Frequently Asked Questions
Eastern Region State, Private and Tribal Forestry
National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy
Request for Applications

1. **Where can I go to access information related to these grants?**

   Eastern Region Grant Opportunity: Cohesive Fire Strategy

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

   National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) grants support the 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.

3. **What is the process for application submittal and deadlines?**

   All grant applicants will apply though grants.gov by close of business January 15, 2025. Most applicants must submit an initial draft of their application to the relevant State Forester by December 16, 2024, and receive a letter of support from the same to be included 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.

4. **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. The Northeast-Midwest Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (NMWRAP), Wildfire Risk to Communities and Community Wildfire Defense Grants are some of the tools available but not limited to demonstrate how the project targets a priority landscape(s) and accounts for current and future drivers of fire risk.

   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 can use the Wildfire Risk to Communities and Community Wildfire Defense Grants to demonstrate benefit to an underserved community. No matter the data sources or descriptions used to describe benefit to underserved communities, please document the data source utilized and explain a clear, meaningful benefit to or engagement with underserved communities/people in your project narrative.

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

   The funding range for Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) grants is $25,000 to $300,000 dollars and applications require a 100% match. The FY2025 allocation for this grant opportunity will be like the FY2024 amount of $2.8 million.

6. **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 Forest Service and State Foresters. They are designed to allow equitable competition for funding from across the twenty 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.

7. **Where can I find the 2020 State Forest Action Plans (SFAP)?**

   Many of the 2020 SFAPs (including Vermont's 2016 SFAP) are available on the National Association of State Forester's State Forest Action Plan website. If the 2020 SFAP needed for review is not posted at the site, reach out to the relevant State Forester.

8. **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 Matching Funds document for more guidance on match and allowable costs.

9. **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, a NICRA or the election of a de minimis rate must be documented even if the partner chooses to not charge indirect.

10. **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-February 2025. 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.