



Vessel Strike Avoidance Fund 2024 Request for Proposals Pre-Proposal Tip Sheet

STARTING AN APPLICATION

When you are ready to begin the application process, go to easygrants.nfwf.org.

- New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting their application.
- Existing users should log in using their e-mail address and password. If you have forgotten your password, please click the “Forgot your password?” link on the Easygrants login page and a reset link will be sent to you. The link expires within 24 hours of being sent.
- Once you are logged in, click the **Apply for Funding** button, and select Vessel Strike Avoidance Fund 2024 Request for Proposals from the list of “Available Funding Opportunities”.
- Complete the Eligibility Quiz and Save and Submit your response.
- If you pass the Eligibility Quiz, Easygrants will return you to your personal Easygrants Home Page. From there, click on the Pre-Proposal for the Vessel Strike Avoidance Fund 2024 Request for Proposals. Now you are ready to get started! If you do not pass the Eligibility Quiz, please contact the NFWF Program Contact identified in the RFP.

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The instructions below follow sequentially through each section and field in Easygrants required for this program. You may, however, complete these sections and fields in any order. **You are encouraged to use the Help feature in Easygrants for additional guidance and examples.** Additional resources for applicants, including the Indirect Cost Policy, can be accessed on the NFWF website by clicking [here](#). Use the Quick Launch box on the left-hand side of the screen to locate your desired information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Enter the contact information for the primary person responsible for completing the Easygrants application (this person is tagged as the Principal and all system notifications and tasks will go to this email). **PLEASE include a phone number in case there are any questions about your application.** Additional personnel may be added to your Easygrants account by clicking the “Add” button and entering their information (tag as a Collaborator).

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Use the “Select Organization” button to search for your organization; you can search by Name, EIN number, or UEI number. When searching by Name, it is recommended that you enter as few words as possible to ensure your return list is comprehensive. Select your organization from the list that is the most complete (has UEI and/or EIN numbers). If Easygrants informs you that your organization’s EIN or UEI already exists but you are unable to find your organization, please contact Easygrants@nfwf.org for support (include your organization’s name, EIN, UEI). If your organization is new to Easygrants, click the “Add New” button at bottom of list and fill out your organization’s information.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Take Note!

- **Pop-ups:** Easygrants uses pop-up windows to display some files. Please make sure your web browser allows for pop-ups. The internet browser pop-up blocker must be disabled prior to beginning the application process. You can also try holding the Shift or Control (CTRL) key when clicking the link.
- **Cookies:** Easygrants uses cookies to maintain the session information. Please make sure that your browser and computer can accept cookies.
- **PDF:** Easygrants uses PDFs extensively. Make sure you are able to use Adobe Reader.
- **SAVING AND SUBMITTING:** Once an application has been initiated, it may be saved and then modified and submitted at a later time, up to the application deadline of **June 25, 2024 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time**. Please note DO NOT hit the “Submit” button until you are actually ready to submit. Once you hit submit the application is formally submitted and you may no longer make changes.

The content in this section builds the primary project database for NFWF, therefore both the content and format of these fields must be consistent and informative as this information is shared with a variety of external audiences, including board members, funders, members of Congress and the general public.

General Guidance for these 'Data Fields'

- Do not use technical jargon, acronyms or abbreviations (Use “best management practices,” not “BMPs”) and if you address a concept likely to be misunderstood by the general public, please briefly explain. For example: “... grantee will construct three bioswales, landscape features that remove silt and pollution from surface runoff water.”
- Do not use personal pronouns (we, our organization, my, etc.).
- Say what the project **will** accomplish if funded (future tense), i.e. “The Organization Name will restore” rather than “the Organization Name proposes to.”
- Use factual information and do not editorialize (e.g. “this is the last important...”).

Project Title: Titles should be concise, unique and descriptive. Include, to the extent possible, the species/habitats benefited, the location, and the conservation method (e.g., restoration, education). In most cases, all words should be capitalized except for prepositions (e.g. “of,” “with,” “into,” “for”) and the words “and” and “the.” If location is not already indicated with the Project Title, then include a two-letter state abbreviation for each state in parentheses. (100 character limit, including spaces)

Examples:

- *Cooperative Weed Management in Central Upper Michigan*
- *Bird Banding Internships for Underserved Community Youth (CA, OR)*

Project Start Date: Most projects should begin within two - six months of the award announcement date.

