

2026 National Culvert Removal, Replacement & Restoration Grants

Culvert AOP Program



Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 PM ET July 16, 2026.

Culvert AOP website: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/engineering/hydraulics/culverthyd/aquatic/culvertaop.cfm>

View the NOFO: <https://simpler.grants.gov/opportunity/228448ea-88bb-4139-876f-b43e16258db6>

Program Overview

The National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program (Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Program) is a competitive grant program that awards grants to eligible entities for projects for the replacement, removal, and repair of culverts or weirs that meaningfully improve or restore fish passage for anadromous fish. Anadromous is the term that describes fish born in freshwater who spend most of their lives in saltwater and return/migrate to freshwater to spawn.

The FY 2023–2026 Culvert AOP NOFO released June 2, 2026 replaces the June 25, 2024 NOFO. Applicants who previously submitted under the 2024 NOFO must update and resubmit their application using the new application template.

Eligibility

States, units of local government and Indian Tribes.

Multiple Eligible Applicants may submit a joint application. Such applications should identify a Lead Applicant as the primary point of contact and identify the primary recipient of the award. The requirements applicable to the Lead Applicant will apply to a joint application that receives Culvert AOP Program funding.

Eligible Project Types

Eligible Projects must: (1) meaningfully improve or restore fish passage for anadromous fish; and (2) involve the replacement, removal, or repair of culverts or weirs. With respect to weirs, an Eligible Project may also include infrastructure to facilitate fish passage around or over the weir and weir improvements. See 49 U.S.C. 6703(b). Eligible Projects should also: (3) have a transportation nexus (e.g., involve, relate to, or be situated in close proximity to a road/rail crossing, pipeline, highway, or other transportation infrastructure)

Eligibilities for culverts: Projects to replace, remove, or repair culverts that would meaningfully improve or restore fish passage for anadromous fish; [§ 21203(a); 49 U.S.C. 6703(b)]

Eligibility for weirs: Projects to replace, remove, or repair weirs that would meaningfully improve or restore fish passage for anadromous fish. With respect to weirs, the project may include—

- infrastructure to facilitate fish passage around or over the weir; and
- weir improvements. [§ 21203(a); 49 U.S.C. 6703(b)]

Applications may propose a project (or bundled multiple projects) that may include non-construction activities, construction activities, or both.

Eligible grant activities may include preliminary and detailed design studies and associated environmental studies

Costs of replacing, removing, or repairing culverts or weirs that are the subject of a settlement agreement or court order are eligible under the Culvert AOP Program, and are reimbursable if awarded a grant under this program and incurred pursuant to such award.

A weir is a constructed barrier on a stream channel designed to provide hydraulic control without completely stopping

flow or creating a large storage impoundment. A dam is not a weir for the purposes of this program.

Cost Share

80 percent Federal share for grants to States or units of local government (requiring a minimum of a 20 percent match).
100 percent Federal share for grants to Indian Tribes (requiring no match).

DOT will primarily administer grants on a reimbursement basis. Recipients or sub-recipients do have the option to request alternative funding arrangements.

What Anadromous Fish will be Positively Impacted

The primary goal of the Culvert AOP Program is to improve or restore anadromous fish passage through the replacement, removal, repair, or improvement of culverts or weirs. Fish passage is the ability of fish to move freely between habitats they rely on for food, growth, reproduction, and other needs. Fish passage projects improve the movement of fish within and between their spawning, rearing, and adult habitats by modifying or removing dams, culverts, and other barriers that restrict their migration.

The grant program prioritizes projects that would improve fish passage for:

- Anadromous fish stocks listed as an endangered species or a threatened species under Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533); For the purpose of the program, endangered species are those listed as endangered species under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1533. See [50 CFR § 17.11](#).
- Anadromous fish stocks identified by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that could reasonably become listed as an endangered species or a threatened species under that Section;
- Anadromous fish stocks identified by the NMFS or the USFWS as prey for endangered species, threatened species, or protected species, including southern resident orcas (*Orcinus orca*);
- Anadromous fish stocks identified by the NMFS or the USFWS as *climate resilient stocks*;
 - Climate resilient stocks are capable of resisting, recovering, and adapting to climate change such as increases in stream temperature or changes in flow. This funding opportunity will consider fish barrier removal projects that improve the climate resilience (reduce climate vulnerability) of anadromous fish stocks and their ecosystems.
- The program also prioritizes projects that would open up more than 200 meters of upstream (anadromous) habitat (49 U.S.C. § 6703(e)(2)).

Interested applicants should define in clear terms which anadromous fish species will be positively impacted by the project. The program also prioritizes projects that would open up more than 200 meters of upstream (anadromous) habitat before the end of the natural habitat (49 U.S.C. 6703(e)(2)).

Endangered or threatened anadromous fish found in NH:

There are 3 species of anadromous fish known to inhabit NH that are presently on the threatened or endangered species list: *Atlantic sturgeon*, *Shortnose sturgeon*, and *Atlantic salmon*.

