3362 directs federal coordination within these 11 Western States and tribal governments to conserve and enhance winter range and migration corridors for big game.

12:56

And then again for Option B, there is a priority for projects that align with the WAFWA priorities, which WAFWA really supports cross state coordination in western migration corridors that span multiple states.

13:17

Couple more differences when we're talking about Option A and Option B is the grant range.

13:23

So you can see on the slide that the grant range is a little bit larger for Option B.

13:28

A note on this grant range is that it is flexible in that you can come under or over these ranges.

13:37

But NFWF does recommend that you are within the target range of possible and it is possible that if you are awarded funding that you will receive a partial award and not the full award if your project scope doesn't isn't fully inclusive of all the priorities and all the activities that NFWF would like to see.

14:00

So for example, let's say your project includes some work that's going to go towards the conservation easement that's not allowable under this funding source.

14:11

But the rest of your scope really aligns with the priorities of the funding.

14:17

Therefore, NFWF may come back to you and say we will award partial funding minus your work that you proposed on an easement, right.

14:26

So that is a possibility if you are asked to continue and become funded under this program.

14:34

Quick note on match requirement.

14:35

So option is a little bit more simple and straightforward when it comes to match.

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14:39

It's a minimum of a one to one non federal match and that that could be a cash or in kind.

14:45

For option B it's a little bit more complicated.

14:47

So if you are a state entity that is applying 10% of your total project costs and the total project costs means the NFWF award plus the match.

14:59

So 10% of that needs to be non federal match with at least 2.5 in cash.

15:08

So you cannot propose all in kind match.

15:11

It needs to be at least 2.5 cash match.

15:14

For tribes, 3% of your total project costs needs to be non federal match with .75% as cash.

15:23

Now one quick note.

15:24

If you are a nation or organization, this match is often covered by the Native Americans and Philanthropy.

15:32

It is not guaranteed, but do note that this may be a possibility under this program that your match will be covered by the Native Americans and Philanthropy organization.

15:43

All right, let's go over some really important dates.

15:45

So NFWF hosted a live and recorded applicant webinar, which is available on their website last week, which was March 12th.

15:57

Native American Fish and Valley Society is going to be hosting a Native Nation and Tribal webinar on Tuesday, March 24th.

16:07

The full proposal is due April 21st at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time.

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16:13

I highly recommend that you do not wait until April 21st at 11:58 to hit the submit button on Easy Grants.

16:21

Easy Grants has been known to crash if too many people are trying to submit all at the same time.

16:27

So do yourself a favor and try to apply a little bit early.

16:30

Even if it's at 8:00 AM on April 21st.

16:33

Just give yourself a little bit more extra time to make sure that you're able to submit all of your hard work and easy grants.

16:40

The review period is going to go from April to August of this year with awards at this time likely being announced in August 2026.

16:49

OK.

16:49

So we're going to go over a little bit of the application evaluation criteria as well as the go over the review process.

16:59

So as a reviewer, these are the four criteria that we look at when looking at your application.

17:06

I'm going to go over them one by one.

17:08

So the first is program goals and priorities.

17:11

So when we review, we really want to make sure that your project aligns with those program goals and priorities.

17:16

So in this case, not only the big game funds own goals and priorities, but also those priorities that are set forth in the state action plans or your tribal wildlife action plans.

17:29

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We want to make sure that you have selected the correct and quantifiable metrics that makes sense for the project activities that you're proposing and to make sure that you have the appropriate types of monitoring activities that can help gauge that success through your quantifiable metrics.

17:47

We also want to make sure that your project is sustainable in the long term.

17:50

This is something that's going to last and continue to provide benefits for big game into the future.

17:57

So for technical merit, what we look for is want to make sure project is sounding feasible.

18:01

Do you have the right technical experts involved to successfully implement your project?

18:07

Are you working under achievable timelines?

18:10

Have you proposed something that usually takes five years, but you think you can get it done in two?

18:16

You need to show us that you can write that you're able to get that done in that to your time frame.