Project End Date: Most projects should be completed within 36 months of the project start date.

Project Description: Should use the following two-sentence format. The first sentence should lead with a verb and clearly state the **main activity/method** being used to address a **specific species/habitat and location**. The second sentence should start with ‘Project Will’ and state the expected outcome (**reference metric encouraged**) from the investment and relevance to conservation. (400 character limit, including spaces)

Example:

- *Restore 200 acres of oak savannah in upstate New York to benefit songbirds such as the golden-winged warbler, small mammals such as the eastern red bat, and native fish such as the eastern brook trout. Project will engage youth volunteers from three urban schools who will grow and plant 5,000 native plant seedlings.*

Abstract: Provide a more detailed description of your project; including location, purpose, major activities, target species, specific habitat, outcomes (deliverables at the end of the grant period) and partners. If this is an international project (or if work is to be completed outside of the US or US territories), please provide one or two sentences explaining the importance/connection to the U.S. Please refrain from using pronouns such as I, we, our, etc. (1500 character limit, including spaces)

Tips:

- Lead with a sentence stating what the organization will do (e.g. “The Happy Organization will...”). You can revise the Project Description for this purpose in many cases.
- Middle section provides the context for the project and the action taken (why do we care and why this is needed?).
- Last paragraph brings home how the project will specifically progress the issue (what will result to help address the problem).

Project Location Description: Please only provide the location without any narrative language or geographic coordinates or addresses. If multiple values are entered for a local project, they should be ordered from smallest to largest in terms of geographic scope (e.g., “Franklin, New London County, Connecticut”). (200 character limit, including spaces)

Examples:

- Town Creek Harbor, Beaufort, North Carolina
- Coastal Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey
- South Tract of the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Roswell, New Mexico
- Canyon Creek, a tributary to the Teton River, Idaho

Requested Amount: There is no hard maximum or minimum, however most grants will fall within the range of \$250,000 and \$750,000.

UPLOADS

To complete your application, you must upload one or more files into Easygrants. In general, please minimize the file size of uploads, especially files that include photos, diagrams or logos. There is a file size limit of 15 megabytes.

- **Pre-Proposal Narrative:** The most important upload is your pre-proposal narrative. The **pre-proposal narrative template** may be downloaded from Easygrants at any time and completed at your leisure. It must be uploaded back into your Easygrants application before your application may be submitted. The narrative may not exceed two (2) pages in total length.
- **Map of Project Site (optional):** If you are proposing a habitat restoration project then please provide a site map and a design schematic.

MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

Projects are strongly encouraged to provide match, but matching funds are not a requirement for this program. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners may be more competitive. Match can be from both federal and non-federal sources.

Click the "Add" button to add sources of matching contributions and list each source separately in the space provided. Match consists of the portion of project costs not paid with NFWF requested funds and may be in the form of cash, in-kind or volunteer contributions. Match must meet all of the following criteria:

Non-federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee's records
- Not included as contributions for any other Federal award
- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Committed directly to the project and used within the period of performance
- Allowable under OMB 2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

Federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee's records
- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Committed directly to the project and used within the period of performance

REVIEW and SUBMIT

When you are ready to submit, each section of your proposal should be indicated "Complete" with a green check mark (✓) in the "Status" column. If any section is indicated "Incomplete" with a red (✗), you will not be able to submit and must go back and check your work in each section that is "Incomplete". The Validation Status section in the Review and Submit section of the application explains why the system indicates a section is "Incomplete".

To view and save your proposal you may click on the "View PDF" button. This function creates a composite file with all of the fields and substantive uploads, which you may then save as a stand-alone document. Please note that some of the financial documentation will be excluded from the composite file but will be received by NFWF upon submission. Once you have reviewed your pre-proposal for accuracy, click the "Submit" button to officially submit your proposal. Upon submission, you will receive a confirmation email from Easygrants@nfwf.org.

FREQUENTLY ASKED EASYGRANTS QUESTIONS

1. How do I get back into the Easygrants online system when locked out?

Please send an email to Easygrants Helpdesk (Easygrants@nfwf.org) with your name, easygrants ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.

2. I forgot my Easygrants password. How do I get this information sent to me?

Please go to easygrants.nfwf.org, click the "Forgot your password?" link, enter your e-mail address as the Login ID, and click Submit. Easygrants will e-mail you a copy of your login information. Please note that the reset password link expires after 24 hours of being sent. If it has been longer than 24 hours since the initial request you will have to request another link in order to reset your password. If you are unable to log in after having attempted to reset your password please send an email to Easygrants Helpdesk (Easygrants@nfwf.org) with your name, easygrants ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.

