

# USING WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR SHOOTING RANGES



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# USING WILDLIFE RESTORATION FUNDS FOR SHOOTING RANGES

## What entities are eligible to apply?

**Only the state agency with statutory authority to manage wildlife resources is eligible to apply for Wildlife Restoration funds. However, the authorized state agency may choose to channel any Wildlife Restoration funds it receives through its state's hunter education sub-program to the following third-party shooting ranges:**

- Non-profit, membership-based shooting organizations (e.g. rod and gun clubs, fish and game associations, sportsmen's clubs, firearm and archery ranges) that have as their purpose the promotion of safe handling and proper care of firearms and archery equipment, as well as improving shooting technique and marksmanship.
- Units of state or local governments that own and manage shooting ranges.
- Other governmental agencies (e.g. Native American tribal governments) that own and manage shooting ranges.

- Non-profit youth organizations and educational institutions sponsoring opportunities for youth participation in the shooting sports.

## Does your shooting range currently provide regularly scheduled hours of public access? If not, will your organization commit to doing so if you receive grant funds?

Grant recipients are required to provide public access during agreed upon times. The standard for "public access" to ranges is a reasonable number (somewhat correlated with grant investment) of regularly scheduled, continuing shooting hours for simple recreational shooting or target practice available to the general public. Public access does not have to be free, it does not require that an entire facility be available to the public and during those hours, and it does not need to be restricted or limited to the portion of the facility benefited by the work enabled under the grant.

A member of the public should not have to be enrolled in a class, purchase a membership to a club, be a guest of a club member, participate in an organized competitive event or pay more than a modest fee to access the range facility. If a fee is charged, the fee must be modest, may not be punitive towards public users and may be used only to offset or defray documented operating, maintenance and management costs of the facility. Any such public access fee schedule must be approved in writing and prior to receiving the grant by the state and by the state and by the respective regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program staff.

*Note: Not all states have a third-party shooting range grant program. Check with your state fish and wildlife agency to see if this type of program is offered in your state.*



# GENERAL INFORMATION

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Shooting range projects that can be funded with Wildlife Restoration (Hunter Education) funds include those that:

- Improve public recreational firearm and archery shooting opportunities by providing small grants to range-owning organizations for range enhancement
- Accomplish improvements at existing firearms and archery range facilities.
- Develop new firearm and archery range facilities.
- Provide facilities accessible by persons with disabilities, where feasible.
- Integrate safety, accessibility and environmental best management practices (refer to the EPA's Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges or NSSF's Environmental Aspects of Construction and Management for Outdoor Shooting Ranges publications for descriptions of these practices) into the physical facilities of ranges and their maintenance.
- Support firearms and archery education that teach safe and responsible hunting and shooting practices

# FAQS

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**If I apply for and receive a grant, will I need to provide matching funds?**

Yes. A minimum of 25 percent of the eligible and state-approved costs must be matched with non-federal funds. This non-federal match may include cash contributions (e.g. private funding, or non-federal state or local funding), and/or in-kind contributions (e.g. the value of donated or discounted labor, materials, services, equipment and/or land).

**What is the grant application process?**

Please contact your state fish and wildlife agency for details on the grant application process. This information will normally include grant program objectives, a definition of who may apply, where grant funds can be used, grant and match requirements, grant amounts and the actual application process. It will also specify the grant selection process, selection criteria, approval notification, management of the grant once awarded, grant recipient obligations (including useful life for a range, public access requirements, etc.) and the contractual terms that will govern the relationship between the state and the grant recipient(s).

**Please note that grant recipients must have all required local, state and federal zoning and development permits that pertain to the grant proposal project before the start of construction.**



# FAQS

## From where does the funding derive?

Funding for the Shooting Range Small Grant Program is generated by manufacturer federal excise taxes collected on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment. These monies are managed as a federal grant program to the states under the Wildlife Restoration Program (Section 4 - Hunter Education and Section 10 – Enhanced Hunter Education) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as a “User Pays—Public Benefits” program. Therefore, this grant program will involve local communities and/or organizations in a three-way partnership with a state and the USFWS’s Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR).

