



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
441 G STREET, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20314-1000

S: 30 September 2019

CECW-CO

**MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION**

**SUBJECT: Handshake Partnership Program – Fiscal Year 2020 Invitation for Proposals**

1. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is committed to continuing and building a partnership culture within our organization and recognizes that partnerships are a key component to continued successful operations.
2. The Handshake Partnership Program began in 2004 and has provided “seed money” to Corps facilities for 184 partnership projects that have engaged over 560 partners on federal lands. These projects have improved recreational opportunities and benefited environmental stewardship activities while promoting the Corps missions. Partners have contributed over \$8.4 million in volunteer hours, professional services, materials and supplies, equipment, and funds to these efforts.
3. This program provides incentive to use our partnering authorities to their fullest potential and an opportunity to compete for additional funding to further partnerships.
4. Corps project offices are invited to submit applications to obtain funding assistance to enter into partnerships with non-Federal entities (i.e. Challenge Partnership Agreements) to accomplish activities which benefit recreation facilities and/or natural resources at Corps water resource development projects. Applications must be received no later than 30 September 2019.
5. The Handshake Program application instructions and application form are enclosed. More information about this program and the downloadable application form can be found on the Natural Resource Management Gateway at <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/handshake/handshake.cfm>.
6. POC for this effort is Heath Kruger, NWD Partnership Advisory Committee member, (402) 995-2716.

2 Encls

1. Handshake Application Instructions
2. Handshake Program Application

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas P. Smith".

THOMAS P. SMITH, P.E.  
Operations and Regulatory Division  
Directorate of Civil Works

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SUBJECT: Handshake Partnership Program – Fiscal Year 2020 Invitation for Proposals

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SUBJECT: Handshake Partnership Program – Fiscal Year 2020 Invitation for Proposals

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## Handshake Program FY 2020 - Application Instructions

### **Application Deadline: Close of Business 30 September 2019**

Please read all instructions prior to beginning application. These instructions and the application form are available on the NRM Gateway:

<https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/handshake/handshake.cfm>

#### 1) **General Information:**

- A. Individual lakes/river projects/districts may submit more than one application; however, each location may only receive funding for one project.
- B. Locations receiving Handshake funding must include this information in their NRM Assessment/OMBIL reporting in the appropriate year end reporting.
- C. The application must be routed through the NRM branch at the District and Division levels.
- D. The entire application package must be forwarded electronically for consideration from the Division level.
- E. After being notified of their selection, recipients must complete and provide a copy of the signed Challenge Partnership Agreement that has been reviewed and approved by District Office of Counsel to the Handshake Program POC. Upon receipt of a valid agreement, funds will be provided to recipients. Funding is subject to availability.
- F. These funds are intended for “start-up” costs and/or the Corps facility’s match in the partnership. All government funds must be spent in accordance with FAR, DFAR and AFAR contracting laws and regulations. Funds cannot be provided to the partner(s).
- G. Funds should be spent before the end of the next fiscal year following award (within 2 years). A completion report must be submitted to the Handshake Program POC. The report format will be provided upon notification of being selected.
- H. Any lake project or facility that has received handshake funds more than two years previous to this (FY2018 and before) must have submitted a final report or a request for extension for those previous Handshake projects to be eligible for 2020 funding.
- I. If at any point a partnership chosen to receive Handshake Funds cannot proceed, the Handshake Funds must be returned to HQUSACE.

#### 2) **Please, keep in mind that USACE does not:**

- A. Solicit funds.
- B. Endorse products or services of partners.
- C. Give preferential treatment to partners.
- D. Have authority to provide “grants” to a partner. You CANNOT give your Handshake Funds to your partner. Handshake Funds must be expended via regular contracting and expenditure mechanisms.
- E. Lobby. However, we do provide information about potential project development and partnering opportunities to anyone who asks.

3) **The Application Form:** Applications should be concise and complete. Section E may not exceed three (3) pages. The application form and financial worksheet are a protected MS Word document. Please do not alter the application form. An explanation of entry blocks follows.