3. I have finished my proposal and it is not showing up as completed.

Please remember to hit the "submit" button in the Review and Submit section of the application when you have completed the application. When a task is properly submitted in easygrants the task will no longer be visible on the user's homepage.

4. How will I know when NFWF has received my completed application?

You will receive an automated notification from Easygrants@nfwf.org.

5. I completed the application and it will not submit. Why not?

If you are unable to submit your application, go to the Review and Submit form in the application. If any section is indicated "Incomplete" with a red (X), there will also be an explanation as to why the system indicates the section is "Incomplete". You must go back and check your work in each section that is "Incomplete". Below are two examples that frequently prevent submission:

- 1) Check the Project Information section of the Easygrants online application "Requested Amount" to see if it matches your budget grand total. The amounts must match **exactly** (down to the cent) for you to be able to submit a proposal. Please edit your Requested Amount and/or budget if needed.
- 2) Do not complete sections of the budget where you have no costs. If you entered "0" for any budget line items, delete those line items. Placing a "0" in these line items will prevent you from submitting a proposal.

6. What should I do if a page crashes in Easygrants?

If you receive a System Encountered Error it is important to follow the instructions on the page

- 1) First, click **Resume** and you should return to the previous page. Check if the action you tried to complete occurred. If the action did not complete, make a note of what page you are on and what button or link you are clicking.
- 2) Retry the action. If the system crashes again you must click the **Send an E-mail** to report the issue. This will open a Send Error Message E-mail page in a new window or tab. **Do not skip these steps and e-mail Easygrants Helpdesk yourself; we need the information in this e-mail to resolve your issue.**
- 3) In the email to Easygrants Helpdesk, please enter your name, easygrants ID #, e-mail address, phone number, and a description of what happened. The description needs to include what page you were on, what data you may have typed into the page, what button/link you clicked, and what you were trying to do.
- 4) Click **Submit** to send the message and report the error. This will be sent to the NFWF Easygrants Helpdesk along with additional technical information sent by Easygrants.

7. I need to download a copy of my submitted proposal.

To download a copy of your proposal after submitting please go to your Home screen, click the **View All Tasks** button, and find your proposal in the list of tasks. Click **View PDF** to download a copy of your proposal. If the PDF does not open or begin downloading please try again, holding the Shift or Control (CTRL) key on your keyboard to override your pop-up blocker. Please note that proposals are only available for a limited time after a cycle closes.

HELP WITH THE EASYGRANTS ONLINE SYSTEM

For Easygrants technical support please contact our Helpdesk at Easygrants@nfwf.org or leave a message at 202-595-2497. Please include your name, easygrants ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue. Helpdesk hours are 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM EST, Mon-Fri.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RFP

Gray Redding, Manager, Fisheries Conservation
gray.redding@nfwf.org

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED AN EMAIL FROM EASYGRANTS@NFWF.ORG INVITING YOU TO SUBMIT A FULL PROPOSAL, PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THE FOLLOWING PAGES OF INSTRUCTION.

Vessel Strike Avoidance Fund 2024 Request for Proposals Full Proposal Tip Sheet

PLEASE READ IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED AN EMAIL FROM EASYGRANTS@NFWF.ORG INVITING YOU TO SUBMIT A FULL PROPOSAL.

CONTINUING YOUR APPLICATION

When you are ready to continue the application process, go to easygrants.nfwf.org.

- Enter your login ID and password. If you have forgotten your password, Easygrants will e-mail one to you.
- Once you are logged in, the Full Proposal “To Do” item and its due date will appear on your Home page.
- Click “Full Proposal” task link to begin.

* * * * *

The instructions below follow sequentially through each section and field in Easygrants required for this program. You may, however, complete these sections and fields in any order. **You are encouraged to use the Help feature in Easygrants for additional guidance and examples.** Additional resources for applicants, including the Indirect Cost Policy, can be accessed on the NFWF website by clicking [here](#). Use the Quick Launch box on the left hand side of the screen to locate your desired information.

CONTACT INFORMATION

This section will be pre-populated with information from your pre-proposal; however, you may update this section with additional project personnel or changes to personnel roles.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

This section will be pre-populated with information from your pre-proposal.

