N.J.A.C. 7:5

Conserve Wildlife Matching Grants Program

Statutory authority: N.J.S.A. 39:33-33.11

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For regulatory history and effective dates, see the New Jersey Administrative Code

Table of Contents

Subchapter 1. General Information
Subchapter 2. Eligibility for Conserve Wildlife Matching Grants
Subchapter 3. Allocation of Conserve Wildlife Matching Grants Funding
Subchapter 4. Application and Grant Agreement Procedures
7:5-1.1 Scope and authority

This chapter constitutes the rules of the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the Department of Environmental Protection for the Conserve Wildlife Matching Grant Program for nonprofit organizations in accordance with N.J.S.A. 39:3-33.11 et seq. The Conserve Wildlife Matching Grant Program shall be administered through the Endangered and Nongame Species Program within the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

7:5-1.2 Construction

This chapter shall be liberally construed to allow the Department to fully effectuate the purposes of the Act.

7:5-1.3 Definitions

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.


"Applicant" means the nonprofit organization that submits an application for a matching grant in accordance with this chapter.

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection.

"Department" means the Department of Environmental Protection.

"Division" means the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the Department.

"ENSP" means the Endangered and Nongame Species Program in the Division.

"Grant" means a grant awarded pursuant to the Act and this chapter.

"Grant agreement" means a document executed by the Department and the grant recipient that provides grant assistance in an amount and for a project approved by the ENSP.

"Grantee" means an applicant that has received a grant pursuant to P.L. 1995, c.241 and this chapter and that has fully executed a grant agreement document.

"In-kind support" means salary, fringe benefits and materials used only for the purpose of carrying out an approved project.

"Nongame wildlife" means any wildlife for which a legal hunting or trapping season has not been established by the New Jersey Fish and Game Council.
"Nonprofit organization" means an organization with an Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) exemption.

"Program" means the Conserve Wildlife Matching Grant Program.

7:5-1.4 Severability

If any section, subsection, provision, clause or portion of this chapter is adjudged unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this chapter shall not be affected thereby.

7:5-2.1 Eligible participants

Any nonprofit organization as defined at N.J.A.C. 7:5-1.3 shall be eligible to submit an application for Conserve Wildlife matching grants.

7:5-2.2 Eligible projects

(a) Projects eligible to qualify for a grant through the Conserve Wildlife Matching Grants Program shall benefit New Jersey's nongame wildlife through education, outreach, research, conservation, species protection or habitat management or a combination of these. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Education/outreach projects, such as classroom wildlife programs, interpretive signage or public outreach programs;
2. Research projects, such as animal surveys or censuses, habitat monitoring or public attitude surveys;
3. Management projects, such as habitat development, improvement or restoration; or
4. Habitat protection projects, such as establishing and maintaining urban wildlife corridors or wardening sensitive wildlife breeding areas.

(b) Grant funding shall be expended only on projects located in New Jersey.

(c) Projects shall be completed within two years of notification of grant approval and a final project report shall be submitted to the ENSP at the completion of the project. The project report shall include, but not be limited to, a description of the final product as described in the scope of work, any documentation supporting the completion of the grant project (that is, photographs, newspaper articles), the manner in which the funds were expended and all associated receipts.

7:5-3.1 Funding availability
The Department shall express its intent to fund a project through a letter of award to the applicant. Funding is guaranteed only after a project agreement has been executed by the Department and funds are subsequently obligated by the Department to the nonprofit organization for a particular project.

7:5-3.2 Ranking of grant applications

(a) Conserve Wildlife matching grant funds shall, for the purpose of determining priority for funding, be ranked on the basis of the degree to which the proposed project:

1. Has the broad support of local or county agencies, civic groups, etc. Letters of endorsement may be submitted to ENSP as evidence of such support;

2. Is responsive to regional as well as local needs;

3. Conforms to project criteria;

4. Shall raise awareness of the public's responsibility to actively conserve wildlife; and

5. Demonstrates a strong likelihood of tangible results.

7:5-3.3 Grant amount

The minimum matching grant amount provided by ENSP shall be $2,500; the maximum grant amount shall be $10,000.

7:5-3.4 Grant payment

The entire grant amount shall be released to the grantee in one sum following receipt and acceptance by ENSP of all agreed upon work product of a project, and upon compliance with all terms of the grant agreement required under N.J.A.C. 7:5-4.3.

7:5-3.5 Matching funds

The grantee's share of project funding shall equal at least 50 percent of the grant amount, and shall be in-kind support, cash match, or any combination of in-kind support and cash match. The availability of the grantee’s matching funds shall be certified by a resolution adopted by the nonprofit organization as required under N.J.A.C. 7:5-4.2(b)1.

7:5-4.1 Announcement of funding availability

(a) Notice of funding availability and the opening and closing dates for submission of Conserve Wildlife Matching Grant Program applications shall be published by the
7:5-4.2 Application and review sequence

(a) Nonprofit organizations shall find instructions on how to apply for grant funds on the Division’s website at njfishandwildlife.com.

(b) A completed application shall be submitted to the ENSP as directed in the application instructions and shall include:

1. A resolution adopted by the governing body of the nonprofit organization authorizing the organization to enter into the grant agreement and certifying that the matching funds and in-kind support will be provided for the project if the Department approves and funds the project;

2. An IRS letter of determination describing the organization's nonprofit status;

3. A completed grant applicant data form; and

4. A detailed scope of work and a budget.

(c) A notice of receipt of the application shall be sent from the ENSP to each applicant.

(d) Applications shall be reviewed by the ENSP. An applicant who submits an incomplete application shall be notified. If the applicant wishes its project to be reconsidered, the applicant shall complete and resubmit the application as required by the ENSP.

(e) The ENSP shall promptly notify each applicant in writing of its determination to approve or deny an application and, in the case of a denial, shall provide reasons for such denial. An applicant whose application has been denied during one application period may reapply for reconsideration during a subsequent application period.

7:5-4.3 Development and execution of grant agreement

(a) If the ENSP approves the application submitted pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:5-4.2, the grant amount shall be determined by the ENSP consistent with N.J.A.C. 7:5-3.3 and in accordance with an executed grant agreement between the Department and the applicant. The grant agreement shall specify, among other things, the following:
1. The amount of the grant;
2. The project scope;
3. The work period, not to exceed two years;
4. The itemized budget; and
5. The work product to be submitted to the ENSP.

(b) During the period between the receipt of the application package by ENSP and the transmittal of the letter of award and execution of the grant agreement by ENSP, ENSP and/or the applicant may revise the application package as necessary to meet the requirements for grant agreements set forth at (a) above. Any such modifications shall be mutually agreed upon in writing by the ENSP and the applicant.

(c) Before the execution of a grant agreement by the Department, the nonprofit organization shall submit to the ENSP a resolution authorizing, by title, an official to execute the grant agreement on behalf of the nonprofit organization.

(d) Once the award is made, the grant award shall become effective upon execution of the grant agreement by the Department's designated representative, who shall sign the grant agreement. The executed grant agreement shall constitute an obligation in the amount and for the purposes stated in the grant agreement. A signed copy of the executed grant agreement shall be returned to each approved applicant as formal documentation of the award.

(e) The terms, conditions, budget and schedule of the grant agreement may be amended or modified in accordance with the procedures established in the grant agreement if mutually agreed upon by the Department and the nonprofit organization.