

(iii) *Objectives of the project.* This section must include the following:

(A) A description of how the VPA-HIP funding will be used to encourage public access to private farm, ranch, and forest land for hunting, fishing, and other recreational purposes;

(B) A description of the methods that will be used to achieve the provisions of paragraph (f)(5)(iii)(A) of this section;

(C) A description of how and to what extent the proposed program will meet with widespread acceptance among landowners;

(D) A detailed description of how and to what extent the land enrolled will have appropriate wildlife habitat and how program funds may be used to improve those habitats;

(E) A detailed description of how and to what extent public hunting and other recreational access will be increased on land enrolled under a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program as specified under §1410.50 of this chapter, or if Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program land is not available, specify that there is no impact;

(F) A detailed description of how any additional Federal, State, tribal government, or private resources will be used to carry out grant activities; and

(G) A detailed description of how the public will be made aware of the location of the land enrolled.

(iv) *Work plan.* Applications must discuss the specific tasks to be completed using grant and matching funds. The work plan should show how customers will be identified, key personnel to be involved with administration of the grant, and the evaluation methods to be used to determine the success of specific tasks and overall objectives of a VPA-HIP grant. The budget must present a breakdown of the estimated costs associated with VPA-HIP activities and allocate these costs to each of the tasks to be undertaken. Additional funds from Federal, State, tribal government, or private resources as well as grant funds and resources provided in kind must be accounted for in the budget.

(v) *Performance evaluation criteria.* Applications should discuss how the State or tribal government will evaluate whether the program for which the

grant is being sought will meet the stated goals for the State or tribal program, including but not limited to landowner and recreationist participation, outreach, and cost-effectiveness.

(vii) *Other similar efforts.* The applicant must describe its previous accomplishments and outcomes in public access activities, if any.

(viii) *Qualifications of personnel.* Applicants must describe the qualifications of personnel expected to perform key tasks, and whether these personnel are to be full- or part-time employees or contract personnel.

#### § 1455.20 Criteria for grant selection.

(a) Incomplete or non-responsive applications will not be evaluated. Applicants may revise their applications and re-submit them prior to the published deadline if there is sufficient time to do so.

(b) After all applications have been evaluated using the evaluation criteria and scored in accordance with the point allocation specified in the RFA, a list of all applications in ranked order, together with funding level recommendations, will be submitted to the Deputy Administrator, FSA.

(c) Unless supplemented in a RFA, applications for grants for VPA-HIP will be evaluated using the criteria listed in this section. The distribution of points to be awarded per criterion will be identified in the RFA.

(1) *Benefits.* The application will be evaluated to determine whether and to what extent the project's anticipated outcomes promote improvement of public access for wildlife-dependent recreation and intended environmental benefits.

(2) *Project description and feasibility.* The application will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which the applicant demonstrates a reasonable approach to the project, sufficient resources to complete the project, and a capability to complete the project in a timely manner.

(3) *Widespread acceptance and maximizing participation of landowners.* The application will be evaluated based on the applicant's plan for encouraging the participation of owners and operators of privately-held farm, ranch, and forest land, and for engaging the public

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users. Additionally, the extent to which the applicant has identified and established relationships with the partners necessary to achieve the project's goals will be evaluated.

(4) *Appropriate wildlife habitat.* The application will be evaluated to determine whether the applicant demonstrates expertise in providing technical assistance with respect to establishing and maintaining appropriate wildlife habitat on public access land.

(5) *Strengthening wildlife habitat for lands under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).* The application will be evaluated to determine whether the project proposes to provide incentives to increase public hunting and other recreational access on land enrolled under CREP as authorized by § 1410.50.

(6) *Additional private, Federal, State, or tribal government resources.* The application will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the support letters provided by other organizations involved with the project demonstrate specific and quantified commitments to the project. Applications that demonstrate additional resources will receive more points, all else being equal, than those that do not.

(7) *Making available the location of enrolled land.* The application will be evaluated to determine how the project proposes to make available to the public the location of the land enrolled.

(8) *Performance evaluation criteria.* The application will be evaluated to determine whether the applicant has included outcome-based performance measures.

(9) *Administrative capabilities.* The application will be evaluated to determine whether the grant applicant has a track record of administering the project or, in the absence of a track record, the capacity to administer the project. Applicants that have demonstrated capable financial systems and audit controls, personnel and program administration performance measures, and clear rules of governance will receive more points than those not evidencing this capacity.

(10) *Delivery.* The application will be evaluated to determine whether the applicant has a track record in implementing public access or similar pro-

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grams or, in the absence of an actual track record, the capacity to implement a public access program. The applicant's potential for delivering an effective public access program and the expected effects of that program will also be assessed.

(11) *Work plan and budget.* The work plan will be reviewed for detailed actions and an accompanying timetable for implementing the components of the application. Clear, logical, realistic, and efficient plans will result in a higher score. Budgets will be reviewed for completeness and whether and to what extent additional resources were committed by Federal, State, or tribal government, and private resources.

(12) *Qualifications of those performing the tasks.* The application will be reviewed to determine if key personnel have appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities with respect to wildlife-dependent recreation including hunting or fishing on privately-held farm, ranch, and forest land, funds control, grants management, performance monitoring and evaluation, or other activities relevant to the success of the proposed public access program.

### § 1455.21 Additional responsibilities of grantee.

(a) Before receiving grant funding, the grantee will be required to sign an agreement similar in form and substance to the form of agreement published within or as an appendix to the RFA. The agreement will require the grantee to commit to do all of the following:

(1) Take all practicable steps to develop continuing sources of financial support from other Federal, State, tribal government, or private resources;

(2) Make arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the activities related to implementation of the public access program of the owners or operators that enroll farm, ranch, and forest land; and

(3) Provide an accounting for the money received by the grantee under this subpart.

(b) Grantees will be required to monitor funds or services as specified in paragraph (c) of this section, and must