PROJECT INFORMATION

The following fields will be pre-populated with information from your pre-proposal; however, you may edit these fields to make improvements or to reflect changes in your project however, if you do please re-reference the pre-proposal tip sheet guidelines:

- **Project Title**
- **Project Start Date**
- **Project End Date**
- **Description**
- **Abstract**
- **Requested Amount**

PROJECT LOCATION

The following fields require new information not provided previously:

- **Project Location Country:** Most projects will occur within “North America – United States”.
- **Project Location State/Province:** Select all states that apply; i.e. Washington, Oregon
- **Project Location U.S. Congressional District(s):** As of January 1, 2023, Congressional District lines were redrawn in many states. Please carefully review the district(s) for your project’s location. If you are not sure what the Congressional District(s) should

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- **Cookies:** Easygrants uses cookies to maintain the session information. Please make sure that your browser and computer can accept cookies.
- **PDF:** Easygrants uses PDFs extensively. Make sure you are able to use Adobe Reader.
- **SAVING AND SUBMITTING:** Modifications to applications may be saved and submitted at a later time, up to the application deadline of **September 18, 2024 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time**. Please note DO NOT hit the “Submit” button until you are actually ready to submit. Once you hit submit the application is formally submitted and you may no longer make changes.

be, you can enter the project zip codes or addresses at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map> to determine the correct district(s) for your project. If your project takes place statewide, please select the “All Districts” option for that state.

- **Project Location Description:** This field will be pre-populated with information from your pre-proposal; however, you may edit to reflect changes or refinements to your project location.

MAP

This section allows you to map the location(s) of your proposed project, which is required and will allow a searchable reference from our web-based tool should your project be selected for funding. Follow the page instructions provided in Easygrants. For more detailed assistance, refer to the [Mapping Video Tutorial](#).

- Navigate to the map window and click “Save” at the bottom of the page to begin mapping your project.
- There are three methods of submitting the location(s) of your project:
 - Upload a Shapefile
 - Select by Geography
 - Draw a Custom Area
- Once your location(s) have been created, click “Submit Project Location”.
- To finalize your location, click the “Confirmation” check box at the bottom of the page.
- Then click “Save” (or “Save & Continue”) to save your map and move to the next task.

UPLOADS

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- **Full Proposal Narrative:** The most important upload is your full proposal narrative. The **full proposal narrative template** may be downloaded from Easygrants at any time and completed at your leisure. It must be uploaded back into your Easygrants application before your application may be submitted. The narrative may not exceed eight (8) pages in total length.
- In addition to the narrative, several other files should be uploaded. Following is guidance regarding all required and optional uploads:

Upload	Required	Notes
Narrative	Yes	Template provided in Easygrants online application “Uploads” section.
Project Maps	No	In addition to the Mapping Tool, please submit maps and/or diagrams of on-site work proposed, if applicable. Strongly recommended for restoration or green infrastructure projects.
Letters of Support	No	Strongly recommended from significant partners whose contribution is critical to the implementation approval and/or success of the project, including key stakeholders such as marine user groups. Letters of support should not be mailed directly to NFWF. Scan all letters of support into one single file and upload the file in the “Uploads” section of your online application.
Other documents	No	This is an OPTIONAL upload if critical to understanding the project. This should not be used to tack on published papers and additional narrative. Ten (10) page limit.
Statement of Litigation	Yes	Template provided in Easygrants online application “Uploads” section. Federal, state, tribal, and local government applicants are not required to complete this section but will still need to upload a document stating it is not required if it is listed in the Uploads table.
Board of Trustees or Directors	Yes	Provide a list of members. If your organization is not a nonprofit or does not have a Board, upload a document stating that none exists.
GAAP Audited Financial Statements*	Yes	Please refer to the Required Financial Documents and FAQs webpage for details on all financial information required for submission. Note that all financial documents must be less than 2 years old and reference the SAME year.
IRS Form 990*	Yes	Please refer to the Required Financial Documents and FAQs webpage for details on all financial information required for submission. Note that all financial documents must be less than 2 years old and reference the SAME year.
Single Audit*	Yes	Please refer to the Required Financial Documents and FAQs webpage for details on all financial information required for submission. Note that all financial documents must be less than 2 years old and reference the SAME year.

