

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Refuges**

Conservation Program to Introduce Youth to Natural Resource Conservation Careers
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.676

Notice of Funding Availability and Application Instructions

I. Description of Funding Opportunity

- A. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) intends to award funds to the Student Conservation Association (SCA) for a period not to exceed five years. The funds are intended to provide an introductory developmental educational experience of natural resource careers to young people, including culturally, ethnically and economically diverse students, through training, hands-on experience and mentoring at a variety of USFWS programs including, but not limited to, national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, and ecological services offices. Under this program, individuals and/or groups of youth and young adults:
- Will be introduced to natural resources careers through hands-on work with, and training by, natural resource professionals employed by the USFWS.
 - May be given the opportunity to serve both seasonal and or year-round assignments.
 - Will be introduced to various real-world conservation and rehabilitation activities such as invasive species management, habitat restoration, wildlife management, public education and interpretation, and communications, mixed with informal and formal training sessions directed by USFWS employees during the assignments.
 - Will be provided feedback for their future growth and may receive consideration for future employment with the USFWS.
- B. This award is made under the authority of: 16 USC §742f - Powers of Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce, Section 7a of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. § 742 f(a)(4)), as amended, and the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. § 1721 - 1729), as amended.
- C. As authorized under Departmental policy (505 DM 2.14), the USFWS will award funds (contingent on annual funding levels, regional priorities and available opportunities) to SCA without competition based on SCA's unique qualifications to fulfill, and previous experience in fulfilling, the goals and objectives of this program. The SCA, with offices in Charlestown, NH, is a private, nonprofit (501c3) organization engaged in providing conservation service opportunities, outdoor skills and environmental education, and career development and leadership training for a culturally diverse national audience to foster an interest in environmental and conservation careers. SCA was established in 1957 and today comprises the nation's largest pool of potential future conservation professionals and leaders. SCA conservation students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, all levels of education and all 50 states and U.S. territories. A Student Conservation Association program participant is a Student Conservation Association volunteer of either high school or college age recruited through the SCA. The USFWS will not require the participants to sign an OMB 301A volunteer services agreement form.
- D. Currently, the SCA program models include:

Individual Short-Term and Long-Term Opportunities:

College and graduate students, as well as other qualified individuals, gain hands-on experience in environmental education, community service and natural and cultural conservation resource management in 12-week to one year positions. These positions complement academic programs, develop work-related skills and provide experiences that enhance the individual's future educational or job placement opportunities. Program elements include:

- **Tribal College Program:** 12-week positions for Native American students to gain hands-on experience with natural resource management activities conducted in partnership with tribal colleges and universities. Activities include habitat and wildlife monitoring, environmental education and interpretive programs, maintenance, invasive species control and fire management.
- **Fellows Program:** After receiving introductory training, graduate-level students work in teams for 6 months to learn and apply science-based, data-driven strategies to inventory and monitor plant and animal species and their habitat conditions. Students work collaboratively with USFWS refuge staff on projects that include selecting, applying and evaluating measures used in monitoring wildlife habitat and evaluating habitat management strategies.

Conservation Corps:

Teams of college and graduate students and other qualified participants work together to address critical environmental issues related to wildlife management and education, trail restoration and maintenance, environmental education and invasive species eradication. Teams live and work together for three to 12 months and are led by an SCA project leader. Program elements include:

- **Inventory Program:** As part of a nationwide inventory project, youth work in pairs to GIS map trails meeting the criteria for data collection on over 600 USFWS sites across the country. Assignments require three weeks of field work followed by eight days of activities conducted in Boise, Idaho.

National Conservation Crews: In these month-long summer projects, up to eight high school students from around the country are paired with experienced SCA crew leaders to build trails and restore threatened habitat and experience the challenges of living and working outdoors. SCA's National Crews provide a formative experience, as members serve nature, challenge themselves, both individually and as a team, and gain skills that enhance the individual's future college and/or job placement opportunities.

Community Programs: Offering year-round training and service opportunities, SCA's School Year Community Program and Summer Community Crews engage diverse high school students in major U.S. cities who may lack access to the natural environment and green job opportunities. SCA currently operates Community Programs in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Jacksonville, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, the San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle, Stamford, and Washington, DC.

