

## **Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program Project Grant Submission Summary 2015**

Summary of information on submitting an application for a grant for the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP). Please refer to the complete Request for Applications notice to verify your application material is complete before submission. The notice is posted in the Federal Register at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-08-06/pdf/2014-18539.pdf>

The final rule of the CFP is posted at: [http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/cfp\\_finalrule.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/cfp_finalrule.pdf)

### **Dates**

Application deadline is January 16, 2015 for submitting applications to the State Forester or equivalent official of the Indian tribe. All applicants must also send an email to [communityforest@fs.fed.us](mailto:communityforest@fs.fed.us) to confirm an application has been submitted for funding consideration. To find your State Forester go to: <http://stateforesters.org/about/who-we-are>

Application submitted to the appropriate Region/Area of the Forest Service by February 17, 2015 from the State Forester or equivalent official of the Indian tribe. A list of the Forest Service contacts is in the Request for Applications notice published in the Federal Register.

### **Maximum Grant Amount**

Individual grant applications may not exceed \$400,000.

The President's Budget Request for the CFP for FY2015 was \$1,683,000

### **Eligible Applicants**

A local governmental entity, Indian Tribe (including Alaska Native Corporations), or a qualified nonprofit organization that is qualified to acquire and manage land (see § 230.2 of the final rule). Individuals are not eligible to receive funds through this program

### **Cost Share (Matching Requirement)**

All applicants must demonstrate a 50 percent match of the total project cost. The match can include cash, in-kind services, or donations, which shall be from a non-Federal source. For additional information, please see §230.6 of the final rule at:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/cfp\\_finalrule.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/cfp_finalrule.pdf)

## **CFP Application Requirements:**

The following section outlines grant application requirements:

- The application can be no more than eight pages long, plus no more than two maps (eight inches by eleven inches in size),
- The following grant forms and supporting materials must be included in the application:
  - An Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form SF 424);
  - Budget information (Standard Form SF 424c—Construction Programs);
  - Assurances of compliance with all applicable Federal laws, regulations, and policies (Standard Form SF 424d—Construction Programs).
  - The forms listed can be found at: [http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fap/fap\\_forms.shtm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fap/fap_forms.shtm)
- Documentation verifying that the applicant is an eligible entity and that the land proposed acquisition is eligible lands (see § 230.2 of the final rule)
- A draft community forest plan
- Applications must comply with the Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations (7 CFR Part 3015).
- Applications must include the forms required to process a Federal grant. Section § 230.7 refers to the grant forms that must be included in the application and the specific administrative requirements that apply to the type of Federal grant used for this program.

### **Applications must include the following, regarding the property proposed for acquisition:**

1. A description of the property, including acreage and county location;
2. A description of current land uses, including improvements;
3. A description of forest type and vegetative cover;
4. A map of sufficient scale to show the location of the property in relation to roads and other improvements as well as parks, refuges, or other protected lands in the vicinity;
5. A description of applicable zoning and other land use regulations affecting the property;
6. A description of relationship of the property within and its contributions to a landscape conservation initiative; and
7. A description of any threats of conversion to non-forest uses, including any encumbrances on the property that prevent conversion to non-forest uses.
8. A proposed project budget (section § 230.6 of the final program rule);
9. The status of due diligence, including a signed option or purchase and sale agreement, title search, minerals determination, and appraisal
10. Description and status of cost share (secure, pending, commitment letter, etc.). Section § 230.6 of the final rule;
11. The status of negotiations with participating landowner(s) including purchase options, contracts, and other terms and conditions of sale;
12. The proposed timeline for completing the acquisition and establishing the community forest;
13. Long term management costs and funding source(s).

## **A draft community forest plan.**

The eligible entity is encouraged to work with the State Forester or equivalent official of the Indian tribe for technical assistance when developing or updating the Community Forest Plan. In addition, the eligible entity is encouraged to work with technical specialists, such as professional foresters, recreation specialists, wildlife biologists, or outdoor education specialists, when developing the Community Forest Plan. The plan should also address the following:

- (1) A description of the benefiting community, including demographics, and the associated benefits provided by the proposed land acquisition;
- (2) A description of community involvement to-date in the planning of the community forest acquisition and of community involvement anticipated long-term management;
- (3) An identification of persons and organizations that support the project and their specific role in establishing and managing the community forest

## **Forest Service's Project Selection Criteria**

Using the criteria described below, to the extent practicable, the Forest Service will give priority to applications that maximize the delivery of community benefits, as defined in the final rule (see § 230.2 of the final rule).

The Forest Service will evaluate all applications received by the State Foresters or equivalent officials of the Indian tribe and award grants based on the following criteria:

1. Type and extent of community benefits provided, including to underserved communities. Community benefits are defined in the final program rule as:
  - i. Economic benefits such as timber and non-timber products
  - ii. Environmental benefits, including clean air and water, stormwater management, and wildlife habitat;
  - iii. Benefits from forest-based experiential learning, including K–12 conservation education programs; vocational education programs in disciplines such as forestry and environmental biology; and environmental education through individual study or voluntary participation in programs offered by organizations such as 4–H, Boy or Girl Scouts, Master Gardeners, etc.;
  - iv. Benefits from serving as replicable models of effective forest stewardship for private landowners; and
  - v. Recreational benefits such as hiking, hunting and fishing secured through public access.
2. Extent and nature of community engagement in the establishment and long-term management of the community forest;
3. Amount of cost share leveraged;
4. Extent to which the community forest contributes to a landscape conservation initiative;
5. Extent of due diligence completed on the project, including cost share committed and status of appraisal;
6. Likelihood that, unprotected, the property would be converted to nonforest uses; and
7. Costs to the Federal Government