A. Checklist:

- 1) Challenge Partnerships may only occur on facilities and resources where such facilities and resources are being maintained at complete Federal expense. Activities on standard recreation lease areas ARE NOT eligible (i.e state parks/county parks) for Handshake funds.
- 2) Challenge Partnerships must be with non-federal public and private entities in accordance with Section 225 of WRDA 1992.
- 3) Activities shall be within current authorities and contained in the annual or five-year plan in the approved Operational Management Plan (OMP) in accordance with ER 1130-2-500 Chapter 12. If the proposed activity is not in the annual or 5-year work plans, the OMP must be updated and approved prior to the start date of the proposed project to be considered for Handshake funding.
- 4) Projects must consider any NEPA requirements that may be necessary prior to beginning work on the Handshake project.
- 5) Challenge Partnership Agreements must be reviewed and approved by District Office of Counsel and any other support elements as applicable (ie. Contracting, Resource Management) prior to submittal to the Handshake Program POC.
- 6) All Handshake applications are reviewed and ranked by the PAC team. The highest ranked projects will receive funding up to the \$200,000 total for the FY 20 program. Oftentimes, the last project that falls within the funding limit may not receive the full amount requested. Please let us know whether you would be able to accept less than the full requested amount for your project to complete a portion of the proposal.
- 7) The Partnership Advisory Committee recommends participation in one or more of the Handshake Webinars that provide guidance and information regarding the Handshake Program.

B. Handshake Funding Amount Requested: enter amount being requested up to \$25,000 maximum.

C. Incentive Points Categories:

- 1) This project will be completed with a national MOU partner with which the Lake or Project hasn't previously partnered. (100 points).

- 2) This project reduces O&M costs to the Corps over the lifecycle of the proposed project or improves existing infrastructure. (100 points).

D. Describe your partnership and the proposed project:

- 1) Summary Statement: Provide a **three or four sentence** summary of what the project is about. This block is limited to **1,500 characters**.
- 2) Handshake Funding Cost Break Down – Clearly define what the Handshake Funding will be used to purchase, and provide cost breakdowns in bullet format.

For example, see the following Handshake funding cost break down from a previously selected Handshake Project:

*Handshake Funding Cost Break Down:*

- *Elevated Shooting Stand Materials – wood, screws, bolts, stain, etc. - \$2,543.17*
  - *Shooting Target Structure Materials – wood, screws, bolts, stain, etc. - \$1,953.76*
  - *Fencing Contract- Fencing, Labor, and Contracting Fees - \$11,700.00*
  - *Cement Pathway- Cement and Trucking Delivery - \$3,240.00*
  - *Limestone Chip Paths- Rock and Truck Delivery- \$600*
  - *Morrel Archery Targets/Replacement Covers- Supplies and Shipping - \$2,215.92*
  - *Kiosk- Kiosk and Shipping- \$1,616.59*
- Total: 23,869.44*

- 3) Description: Describe the partnership and the work to be accomplished. The description (all of Section E including the Summary and Concluding Statement) shall not exceed three pages. Include the basic who, what, when, where, how. Outline concisely the tasks needed to complete the project and who will accomplish them, e.g., new facilities, renovations made, research reports, type of visitor services, cultural or natural resources preserved, educational or interpretive products created, etc. Specifically address how the project will meet the following six evaluation criteria.
  - a. Longevity / O&M – Explain or describe the expected life of the project. How many years will it last? What materials are used or efforts are made to extend the life span of the final product? Who will provide the operations and maintenance of the project to ensure prolonged benefit to the Corps and/or its partner(s)?
  - b. Partnership Value – What is the significance of the partner’s involvement and contribution to the project (e.g. matching dollars, materials or in-kind services, etc.)? How is the partner critical to the successful completion of this project and to ongoing relationships?

- c. **Recreational Benefit** – How does the project improve the overall recreational experience? Does the project improve the recreational experience for multiple user types? List the types of users that will benefit from this project.
  - d. **Environmental Stewardship Value** – Does the project contribute to the physical improvement of the Corps' natural and/or cultural resources? Explain how this project improves the Corps' ES mission. Some examples may include improving pollinator habitat, reduction of invasive species, improvement of waterfowl habitat, landscape conservation, improvement of fisheries habitat, etc.
  - e. **Communication and Education Value** – Does the project increase public understanding of the Corps and its missions through interpretation, outreach, education and public information? What specific activities will be done to communicate the benefits of this project and how do they relate to the missions of the Corps?
  - f. **Innovativeness** – Describe the innovative nature of the partnership or the end result. Are other organizations doing this kind of project? How is this partnership unique and valuable to the lake project and to this Handshake Project? What makes this project important and unique? How is it different from everyone else's project?
- 4) **Conclusion** – Summarize why this project should be awarded Handshake funding. Anything not addressed above should be included in this section. This is not a scored item and is limited to 500 characters.
- 5) If the partner(s) will be utilizing funds from a grant, indicate the amount of the grant, how the funds would be expended, the organization providing the grant, and when the grant would be awarded.
- 6) Describe contingencies for proceeding with the project if the partner does not receive the anticipated grant or if the project does not receive Handshake funds. These will be taken into account when evaluating the proposal. Funds provided by a non-Federal partner may include grant funds provided by another Federal agency if the Federal granting agency confirms, in writing, that the funds may be used for this purpose.