18:22

We also want to make sure that you have a you thought about and you either have a sound environmental compliance approach or have already achieved compliance and you'll see more about that and that compliance overview in the video shown at the end of this presentation.

18:39

Partnerships and community impact.

18:40

So we want to make sure that we understand how you're going to collaborate with the community.

18:44

So how is really important in your application, but how are you going to go meeting with the community?

18:50

Are you going to host meetings?

18:52

Are you going to do webinars?

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18:53

Are you going to go knock on doors, right?

18:56

How are you going to establish that meaningful engagement with the community?

19:01

Do you have partnership as a colder buy in?

19:04

Can you show us the proof?

19:05

Can you include letters of support or other documentation that shows you how that stakeholder buy in?

19:12

And then finally, we look at your budget.

19:14

So we really want to make sure that your budget is reasonable.

19:16

They're not coming in crazy higher, crazy low on your budget that what you were proposing for your activities makes sense for how much money you asked for and whether or not you have the requisite matching contributions.

19:29

So the application review process.

19:31

So proposals are evaluated by a multi party review team.

19:36

This includes the NFWF with program staff for the Big Game program and the national programs, as well as federal partners, the field liaisons, external third party reviewers, as well as other NFWF staff.

19:50

So each application is going to receive multiple reviews to assess the eligibility, the technical merit, the alignment with priorities and the feasibility.

19:59

And then those funding recommendations are going to be informed by this collective review process.

20:08

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All right, so let's get into a little bit about what to maybe do and don't do on in your application, as well as we're going to go into some tips for submitting a really compelling application.

20:19

And then we're going to go through the narrative question by question to talk about those specifics.

20:24

The narrative of this application is the meat of your application.

20:29

This is where the bar beats the road.

20:30

We're going to really see what your activities are and what your plan project is.

20:35

That's why we're going to spend so much time on the narrative in this webinar.

20:39

So a couple things to do when you are applying.

20:44

Make sure that you're eligible for the program #1 make sure that you are selecting the right funding option for your project and for your organization.

20:54

Make sure to clearly align your proposal with a big game priorities again with the parties in your state action plans from your departments of Fish and Game or Fish and Wildlife or your tribal wildlife agency.

21:08

Make sure to provide strong letters of support.

21:10

This is how reviewers know that the landowner supports what you're proposing to do, that you have stakeholder buy in or that you have community engagement buy in as well.

21:21

Make sure to select a realistic part of time frame.

21:24

Don't propose something that you usually takes three years and one year, right?

21:31

Think about how much you can realistically get done in that time frame and make sure that your budget matches that time frame.

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21:40

Define targeted, achievable metrics.

21:43

So you'll see this in the section as well.

21:45

Don't select every metric that you possibly can.

21:48

It is difficult for you to track.

21:50

It's difficult for NFWF to track.

21:52

If you become a grantee, make sure to be judicious with what you choose for your metric.

21:59

We typically recommend three to five metrics that make the most sense for your project.

22:05

Make sure to when you talk about your partners and you talk about the community in your application, make sure to talk about how you're meaningfully engaging with them.

22:15

So don't just say we are here to we are going to engage the community.

22:20

Say we are going to engage the community by doing X.

22:23

So we are going to engage the community by hosting series of meetings.

22:29

We are going to get to the community by sending out Flyers.

22:31

However you feel like is the best for your project for that engagement.

22:34

Make sure to talk about the how in your application.

22:38

And then finally, when if you are choosing to use the other upload section of the application, make

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sure in the narrative to direct the reviewer or the reader to that specific content in the other upload section that you need us to take a look at.

22:57

There are a lot of applications that were integrated program.

23:01

There's a lot of reading to be done.

23:03

Don't, and we say this in the other half of the slide.

23:06

Don't just upload to upload other information.

23:10

Don't give us a bunch of fluff.

23:12

Please be judicious what you select for your other uploads and then point the reader in the section of the narrative to the other uploads for the documentation that you need us to see.

23:23

So some don'ts, which I covered a little bit, but don't propose projects that are identified outside the priority areas.