Photos	Yes	Please upload 2-4 photos, compressed to minimize file size. Photos should be described and credited in the narrative.
Conceptual or Engineered Plans	No	Conceptual or engineering designs of green infrastructure, restoration, best management practices, and other technology or techniques that will be employed during the project, if applicable.
Applicant Controls Questionnaire	Yes	Please refer to the Required Financial Documents and FAQs webpage for details on all financial information required for submission. Required for all to completely fill out, sign, and upload.
Applicant Demographic Information Form**	Yes	Template provided in Easygrants online application "Uploads" section. While this upload is required, you can opt out of providing the information within the form. If your organization has provided NFWF with this information in the last 12 months, please indicate that in the opt out drop down menu. This document will NOT show up as 'successfully converted' because it does not merge into the proposal application.

*If your organization has recently applied to NFWF for a grant and valid information is already on file in Easygrants and is current, you may not be asked for these uploads and these categories will not appear for you in Easygrants. Also, please note that financial documents may not show a 'successfully converted' status when you are uploading them. This is because financial documents are not pulled into the full proposal PDF but are stored in a separate part of the easygrants system which can only be accessed by NFWF staff once uploaded.

METRICS

This section allows you to select the activity and outcome metrics you will use to measure your project's progress and success. **Read the instructions and qualifications for each metric as listed in the Request for Proposals.** Follow the directions provided in Easygrants to complete this section. A couple of pointers:

- A list of metrics associated with this program will be presented which are also defined in the RFP.
- Hover your mouse cursor over the "?" next to a metric to read its description and specific guidance.
- Please "Add" and complete at least one metric relevant to reporting your project's progress.
- For each metric you will need to provide values for "Starting Value" and "Target Value". In most cases the starting value will be zero (0).
- **For most projects only 2-3 of these broad program metrics will be relevant**, you will have the opportunity to describe additional activities and outcomes associated with your project in the project narrative. In your narrative you can also provide more specific metrics on technology performance or other measures that will help you assess success and progress.
- You will need to delete any metrics that do not have values.
- **YOU MUST ADD NOTES FOR EACH METRIC.** Notes should interpret the metric as it specifically relates to your project and how progress toward that metric will be monitored.

BUDGET

Please refer to the [Detailed Budget Instructions](#) sheet in order to accurately complete a budget for this project.

- **You must include a budget narrative entry for every portion of the budget used.** Budgets without narrative descriptions may be rejected and/or returned to the applicant for further details and clarification.
- Narratives should be written in such a way that someone not specifically familiar with the project can conceptually understand the rationale, purpose and calculation of the anticipated costs identified.
- The "Requested Amount" in the Project Information section must match your budget grand total exactly. The budget should only represent the grant amount being requested from NFWF; it should not include matching funds or represent the overall budget for the project.
- Project budgets will be compared to similar projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

Indirect Costs: If you intend to include indirect costs in your budget, please review NFWF's [Indirect Cost Policy](#).

- The federal government has determined that a *de minimis* 10% indirect rate is an acceptable minimum for organizations without a NICRA, as such NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize **ALL** proposals with indirect rates above 10% for cost-effectiveness.
- If you are including indirect costs in your budget request, please provide a narrative description identifying what the indirect request will be supporting (e.g., CEO salary, rent for lab space central to project site, etc.).
- Indirect cost narratives should include a statement of whether the applicant has ever had a NICRA. If the applicant has a NICRA, it shall include supporting documentation.
- Budgets without narrative descriptions for indirect costs may be rejected and/or returned to the applicant for further details and clarification.

MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

Projects are strongly encouraged to provide match, but matching funds are not a requirement for this program of either cash or in-kind contributions (federal or non-federal). Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive.

Click the “Add” button to add sources of matching contributions, and list each source separately in the space provided. Match consists of the portion of project costs not paid with NFWF funds and may be in the form of cash, in-kind or volunteer contributions. Match must meet all of the following criteria:

Non-federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee’s records
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- Committed directly to the project and used within the period of performance
- Allowable under OMB 2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

Federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee’s records
- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
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PERMITS and APPROVALS

If permits and/or approvals are required for this project, click the “Add” button to provide details for each permit and/or approval. Include extra information in the description section as necessary (e.g., pre-permit meeting held on Jan. 1, 2024, etc.).

REVIEW and SUBMIT

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GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RFP

Gray Redding, Manager, Fisheries Conservation
gray.redding@nfwf.org