## What if the project earns program income or revenue?

Program income or revenue is defined as gross income earned by the non-federal entity and that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the federal award during the period of performance. Applicants should be aware that any income or revenue generated from a federal aid project must be returned to the project in the form of funds available for the regular operations and maintenance of the project. If the actual project receiving funding from this grant program will generate revenue, then that program income must be documented, reported annually and returned for use by the general operations and maintenance of the range facility only. Depending on the situation, range fees received by a club may

not be considered program income. Documentation should be retained for possible USFWS-WSFR Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits. More information about program income can be found in 2 CFR 200.

## Are there any federal compliance requirements?

Yes. These compliance issues are addressed as part of the federal grant application portion of the process, not during the initial application and panel review process. Depending on the complexity of the projects, substantial delays (defined as nine months or more) may occur as a result of these requirements, although lengthy delays are the exception. The following lists some compliance assurances that are typically required as part of the federal review process:

POTENTIAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT	WHAT IT IS, WHO TAKES LEAD ON ADDRESSING
Historical and Cultural Preservation	A written statement from the State Historical Preservation office clearing your project; the state normally takes the lead on this). If the project requires a Cultural Resource Survey (CRS), additional costs and time will be required. A CRS may be required any time soil is disturbed (e.g. berm construction, foundation digging, road building, etc.)
Prime and Unique Farmland	A written confirmation from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (previously Soil Conservation Services, or SCS) clearing your project site from unique or prime farmland restrictions; the state normally takes the lead on this).
Army Corps of Engineers 404 Permit	A 404 Permit or clearance from the Corps of Engineers may be needed for projects that could affect jurisdictional wetlands; the project sponsor normally takes the lead on this, if applicable, through contact with the local Army Corps of Engineers Office.
Endangered Species	Each project must assess whether there will be an impact on any federally listed threatened or endangered species or how any impact will be mitigated; state personnel normally take the lead on assessing the presence of any listed species. If endangered species issues arise, the project sponsor will work with the state to determine how to modify the project to avoid impacts to those species.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)	Projects that involve water depletions, wetlands or involve other impacts to the environment may require an acceptable Environmental Assessments. See NEPA section 102. ( <a href="http://www.epw.senate.gov/nepa69.pdf">http://www.epw.senate.gov/nepa69.pdf</a> )
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Wildlife Restoration-funded projects must be ADA compliant (public entities do not necessarily need make their existing facilities ADA accessible.)

# FAQS

## What are the elements of a successful project?

Start planning your project early and communicate with the state fish and wildlife agency often about your project goals. Before applying for a grant, spend some time discussing needs, goals and expectations of the grant program.

Employ Best Management Practices (BMPs). Planning and design of improvement projects should conform to generally accepted practices and the Best Management Practices (BMPs) as described in several publications by governmental agencies including and by recognized and respected national shooting sports organizations such as the National Shooting Sports Foundation® (NSSF®). A Range Management Plan is an additional component of Best Management Practices.

Understand this grant program is administered as a reimbursement program. This means you must incur and pay all costs associated with the project before seeking reimbursement from the state.

No grant advances are allowed. As costs are incurred, save all invoices, receipts and other proof of purchase or proofs of payment. Make sure to document volunteer hours worked, as the value of these hours can be used as your local share (match). The state has volunteer time sheets available for your use. If you choose to use these forms, you must include volunteer name, date, hours worked and activity performed, and the form must be signed by both the volunteer and a state employee who can verify the hours.

Finish your grant project before your grant expiration date. If you need an extension to the date on your grant agreement, contact the state fish and wildlife agency well before the grant expiration date. Remember that costs incurred prior to the grant agreement start date or after the end date of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.

Finally, and most importantly, ask questions if you don't know how to proceed or need clarification on topics such as eligible costs or grant

administration procedures.

## Are there any additional requirements?

A state may include additional requirements. Your state fish and wildlife agency will be the best source of information about requirements and the application process.





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