23:29

You won't get funded.

23:31

Don't provide a very limited narrative explanation of how your activities will be implemented.

23:37

This is very important.

23:39

We want to know how you're going to reach your outcomes through the activities that you proposed.

23:46

Again, I know I spoke about this earlier, but don't select all the metrics.

23:49

Really make sure that the metrics align with what you're proposing.

23:54

Make sure to describe your engagements clearly.

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23:59

Don't just tell us you're going to engage.

24:00

Tell us how that's very important.

24:02

And then again, as I mentioned earlier, don't just submit a bunch of fluff in your other uploads.

24:07

Make sure that what you add as your other uploads is your supplemental materials, that they clearly strengthen or clarify your proposal.

24:17

So a quick note as we move forward, you're going to see on the following slides some application tips.

24:23

These application tips are informed by our reviewer experience, lead ONS, marketing of helpful reviews and the things they like to see in their applications.

24:34

And these tips should supplement but do not replace the RFP requirements.

24:41

All right, so here's some tips for submitting A compelling application.

24:47

As I mentioned earlier, the narrative is the heart and soul of the application.

24:50

You only have 6 pages, so be clear, be precise, and if you need to use those other upload sections to have additional information, please do so.

25:01

You can adjust the formatting of your narrative so you can make it single space, you can adjust the margins, etcetera.

25:09

Just make sure it's readable.

25:12

Technically sound proposals are important, but we understand as reviewers that we are not all of the same technical discipline as your project, so writing in a very highly technical way is not necessarily needed.

25:28

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The reviewers are looking for the quality and the impact of the project, not how well it's written necessarily.

25:36

We also understand that you all aren't professional grant writers, so if you have some mistakes, some grammatical errors, things like that, that's OK, right?

25:45

Again, we're really looking for the quality and the impact of the project.

25:50

And then last but not least, make sure to state how the how is very important.

25:54

Remember, how will priorities be advanced, the outcomes achieved and engagement carried out.

26:03

So again, the proposals are reviewed by by people and go back to that previous slide and take a look at all the different folks that are going to be reviewing your application.

26:14

Make sure that you have your project is clear, make sure that your application is readable and that make sure that you really provide those authentic project specific responses.

26:27

I know AI is right now a lot of people are using it, but don't just copy and paste out of AI.

26:33

If you've given it a prompt, the reviewers can usually tell, right?

26:39

So now we're going to dig into each of these different narrative questions.

26:42

We're going to give you some tips under under each one.

26:45

So the narrative question #1 which is what you see on the slide.

26:50

So this is the question that you're going to see directly in your narrative.

26:53

So for question number one, you want to make sure that you're clear with stating the conversation problem and how your proposed project provides a solution to that problem.

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27:05

You want to make sure that you state your overall goal.

27:07

You want to make sure that you show clear alignment with the state or tribal conservation priorities, or if you're going for option B, the the WAFWA priorities and make sure that you talk about how those priorities are happening within those identified focal areas.

27:23

So remember for option A it is those 11 western states.

27:27

For option B, it's 11 western states plus the 6th great plain States and Alaska.

27:32

And then under narrative question one, make sure to explain how your project advances these priorities.

27:39

Not just that it meets these priorities, but how.

27:42

So first tip, make sure to show how and why.

27:45

Always go back to that.

27:47

The second tip is to make sure to clearly explain how your project advances these priorities.

27:55

So narrative question 2.

27:57

So this is about your metrics.

28:02

So in in question two, you want to make sure that you indicate how you're going to monitor for success and then and how you're going to report on those metrics that are selected previously in the application.

28:17

So you'll select your metrics in easy grants as its own, its own section of easy grants.

28:22

You won't select those as part of your narrative.

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28:26

You can find these metrics on the NFWF website or in the RFP.

28:32

NFWF has a standard set that you typically use.

28:36

Make sure that you are aligning your what your project is doing with the appropriate metrics.

28:43

Remember, if you are awarded money under this grant, then you have to track all these metrics.

28:49

So choosing more does not make you more competitive.

