

Frequently Asked Questions for the Gulf of Mexico Coast Conservation Corps Funding Program

QUESTION: Who is eligible to apply for funding?

ANSWER: Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, commercial (for profit) organizations, U.S. territories, and state, local and Native American tribal governments. Applications from individuals, federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Individuals and federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply.

QUESTION: When will proposals be due?

ANSWER: Proposals will be due March 2, 2017, either via Grants.gov or mail with postmark by deadline.

QUESTION: Is this a new program?

ANSWER: Yes, funding for this program is provided through the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act (RESTORE Act). Under the RESTORE Act, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (Council) selected an initial list of projects, known as the Funded Priorities List (FPL), to provide near-term, on-the-ground ecosystem benefits, while also conducting planning activities designed to build a foundation for future success as additional funds become available. As part of this initial FPL, the GulfCorps program is funded for three years.

QUESTION: Will match be required for this program?

ANSWER: No, match is not required. Cost-sharing through cash or in-kind match is one of the evaluation criteria, but is not required.

QUESTION: What is a Conservation Corps?

ANSWER: A Conservation Corps is a job and skills training program for local citizens to learn about habitat conservation and restoration and begin to generate skills that could help workforce development in this field. The GulfCorps program will provide paid, hands-on work experience in on-the-ground restoration projects. These jobs will involve mostly hand-labor and conservation activities. The intent of the GulfCorps is to introduce local citizens, including youth

and veterans, to opportunities in environmental restoration careers, which could include more advanced skills training. Through partnership development, the GulfCorps aspires to connect participants to other restoration-based career building opportunities that could lead to more specialized jobs as operators, machinists, welders, surveyors, and a variety of laborers, scientists, and managers.

QUESTION: What are some examples of restoration projects in the context of this program?

ANSWER: GulfCorps members may work at a variety of restoration project sites that directly result in restoring Gulf of Mexico coast ecosystems. Such projects may include invasive species eradication, shoreline stabilization, wetland or stream buffer revegetation, oyster reef restoration, hydrologic restoration through light earthwork, conservation or land management activities, debris removal, habitat or water quality assessment, and ecological monitoring.

QUESTION: How will restoration projects for GulfCorps members be selected?

ANSWER: Restoration projects for GulfCorps participation will be selected collaboratively by NOAA, our state partners, and the award recipient(s), and by applying the following project selection considerations: 1) project readiness and implementation logistics; 2) benefit to habitats and communities affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; and 3) opportunity for GulfCorps skillset development.

QUESTION: How long will the GulfCorps Program last?

ANSWER: Applicants should prepare an application that divides their funding request into three one-year allocations. Once funds are awarded, recipients will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years. NOAA expects, but is not obligated, to provide more funding to these awards for an additional two years, based on recipient performance, the availability of restoration projects that meet the project selection considerations described in the FFO, and future allocations of funding from the Council as awarded through an Interagency Agreement between NOAA and the Council. The RESTORE Act has provided funding for the GulfCorps for three years. After this period, NOAA or other Council members will need to compete for additional funding on subsequent FPLs.

QUESTION: Where will the GulfCorps be located?

ANSWER: The GulfCorps will have representation in each of the Gulf coast states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida). As stated in the FPL, approximately \$1 million of restoration work will be accomplished in each state. The management structure of the GulfCorps is at the discretion of the applicants to propose, and will be chosen based on the best fit to the selection criteria.