

Project Abstract Summary

This Project Abstract Summary form must be submitted or the application will be considered incomplete. Ensure the Project Abstract field succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. Use 4,000 characters or less. Do not include personally identifiable, sensitive or proprietary information. Refer to Agency instructions for any additional Project Abstract field requirements. If the application is funded, your project abstract information (as submitted) will be made available to public websites and/or databases including USAspending.gov.

Funding Opportunity Number

F-FWS-WSFR-23-001

CFDA(s)

15.628

Applicant Name

Wildlife Management Institute

Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project

2023 MSCGP Developing Competencies to Implement the Relevancy Roadmap

Project Abstract

The purpose of this project is to create a national coalition of staff in state fish and wildlife agencies and other Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies member organizations to serve as expert practitioners (coaches) to teach and learn from each other to support implementation of the Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap. The coaches will be provided technical assistance from wildlife professionals that are deeply embedded in conservation relevancy work and provided "open source" customizable materials to help their own and other conservation organizations: 1) articulate what relevancy means in an organizations or state's context, 2) assess why and to whom a conservation agency or organization wants to increase relevancy, and 3) develop actionable plans to engage and serve broader constituencies to enhance conservation.

State fish and wildlife agencies are struggling to understand and adapt to the changing interests, needs and concerns of the North American public about fish and wildlife conservation. To address this challenge, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) worked with over 60 wildlife professionals to develop the Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap (<https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-informs/resources/blue-ribbon-panel/relevancy-roadmap>). Adopted by AFWA directors in 2019, the Roadmap is a practical guide that offers over 100 recommendations state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies can use to overcome barriers to broader relevance, improve public engagement and support, and enhance conservation outcomes. After working with 14 state agencies that are experimenting with implementing the Roadmap recommendations, our project team has identified several key competencies that are critical to effective implementation of the Roadmap. These competencies are missing or insufficiently developed in many state agencies.

Objective 1 Title: Update existing relevancy-related training materials.

Objective 2 Title: Provide technical assistance to up to 75 people (representing each AFWA region) to improve competencies to implement the Relevancy Roadmap by December 31st, 2023.

The ultimate outcome of this technical assistance program is the development of the Relevancy Coaches Coalition - a cohort of staff embedded in state fish and wildlife agencies and other AFWA member organizations that have the foundational competencies that are needed to support and implement the Relevancy Roadmap. These coaches will become the conveners of internal discussions about relevancy and will facilitate implementation of relevancy-related projects. As relevancy "ambassadors" they will help create the necessary time for reflection, diagnosis, planning and prioritization to address the needs, interests and concerns of current and future stakeholders. They will have developed foundational competencies that allow agencies to better adapt to changing societal and ecological conditions. They will have access to contemporary materials and expertise that support relevancy-related projects. They will have the skills to amplify and accelerate experimentation and adoption of new approaches to engage current and broader constituencies. The relevancy coaches will function as communication hubs within their organization and can support relevancy efforts in nearby states by offering collaborative "in-kind" services. WMI staff will coordinate and manage the Relevancy Coaches Coalition.