28:52

It may be more of a pain when you get awarded the money.

28:54

So again, be judicious with how you select those metrics.

28:59

So I'm going to give you an example.

29:00

So if you are proposing fencing improvements under implementation metric, make sure to specify how many miles of fencing you'll be documenting and how you will be documenting it.

29:14

So in this case, you may be documenting it through GPS collection and GIS mapping of the treated second segment.

29:21

So those improved segments of this could be supported by contractor records and field verification.

29:29

So if you're going to do this, make sure in your application to explain how that data will be compiled and reported over the life of the grant and identify any anticipated challenges that could affect your data collection and reporting.

29:42

So getting one specific.

29:45

So a couple of tips which I already kind of covered, but one, make sure to review those metrics that are identified in the RFP, select those that directly align with your activities.

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29:55

And the second is to make sure to be thoughtful with those metrics.

30:00

So narrative question 3.

30:01

This is about community impact, so you need to under this question, describe your community or the community is where the project will take place, who will benefit and how they will be engaged.

30:14

So, for example, if the private land owners, local conservation districts, and tribal partners are directly affected, specify how those communities will be engaged during planning and implementation.

30:27

So you want to describe the timing and formats of the meeting or the outreach, how input will be documented and how that feedback will then inform the final treatment locations, access decisions or implementation strategies.

30:42

So you want to make sure that you describe the specific methods you will use for engagement, when and how the engagement will occur and how that input will inform project development and implementation.

30:54

So you could talk about the number of meetings, the outreach, methods of coordination with partners, the follow up communication, etcetera.

31:00

So don't just list your partners that you have here in this under this question, you want to explain how you're going to achieve that meaningful engagement.

31:13

So question 4, this is about the product team.

31:15

So these are the key individuals that are going to be involved in your project and the qualifications for that are relevant for this project implementation.

31:24

So for example, if the project includes fencing modifications on BLM land, specify that the state agents wildlife agency will produce the technical guidance, for example, on the wildlife friendly design.

31:37

If they're going to be your partner, if you have a local conservation district that is going to be a partner on this, talk about how they're going to coordinate the landowner outreach.

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31:47

And if you have a contracted fencing crew, you know, how are they going to complete the installation and what what their piece of project is going to be.

31:54

So you want to indicate in that under this question whether these partners have previously collaborated on similar projects together or if there's going to, if there's a new agreement that needs to be established prior to implementation.

32:07

This is extremely important, particularly with your land owners.

32:11

You'll want to demonstrate that you have a agreement in place or that they support your project through a letter of support to be able to access that land and do that work on that land.

32:24

Under this question, you'll also want to demonstrate collaborations and partnerships that really strengthen your project's feasibility.

32:30

Don't just name partners that you may or may not talk with if they're not hyper relevant to what you're proposing.

32:38

So identify who is responsible and for what.

32:42

So again, don't just list partners, say this partner is going to be doing this part of the project and they are qualified because so how are these projects going to contribute to the successful implementation of the project?

32:54

And make sure to clarify whether these are new partnerships or if they are established already.

33:03

So question #5 So this is a little bit of context about whether or not you have a previous or current NFWF grant that is directly applicable to this proposal.

33:14

So if you if your organization has a grant under the National Coastal Resilience Fund, for example, not necessarily relevant to this, but if you have a project maybe that is under the Erie program or under a previous big game year program fund, please make sure to talk about where that project is, how it went, etcetera.

33:39

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So for example, if your organization previously implemented a NFWF funded habitat restoration project, describe how that experience informed your site selection for this project.

33:52

Maybe your partnership coordination or maybe your implementation methods for the proposed projects to talk about lessons learned, right?

34:00

Explain whether the this proposed work under this allocation is building on that demonstrated success from other projects.

34:08

Maybe it expands those previous projects geographically.

34:15

So when you are answering this question, if you have something relevant, make sure to be brief.

34:22

So briefly summarize the relevant past or current.

34:24

If we're funded work.

34:25

Remember you only have 6 pages in your narrative, so you got to be briefed.

