

National Park Service, Northeast Region Challenge Cost Share Program – CCSP Fiscal Year 2010 Application Guidelines

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Challenge Cost-Share Program (CCSP) promotes increased participation by neighboring communities and qualified partners in the preservation and improvement of National Park Service (NPS) natural, cultural, and recreational resources and in all other authorized Service programs and activities – both outside or inside park lands, and on national trails, as defined under the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241-51).

Applications are invited for FY 2010 CCSP awards in two categories:

- 1) General CCSP Projects and
- 2) National Trails System CCSP Projects.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Please note several changes from FY 2009 CCSP:

- The Maximum Federal share is reduced from \$30,000 to \$22,000 in the Northeast Region (NER) to enable us to make more project awards; with \$3,000 being the minimum Federal share. If the proposal is part of a larger project, the scope of the CCSP portion must be specified. Please note that only the Federal share amount should be entered into the Project Management Information System (PMIS).
- Leslie Dietrich (617.223.5433, leslie_dietrich@nps.gov) is this year's CCSP Regional Coordinator.

1. **AUTHORIZATION:** FY 2010 not yet appropriated.
2. **ALLOCATIONS:** For FY 2010, the amounts allocated will be determined once appropriations are authorized. In FY 2009, however, NER received \$291,100 for general CCSP and \$9,900 in Trails funding.
3. **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS:** FY 2010 CCSP funds will be transferred to Regional Directors in a "lump sum" via Allotment Advice.
4. **SIZE OF CCSP SHARE:** The Washington Office, NPS (WASO) has set the maximum Federal share for Regular Projects and National Trails System Projects at \$30,000. However, regions may set lower the cap to increase the number of projects supported by the funding, and the **NER has set the maximum Federal share at \$22,000**. An equal amount of eligible and allowable matching share of cash, goods, or services from non-federal sources is required.
5. **PROJECT SELECTION:** Proposals are forwarded to the NER CCSP Regional Coordinator and will be reviewed by a Region-wide committee, consisting of park and Northeast Regional Office representatives. Based on competitive selection, the committee will develop a prioritized list with funding recommendations. Final approval will be by the Regional Director. In FY 2009 15 general projects were initially awarded, with an average of \$18,500; and 1 trails project.

6. **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** Ideally, projects should be completed within one year and should be able to “stand alone” without future phases or additional components. Five years is the maximum term of any cooperative agreement.
7. **NPS ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES:** Each Region may use up to \$5,000 of its total Regional allocation to offset project review, selection costs, and/or administration.
8. **DECISION TIMEFRAME:** All projects must be selected no later than January 31, 2010.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Projects that demonstrate innovative partnerships, involve coordination among disciplines, take a Region-wide or Cluster-wide approach, benefit multiple units of the National Park System, benefit multiple partner resources or needs, and/or involve multiple programs working together are encouraged.

The project cannot be a “pass-through” project to a partner. The project must demonstrate that there is substantial involvement by NPS staff. All parties involved in the project must benefit from the project’s completion.

1. GENERAL CCSP PROJECTS

Applications must benefit NER units of the NPS, National Heritage Areas (NHA), National Historic Landmarks (NHL), National Natural Landmarks (NNL), National Trails, Wild & Scenic Rivers, or authorized NPS natural, cultural, or recreational programs, including the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. Applications to nominate properties as National Historic Landmarks (NHL) or National Natural Landmarks (NNL) are also eligible.

The NER includes Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia; and, for the NHL and NNL programs, the District of Columbia.

2. **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** Projects must be consistent with the NER agenda for Civic Engagement. Civic engagement is a formal commitment to building long-term, sustained relationships among diverse communities, historic sites, and national parks. Through interpretation, curriculum-based education, and other public programming historic sites can connect the heritage of a park, site, or area to its contemporary environmental, social, and cultural issues. Examples of Civic Engagement include:

- Projects that identify heritage resources that represent the diversity of the nation.
- Projects that create or expand interpretation, curriculum-based education, or other public programming to connect the heritage of the park or site to its contemporary environmental, social, and cultural issues. Projects should reach out to students, visitors, citizens, and partners in innovative ways to teach the stories at the park or site. Projects could include partnerships with academic institutions and other educational organizations to incorporate the multiple perspectives of current scholarship.
- Projects that support meetings, workshops, or colloquies on topics addressing innovative and inclusive learning, interpretation, and education approaches to engaging the public using the park or site.

