



Minister's Special Licence Resident Draw Grants Submission Guidelines 2026-2027

Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) administers the Minister's Special Licence Resident Draw Grants, under contract with the Government of Alberta. The Government of Alberta makes the MSL Resident Draw program possible through the donation of special licences for hunting privileges (tags) for specific species; these special licenses are only available to residents of Alberta. These species are bighorn sheep, elk, moose, mule deer, white-tailed deer, cougar, mountain goat, pronghorn, and turkey. These special licence tags are distributed through a random draw process to raise money to fund worthy conservation projects. The money raised through this process fund the MSL Resident Draw Grants program which supports conservation activities that benefit all Albertans. The Minister's Special License Resident Draw Grants (MSLRDG) are awarded to qualified applicants through a competitive evaluation process overseen by Alberta Conservation Association, on behalf of the Government of Alberta, and the stakeholders that support conservation in Alberta.

These Guidelines provide the eligibility criteria and application information you need to apply to the MSLRDG for a project to take place between April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027. You are strongly encouraged to read the Guidelines in full before submitting your application.

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Section 1

About the MSL Resident Draw Grants

Purpose

The MSL Resident Draw Grants funds support activities by individuals (with appropriate insurance coverage), organizations, and communities that contribute to healthy wildlife populations, and to conservation or enhancement of the habitat that wildlife populations depend on. In addition, a portion of the funds may be granted to hunter training projects and/or to projects that promote awareness and understanding of the role hunters and hunting plays in wildlife conservation.

MSLRDG only funds projects that occur in, and relate to, Alberta. Organizations external to Alberta may apply for funding for projects that meet this Alberta-based criteria.

Section 2

Eligibility

Who Can Apply?

Any legally recognized organization (charity/society/corporation) or individual, with appropriate liability insurance and WCB coverage, can apply if they have a suitable project, with the exception of federal or provincial government staff. MSLRDG does not fund applications where the federal or provincial government employee is the principal applicant (principal applicant is considered the lead on a project) or the principal applicant is a federal or provincial ministry. Federal or provincial government employees may be part of the project but must not be responsible for the majority of the project.

ACA administers multiple granting streams. **A project may only apply to the MSLRDG program and one of ACA's other granting streams (ACA Grants in Biodiversity, ACA Research Grants, or ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants).**

Anyone engaged in the activities outlined in the ACA's "Grounds for Disqualification" will not be eligible to receive grant funds from MSLRDG. This document is located on ACA's website at: <https://www.ab-conservation.com/grants-program/msl-grants/applicant-information/>.

Successful applicants will be expected to follow the ACA Cooperative Project Agreement. This document is located on ACA's website at: <https://www.ab-conservation.com/grants-program/msl-grants/applicant-information/>. Please check that your organization is willing to use ACA's Cooperative Project Agreement before applying.

Does Your Project Qualify for MSLRDG?

Grants are available for:

- Projects that conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife populations and their habitats.
- Projects that contribute to the Funding Priorities outlined in Section 4.
- Projects that demonstrate a “self-help” attitude (i.e., partner contributions, matched funding dollars, and public involvement).
- Small and large projects. How much can be applied for? There is no maximum specified for an individual project and the total funds available for 2026 has yet to be determined. As an indicator, in 2025, the range of grants awarded was \$3,750 to \$50,000.
- Scientific research projects are allowed, but the application should be written at a layperson level.
- Conference travel and fees to conferences on case-by-case basis for the applicant to present their MSLRDG-funded project.

MSLRDG does not provide funding for:

- Projects outside of Alberta.
- Profit-making activities.
- Overhead costs.
- Emergency funds or deficit financing.
- General fundraising.
- Land acquisition.