34:29

Highlight your measurable outcomes and successful implementation work that was done in previous projects and then explain how this new project that you're proposing on for 26 builds upon prior successes or lessons learned.

34:47

OK, so narrative question 6.

34:49

So this is the other section.

34:52

So provide any further information important for the review of this proposal.

34:57

So a couple things to keep in mind.

34:59

So letters of support are required from the state wildlife agency or relevant tribal agencies.

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35:07

Products that are adjacent on or adjacent to federal lands will also be more competitive with a letter of support from the local federal Land Management offices.

35:18

You may want to include as part of these this optional other information project maps showing the project area, priority, habitat, corridor alignment, or land ownership.

35:32

You could also include a project design if your project is, you know, using some sort of design right.

35:39

If you needed to to go to an engineer, perhaps you could include those designs here.

35:46

If your project is using contractors, it may be worth adding a more detailed budget breakdown, particularly if a large lump sum is going under that that contractor category NFWF with and the reviewers like to see a little bit of a breakdown of what that contractor budget looks like.

36:05

So how much is going to go let's say to labour or is any money going to be going to travel and what types of activities is that money going to pay for, Right.

36:13

So that may be something you can include here.

36:17

And then if including supplemental documentation, make sure to clearly reference the specific section in your narrative and indicate where reviewers can find that relevant information as attached.

36:31

So a tip again, make sure that your supplemental documents are referenced in that narrative.

36:40

OK, so budget and budget narrative number one, you must fill out the budget narrative section with details.

36:47

Do not skip that.

36:49

It is a critical part of what we reveal.

36:52

As I said in the last slide, if you're using a contractor, make sure to include a very descriptive and detailed budget narrative that explains what the contractor work will cover.

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37:03

So if you're budgeting for materials, make sure to break down those materials in that budget on easy grants and you need to break them out by category.

37:14

So don't just include like \$100,000 for materials.

37:17

You need to say X dollars for let's say fencing post, X dollars for speed, X dollars for maybe some new chainsaws, right?

37:28

Something like that.

37:30

If let's see here, you may want to include a breakdown of the budget in a little bit more detail, particularly if you have a lump sum.

37:39

So like a lump sum for the contractor, right?

37:41

You might want to include a detailed breakdown of the budget as a table and the other uploads.

37:48

You need to keep in mind that what you fill in at this stage is going to directly transfer and be your budget if you are awarded funding under this program.

37:57

So how you have it broken down and the way that you're showing the different budget categories is going to be a one for one if you are awarded the grant.

38:07

A couple things to know 1 is that if you if you are looking at get buying equipment, NFWF recommends that you rent equipment where possible.

38:20

If you buy equipment over a \$10,000 threshold, this is going to result in you having to do additional paperwork to track depreciation.

38:29

So please keep that in mind For the personnel category, you make sure to account for personal pay increases.

38:38

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So if this is a multi year project and you're planning on giving your staff raises or they might have different salaries, make sure to have two different line items for that same person.

38:48

So you could have, let's see here, Betty Jean as you know, you know, \$100,000 for year one and then Betty Jean year 2 at \$120,000 or \$110,000.

39:00

Do not lump people together if you're using cruise unless they have the exact pay rate and fringe benefit.

39:09

You're going to have to split those out if they do not have that exact pay range and and fringe benefit.

39:15

So for travel and expense categories, make sure to lump together as possible.

39:24

So this is a little bit different than that material category that we talked about earlier where you want to have that breakdown, right.

39:32

So you want to have fence post seats, etcetera, etcetera, buy those materials.

39:36

Travel and expenses is a little bit different, so you want to lump them together where possible.

39:41

So don't account for every pen, you know, don't account for every car rental, don't account for every airline ticket.

39:50

You want to make sure to lump them together.

39:52

So a good example is if you are planning on traveling to a site 10 times and you're going to use mileage and you have 100 miles per round trip, don't say 10 times in the application trip 100 miles trip to 100 miles.

40:08

You want to say travel to site mileage 1000 miles to account for all those 10 trips.

