Branch of Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight
New Award Process

The Branch of Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight (FAPO) requires 30 working days to process your requests. Please plan accordingly. Departmental Manual Part 505, Chapter 2 (505 DM 2) can be accessed online at http://www.doi.gov/pam/financialassistance/resources/index.html. Read through all steps before beginning a new award.

Follow these steps to complete a new award action:

1. Evaluate funding tool: Program office must evaluate if financial assistance is the appropriate funding tool. Per 505 DM 2, Section 2.9, is the activity to be funded an acquisition, an interagency agreement, or financial assistance? The principal purpose of a financial assistance award (grant or cooperative agreement) is to transfer funds, services, or property from the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to an eligible recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation as authorized by United States law. The principal purpose IS NOT to transfer funds to another Federal entity. The principal purpose IS NOT to obtain goods or services needed by the FWS. Use the *Decision Diagram Selection of Instrument Type* document posted on the FWS Intranet>FAPO News >Guidance page (https://inside.fws.gov/go/post/FAPO-news) to assist you in determining the appropriate funding tool. Document the determination of financial assistance as the appropriate funding tool under Item 1 on the *FAPO New Award Checklist*. If the appropriate funding tool is determined to be something other than a grant or cooperative agreement, STOP HERE and contact Contracting and Facilities Management (CFM).

2. Determine award instrument: Program office must determine if the financial assistance award should be issued as a grant or a cooperative agreement. Check your program's authorizing and/or funding legislation to determine if a specific award instrument is legally prescribed. If a specific award instrument is not legally prescribed, use the information below to assist you in determining the appropriate award instrument. Document the financial assistance award instrument to be used under Item 2 on the *FAPO New Award Checklist.*

   A cooperative agreement award should only be used when substantial Federal involvement is expected. Per 505 DM 2, Section 2.9 substantial involvement is expected when FWS: (A) participates and collaborates jointly with the recipient partner, volunteer, scientist, technician or other personnel, in carrying out the scope of work, training recipient personnel, or detailing Federal personnel to work on the project effort; (B) reviews and approves one stage of work before the next stage can begin; (C) reviews and approves proposed modifications or sub-grants, prior to award; (D) helps select project staff or trainees; (E) directs or redirects the work because of interrelationships with other projects; (F) has power to immediately halt an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met; and (G) limits recipient discretion with respect to scope of work, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operations and other management processes, coupled with close monitoring or operational involvement during performance under the award.

   The following are NOT considered substantial involvement: (A) Government approval of recipient plans prior to award; (B) normal exercise of Federal stewardship responsibilities during the performance period such as site visits, performance reporting, financial reporting, and review to ensure that the objectives, terms and conditions of the award are accomplished; (C) unanticipated Government involvement to correct deficiencies in project or financial performance from the terms of the assistance instrument; (D) general statutory requirements understood in advance of the award such as civil rights, environmental protection, and provisions for the handicapped; (E) Government review of performance after completion of the assisted activity; and (F) general

administrative requirements, such as those included in OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-102, A-110, A-133, and applicable implementing regulations.

Cooperative agreement awards require a detailed description of the expected FWS involvement in the project activities to be included in the both the Grants.gov funding opportunity description and the notice of award letter.

3. Identify CFDA Program: Program office must identify the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) program under which the program/project is being funded. Select the CFDA most appropriate to the funding source and/or the activity to be funded. To view the FWS CFDA program descriptions online, go to http://www.cfda.gov and click on the Agencies tab. Locate Department of the Interior on the list (page 2), click on the 12 Offices link, locate Fish and Wildlife Service on list, and click on the numbered link under the Programs column. If your program does not have an established CFDA program, select the general FWS CFDA program that most closely matches the award activities. The general FWS CFDA programs are:
   - 15.649 for Training and Technical Assistance projects;
   - 15.650 for Research Grants; and
   - 15.664 for Congressionally mandated or directed awards, and Fish and Wildlife Coordination and Assistance programs

   Document the CFDA number and CFDA program title to be assigned to this award in the corresponding fields on the top of the *FAPO New Award Checklist*.