- Projects that develop inclusive, comprehensive planning which engages stakeholder groups and communities in public discussions about the management and preservation of the park or site.

NER CCSP eligible projects do not include construction on a resource, e.g., restoration, rehabilitation, or preservation maintenance activities, with the exception of National Trails System projects.

3. **NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM PROJECTS:** The National Trails Systems Act (16 U.S.C. 1241-51), defines four categories of trails: national scenic trails, national historic trails, national recreation trails, and side-and-connecting trails. In addition, rails-to-trails projects are created under this Act. Projects must relate to one of these five types of trails. The kinds of projects (and program offices) which would qualify include:
 - national scenic and historic trails (trail field offices);
 - NST and NHT segments in parks (park superintendents or trails foremen);
 - national recreational trails (RTCA or technical assistance staffs);
 - rail-trail projects (RTCA).
4. **COST SHARING :** This is a 50/50 matching program. The **non**-federal contribution(s) is at least 50% of the CCSP share and all costs detailed in the budget narrative are directly related, necessary, eligible, and properly valued in accordance with 43 CFR 12. (*See ELIGIBLE COSTS AND VALUATION*) The non-federal contribution may be cash or in-kind.

SELECTION CRITERIA

To be eligible for competitive evaluation for all CCSP categories, the applicant must meet the following selection criteria. Projects will be ranked on a 100-point basis as follows:

1. **PROJECT MEETS A CRITICAL NEED:** The proposal must demonstrate that the project will address a critical issue or need, faced by the park, site, or program, as defined in “Eligibility Information” above. **(45 points)**
2. **PARTNERSHIP PARTICIPATION:** The proposal ensures and demonstrates active and full support, partnership, sponsorship, and participation by non-NPS entities ensuring a strong collaborative effort. All parties involved in the project benefit from its completion, with work potentially strengthening a cooperative relationship between the NPS and the partner(s). New partnerships, innovative/creative partnerships and multi-partnership projects are encouraged. NOTE: Supporting letters from potential partners must accompany the proposal to document their willingness to participate in the project if funded. **(35 points)**
3. **TANGIBLE RESULTS:** The proposal adequately addresses the outcomes and products of the project, as well as describing the quality and usefulness of the products. The proposals should have a plan for publicity of the funded project and the Challenge Cost Share Program. Proposals should generally describe projects that adhere to a one-year time frame. Proposals offering projects with a time frame requiring longer than one year should describe the need for the extended term. **(10 points)**
4. **COST EFFECTIVENESS.** The budget is well developed and reflects reasonable costs and allocation of funds for materials and services to complete proposed work within the scheduled time frame. Lump sum components are broken down into rates, hours, units, etc. **(10 points)**

5. **COMPLETE APPLICATION PACKAGE:** The application proposal must be complete.
6. **PROJECT COMPLETION FORM:** If applicable, the applicant must have submitted a Project Completion Form or Project Status Form for a prior project. If one has not been received, or has been found unacceptable by the CCSP Regional Coordinator, then the proposal is not eligible for consideration for a new CCSP award until the deficiency is remedied.

PROJECT APPLICATION

CONTENT AND FORM OF APPLICATION:

- The project application form is included and is largely self-explanatory. Please note that although the application form is electronic, there is no vehicle to apply on-line. SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance, 424A Budget and 424B Assurances are also attached.
- The project information must fit within the spaces provided on the application form – no continuation sheets will be accepted.
- The project must be entered into the NPS Project Management Information System (PMIS) by the project manager and the application must be submitted to the CCSP Regional Coordinator via e-mail or in hard copy.
- Supporting letter(s) from the potential partner(s) stating a commitment to provide the matching funds or in-kind services must accompany the application.

ADDRESS TO SUBMIT APPLICATION:

NER CCSP Coordinator
Leslie Dietrich
National Park Service, NER
15 State Street
Boston, MA 02109
Phone: (617) 223-5433
e-mail: Leslie_Dietrich@nps.gov

TIMELINE:

Hard copy applications and letter(s) of support must be received by the CCSP Regional Coordinator via e-mail, regular mail, or overnight mail (faxes not accepted) by:

5:00pm, Monday, December 7, 2009.

The project must be entered into PMIS by

COB, Monday, December 14, 2009.

