



Five Star & Urban Waters Frequently Asked Questions

General Information:

1. Who may apply?

Any non-federal or state public or private entity. Preference is shown to organizations directly connected to the local community who can monitor and sustain these projects for 5 years or more.

2. What activities CANNOT be funded?

No political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying or litigation is allowable. If you are legally required to perform the work (by law or through court order, etc.) then the grant cannot support that work but if the grant work goes above and beyond baseline required efforts, it can be included.

3. How much funding can my organization request?

The Five Star program provides \$20,000 to \$50,000 grants with an average award size of \$30,000. Grants in the \$30,000-\$50,000 range are typically two years in length and are in urban areas.

4. Where can a project take place?

Project sites may be public land - parks, streams, school campuses - or private land such as corporate facilities. Because public participation is paramount in community-based restoration, these sites should be accessible to the community.

5. Do I need to submit separate proposals for the Five Star and Urban Waters Programs?

No, there is one application for all program elements and funding partners, the program team will match your application up with all of the funding sources that apply.

6. Do I need to specify which funds I am applying for?

No, you do not need to specify which funds you are applying for. You should answer the questions in the full proposal narrative as they apply to your project, and specify where your project is located. Our program team will match your application up with applicable funding sources.

7. Are Urban Waters funds only available for projects in Urban Waters Federal Partnership Locations or source water protection areas?

Applicants in urban areas nationwide are eligible to receive Urban Forestry and Waters funding, but preference will be given in the evaluation process to projects in partnership locations and/or source water protection areas. A map of federal partnership locations is available [here](#) and a map of source water protection areas is available [here](#).



9. How does this grant program define “urban” areas?

This grant program defines “urban” as an area (i.e. city, town, metropolitan area) with a population of approximately 50,000 or more.

10. My grant project is not located in an urban area. Am I still eligible to apply?

Yes, funds are available for grant projects in any-sized community nationwide.

11. If I receive a grant for a Fish and Wildlife Service Urban Bird Treaty project, do I work with NFWF to become an Urban Bird Treaty City?

If you receive a grant for an Urban Bird Treaty project, Fish and Wildlife Service will reach out to you to discuss next steps to become an Urban Bird Treaty City.

12. My project is located in a current Urban Bird Treaty City. Can I still submit a proposal for an Urban Bird Treaty project?

Yes, applicants from established Urban Bird Treaty cities are eligible to receive Fish and Wildlife Service funds and are welcome to submit proposals.

Grant Match & Partnerships

13. Is there a matching requirement?

A minimum 1:1 non-federal match is required.

14. What is NFWF’s policy on administrative costs or indirect rates?

NFWF’s indirect rate policy is located [here](#).

15. Must all matching funds be in cash?

No, matching funds can be in-kind as well. For volunteers, please use the market rate for the services that the volunteer provides. For example, if an attorney provides donated legal services, his or her paid hourly rate for those services will be the hourly volunteer rate. If an attorney provides labor by helping remove invasive plant species, the rate should be equivalent to the cost of that physical labor.

16. How should my organization track volunteer hours?

Most organizations track volunteer hours by providing a sign-in sheet for volunteers that lists their name and the hours worked. A staff member from the grantee organization should supervise this activity and sign off on each sign-in sheet.



18. Can corporate sponsor volunteer time count as match?

If your project hosts a volunteer event for one of the program’s corporate sponsors, the employee volunteer time cannot count as match toward your project.

19. Can you count professional services in support of preparing the grant proposal as part of matching funds?

Yes, their time should be valued at the professional cost of those services by their hourly rate.

20. Are any specific partners required?

We do not require any specific partners in a project, but we do recommend that you have a diverse mix of partners including but not limited to businesses and corporations, educational institutions, local, state or federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations and non-profits. This partnership should be integral to achieving project goals and engaging audiences to make the project a success and to sustain the results in the future. We encourage you to have as many partners as is feasible and to look for a diversity of partners to best meet project needs.

21. What level (if any) of public access is required to the project site?

The project should be community-supported and accessible to the community as much as possible.

22. Does the applying organization count as a partner?

Yes, the applicant organization counts as a partner.

23. Do I need to list the project partners under the ‘Organization Information’ tab in the full proposal?

No, you do not need to add the project partners to the ‘Organization’ tab in the full proposal. You should list your project partners in the table in the full proposal narrative template.

24. Can a project contain construction of any kind?

Construction can be included in a Five Star application. However, note that Five Star budgets should primarily go towards on-the-ground restoration. It is advisable to use matching funds to pay for construction activities.