II. Award Information

- A. Contingent upon the availability of funds, the USFWS will award to SCA an amount not to exceed \$4,000,000 per fiscal year for the next five fiscal years (FY14-FY18) to provide an introductory developmental experience of natural resource careers to SCA-recruited participants.

- B. In response to this funding opportunity, SCA must submit to the USFWS the documentation detailed in Section V. Based on regional priorities and available assignment opportunities, individual USFWS regional cooperative agreement awards will be made to SCA based on the proposal approved by USFWS Refuges Headquarters office. SCA is required to submit financial and performance reports for each of the individual USFWS regional cooperative agreement awards. **All awards issued during the five-year period will end on September 30, 2018.**

- C. The regional cooperative agreement awards will be revised over the period (FY14-FY18) to add funding as needed to meet regional priorities and available assignment opportunities. To support funding decisions beyond the first year, SCA is required to submit the documentation detailed in Section V to USFWS Refuges Headquarters on or before December 31 of 2014 (for FY15), 2015 (for FY16), 2016 (for FY17) and 2017 (for FY18). USFWS Refuges Headquarters will review the annually-submitted documentation and send final approved versions out to USFWS Regional offices by January 31 each year.

III. Description of Work

- A. The SCA will:
 - 1. Cooperate with the USFWS to provide SCA youth and young adult programs and to place SCA participants at requesting USFWS sites.

 - 2. Recruit and provide trained SCA staff Crew and Corps Team Leaders to undertake work projects under the direction of USFWS employees. Make final selection of Crew and Corps participants. Make sure Crew and Corps Leaders fully understand the appropriate and necessary safety regulations for projects to which they are assigned.

 - 3. Provide reasonable round trip transportation to safely transport SCA participants to USFWS project sites at the beginning and end of their assignment. For participants who live within commuting distance of their duty station, provide a travel allowance. Provide subsistence and clothing allowances for participants during the tour of duty.

 - 4. Provide SCA participants with food, camping equipment, and all educational, first aid, recreational and general supplies required.

 - 5. Conduct on-site project evaluations at approximately 25 percent of USFWS projects with USFWS staff to define progression of the planned project and to decide if the participant(s) is/are receiving the expected educational learning/training experience.

6. Manage and carry out all administrative functions associated with services under this Agreement, except those related to the performance and work assignments for the participants or as otherwise specified herein.
7. Process all administrative procedures and maintain all administrative records required for operation and management of the youth program participants.
8. Certify that standard SCA background screenings and eligibility reviews have been conducted on all participants assigned to all programs.
9. SCA agrees that USFWS rules regarding physical security and personnel security apply to all participants while on USFWS property and/or while conducting work on behalf of the USFWS.
10. SCA is solely responsible for providing workers compensation coverage to all SCA participants and staff, including Project Leaders and Crew Leaders.

B. The USFWS will:

1. Provide appropriate staff to oversee work assigned to SCA participants and other youth programs. Provide appropriate specifications for work projects and direction to SCA participants and to Project and Crew Leaders. The USFWS will provide SCA with a statement on hazardous working conditions, if necessary.
2. Determine the acceptability of individually-placed applicants from SCA's Conservation Interns programs and notify SCA of the names of candidates USFWS has selected for the proposed projects.
3. Provide duty transportation as required to carry out assigned projects.
4. Provide appropriate housing with utilities and/or camping sites with access to potable water for participants. Safety equipment will include a radio at remote locations. The USFWS may request SCA to locate and administer suitable housing and will reimburse such housing-related costs.
5. Provide a written performance evaluation from each participating USFWS program on forms provided by SCA for each participant and youth program.
6. Make available training opportunities to participants and youth program members that will make their service more effective and ensure proper training for all activities covered by this Agreement.

C. The USFWS and SCA mutually agree that:

1. Upon notification or otherwise becoming aware of existing or potential problems of health and safety, USFWS staff will promptly notify the SCA's personnel of the situation and provide the SCA an opportunity to eliminate existing or potential problems. If the

SCA does not take corrective action promptly, the USFWS may direct the SCA and/or participants to cease work immediately until the issue has been corrected.

