

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 USA Spending.gov.

* Funding Opportunity Number

F-FWS-WSFR-24-002

CFDA(s)

15.628

* Applicant Name

International Hunter Education Association - USA

* Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project

Training of Wildlife Officers to Effectively Investigate Hunting Incidents

* Project Abstract

When a hunting incident occurs, first responders and law enforcement officers are often called to the scene. Whether or not these individuals are certified to investigate a hunting incident comes down to their ability to attend the Hunting Incident Investigation Academy (HIIA), currently offered through a partnership with the International Hunter Education Association - USA (IHEA-USA) and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). It is vitally important to the future of hunting that the Conservation Industry continues to train Conservation Law Enforcement Officers and Game Wardens to accurately assess whether an incident is related to hunting, or it is not. Proper recording of these incidents provides insights to trends in safety and leads to the creation of safety standards delivered through Hunter Education thus providing each generation of new hunters with an education to create safer days in the field.

The program is specifically designed to train wildlife law enforcement officers to investigate and report hunting incidents accurately. As this is a program of the IHEA-USA, the Academy also covers the importance of the North American Model and the connection between incident reports, the standards of hunter education that are created by examining these incidents, and the resulting reciprocity for hunting license purchases the standards provide when included in Hunting Education curriculums. The Academy is run by wildlife officers with special skill sets and expertise in this discipline. With very few exception, the Academy has been delivered once or twice per year to nearly 40 officers since 1993. Fourteen different states have hosted the Academy during that time. Host requirements, location availability, operational costs, and travel costs have made it difficult to reach more officers. For the last two years, dozens of interested officers have been turned away from participating due to challenges in sourcing new instructors and an ability to coordinate more than two training opportunities each year. A new scalable model involving blended learning is set to launch in 2024 to help agencies deliver their own learning Academy training with the help of HIIA Certified Trainers. States will be expected to choose two officers to become these certified trainers and send to a Train the Trainer (TTT) event in Missouri in 2024.

This grant proposal seeks funding to cover the travel, accommodations, and equipment costs of officers from four State Agencies in each AFWA Region to attend the first TTT in 2024. With 16 states and 32 officers qualified to deliver the new blended learning Academy format in their home states, expectations are that the number of certified wildlife officers would surpass the

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previous 30 years with the next 3.

Several state agencies have already expressed an interest in sending officers to the first TTT in Missouri next year. These include the following: CA, CO, MO, IA, MI, IN, CT, MD, TN, NC, MS, and SC.