Application Components

25. Are applications submitted on paper or online?

All applications are processed online through our Easygrants system available at www.easygrants.nfwf.org. Paper applications are not accepted.



27. Is the budget for the grant and match or only the grant funds?

The budget is for grant funds only; match is entered in the MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS section.

28. Where do rentals go in the budget?

Vehicle and equipment rentals should go in the “Other Direct Costs” section of the budget.

29. How do I determine if an item should go in the EQUIPMENT OR SUPPLIES category?

If one unit of an item is \$5,000 or more, it should go under EQUIPMENT. All other items should go under SUPPLIES.

30. Should I include a narrative description of each line item in my budget?

Yes, we highly encourage you to use the ‘notes’ (notepad) feature in the EasyGrants budget to describe each line item.

31. Is a letter of intent or pre-proposal required for this program?

No, only a full proposal needs to be submitted.

32. What financial documents are required as part of the application?

Required financial documents will be listed under the UPLOADS section in Easygrants. Please note that all financials should be uploaded under their appropriate category in the UPLOADS section drop-down list. Do not upload financial documents under OTHER DOCUMENTS.

33. I am having trouble uploading some of the financial documents. What do I do?

If you are having issues uploading a financial document, it is possibly due to the file size being too large. If the document is available via a link, please copy and paste the link into a word document and upload the word document into the system. If you have recently applied for a grant and your organization’s financial information is in NFWF’s system and is recent, you will not be required to upload fiscal documents.

34. Are letters of support required?

Letters of support are not required as part of the application but are encouraged. You can upload them into Easygrants with your application under “Other Documents.”

35. Who should I address letters of support to?

Letters of support can be addressed to Carrie Clingan or Danny Bowater at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Letters should be included as uploads in Easy Grants and should NOT be mailed directly to NFWF.



36. Do we need to supply photographs or maps of the project site with our proposal?

Although not required, it is always helpful for the review team to see a visual representation of the project via a map and/or photographs. If you do supply these items, please only upload one or two of each and keep file sizes to a minimum. Upload these separately than your narrative so that these do not count toward your page total.

37. I have completed the application but there is a red “X” next to the BUDGET section in the checklist under REVIEW AND SUBMIT. What is wrong?

Make sure that the AMOUNT REQUESTED in the PROJECT INFORMATION section of the proposal exactly matches the total amount of your line-item budget.

Project Location and Mapping

38. My project locations spans multiple states. Should I select ‘nationwide’ as the state?

No. When selecting your project’s state under the Project Location tab, you should individually select all states where your project work will take place.

39. How do I map my project location in EasyGrants?

You can map your project location in one of the following ways:

- i. Upload a shapefile
- ii. Manually draw your project area
- iii. Select a layer (watershed, city, etc.)

A detailed overview of the mapping tool is available here:

<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/mapping-tool.aspx>

40. Can I map an entire state or an entire county as my project location?

Unless your project work spans the entire state or county, you should not map the whole region. Your project location should be as specific as possible. If you will be working in multiple locations, map each location.



ACTIVITIES and METRICS Guide

- **Template:** Choose “Five Star Activity/Outcome Metrics” from the drop-down menu and click Select. You should now see a list of recommended metrics.
- **Adding Metrics:** Click the “Add” button to the right of the metric you want to add to your proposal.
- **Current Value:** Enter the current metric value. In most cases this will be zero.
- **Grant Completion Value:** Enter the value of the metric at grant completion. This should be the gains attributable to the project at the end of the grant.
- Typically the “value” will be stated in acres of habitat, linear feet of stream, number of students, percentage change in behavior, etc.
- After you have added the proper amounts for the metric at current and grant completion, click Save and Close.
- **Notes:** If further clarification is needed about a metric, you can click “Notes” to add a note to the metric. **This should never be longer than one to two sentences.**
- If you want to add a metric that isn’t on the list, click “Add Other” and enter the metric you want to add.
- Please note that we ask you include the metrics provided by utilizing the existing list of Five Star/Urban Waters Metrics wherever possible so that we may standardize our data collection.
- **Recommended Metrics** include acres habitat restored, acres with BMPs, volume stormwater prevented, # trees planted, # volunteers participating, # youth engaged, # veterans engaged.
- When you are finished filling out the metrics section, please delete any metrics you are not using (the proposal will not submit unless this step is completed). **Check the box next to any metric you wish to delete and then select “Delete” from the drop down menu at the bottom of the list and click “Go”.**