40:16

A couple other notes, 1 is that indirect costs?

40:22

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If you have a Nitro, you can use your Nitro, but if you don't, you need to use that de minimis rate and the de minimis rate for 26 as I believe 15% overall, 10 or 15% overall.

40:40

And then you want to make sure that you have a narrative description for what that indirect rate will be used for.

40:47

So if you're using it for making sure that, you know, keep your lights on in your building, you're paying rent on the building, etcetera, just to make sure that you have a narrative description for that indirect rate.

40:59

And then last but not least, be sure that whatever you budget, whatever budget you're proposing here, it matches with what you enter into your overall easy grant so that you're going to be asked for the overall projects award amount.

41:20

You need to make sure that it matches.

41:21

So you have up to a \$1.00 rounding error, which is not very much.

41:28

If you do have a rounding area, you can explain what that rounding area is in the other direct cost sections, but make sure that where you're saying your budget matches throughout your grant application.

41:45

OK, so some applicant resources for you all.

41:48

So you can go to the NFWF Big Game Fun website.

41:52

And again, we're going to have this slide deck as a PDF with all of these links in here.

41:57

So you can go back to that slide deck and and click on these links to get to these areas and quickly.

42:03

And so you can go to the NFWF website.

42:06

They're going to have the recording of the March 12th webinar.

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42:11

They're gonna, this is where the RF is, this is where the Easy Grants TI sheet is.

42:14

You're gonna have all this information on the NFWF website.

42:18

And then if you have questions for NFWF, there are a few folks you can get ahold of.

42:24

1 is Seth Gallagher, who's the program director, Danny who is the Rocky Mountain Regional Manager, and Margaret who is the Mountain Rocky Regional Coordinator.

42:35

You can reach out to any of these folks with questions, particularly questions around Option A.

42:42

They're going to be your resource for Option A funds.

42:45

You can also schedule a proposal lab with the NFWF big game team by clicking on this in the slide deck.

42:53

Or you can scan this QR code and it should take you to their bookings page.

42:59

Again, I just want to offer to the the advice to make sure to go back and watch the NFWF webinar if you've already.

43:06

It's going to offer a little bit different context than what we're offering here around the funding history and can address easy grants in a way that we have not on this.

43:16

This webinar.

43:17

In addition to NFWF's website for the Big Game program, ECT is also offering our own Western Big Game Program web page for the liaisons.

43:28

This can be found at this website here on the web page we will be posting this presentation, recording this webinar's recording, the webinar slides, and a transcript of the presentation.

43:42

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We will also be developing an FAQ for you all and this will be based off of our proposal labs that you can schedule here.

43:53

So if you would like to have a one-on-one meeting with our liaison staff about the Big Game program, you can set up a meeting through our bookings app either by clicking here or by using this QR code.

44:07

You may also reach us at any time at the National Program Liaisons e-mail.

44:11

So it's National Program Liaisons at ECT inc.com where we would be happy to answer any of your questions or discuss your project ideas.

44:22

We can go over the priorities, we can discuss the program in a little bit more depth.

44:27

So please reach out at any time.

44:29

We're really here as a resource for you all.

44:33

Up next we will be, we will be going to SWCA's webinar.

44:42

So SWCA is going to give you an overview of the federal compliance for Option B.

44:48

They are a resource for you.

44:50

If you get awarded under Option BSWCA will be there to help you make sure that you comply with the federal regulatory program.

45:02

So I'm going to move you on to their webinar.

45:05

Give me one second and I'm going to make sure that you guys can hear the sound.

45:18

OK, great.

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45:20

Thank you so much ECT.

45:22

Hi everyone.

45:23

We are very happy to be able to introduce ourselves to you all today.

45:27

My name is Ari Porter and I am one of the Co program Managers at SWCA Environmental Consultants.

45:33

For this program.

45:35

We are here to provide an overview of the federal environmental regulatory compliance process for grant awards associated with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat Migration Corridors Fund.

45:51

I have already introduced myself, but my colleagues are here so I'm going to introduce Elena.