4. Justify single source award: Program office must justify issuing an award without competition (single source award), regardless of award amount. Per 505 DM 2, Section 2.14, a single source award is a financial assistance award specifically directed to a known recipient that is statutorily designated or determined to be an appropriate partner based on demonstrable criteria, such as unique expertise or capacity. Decisions to award funds to a single source without engaging in competition must withstand scrutiny, should protect the public interest, and should be consistent with management priorities, objectives and statutory requirements. Use the *USFWS Notice of Intent to Award to a Single Source without Competition* (NOI) template to document justification for issuing an award without competition. The completed template must be included in the official award file maintained by the program office. See Step 5 below for the Grants.gov funding opportunity posting requirements for single source awards.

5. Post Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov: Program office must post a funding opportunity, including both a synopsis and complete application package and instructions, to Grants.gov for all discretionary programs/awards regardless of funding amount, and for single source awards for $25,000 or more. For single source awards, the completed NOI template (detailed in Step 4 above) must be scanned and uploaded as an attachment to the Grants.gov funding opportunity synopsis.

   For cooperative agreement opportunities/awards, the funding opportunity synopsis description field must include a description of the expected substantial Federal involvement as follows: "Substantial involvement on the part of the USFWS is anticipated for the successful completion of the objectives to be funded. In particular, the USFWS will be responsible for the following: [insert a description of the specific activities/responsibilities to be performed by USFWS staff]".

   ALL funding opportunities must include a complete application package and application instructions. Your application package and instructions must contain and instruct the applicant to submit the following required documents:

   - ☐ A complete, signed and dated SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

- ☐ A project narrative that, at a minimum, describes the goals, objectives, activities, and anticipated products and outputs of the proposed project
- ☐ A complete SF-424 A or C, Budget Information form
- ☐ A budget narrative that describes and justifies the proposed costs
- ☐ If indirect costs are included in budget proposal, a copy of the organization's current approved indirect cost rate agreement or pending proposal
- ☐ A signed and dated SF-424 B or D, Assurances form
- ☐ As applicable, a signed and dated SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form

Programs that do not already have a complete application package template on Grants.gov should use one of the following standard Grants.gov FWS Form Package templates: *FWS non-construction with narratives*, or *FWS construction with narratives*. Select the one most appropriate to the nature of the program/project being announced. Program must also attach application instructions for the applicants. Programs may use the standard *Application Instructions* document *(*attached) or upload program-specific application instructions. Use the standard *Application Instructions* document as a template for developing any program-specific instructions.

Grants.gov Exemptions: The 505 DM 2 justifications applicable to FWS exempting programs from posting a funding opportunity to Grants.gov are: 1) The funding opportunity is for awards less than $25,000 for which 100 percent of eligible applicants live outside of the United States; 2) The funding opportunity is for a single source award less than $25,000; 3) The exception cited in 505 DM 2.4A for awards made under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638, 88 Stat. 2204); and 4) An award for which there is insufficient time available (due to a compelling and unusual urgency, or substantial danger to health or safety) for adequate competitive procedures to be followed. Document any applicable exemption from posting a funding opportunity to Grants.gov under Item 5 of the FAPO New Award Checklist.

6. Review and approve proposal: Program Office must review and approve the proposed project scope of work, project objectives, and project costs. Proposal documents are routinely incorporated into unilateral awards by reference and as such the proposed activities and budget must parallel the amount to be awarded. Following review, applicants may need to revise the proposed project period of performance (either they accept that the standard award start date is the date the FAPO Branch Chief signs the notice of award letter, or they provide justification for a specific start date), scope of work and/or budget, and may need to provide additional justification for requesting reimbursement of any pre-award costs.

   Prior to submission of a new award package, Program Office must ensure that the amount requested on both the SF-424 and the SF-424A or C match the amount to be awarded. If unusual circumstances require the USFWS to reimburse the recipient for pre-award costs, the program office must provide a written justification detailing the reason(s) why recipient has begun work, a description of the activities underway, the associated costs (categories and amounts) being incurred, and the date on which costs were first incurred.

