

FAQ

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Any undergraduate student attending a college or university in Florida during the 2026-27 academic year is eligible to apply. Students must be 18 or older by October 15, 2026.

DO I NEED TO PAY TO PARTICIPATE?

Participation in the program is free to students. A small stipend is provided to offset costs that present a financial barrier to participation, such as for travel to various events and program activities.

HOW LONG IS THE PROGRAM?

The cohort runs from October through May annually. The occasional summer opportunity may be offered after the program ends. See page 3 for more information about available opportunities for participation.

HOW MUCH OF A TIME COMMITMENT IS CLI?

CLI is designed to be flexible for a student's busy schedule, and we understand that circumstances vary among students. Opportunities vary in date, time, and duration to offer a wide range of options to accommodate busy schedules. We ask that students commit to a minimum of five offered opportunities within the Cohort year, in addition to a student-led conservation project (see page 3). Many of these will be in-person in their local area, and some will be online, typically in evening hours.

HOW ARE MEMBERS OF THE COHORT SELECTED?

We are looking for students with a deep desire to learn, a willingness to participate, and an interest in Audubon and conservation initiatives. We highly encourage students to apply regardless of experience in the conservation field. No bird expertise or birding experience is necessary!

The CLI selection committee reviews applications as they are submitted using a rubric grading system. The committee is comprised of Audubon Florida staff and CLI student alumni. Once applications close, grades are compared, and 25 students will be invited to join the Cohort. We consider a variety of factors when selecting the Cohort, with an emphasis on including students with different career interests, perspectives, and identities.

FAQ

DO I NEED MY OWN TRANSPORTATION?

No. Students do not need their own transportation to participate. We ask about transportation in the application to help us match each student with an appropriate mentor and other program participants in the area for potential carpooling or transportation support, and identify opportunities to help remove transportation barriers to participation where possible.

IS TRAVEL REQUIRED?

Students are required to attend the CLI kickoff at Audubon Assembly. Beyond Assembly, students are expected to participate at the local level with their nearby Audubon chapter. Other optional opportunities across Florida may also be offered for those that are willing and able to travel. Stipend money may be used to offset travel costs. We will do our best to help coordinate carpool options with others traveling from their area.

WHAT IS THE AUDUBON ASSEMBLY?

Audubon Florida's annual conference, Audubon Assembly, is taking place on October 15-17 in St. Pete Beach, FL. Assembly brings together Audubon leaders, members, and other stakeholders in our network for a time to socialize, learn, and strategize the future of Audubon Florida conservation. The Assembly also functions as the onboarding event for each year's CLI class.

Students will arrive Thursday early evening for dinner and a social with fellow participants. Students will attend a combination of regular Assembly events and CLI-specific sessions on Friday and Saturday. Hotel and food costs are covered by the CLI program, and carpool options may be provided.

Please visit audubon.org/florida/assembly for more Audubon Assembly details.

I HAVE CLASS ON THURSDAYS AND FRIDAYS. CAN I STILL ATTEND THE AUDUBON ASSEMBLY AND BE A PART OF CLI?

Attendance at Audubon Assembly is required. Most schools and/or professors will accommodate reasonable requests for absence for professional development opportunities. We have rarely, if ever, encountered a situation that prevented a student from attending. We are happy to provide a letter to verify the reason for this absence.

FAQ

WHAT KINDS OF OPPORTUNITIES ARE OFFERED TO STUDENTS?

Students are offered a variety of experiences to accommodate different interests, circumstances, and availabilities. Topics include leadership and career development, community science, land management, environmental education, and more. Opportunities include remote online learning, local events, and statewide events.

Past experiences have included:

- Alternative Spring Break with FDEP Aquatic Preserves Team
- Everglades Policy Day in Tallahassee
- Northshore Birding Festival in Apopka
- Volunteer workdays at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland
- Native plant installations
- Environmental education and outreach facilitation
- Volunteering at bird banding stations
- Land restoration and species monitoring projects
- Op-ed writing workshops and publishing opportunities

WHAT KIND OF PROJECT IS EXPECTED OF ME?

Over the duration of the program, students are responsible for leading a collaborative conservation project that combines their personal interests and skills. In May, the cohort will convene online for a Final Project Showcase, where each student will briefly present their project and reflect on the experience.

Projects are flexible and can vary in timespan (one-day event or longterm project). Students are expected to collaborate with their mentor for guidance and support.

Some past projects include:

- Species population monitoring/research
- Installation of nest boxes
- Event coordination or planning (planting events, outreach days)
- Social media management
- Workshop or education program facilitation
- GIS mapping
- Native plant projects or land management

MORE QUESTIONS?

Visit audubon.org/CLI

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