45:56

Do you want to introduce yourself?

45:58

Sure.

45:58

Hi everyone, my name is Elena Callahan.

46:01

I'm one of the Co program managers for SWCA on NFWF programs.

46:05

Christian.

46:06

Thanks, Elena.

46:07

Hey everyone, my name is Christian Testerman and I'm also with SWCA working as a Co program manager for their NFWF programs.

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46:16

And we, we are, we can be reached at ATBC regulatory at SWC.

46:24

If any of your inquiries throughout the process, that e-mail goes to all three of us and we're always here to answer your questions.

46:32

So a little bit about why SWCA was hired.

46:35

We are expanding capacity for NFWF and our job is to coordinate between NFWF, the funding agencies and grantees, you all to ensure that projects are producing necessary fine regulatory compliance documentation.

46:51

And federal regulatory compliance is required because this is federal.

46:56

So no matter what project type you have, this will be a required process.

47:01

We'll work with you on the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as any additional federal regulations.

47:12

Thank you, Ari.

47:13

And I'll expand on the federal regulatory compliance.

47:17

To begin, it's required as part of your grant award agreement as Ari said, regardless of the project location or activity type.

47:24

And because your award contains the federal funding, you now have the federal Nexus for your project.

47:30

As a result, many federal federal regulations come into play and must be addressed before federal grant funded work may begin.

47:39

So when you receive your award agreement, there will be additional details in the agreement about your obligations to complete the federal federal regulatory compliance process.

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47:49

And when we say federal regulatory compliance process, we're typically referring to three primary regulatory compliance mechanisms.

47:56

These include the National Environmental Policy Act NEPA, the Endangered Species Act ESA, and the National Historic Preservation Act NHPA.

48:06

At a minimum, your project will need to comply with these three mechanisms, with the level of analysis required for each mechanism heavily depending on the activities proposed in your grant application.

48:16

SWCA is here to help and provide guidance throughout the regulatory compliance process, so please consider us your first point of contact for any questions you may have about the process as we work through things together.

48:31

After the webinar, we will also be distributing A guidance document that provides an in depth look at what the compliance process typically looks like.

48:41

As we mentioned, the compliance process will vary from grantee to grantee depending on the proposed project.

48:48

Included on the screen is a summary of what that process typically look typically looks like.

48:52

To begin, in the coming weeks, SWCA will reach out to each grantee via e-mail to schedule an introductory call.

48:59

This e-mail will come from your assigned grantee liaison, who will be an SWCA employee located in a similar geographic area to your project.

49:07

This individual will function as your main point of contact for the regulatory compliance process.

49:12

Until all documentation has been received and approved by the appropriate contacts, this initial e-mail from SWCA will be sent to the primary contact listed in your grant application.

49:25

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So if you are not the primary contact for your grant award, please make sure that the primary contact is aware of the upcoming coming e-mail.

49:33

Step 2 will be the introductory call itself.

49:35

Prior to this call, the SWCA Grantee Liaison and a member of our Program Management team will review your grant application so we're familiar with your project's proposed activities.

49:45

The main purpose of this call is to get a complete picture and make sure we have an accurate understanding of the activities that are proposed and to identify potential paths towards compliance documentation.

49:57

Step 3 is the bulk of the regulatory compliance process and will vary depending on several factors.

50:03

This includes your proposed activities, project location, presence or absence of protected species, potential impacts to sensitive resources, and also the federal agency that is funding your grant board.

50:14

These factors will be discussed during your introductory call, and we will provide an overview of what this process is anticipated to look like for your specific process based on our initial review.

50:24

To facilitate efficient completion of these documents, we've also established a secure Microsoft SharePoint site that can be used to share project files that are relevant to the compliance process.

50:35

Each grantee will have their own document folder, which can only be viewed by SWCA and NFWF employees as well as programmatic contacts from the Funding Agency.

50:45

To reiterate, Step 3 will be the bulk of the process and there may be multiple sets of documents that need to be completed to achieve final regulatory compliance for your project.

