



NATIONAL COHESIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FY 2023 COMBINED REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What does the Forest Service want to accomplish with these grants?

National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) grants support two Cohesive Strategy goals:

- 1) Restore and Maintain Landscapes: Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances, in accordance with management objectives.
- 2) Create Fire Adapted Communities: Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.

2. What is the process for application submittal?

All grant applicants will apply through Grants.gov by close of business April 30, 2023. Most applicants must submit a draft of their application to the relevant State Forester by March 31, 2023, and receive a letter of support from the same to include in their final application. In lieu of specific State Forester support, forest fire compacts may use a letter of support from their commissioners or commission chair. Federally recognized Tribes are encouraged but not required to have State Forester support.

On-the-ground projects must achieve outcomes on private forest land, Tribal, State, and/or local government forest land.

3. How does this RFA support Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government?

The RFA encourages applicants to show emphasis on communities at greatest risk from wildland fire. Various wildfire risk-identification maps and tools focus on environmental conditions and historic wildfire patterns.

Project overviews must specify whether benefits to traditionally underserved or marginalized communities are a component of the grant application and are part of the scoring criteria. The communities at risk from wildfire tend to be largely forested or in the wildland-urban interface, and they tend to be more rural and less affluent than built-out communities. In addition to equity results in this regard, federally recognized Tribes are encouraged to apply for training grants or projects on their land.

Applicants may use the CDC [Social Vulnerability Index](#) with a score of 0.5 or higher to demonstrate benefit to an underserved community. Other data sources or descriptions to document benefit to underserved communities may be described in your project narrative. [Low Income](#) data is also available to assist with your project narrative.

4. Is there a minimum and maximum amount of Federal funding we can request?

Cross-Boundary Hazard Mitigation projects tend to involve mitigation on large acreages and requests are not capped, though shouldn't exceed the anticipated total money available (\$1.5 million).

The funding band for Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) grants is \$25,000 to \$300,000 dollars and applications require a 100% match. Estimated FY 2023 State Cap is \$420,000. The overall funding level for FY 2023 is \$2.8 million.

5. Why limit WRR submissions to three applications sponsored by each State Forester, and funding in any one state to 15% of the total funding?

These parameters are in place by mutual arrangement of the U.S. Forest Service and State Foresters. They are designed to allow equitable competition for funding from across the 20 States of the Eastern Region. Tribal applications are not subject to this cap and do not reduce the funding that a State could request. Third party funding will count toward the overall State Cap.

6. Where can I find the 2020 State Forest Action Plans?

Many of the 2020 SFAPs (and the Vermont 2017 SFAP) are available on the National Association of State Foresters [State Forest Action Plan website](#). If the 2020 SFAP you need to review is not posted at that site, reach out to the relevant State Forester.

7. What are the match requirements for WRR?

Matching of funds at 1:1 is required. Matching funds must meet requirements to be eligible and allowable and are subject to match provisions in grant regulations. See the [Code of Federal Regulations Title 2 Part 200.306](#) and [Subpart E for Cost Principles](#). Match must meet all the same requirements as the Federal share and be documented sufficiently to support financial tracking and accountability. Refer to the Eastern Region [Matching Funds document](#) for more guidance on match and allowable costs.

8. Can we only waive indirect if we have the approved indirect rate?

Yes. Foregone indirect is only an acceptable source of match if there is an approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) or a decision has been made to charge the set de minimis rate of 10%. Similarly, an approved NICRA is required for reimbursement of indirect expenses. In addition, an NICRA or the election of a de minimis rate must be documented even if the partner chooses to not charge indirect.

9. When will funding be available for funded projects?

A ranked list of Cohesive Fire Strategy projects will be submitted to the Regional Forester by mid-June 2023. Selected projects are funded following the grants and agreements processing period. Operating under a continuing resolution or delay in receiving the budget, appropriation, or allocation can significantly impact the date funding becomes available.