**NOTE:** If a proposal is chosen to receive Handshake funds, but the Challenge Partnership cannot proceed due to any reason, the Handshake funds must be returned.

- E. **Financial Work Sheet** (spreadsheet) – Complete all applicable information based on the guidance below. Double click on the spreadsheet to access data entry fields. Fields not applicable to the funding provider are blocked. Funding totals and % fields will be calculated automatically.

- 1) Corps – Enter funds that your local office is putting towards the Challenge Partnership. This includes burdened salaries for Corps employees (local office and/or district office) during review or oversight, or any other government expenses not covered by Handshake funds. Every project should have some amount in this field.
- 2) Handshake Funds – Funds may be expended for the purchase of materials and supplies, equipment use, and contract labor via government credit card and/or government contracts. Handshake funds may not be spent on salaries or travel for Corps employees. If Handshake funds are used for contracts, list amount as “Other.” Handshake funds may not be used to fund contracts entered into by partners. Non-applicable fields are locked.
- 3) Partner(s) – Enter the partner’s name at the top of each column. List the contributions of each partner signing the challenge partnership agreement. If the partner(s) are utilizing funding from a grant, please disperse funds in spreadsheet in the category they will be expended. Information on the total amount of the grant and the status of the grant should be included in the Description section.
- 4) Funding Categories:
  - a. Salaries – Staff salaries - Hours necessary to accomplish the project including local office and/or district office review or oversight. Handshake Funds cannot be spent to pay for Corps staff salaries.
  - b. Travel – Expenses including transportation, lodging, etc. Handshake Funds cannot be spent on Corps travel.
  - c. Materials and Supplies – Consumable items including materials (lumber, gravel, concrete, wire, etc.) and supplies (nails, envelopes, paper products, etc.) necessary for construction of the project. Personal property is listed separately.
  - d. Contributed Funds – Cash contributions made to the Corps by partner/s which the Corps would expend on the partnership project are listed under the partner’s contribution. Include an explanation of how these funds would be expended in the explanation section of the worksheet and/or project description. Funds provided by a non-Federal partner may include grant funds provided by another Federal agency if the Federal granting agency confirms, in writing, that the funds may be used for this purpose.
  - e. Equipment Use – Value of hours of equipment use. Use prevailing local rates for rentals.
  - f. Personal Property – Items such as signs, benches, tools, equipment, etc. that will become the property of the Corps.
  - g. Volunteer – Value of hours worked by volunteers. The value can be calculated using volunteer value of service hourly rates in accordance with National



Volunteer Policy Letter 04-01. The rate is available on Volunteer Page of NRM Gateway.

<https://corpslakes.erd.c.dren.mil/employees/faqs.cfm?Id=volunteer&View=Yes>

- h. **In-Kind Services** – The value of services donated by a professional (design, engineering, etc.) or trades person (carpentry, plumbing, electrical) based on the prevailing rate for those services. The value of this item will be determined by the partner(s).

**NOTE:** The financial worksheet used in the application may be used as the financial worksheet attachment for your Challenge Partnership agreement if selected, instead of the example provided in Appendix T of the regulation.

4) **Attachments:** Up to **four** additional pages of **drawings, maps, photos, plans**, etc. may be attached to the application. Text should be limited to a title or brief description of the attachment. This is not a location to provide additional justification of the application.

5) **Compliance:** Applications that do not meet the guidelines outlined within these instructions will have points deducted from their final score. Examples of non-compliance may include sentence fragments, exceeding page limits, excessive attachments, use of previous year's forms, etc.

6) **Submitting Application: Application Deadline: Close of Business 30 September 2019**

Application packages must be coordinated with District and Division offices prior to being submitted and must be sent from the Division coordinator via e-mail to Heath Kruger, [heath.r.kruger@usace.army.mil](mailto:heath.r.kruger@usace.army.mil) (402) 955-2716.

7) **Recipient Selection Procedures:** The Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC) will evaluate and rank the proposal using the **six evaluation criteria** listed above, including incentive categories. Headquarters leadership will make the final award decisions based on the PAC recommendations. A memorandum announcing recipients will be routed through the Divisions following selections.

8) **Handshake Questions:** If you have questions regarding the application or any aspects of the Handshake Program, please contact Heath Kruger, Handshake Program Coordinator or your division PAC member listed on the NRM Gateway at <https://corpslakes.erd.c.dren.mil/partners/pdt-members.cfm>