50:55

We do have the option to phase environmental compliance documentation and approval should you need to access administration, administrative, or planning funding for specific activities before your full set of implementation compliance document is completed.

51:13

Following review by the agency programmatic contact, NFWF will be notified that Federal regulatory compliance review has been completed and at this point NFWF will remove the regulatory compliance hold on your project and allow you to request reimbursement for your activities.

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51:28

Step 5.

51:29

NFWF will notify you via e-mail that the regulatory review process has been completed and that grant funded work can begin.

51:41

Great.

51:42

Thanks, Elena.

51:43

I'll jump in now.

51:46

This has already been touched on, but I want to reiterate just another time to please.

51:52

We have to make sure that's all compliance documentation has been completed and submitted through Fish and Wildlife and approved by NFWF prior to any on the groundwork being completed.

52:06

So please, please reach out to us prior to beginning any work.

52:11

We need to make sure that this is completed.

52:14

It's an extremely important part because any work that takes place before compliance documentation has been completed and approved may be considered non reimbursable.

52:25

So that means that you may not receive funding for those activities that are completed if we don't go through this process prior to that work being started.

52:36

If you have any questions about this related to your timeline or any or any of your activities, like we've said, we're always happy to talk with you all figure out, figure out the solution that makes sense for everybody.

52:50

Next slide please.

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52:54

Great.

52:54

So now I just want to go over a few frequently asked questions that we get from grantees as well as covering a few helpful notes that that we've got.

53:04

So the first question we get quite a bit is how long does the compliance process take.

53:10

And this is a little bit of a complicated question and the answer can vary widely.

53:15

Generally speaking, if you have a planning based grant and activities will take place entirely indoors the process, it'll be faster and more streamlined than an implementation project that has not completed compliance documentation prior to the award.

53:32

Again, once we get on that initial call with you all and you kind of talk through what your project entails, what existing documentation there may be, we can kind of get a better sense of what that timeline might look like.

53:46

The second question that we frequently get is what if I have existing compliance documentation?

53:52

This is a common question that we get from grantees, especially if they've already received funding for this project or a similar project in the past to cover those activities.

54:04

The answer is yes, it is possible to use existing existing compliance documentation.

54:10

In fact, it often expedites the review process.

54:13

However, NFWF in your federal Funding Agency will still need to review and approve the documentation prior to your funded activities taking place.

54:23

There's another topic that we'll cover during your introductory call and we'll just ask you to forward any compliance documentation to us or upload it onto your project specific site for us to review.

54:36

And then the third question is I didn't budget for compliance.

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54:41

Should I be concerned?

54:43

As you can imagine this this answer also ties back to the first question and the level of effort that's that is required and the activities that you're that are taking place as part of your project.

54:56

For example, we're not contracted to conduct biological resource surveys.

55:01

However, we can discuss the surveys needed and connect you with the subject matter experts at SWCA that can help explain why those surveys are needed and discuss timelines.

55:12

If after we have held your introductory call and you still have questions about how this process may impact your project's timeline and budget, we recommend communicating with your NIP with program staff.

55:24

Again, all of this will get covered during your introductory call where we'll walk through that process.

55:30

You know, talk about the activities that that you have planned and kind of scope out what the timeline and needed compliance aspects are before we move forward.

55:44

Awesome.

55:44

Thank you, Christian and thank you, Ari.

55:47

We look forward to working with all the grantees and meeting you during those interest calls.

55:51

So if you have questions in the meantime, we could be reached by the ATBC regulatory e-mail.

55:58

Thank you.

56:07

All right.

56:07

Well, thank you all so much for listening to today's webinar.

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56:13

I just wanted to say one more time that we as a liaison team are here for you during the application phase.

56:20

So please make sure to look at our website, look at NFWF's website, contact your NFWF big Game staff for Option A, or reach out to the liaison team for Option B funding.

56:37

Again, you can reach us via our bookings app on the previous slide or via e-mail nationalprogramliaisons@ectinc.com.

56:49

So thank you again so much for listening today.

56:51

If you have any questions, please reach out.

56:53

Take care.