Important Granting Information:

- Successful applicants will be expected to follow the ACA Cooperative Project Agreement as found on the ACA website at <https://www.ab-conservation.com/grants-program/msl-grants/applicant-information/>.
- Payment Schedule and Reporting: The grant will be paid out in 2 payments equal to a 70% advance and a 30% final payment. Payment are made based on the following conditions: Payment 1 upon signing of the Cooperative Agreement, and payment 2 upon approval of the final reporting due March 15 of the term year and receipt of signed financial statement.
- *Please note the initial payment can be delayed, due to time it takes to sign and process new Cooperative Project Agreements; applicants should be aware that the first grant payments will not be made before June.*
- Project activities must occur between April 1, 2026, and March 31, 2027.
- Grants cannot be made retrospectively, that is for work started prior to the current fiscal year (i.e., before April 1, 2026).
- Your information will be used only for the purpose for which it was originally collected, and it will be disclosed only on a strict “need-to-know” basis. Be assured that we manage the information contained in your submission in manner commensurate with its sensitivity.
- Applicants are responsible for ensuring they have the proper licences and approvals required to carry out the project and have complied with all the requirements of their organization.

Section 3

How and When to Apply?

Read the *Minister's Special Licence Resident Draw Grants Submission Guidelines* carefully to determine if your project is eligible for funding prior to preparing a formal submission to ACA.

- Download the MSLRDG Application Form from the ACA website (<http://www.ab-conservation.com>)
- Complete the Application Form using Section 4 and noting the following:
 - Ensure that all sections of the application are complete, clear, and thorough. *Do not append supporting documents.*
 - There is a **maximum page limit of 8 pages** for MSLRDG applications (excluding the cover page). **Use a legible font size** (i.e., nothing smaller than Arial 10 font).
 - All applications must be submitted electronically; paper copies will not be accepted.
- Submit your completed application by e-mailing it to grants.msl@ab-conservation.com before the deadline. **Applications will be accepted from November 1, 2025 to December 10, 2025, 4:30pm MST.**
- ENSURE YOUR APPLICATION IS ACKNOWLEDGED: upon receiving your application, ACA will email you an acknowledgement receipt within five business days. **It is your responsibility to contact the ACA Grants Coordinator if you have not received acknowledgement of receipt within 5 business days**, as the application may not have been received in good order.

Please contact Amy MacKinven by telephone toll free at 1-877-722-4323 or by email grants.msl@ab-conservation.com, if you have any questions regarding your application to the MSLRDG.

Section 4

Funding Priorities 2026-2027

Funding Priorities

All applicants to the MSLRDG should be mindful that this grant is fully funded by the MSL Resident Draw and supported by the hunters of Alberta. All proposals should be able to demonstrate how the proposed project will conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife populations and their habitats for all Albertans to appreciate.

To help direct potential applicants the following list of priorities has been developed. While the MSLRDG will accept applications that do not relate to these priorities, projects that address one or more of these priorities will have a higher probability of being funded than those that do not. Each of the funding priorities identified below has equal weighting.

- A. Specific habitat enhancement activities that have a demonstrated, direct, positive impact on bighorn sheep, elk, moose, mule deer, white-tailed deer, cougar, mountain goat, pronghorn, or turkey populations.
- B. Tracking/monitoring of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M.Ovi*) in bighorn sheep.
- C. Development of mechanisms to reduce the risk of the spread of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M.Ovi*) from domestic livestock to bighorn sheep (e.g., livestock surveillance programs).
- D. Tracking/monitoring of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer, elk, or moose.
- E. Development of mechanisms to reduce the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD) (e.g., vaccines) in wild cervids.
- F. Identification of mortality factors associated with current or potential future population changes in bighorn sheep, elk, moose, mule deer, white-tailed deer, cougar, mountain goat, pronghorn, or turkey.
- G. Activities specifically designed to attract and train new hunters.
- H. Generating awareness of the link between conservation and hunters and the positive impact hunters have on wildlife and habitat within Alberta.

Regardless of the order in which the above priorities are listed, for the purposes of project evaluation, all priorities are considered equally important.

Section 5

Application Instructions

Most of the application form is self-explanatory, however some additional notes have been provided to help you with completing the application form. All the text boxes expand. Do NOT append supplementary information (e.g., resumés or publications). If you would like to submit photos, diagrams, or illustrations, please do so within the page limit; also, please note ACA cannot guarantee the adjudicators will be viewing the applications in colour.