2. SCA shall maintain its current general liability insurance for all SCA participants, SCA staff and SCA program activities of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage, subject to the usual and customary policy conditions, including standard exclusion on vehicles licensed for highway use and on property in the care, custody and control of the policyholder.
3. The USFWS will not require the participants to sign an OMB 301A volunteer services agreement form.
4. SCA participants, Project Leaders and Crew Leaders shall not be assigned law enforcement or wildfire-fighting duties, with the exception of prescribed burns, and shall not be permitted to handle or discharge any firearms or explosives unless provided prior written permission by SCA and the USFWS.
5. SCA participants, Project Leaders and Crew Leaders shall only operate mechanized equipment when provided all necessary safety training and only with on-site oversight by the USFWS.
6. SCA high school-age participants shall not be allowed to operate any motorized vehicle. SCA participants over the age of 18, SCA Project Leaders and SCA Crew Leaders may be allowed to drive a vehicle owned, rented, leased or loaned by the USFWS only when:
 - The vehicle is used with written permission from the USFWS's field manager and only for official agency use;
 - The driver is properly licensed and qualified to operate the vehicle, and all such vehicle use, maintenance, training and operation is in compliance with 243 FW 1, *Safe Operation of Motor Vehicles and Motor Equipment* and all other applicable policies for usage of USFWS motor vehicles
 - The driver has completed a defensive driving course within the last three years;
 - Before field work requiring the use of a motorized vehicle begins, the USFWS site coordinator provides written documentation that all of the above criteria have been met to the SCA Agency contact. Such documentation may be provided electronically; and
 - Both the driver and the vehicle will be covered by insurance policy maintained by the SCA covering the use of such vehicle.

IV. Basic Eligibility Requirements

A. Eligible Applicants:

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is the only eligible applicant. To remain eligible, the SCA must:

1. Register in the System for Award Management (SAM) and maintain an active registration throughout the life of the award. SCA must review and certify their SAM information at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in information or another award term.

2. Not be identified in the SAM Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal assistance under this program.
3. Maintain general liability insurance of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage, subject to the usual and customary policy conditions (including standard exclusion on vehicles licensed for highway use and on property in the care, custody and control of the policyholder.
4. Maintain worker compensation coverage and comprehensive general liability insurance for all SCA-provided participants and SCA staff involved in activities funded under this award.
5. Maintain insurance to cover both the driver and vehicle whenever any SCA participant or SCA staff member will drive a vehicle owned, rented, leased or loaned by or to the USFWS.
6. Comply with all the terms and conditions of award, including being timely in submission of: required consolidated reporting and eligibility documentation to USFWS Refuges HQ (see Section V), and financial and performance reporting required under each cooperative agreement.

B. Ineligible Activities and Program Restrictions:

1. Individuals recruited under this program will not be assigned to:
 - Staff a USFWS position that is a normal part of the USFWS work force;
 - Displace any USFWS employee or contractor; or
 - Perform inherent functions (such as decision-making) that impact the management of Federal programs.

Although participants may receive consideration for *future* employment with the USFWS, assignments under this program do not count towards career status in government service or toward the eligibility for, or accumulation of, benefits available to Federal employees.

2. Participants under the age of 18 must provide written permission to SCA as part of SCA's enrollment process, to perform project activities from a parent or legal guardian before they can begin service.

V. Annual Documentation and Consolidated Reporting Requirements

A. Each year from 2013 through 2017, SCA must submit to the USFWS Refuges Headquarters on or before each December 31 the following documentation:

1. SCA's DUNS number, Employer Identification Number (EIN) and documentary evidence of their Section 501(c)(3) status as determined by the Internal Revenue Service.