7. Verify applicant eligibility: Program office must verify applicant eligibility to receive Federal financial assistance.
   a. Unless exempt, all applicants must have a valid DUNS number and have an active registration in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Recipients must renew and revalidate their CCR information every 12 months from the date of registration. Go to the CCR Search page (https://www.bpn.gov/CCRSearch/Search.aspx) and enter the recipient's DUNS number in the first search field. A print screen of the query results showing that recipient has an active CCR registration (Registration Status field) and is NOT a for-profit organization (Corporate Information, Business Types data) must be submitted as part of the new award package (see

Step 11 for complete list). If the CCR registration is found to be inactive, the recipient must renew and revalidate the registration before the award package can be sent to the Branch of FAPO for review. If the CCR registration is set to expire within the expected award period of performance, the Program Office must notify the recipient in writing of their responsibility to maintain an active registration throughout the entire award period of performance.

b. Individuals applying for funding as a natural person (not affiliated with any organization i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization they may own or operate in their own name), and foreign entities not already registered and applying for or receiving an award for less than $25,000 for activities to be performed outside the United States, are exempt from registering in DUNS and CCR. Document any CCR and/or DUNS exemptions under Items 6 and 7 on the New Award Checklist.

c. Program office must verify that the recipient is not ineligible to receive Federal awards by searching for the recipient on the online Excluded Parties List (https://www.epls.gov), using one or more of the Current Exclusions search tools. If recipient is on the list, program CANNOT issue an award to that recipient. Print screen(s) of query results from the Excluded Parties List search is required to be submitted as part of the new award package.

d. Recipients expending $500K or more in Federal funds in a fiscal year (FY) must submit A-133 Single Audit reports to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse. Program office must search the Federal Audit Clearinghouse-Single Audit Database (http://harvester.census.gov/sac) to verify that recipient is current in submitting single audit reports. A print screen of the most recently submitted audit report is required to be submitted as part of the new award package.

8. Establish FFS Vendor record: Program office must verify that an FFS vendor record exists for recipient. If vendor is not in FFS, have the applicant complete the FFS Vendor Updating Document (https://inside.fws.gov/go/post/FAPO-news-->go to Forms) and return it to the program office. Program office should submit the completed form to the National Business Center following the instructions on the top of the form. A print screen of the FFS vendor record is required to be submitted as part of the new award package.

9. Draft the Notice of Award letter: Program office must draft a notice of award letter using the *FAPO Notice of Award Letter* template. The letter must include:
   - FWS Document Control Number/Award number (program office assigns this number; award number must be the same as the number to be used to obligate funds in FFS)
   - The program/project CFDA number
   - Project title and project scope of work (goals/ objectives/ activities to be conducted/expected outcomes)
   - If cooperative agreement, provide detailed description of substantial Federal involvement in the project activities ("The Recipient will" and "The USFWS will" statements)
   - Performance period start date. The default start date will be the date of signature on the letter. If required, the Program Office can set a specific date in the future, as long as the date accommodates the 30 working day FAPO review window. Start dates in the past are not allowed.
   - Performance period end date
   - Pre-award cost allowance details, including description of work already begun and associated allowable costs to be reimbursed. If pre-award costs are being authorized, the program office must provide with the award package a written justification detailing the reason(s) why recipient has begun work, a description of the activities underway, the associated costs (categories and amounts) being incurred, and the date on which costs were first incurred
   - Basic funding information (e.g., the total amount of funds to be obligated/matched)
   - If high risk recipient, notice of high risk determination, justification for being identified as high risk, and any special terms and conditions

- Updated DOI standard terms and conditions list. List should be updated to match the particular award requirements and recipient type. Use the following chart to assist you in updating this section. All listed terms and conditions NOT addressed in the chart below are applicable to all recipients and must NOT be removed from the template list.

