



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

S: 31 August 2025

CECW-CO-N

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEFS, OPERATIONS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS
AND DISTRICT COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Handshake Partnership Program – Fiscal Year 2026 Invitation for Proposals

1. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 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 USACE facilities for 224 partnership projects that have engaged over 776 partners on federal lands. These projects have improved recreational opportunities and benefited environmental stewardship activities while promoting the USACE missions. Partners have contributed over \$10.5 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. USACE 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 USACE water resource development projects. Applications must be received no later than 31 August 2025.
5. The Handshake Program application instructions and application form are enclosed. More information about this program and the application form can be found on the NRM Gateway at <https://corpslakes.erdcdren.mil/employees/handshake/handshake.cfm>.
6. My point of contact for this effort is Heather Burke, National Partnership Program Manager, (503) 808-4313.

Encls

1. Handshake FY 2026 Instructions
2. Handshake 2026 Application

STEPHEN L. HILL, PMP, SES
Director, Operations and Regulatory
Programs