2. Complete contact information for the SCA Point(s) of Contact for this project, including the point of contact for USFWS Refuges Headquarters and any region-specific point(s) of contact for the USFWS programs participating in this project.
3. A Cost Presentation schedule of the per program costs for each SCA program to be applicable to all awards from the USFWS for the next year. The Cost Presentation schedule must show/detail the indirect costs separately from the direct costs. When developing the schedule, refer to 2 CFR Part 230, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations.
4. A separate narrative titled “**Budget Justification**” that explains and justifies the per participant/unit costs. Describe the specific costs that are included/covered by the per participant/unit costs.
5. SCA shall procure and maintain, for the life of all cooperative agreement awards issued under this NOFA, and any extension thereof, liability insurance in a form satisfactory to the USFWS. The amounts of the insurance shall be not less than as follows: \$1,000,000 each occurrence and \$500,000 property damage. SCA will provide to USFWS a Certificate of such Comprehensive General Liability Insurance, with USFWS named as an additional insured party, evidencing this insurance coverage. The certificate shall identify the name and address of the USFWS, as well as the insured, the policy number, and a brief description of services to be performed. Should any of the policies be cancelled before the expiration date thereof, notice will be delivered in accordance with the policy provisions.
6. Following OMB Circular A-133, domestic non-profit entities expending \$500,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a year must submit an A-133 Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse’s Internet Data Entry System (<http://harvester.census.gov/sac/>). SCA must provide a “**Statement Regarding A-133 Single Audit Reporting**” indicating if your organization was/was not required to submit an A-133 Single Audit report for your most recently closed fiscal year and, if so, state if that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<http://harvester.census.gov/sac/>).
7. A signed and dated **SF 424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs** form, available online at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424B-V1.1.pdf>.
8. A copy of SCA’s most recently approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). The most recently approved NICRA may be for a provisional or a final rate.
9. If applicable, a completed **SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** form. Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, applicants must complete and submit this form when they have made payment or have agreed to make payment to any lobbying entity for 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 awarding of or the extension, continuation,

renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or loan. Recipients may not use funds awarded under a Federal grant or cooperative agreement to conduct such lobbying activities.

Once approved, the USFWS Refuges Headquarters will distribute to the USFWS Regional programs all of the above documents and an updated notice of award template to be used for all regional cooperative agreement awards to SCA.

B. Each year starting in 2014 through 2018, SCA must submit to the USFWS Refuges Headquarters on or before each December 31 an annual report consisting of the following:

- Total number of project sites, hours, weeks, obligated amounts, and number of interns and other participants;
- Descriptive information and federal expenditures (invoiced amounts) to date of each program activity;
- Diversity of students placed, including demographics and age, to the extent that such information has been voluntarily provided by participants to SCA. Demographics will be reported as an aggregate to ensure that SCA complies with confidentiality requirements regarding individual participant's demographic data;
- Summary of USFWS participation;
- Recommendations for future program activity;
- The report shall be itemized by the location, program provided and number of participants; and
- The report shall be submitted electronically in a searchable, sortable, spreadsheet format.

C. For every cooperative agreement award issued under this NOFA:

1. The USFWS regional point of contact will work closely with SCA to develop a Scope of Work for each project within that region and identify the type/number of SCA-recruited participants/teams needed for the project and then send the information to SCA.
2. SCA will respond to the USFWS by submitting a request for funding that includes a completed, signed, and dated **SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance** form. This form is available online at http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_2_1-V2.1.pdf.

VI. Application Review

On an annual basis, USFWS Refuges Headquarters staff will ensure that SCA meets all the eligibility requirements as detailed in Section IV above.

VII. Award Administration

A. Award Notices: Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before a final award can be made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a Notice of Award document. Notice of Award documents are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (FedEx, DHL, or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the

Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or receiving the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the USFWS. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by e-mail, within 30 days of the final review decision.

B. Payments:

SCA will be responsible for following the basic payment standard and methods detailed in 43 CFR Part 12, Subpart C. SCA must request payment for all awards under this program in the U.S. Treasury’s Automated Standard Application for Payment (ASAP) system.

C. Standard Award Terms and Conditions:

Acceptance of a grant or cooperative agreement award from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Department of the Interior (Interior) carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions of 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 USFWS. Awards are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal financial assistance regulations; Federal program legislation, regulation, and provisions; and special award terms and conditions. The Federal financial assistance regulations applicable to SCA are:

Category	Reference
General	43 CFR Part 12 , Subpart A, Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs
Administrative Guidelines	2 CFR Part 215 , Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations 43 CFR Part 12 , Subpart F, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, other Non-Profits
Cost Principles	2 CFR Part 230 , Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations
Audit Requirements	OMB Circular A-133 , Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations
Other Requirements	2 CFR Part 25 , Central Contractor Registration and Data Universal Numbering System 2 CFR Part 170 , Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation 2 CFR Part 175 , Award Term for Trafficking in Persons 2 CFR Part 1400 , Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement) 2 CFR Part 1401 , Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance) 43 CFR 18 , New Restrictions on Lobbying: Submission of an application