ANTICIPATED NOTICE OF SELECTION AND AWARD DATES:

The CCSP Regional Coordinator will notify superintendents and program managers of their tentative selection or non-selection for funding by January 31, 2010. It is the responsibility of the park and/or program manager to notify their partner organizations of their tentative selection or non-selection for funding.

Funds will be available when the Northeast Region receives its FY2010 CCSP allocation. Once accounts are established, the CCSP Regional Coordinator will notify park superintendents and program managers

with their account numbers and partner organizations will receive an official notification letter from the Regional Director.

ELIGIBLE COSTS AND VALUATION

Project costs must not only be reasonable and necessary to complete project work, but must also be (a) allowable; and (b) valued according to the appropriate Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular cost principles (Department of the Interior regulations at 43 CFR 12). Contracting staff in the Regional Office are familiar with these Circulars. The following are important basic elements:

1. Allowable in-kind (non-cash) contributions are defined in OMB Circulars:

- A-87 - for Agreements with governments;
- A-122 - for Agreements with non- profits; or
- A-21 - for Agreements with educational institutions.

Matching share is also covered in OMB Circulars A-110, codified in 43 CFR 12.923 (administrative requirements for universities or non-profits) and A-102, codified in 43 CFR 12.64 (for governments and Indian tribes).

2. Non-federal partner matching share must be cash or goods, volunteer labor or services, equipment, or other necessary items that would have had to be purchased to carry out the project if it were not contributed. For example:

- a. *Donated supplies or loaned equipment:* If a partner donates supplies, the contribution is valued at the market value of the supplies at the time of donation. If the partner donates equipment, but retains title, the contribution is valued at the fair market rental value of the equipment.

- b. *Volunteer services:* Donated services are valued at the rate for "similar work," in brief:

- (1) In-kind services provided by a government or university partner is valued according to rates paid by the partner to its employees for performing similar work. If the partner does not have employees performing similar work, the applicable rate is that paid by other employers for similar work in the labor market in which the partner competes for services.

- (2) If other organizations other than the partner provide at no cost the services of an employee, these services are valued at the employee's regular rate of pay (except fringe benefits and overhead), provided the services are in the same line of work for which the employee normally is paid. If the services are in a different line of work, then the rules for volunteer work apply.

- (3) The national volunteer labor rate should be used for estimating for in-kind labor contributions if the above situations do not apply. For FY 2010 that rate is calculated at \$20.25 per hour according to www.independentsector.org.

3. Federal funds cannot match Federal funds. To be counted as matching funds, the contribution must come from any non-federal government entity, private individual or organization, charitable group, or private business. Funds provided directly from Federal sources or Federal agencies are NOT

eligible to be "counted" as matching share or cost-sharing, but these contributions may be separately listed to the extent those contributions relate to the overall costs of the project.

4. Generally, CCSP money shall not be used to fund "regular" ONPS activity. This includes routine maintenance or other normally budgeted park operational activity. The following is not to be charged to a CCSP project:
 - Salaries or wages or day labor of National Park Service staff, including supervisory costs;
 - NPS travel unless part of the project work plan;
 - Capital equipment; and
 - Computer equipment purchase unless justified in the application.
5. Where CCSP funding is part of a larger project, only the scope of work of the CCSP project should be considered in calculating the matching share amount to be applied to CCSP.

DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. **CREDIT AND VISIBILITY:** In cases where CCSP funds are awarded to develop publications, videos, pamphlets, displays, exhibits, and signs and/or the recipient disseminates the findings or products developed from the project in professional journals, books, film, videos, or conferences, a copy must be sent to the park, trail or program office; Regional CCSP Coordinator as soon as these become available, even if they appear after completion of project work. There are no restrictions on these publications other than the requirement to include the following acknowledgement and disclaimer in such publications:

This [research][project][exhibit] was supported by the National Park Service's Challenge Cost Share Program. Points of view are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the position of the Department of the Interior.

2. **AGREEMENT INSTRUMENTS:** If CCSP funds are transferred to a partner, a cooperative agreement must be used. SF 424 forms are also required.

