

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-24-002

CFDA(s)

15.628

* Applicant Name

ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

* Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project

Rebranding, Repiloting, and Reevaluating the National Conservation Outreach

* Project Abstract

The States' conservation story has mainly gone untold on a national scale, leaving the public unaware of our goals and accomplishments. Consequently, state fish and wildlife agencies are often misunderstood, their influence and support are suppressed, and opportunities to expand public advocacy for increased funding and resources are missed - especially among non-fishing and non-hunting audiences.

AFWA's Education, Outreach, and Diversity (EOD) Committee created the National Conservation Outreach Strategy in 2018 to increase state agency public relevancy. This strategy provided a toolkit that enabled each state wildlife management agency to raise awareness of its role in protecting and conserving wildlife. In 2019 "Making it Last" campaign was piloted to help learn how to best "tell the story" to boost agency public relevancy, followed by a second phase to fine-tune and further test the initiative. However, states' limited budgets and uncertainty regarding the campaign's effectiveness reduced the number of states able to implement and evaluate the campaign. With the relevancy topic becoming more critical every year, the need exists to field a rebranded and tested campaign accompanied by improved toolkit materials and evaluation.

This project will advance the public case for why agencies matter. This third phase will focus on engaging more states by rebranding away from the "Making it Last" theme to a more directly relevant brand and messaging content. These will be developed using public testing and best practices, and lessons previously learned. We will focus on updating and upgrading the story of state-based conservation through messaging and materials designed to resonate better with the public and the agency staff. Phase 3 will also revise the campaign in part through the lens of employee recruitment to help states better understand how we can be more relevant in the eyes of prospective future staff. We will also implement the new toolkit in at least two pilot states to evaluate public reactions and receptiveness. The result will be a campaign that more state agencies will utilize to increase public awareness and support, especially among audiences not traditionally engaged in conservation or fish and wildlife-based recreation.