	<p>also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying.</p> <p>41 USC §6306, Prohibition on Members of Congress Making Contracts with Federal Government: No member of or delegate to Congress or Resident Commissioner shall be admitted to any share or part of this award, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom; this provision shall not be construed to extend to an award made to a corporation for the public's general benefit.</p> <p>Executive Order 13513, Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging while Driving: Recipients are encouraged to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving, including conducting initiatives of the type described in section 3(a) of the order.</p>
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D. Special Award Terms and Conditions:

1. SCA will be authorized to be reimbursed for all direct and indirect pre-award expenses incurred 90 calendar days prior to the project period start date of this award and necessary to comply with the proposed project schedule/period of performance. Pre-award expenses will only be allowable to the extent that they are authorized by the approved SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance, Scope of Work and project budget incorporated by reference under each award.
2. The transfer of amounts budgeted for direct costs to absorb an increase in indirect costs and vice versus will require prior written approval from the USFWS. USFWS approval of budget changes will depend on if funds are available, either from budgeted direct costs or through additional Federal funding.
3. SCA shall maintain its current general liability insurance of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage, subject to the usual and customary policy conditions, including standard exclusion on vehicles licensed for highway use and on property in the care, custody and control of the policyholder. SCA shall maintain insurance to cover both the driver and vehicle whenever any SCA participant or SCA staff member will drive a vehicle owned, rented, leased or loaned by or to the USFWS.
4. The USFWS reserves the right to terminate any participant or SCA staff member placed in a USFWS assignment despite any SCA recommendation to retain the individual. The SCA reserves the right to withdraw any participant or SCA staff member that SCA finds:
 - Was not provided adequate training for the tasks assigned
 - Is not being actively or effectively mentored by a qualified USFWS employee
 - Was assigned work by the USFWS that is not covered by an approved and accepted cooperative agreement scope of work and/or available budget
 - Was not provided appropriate or adequate housing (as compared to the available housing) or and
 - Was assigned duties by the USFWS that SCA finds dangerous, hazardous, prohibited or otherwise inappropriate.

5. The SCA may issue uniforms; however they must not have any similarity to official USFWS uniforms and must not bear the USFWS logo. SCA participants and staff must not wear a USFWS uniform. Refer to 18 USC 701 for the legal restrictions on use of official insignias and consequences for misuse.
6. When the USFWS provides training through the National Conservation Training Center, participants have the option to receive academic credits through Shepherd University, when appropriate.
7. Title to all USFWS-owned property (such as tools, equipment, facilities, machinery, vehicles) furnished by the USFWS to participants and SCA staff to support activities funded under this program will remain vested in the Federal Government. SCA staff and participants are not authorized to use USFWS-owned property on other activities not sponsored by the USFWS or to provide services to non-Federal outside organizations.
8. Travel costs shall not exceed SCA's written policy for standard travel.
9. The liability of the Federal Government is governed by the Federal Tort Claims Act (28 U.S.C. 2761). The liability of SCA is governed by applicable State statutes.

E. Financial, Performance and Other Reporting Requirements:

1. See Section V. B. for the annual consolidated national reporting due to USFWS Refuges Headquarters on December 31 of each year from 2014 through 2018.
2. For each cooperative agreement issued under this program, the following reports will be required:

Financial and performance reporting:

ANNUAL INTERIM financial reports and performance reports will be required and will be due within 90 calendar days of the end of the annual period. FINAL financial performance reports will also be required and will be due within 90 calendar days of the end date of the awards. **All awards made under this funding opportunity will end on September 30, 2018.** The actual report periods and due dates for each cooperative agreement will be detailed in each Notice of Award.

SCA must use the SF-425, Federal Financial Report form for all financial reporting. This form is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms/.

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. The USFWS will specify the performance reporting frequency applicable to the award in the Notice of Award document.

Significant development reporting:

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, SCA must notify the USFWS Project Officer in writing as soon as the following types of conditions become known:

- 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.
- 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.

VIII. Agency Contact

Deborah Moore
National Uniform and National Volunteer Coordinator
National Wildlife Refuge System
4401 N Fairfax Drive, Room 634
Arlington, VA 22203
Tel: 703-358-2386; Fax: 703-358-2517
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IX. SCA Contact

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