Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks

Youth Participation Initiative Program





2026 - 2027 Program Guidelines

General Information about the **Youth Participation Initiative Program:**

Program Purpose:

- The Youth Participation Initiative Program was established in 2009 to provide funding for the purpose of educating children in the areas of hunting, fishing, conservation, and safety.
- The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) encourages applicants to focus on the education, recruitment, or retention of youth in the areas listed above or in any safety issues arising from the areas of hunting, fishing, or conservation.
- **Preference will be given to those projects demonstrating focus on new ideas, new programs, or programs directed at involving youth that have little or no prior experience in the fields of hunting, fishing, or conservation.**

  -All programs involving hunting or firearms are required to include a safety presentation on safe firearms handling by a presenter who has been certified in Hunter Education. The name and Hunter Education number of the presenter must be included on the YPI application.

Who may apply?

- Only project proposals submitted by and in the name of state agencies, education institutions, or non-profit organizations shall be eligible for funding under this Program.

Funding Criteria:

- All applications must identify the matching monetary or in-kind contributions that will be used to support the proposed project.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide matching funds or in-kind contributions (ex: time contributed from volunteers working your event) and preference may be given to proposals with higher match percentages.

How can grant funds be used?

Eligible items include, but are not limited to the following:

- Program food/drinks/ eating supplies
- Program related equipment
- Fishing Equipment/ supplies
- Ammunition, Shooting supplies, Targets, Throwers, Clay Targets, and archery equipment
- Transportation/gas for grant approved projects
- Advertisement- Flyers, brochures, and radio broadcast. Note-advertisement cannot exceed 20-25% of requested amount.

- MDWFP- Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Logo must appear on all flyers, brochures, or banners for the event/ activities.

Grant funds CANNOT be used for the following:

Ineligible items include, but are not limited to the following:

- Salaries and Fringe Benefits
- Raffles/prizes
- Firearms
- Computers
- Program liability insurance
- Hunting Competitions
- Curriculum development
- Cameras
- Land Lease
- Facility construction/sheds, storage buildings, fences, etc.
- Facility Lease/use
- Range memberships

How to apply:

- Complete the application form and submit the additional information requested. The application period is April 1 – May 1, 2026.

Application Submission Deadline:

Applications must be received by the MDWFP no later than:

5pm on May 1st, 2026

Scope of the project:

- Eligible projects must address one or more of the following:
  - **Recruitment** of youth in the areas of hunting, fishing, or conservation
  - **Retention** of youth in the areas of hunting, fishing, or conservation
  - **Education** of youth in the areas of hunting, fishing, or conservation
  - Increasing **youth opportunities** in the areas of hunting, fishing, or conservation
  - **Education** of youth in any safety issues arising from the areas of hunting, fishing, or conservation

Program Period:

- The 2026-27 YPI program period will be from May 1, 2026 – May 30, 2027.
- All projects must be completed by May 30, 2027.

Review & Selection:

- The MDWFP shall evaluate applications for eligibility. Funding shall only be made to applicants with proposals that comply with all application requirements and

guidelines, and who, in the sole judgment of the MDWFP, propose activities that best promote the advancement of the Youth Participation Initiative's goals and objectives as stated previously. If an applicant was awarded an YPI grant during the previous grant period, the applicant must have submitted a final report to the MDWFP to be eligible for a new YPI grant.

All decisions of MDWFP are final and non-reviewable.

- Recipients **shall be required** to sign a written **Conditions Acknowledgement Agreement** with the MDWFP immediately following notification of selection. Funding is not final and shall be non-binding on MDWFP until agreements are signed by recipients and returned to the MDWFP. All recipients shall be required to submit a final report to the MDWFP by May 30th, 2027.
- The MDWFP reserves the right, at any time, to terminate, suspend or amend the Youth Participation Initiative Program, to adjust the total amount of funding available under the program, to correct any errors made in awarding funds, or to take any other action deemed necessary and appropriate, in MDWFP's sole discretion. MDWFP shall also be authorized to terminate, suspend, or amend the application process, reject any or all applications, in whole or in part, waive minor irregularities in applications, or to allow applicants to correct minor irregularities, if the best interests of the Program will be served by doing so.

Reporting Requirements:

- All recipients shall be required to submit a final report to the MDWFP due by May 30th, 2027.
- As part of the report, biographical information on youth participants will be requested by MDWFP and must be collected by recipients in a format specified by MDWFP.
- If an applicant was awarded a YPI grant during the previous grant period, the applicant must have submitted a final report to the MDWFP to be eligible for a new YPI grant.

Frequently Asked Question

1. **Do you require matching funds**?

No, matching funds are not required, however points are awarded based on sponsor contributions to the project. Contributions can include in-kind and volunteer time.

2. **Can YPI funds be used for construction projects**?

   Funds cannot be used for facility construction projects.

3. **Can funds be used for staff training?**

   No, the funds are designed to be used for hands on activities/ equipment for the participants.

4. **Can funds be used for staff salaries?**

   No. Salary and fringe are not eligible for funding.

5. **When does the project need to be completed?**

   The final report and receipts must be submitted by May 30, 2027.

6. **How long does the grant process take?**
   The Youth Outreach division will review applications and approve acceptable projects. Applicants will be notified within 60-90 days after the application due date. All applicants selected must submit a signed agreement form (provided by the MDWFP), also new vendors must complete a W9 Tax Id Form and complete the online vendor registration.

7. **What is an example Project?**
   - Shooting Sports- archery, firearm safety, and mentored hunts.
   - Conservation- hands on habitat efforts that help understand the importance of wildlife management.
   - Outdoor recreation- fishing, canoeing, camping, and outdoor safety skills

8. **In addition to the completed application, what else is required?**
   (These forms are submitted after notice of approval)
   - Complete vendor registration on-line

- Complete W-9 form
- Invoice of payment
- Signed Agreement
- Complete the Youth Participation Demographics form
- Final Report with budget, receipts, and at least one photo

For more information on the **Youth Participation Initiative**, feel free to contact:

YPI@wfp.ms.gov