Standard Terms and Conditions Item	When to remove?
Special terms and conditions	If award will have no special terms and conditions, remove this item from the list. If special terms and conditions apply, detail them in the Special Conditions and Provisions section of the award letter. NOTE: Reporting requirements are NOT considered special terms and conditions.
2 CFR Part 25, Central Contractor Registration and Data Universal Numbering System	Remove this bullet only if award is to an individual as a natural person, i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization they may own or operate in their own name OR to a foreign entity not already registered in CCR and receiving an award for less than $25,000 for activities performed outside the United States.
2 CFR Part 170, Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation	Remove this bullet ONLY if award is to an individual as a natural person, i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization they may own or operate in their own name.
43 CFR 12(C), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Government	Remove this bullet when award is to an institution of higher education, hospital, other non-profit or commercial organization, or foreign recipient.
43 CFR 12(F), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, other Non-Profit and Commercial Organizations (includes foreign recipients)	Remove this bullet when award is to a state or local government.
43 CFR 43, Government-wide Requirements for a Drug-Free Workplace	Remove this item ONLY if award is to a foreign entity conducting work outside the United States.

- Programs may also choose to highlight any of the standard terms and conditions (such as applicable procurement procedures for expected sub-contract awards, property disposition, program income guidance, or award termination and enforcement policies and procedures, among others) by inserting the complete text from the applicable section(s) in 43 CFR Part 12 (accessible online at http://www.doi.gov/pam/financialassistance/resources/index.html).
- Any special terms and conditions (for high risk recipients, or any related to responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Section 7, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) procurement, or other applicable regulations stipulated in program's authorizing legislation).
- Contact details for the FWS Project Officer and the Recipient Project Officer/Principal Investigator.
- Financial Report Requirements: No interim SF-425, Federal Financial Reports are required. Submission of payment requests using the SF-270 satisfies interim financial reporting requirements. A final SF-425, Federal Financial Report is required within 90 calendar days of the end date of the award.

- Performance Report Requirements: Programs may request interim performance reports as frequently as quarterly, but no less frequently than annually. Interim performance report periods always end December 31, March 31, June 30, or September 30. Final financial and performances reports are ALWAYS required. Use the tables below to establish specific report periods and report due dates and insert them into the award letter:

  Annually: If the award period is for one year and recipient is required to report annually, they will be required to submit one report, the final report. The report period for a final report ends on the last day of the award period of performance. The final report is due within 90 calendar days from the end date of the award.

  For awards longer than one year with an annual interim reporting requirement, the annual interim reporting period is dependent on the award's performance start date. We must receive annual interim performance reports no later than 90 calendar days after the annual interim report end date. Table 1 shows the schedule:

Table 1: Schedule for Annual Interim Performance Reports		
Award Performance Start Date	**Annual Interim Report Period End Date**	**Annual Interim Report Due Date (90 days after report end date)**
January 1	December 31	March 31
January 2- March 31	March 31	June 29
April 1	March 31	June 29
April 2- June 30	June 30	September 28
July 1	June 30	September 28
July 2- September 30	September 30	December 29
October 1	September 30	December 29
October 2 – December 31	December 31	March 31

  Semiannually: The semiannual interim reporting period always ends December 31, March 31, June 30, or September 30. We must receive semiannual interim performance and performance reports no later than 30 calendar days after the last day of each semiannual interim reporting period. Table 2 shows the schedule:

Table 2: Schedule for Semiannual Interim Performance Reports		
Award Performance Start Date	**Semiannual Interim Report Period End Date**	**Semiannual Interim Report Due Date (30 days after report end date)**
January 1	June 30	July 30
January 2- March 31	September 30	October 30
April 1	September 30	October 30
April 2- June 30	December 31	January 30
July 1	December 31	January 30
July 2- September 30	March 31	April 30
October 1	March 31	April 30
October 2 – December 31	June 30	July 30

  Quarterly: The quarterly interim reporting period always ends December 31, March 31, June 30, or September 30. We must receive quarterly interim reports no later than 30 calendar days after the last day of each quarterly interim reporting period. Table 3 shows the schedule:

Table 3: Schedule for Quarterly Interim Performance Reports		
Award Performance Start Date	**Quarterly Interim Report Period End Date**	**Quarterly Interim Report Due Date (30 days after report end date)**
January 1	March 31	April 30
January 2- March 31	June 30	July 30
April 1	June 30	July 30
April 2- June 30	September 30	October 30
July 1	September 30	October 30
July 2- September 30	December 31	January 30
October 1	December 31	January 30
October 2 – December 31	March 31	April 30

10. Compile required documents: Program office must compile the following documents, as applicable:
    - ✓ If single source award, completed *FWS Notice of Intent to Award without Competition* (NOI) template.
    - ✓ Grants.gov funding opportunity synopsis, synopsis attachments, and application package screen prints.
    - ✓ Final, signed application forms (e.g., SF-424, 424 A or C, Budget Information, 424 B or D, Assurances) and attachments (e.g., budget and project narratives).
    - ✓ Print screen of DUNS number query from CCR showing recipient has an active registration (not required if award is to an individual, or a foreign entity not already registered and receiving award less than $25,000).
    - ✓ Print screen of query from Excluded Parties List as evidence that recipient has not been debarred or suspended and is eligible to receive Federal funds.
    - ✓ For recipients expending $500K or more in Federal funds in a fiscal year, print screen of the most recently submitted query from the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit database as evidence that recipient is current in submitting required single audit reports.
    - ✓ Print screen of FFS vendor record.
    - ✓ If indirect costs are included on proposal, applicant must submit copy of most recently submitted/approved indirect cost rate agreement proposal. A recipient without an established indirect cost rate agreement with a Federal agency may not charge indirect costs to Federal financial assistance awards (all costs must be charged directly). Refer to the *Indirect Cost Rate Agreement Requirements* document for details on this requirement.
    - ✓ If pre-award costs are allowed, a written justification detailing the reason(s) why recipient has begun work, a description of the activities underway, and the associated costs (categories and amounts) being incurred is required.
    - ✓ As applicable, documentation supporting high-risk recipient determination.
    - ✓ As applicable, evidence that recipient met all program-specific pre- and post-award compliance requirements (e.g., National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Section 7, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), or other applicable regulations as required).
    - ✓ If legal review from the Office of the Solicitor was requested and a response received, attach documentation of the request and the response. Refer to 505 DM 2, Section 2.8 D and E (5) for description of legal review responsibilities. A legal review is only required when the program office feels the proposed project is of such complexity/novelty or exhibits intellectual property issues or potential conflicts of interest, or other such concerns that warrant legal review.

11. Complete New Award Checklist: Program office must complete the *FAPO New Award Checklist*.

12. Submit complete package: Program office must send electronic copies of the completed *FAPO New Award Checklist*, draft *Notice of Award Letter* completed following the instructions in Step 9, and all of the applicable documents listed in Step 10, by email to the FAPO Branch Chief: Maribel_miller@fws.gov. The subject line of your email should read: "New Award [insert FFS doc number here] is ready for review". When scanning documents, set scanner to scan in black and white, Letter format (8.5 x 11), at a maximum of 600 dpi resolution.

13. FAPO reviews package: FAPO Branch Chief will assign new award package to FAPO Branch staff. FAPO Branch staff will review all documents and communicate with the Program contact, as needed. Once the review is complete, the FAPO Branch Staff will sign the *FAPO New Award Checklist* and send the final draft notice of award letter to the FAPO Branch Chief. FAPO Branch Chief will review, sign, and date stamp the notice of award letter and return it to FAPO Branch staff. FAPO Branch staff will scan the signed notice of award letter and send it to the Program contact by email.

14. Program obligates funds: Upon receipt of the signed notice of award letter, the program office will obligate funds in FFS and send screen print of FFS OBLH screen to FAPO Branch staff.

15. FAPO completes FAADS report: FAPO Branch staff will complete the required FAADS report, save it as a .pdf, and send both the FAADS report and a copy of the signed *FAPO New Award Checklist* to the Program contact by email.

Send any questions by email to FAPO Branch Chief, Maribel Langas Miller (Maribel_miller@fws.gov).