Organization

If the application is successful, ACA will issue the grant cheque or EFT payment in the name of the organization/individual. The organization/individual must have a liability insurance policy and WCB coverage to adequately protect those involved with the funded project. For example, an application received in the name of ABC Group will be issued payment in this name, unless otherwise stipulated in the application.

Link with Funding Priorities

Be specific as to which funding priority or funding priorities (listed in previous section) your project addresses and describe the link. If your project does not address one of the funding priorities, make sure you demonstrate how your project will conserve, protect, and/or enhance wildlife populations and their habitats.

Budget Notes

ACA expects funding requested will be spent as close to the budget as possible. However, it is within the grant recipient's discretion to move funds to different categories, as long as the overall objectives of the project are achieved.

The Budget table should cover the entire project as adjudicators need to be aware of the project's overall expenditures and co-funding. However, the Project Budget Commentary should focus on the budget lines for which the applicant is requesting funding from MSLRDG.

Salaries & Wages: Proportionate salaries of any personnel directly involved in the project can be included, including the principal applicant.

Contract Services: Mention in the budget commentary section who will be contracted for the services required and provide a breakdown of the payment (e.g., cost per sample, rate per hour).

Honoraria: Provide a breakdown for any honoraria (e.g., amount per volunteer).

In-kind Volunteer Contributions: To standardize in-kind contributions from volunteers to the proposed project, please use \$30/hour for unskilled labour work and \$125/hour for professional services.

Travel: The maximum allowed mileage rate is based on current CRA rates.

Other: Overhead costs or unforeseen/contingency budget lines are not eligible under the MSLRDG. We consider office rental, ongoing office bills, etc. as overhead expenses.

Partner Funding: Itemize partner funding dollars and public involvement in your proposed project in the appropriate boxes; projects that have no partner or matching funding will benefit from an explanation as to why they do not have any. In-kind contributions can be listed in the in-kind column of the budget. Make sure any revenue that is generated by the project (e.g., participant contribution to an event or course) is clearly listed in the budget (as co-funding) and in the budget notes.

Intellectual Property and Data Ownership

Unless ACA staff are directly involved in the development of intellectual property, ACA claims no ownership or rights of any kind over intellectual property developed as a result of this funding. In addition, ACA claims no ownership or rights of any kind with respect to any data collected, as a result of this funding. However, by accepting this funding, the recipient agrees that the results of the project, and the raw data collected, will be made publicly available within 48 months of the funding end date, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by ACA.

If the recipient does not make the results and the raw data publicly available within the agreed to time frame, then ownership of all raw data will revert to ACA and the recipient will supply the raw data to ACA within 30 days of request from ACA. ACA will make the raw data publicly available immediately.

Section 6

Grant Application Assessment & Decision Process

Funding requests are likely to far exceed funds available, which will result in some worthy projects being denied funding through the competitive funding process.

ACA's Board of Directors will appoint an Adjudication Committee comprised of up to one representative from each of the following organizations: Alberta Bowhunters Association, Alberta Fish & Game Association, Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, Alberta Professional Outfitters Association, Alberta Trappers Association, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers – Alberta Chapter, Nature Alberta, Pheasants Forever – Alberta Council, Trout Unlimited Canada, Wild Sheep Foundation Alberta, Government of Alberta and one individual from an Alberta post-secondary institution. A representative of ACA will serve as the committee chair.

This Adjudication Committee will assess and rank the grant applications based on the established assessment criteria and funding priorities. Only the top ranked proposals will receive funding.

Applicants will be notified of status of their submission by March 31, 2026. Successful grant applicants will be expected to sign and follow the ACA Cooperative Project Agreement.

Assessment Criteria

1. Is one or more of the priorities being addressed with this project?
2. Does the applicant demonstrate a “self-help” attitude (e.g., do they have co-funding or in-kind support, other funders)?
3. Are the deliverables clear and are they good value for the funding requested?
4. Will the proposed activities of the project support the delivery of the project objectives?
5. Does the applicant have the ability to deliver the proposal as written?
6. Is the workplan clear?
7. Is the budget reasonable to the project objective?