Anadromous fish found in NH:

The following fish are anadromous fish found in NH: sea lamprey; alewife, blueback herring, american shad, river herring, rainbow smelt, brown trout, striped bass, white perch, and rainbow smelt.

Project Selection Criteria

Criterion #1: Conservation Benefits to Anadromous Fish

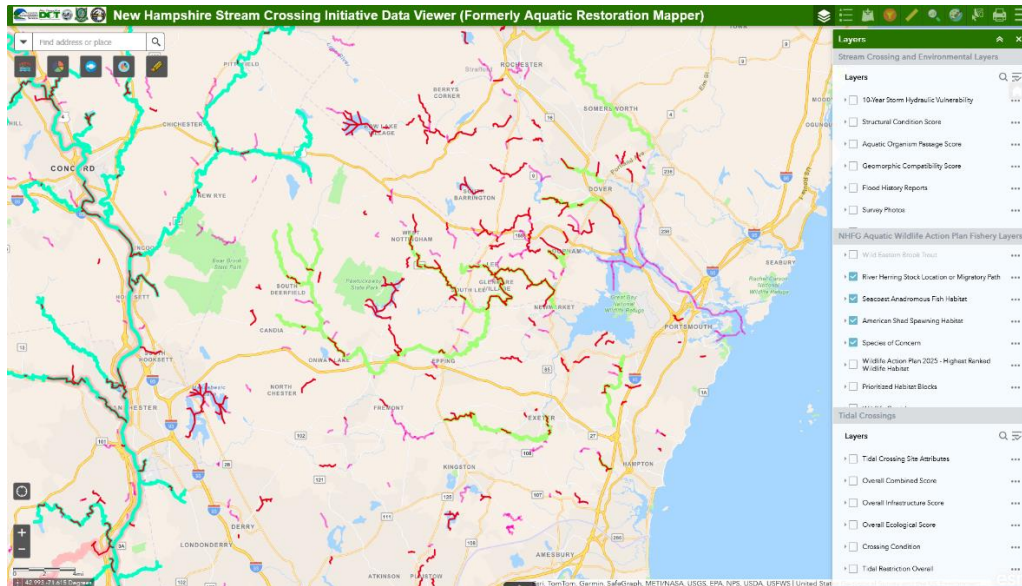
Criterion #2: Regional & Watershed Benefits Supporting American Families & Economy

Criterion #3: Ecosystem Benefits

Criterion #4: Project Design and Performance Prioritizing Core Infrastructure

Applications are also reviewed for technical assessment, financial completeness assessment, and permitting risk assessment.

NHSCI Data Viewer



<https://nhdes.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=21173c9556be4c52bc20ea706e1c9f5a>

*Additional supplemental information is available for NHSCI Data Viewer to support project identification and planning. Please contact UNH T2 Center for more information.

To use the map tool:

At the top right, the first icon on the right is "layers"

Select the following layers:

1. Seacoast Anadromous Fish Habitat
2. American Shad Spawning Habitat
3. River Herring Stock Location or Migratory Path
4. American Eel
5. Species of Concern

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted electronically through **Grants.gov**.

All application materials may be found on Grants.gov at <https://www.grants.gov/> Once at Grants.gov, select the Search Grants tab. Then enter one of the following:

- Opportunity Number: FHWA-CAOP-23-001
- Opportunity Name: National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration (Culvert Aquatic Organism Passage)
- Assistance Listing Number: 20.276

The application package must consist of the following:

Required Forms for Non-Construction Project Applications:	Required Forms for Construction Project Applications:
Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance)	Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance)
Grants.gov Lobbying Form (Certification Regarding Lobbying)	Grants.gov Lobbying Form (Certification Regarding Lobbying)
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form (SFLLL)	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form (SFLLL)
Standard Form 424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs)	Standard Form 424C (Budget Information for Construction Programs)

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/engineering/hydraulics/culverthyd/aquatic/culvertaop_application_template_fy23-26.pdf

All mandatory Standard Forms (SF) of the 424 family are available for download at the

<https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>

Useful links

[Culvert AOP Program Website \(FHWA\)](#)

[Interagency Fish Passage Portal](#)

[Current NOFO](#)

[Application Template](#)

[Grants.gov Opportunity Page](#)

[USDOT Culvert Project Location Overlay Tool \(CPLLOT\)](#)

*Additional supplemental information is available for CPLLOT to support project identification and planning. Please contact UNH T2 Center for more information.

Contacts

For assistance identifying anadromous fish habitats or to request letters of support for potential projects, please contact:

- Jared Lamy
Fish Habitat Biologist, NHFG
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- Kevin Lucey
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- Polly Perkins
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UNH T2 is pleased to provide free and customized Technical Assistance to local road agencies on a variety of road maintenance and transportation infrastructure-related topics, including bridge preservation and maintenance activities. Please reach out to t2.center@unh.edu for additional resources, support, or technical assistance, or visit <https://t2.unh.edu/>.



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