Public Law 104-208, the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 1997, gave broad authority to NPS to use cooperative agreements. The Act states:

The National Park Service may in fiscal year 1997 and thereafter enter into cooperative agreements that involve the transfer of National Park Service appropriated funds to State, local and tribal governments, other public entities, educational institutions, and private nonprofit organizations for the public purpose of carrying out National Park Service programs pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 6305

Also, under P.L. 104-333 (16 U.S.C. 1f), NPS now has permanent authority to enter into challenge cost-share agreements. A "challenge cost-share agreement" is defined as any agreement entered into . . . for the purpose of sharing costs or services in carrying out authorized functions and responsibilities of the Secretary . . . with any unit or program of the National Park System . . . , any affiliated area, or any designated or National Scenic or Historic Trail.

Therefore, in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 6305 and the expanded authority provided in P.L. 104-208, if CCSP funds are to be awarded to an eligible third party, a cooperative agreement may be used even

when the project directly benefits the NPS, provided the "tests" of: substantial involvement by NPS in the project, and of the project involving a "public purpose" are met.

SPECIFYING NPS' SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT: If the "tests" are met, both the partner's CCSP work and NPS' substantial involvement are to be clearly stated in the CCSP application so that, if funds are transferred to the partner's organization, NPS' substantial involvement can be stated in the cooperative agreement. The following is the **minimum** NPS role that may justify substantial involvement:

- ◆ NPS will assign (name and title) as Agreement Technical Representative to work with (name of applicant) to coordinate NPS' role in the project.
- ◆ NPS will assign the following personnel to work on the project:
[Cite numbers of personnel, titles or relevant skills, and other details necessary to describe the skills NPS will provide to the project.]
- ◆ NPS will perform the following activities and tasks:
[List activities and tasks in measurable terms.]

It is recommended that the partner's objectives, major work activities and schedule be inserted into the agreement, and the approved budget be inserted into or attached to the cooperative agreement.

MODEL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT: The NPS Agreements Handbook hasn't yet incorporated a model agreement, however, attached are NER contracting-approved cooperative agreement templates.

NOTE: It is not necessary to require a completed cooperative agreement (or contract) prior to selecting a project for funding. However, the cooperative agreement or contract must be executed before the applicant receives funds.

3. **SUMMARY OF FY 2010 FUNDED PROJECTS:** It is the responsibility of the NER CCSP Coordinator to send a record of all FY 2010 projects selected for funding to the National CCSP Coordinator not later than **July 30, 2010**; this information will include the park unit or program name, project title, PMIS project number (if applicable), project partners, amount of CCSP grant, amount of partner contribution, total cost of the project, and funding mechanism (cooperative agreement, contract or procurement). This information is used in the annual budget justification for CCSP as well as in Administration and Congressional reporting.
4. **PROJECT COMPLETION FORMS:** The Project Completion Form (attached) is intended to show that funds were accounted for and spent for planned results, document partner matches, and to give information for publicizing CCSP results. NER CCSP Coordinator must receive, maintain and ensure that the Project Completion Forms for all funded CCSP projects are complete and accurate. The NER Coordinator, in turn, will forward copies of Project Completion Forms to the National CCSP Coordinator.
5. **SUBMISSION of SF425:** Frequency to depend upon payment schedule (i.e., semi-annually or annually).

6. **PHASED PROJECTS:** For those projects for which (1) planned work has not been completed during the fiscal year for whatever reason; or (2) work was intended to be phased or staged, the Regional Offices should use its own one-page Project Status Form (attached). The Form should state (1) what planned results or deliverables have been completed; (2) causes of any delays; (3) how much of the CCSP and matching funds have been expended, and the balances remaining; (4) what results or deliverables remain; and (5) expected (revised) completion dates. The National CCSP Coordinator should be notified of any projects that will be continuing past the end of the fiscal year in which the CCSP award was received. Project Completion Forms are required at the time the project is finished.

REDISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

If an NPS Office or selected partner(s) are unable to carry out their project at the time that funds are to be awarded, the funds should be allocated by the Regional Director or Associate Director (as appropriate) to the next priority project that can be accomplished with the available funds, upon recommendations by the Regional Coordinator.

UNOBLIGATED FUNDS: If a Regional Office cannot obligate its total amount for CCSP projects in whatever mix is allocated, the Regional Coordinator will notify the National CCSP Coordinator by **July 30, 2010**, so that the balance may be re-programmed to other Regions with greater need.

Attachments (NPS use):

Application

Project Completion Form

Project Status Form

Cooperative Agreement Templates