



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Forest Landowner Support Notice of Funding Opportunity #1

Application Assistance Webinar

Today's Focus: Tribal Applicants, Tracks A and B

September 7, 2023

Agenda

Welcome Remarks
Definitions and Eligibility
What We Are Looking For
How to Apply
What Happens Next
Q&A



(Photo by Maya Buhler)

Focus for Today: Tracks A and B

Track A

Proposal budgets greater than or equal to \$2 million and less than \$25 million

Deadline: 10/21/23

Available funds: ~\$100 million

Track B

Proposal budgets that are less than \$2 million

Deadline: 8/21/24

Considered on a rolling basis, at least quarterly

Available funds: ~\$50 million

Track C

Proposals to administer a national competitive regranting program. Budgets \$5 million - \$50 million; >80% sub-awards

Deadline: 8/21/24

Considered on a rolling basis, at least quarterly

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA): Forest Landowner Support

IRA provides the U.S. Forest Service \$450 million for Forest Landowner Support.

Funding intended to benefit rural non-Federal lands and landowners, including Tribes and Tribal lands held in trust.

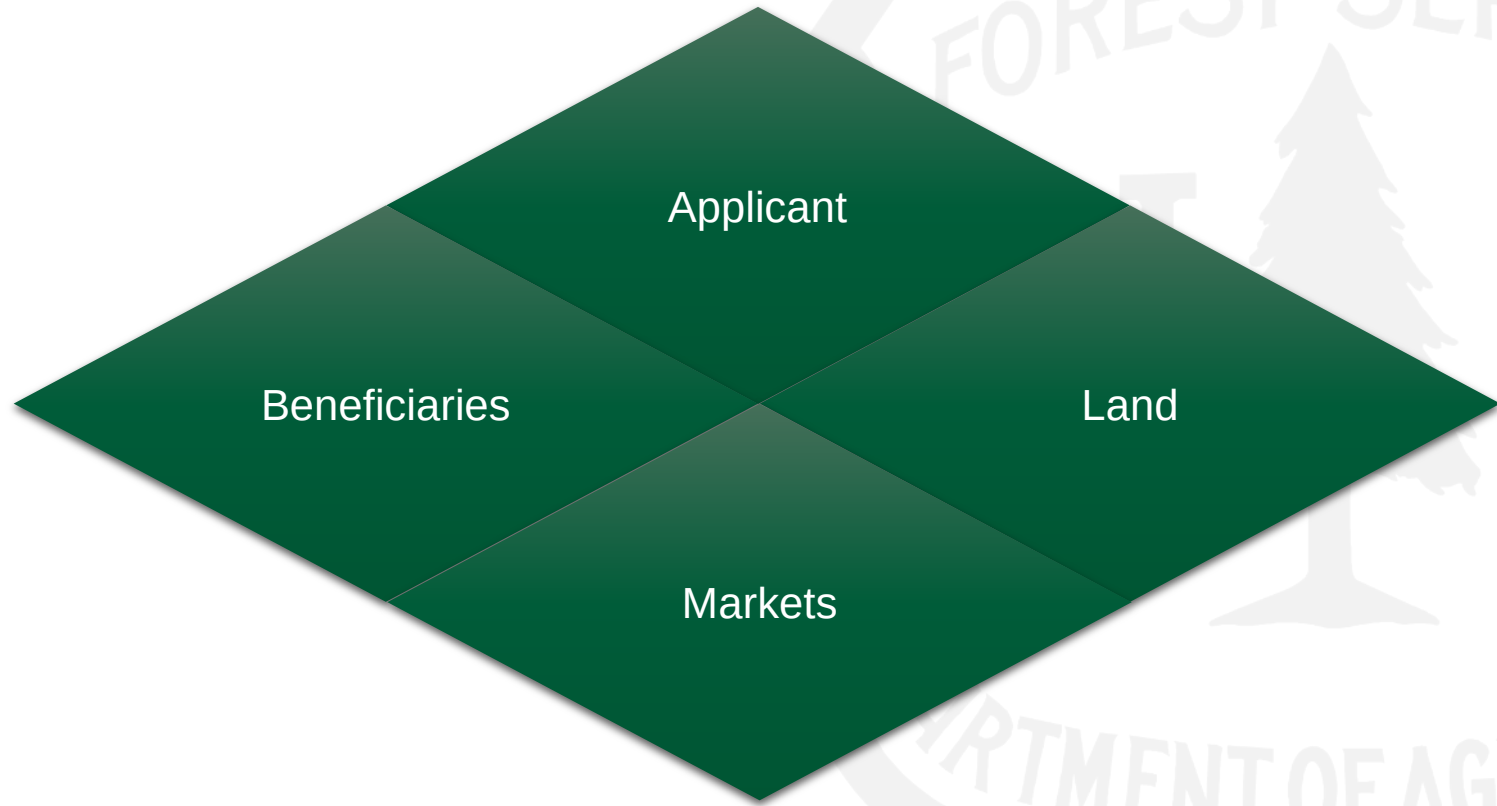
Programs implemented by the U.S. Forest Service's "State, Private, and Tribal Forestry" deputy area.

Opportunity to support Tribes seeking to build capacity for climate-resilient forestry.



(USDA Forest Service photo by Nate Lowe)

Definitions and Eligibility



Definitions and Eligibility: Applicants

Eligible Entities:

- US State Governments
- US Local Governments
- **Tribal Governments**
- **Alaska Native Corporations and Villages**
- **Other Tribal Entities**
- Education Institutions
- Non-Profit Entities
- For-Profit Entities

Individuals are not eligible to apply.



(USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres)

Definitions and Eligibility: Land

Program activities must target ***nonindustrial private forest land***, which is defined as meeting all of the following criteria:

- Is **rural** (all areas outside US Census areas with 50,000 or more people)
- Has **existing tree cover or is suitable for growing trees**
- Is owned by any **private** individual, group, association, corporation, Indian Tribe, or other private legal entity or is **Tribal land held in trust** by the Federal government



(Forest Service photo by Scott Ray)

Definitions and Eligibility: Beneficiaries

Focus Area 1: Underserved landowners

Forest landowner(s) belonging to one or more of the following groups:

- Beginning forest landowners
- Forest landowners living in high poverty areas
- **Federally recognized Tribes**
- Limited resource producers
- Veterans

There is no minimum or maximum acreage for underserved landowners.



(USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres)

Definitions and Eligibility: Beneficiaries (continued)

Focus Area 2: Small-Acreage Landowners

<2,500 acres

No minimum acreage requirement



(USDA Forest Service photo by Preston Keres)

Definitions and Eligibility: Markets

Markets currently exist around greenhouse gases (including carbon), water quality, biodiversity/habitat, and wetland restoration. Additional emerging market innovations include certification for products and supply chains that address conservation objectives.

Market drivers related to cost savings and risk reduction, such as source water protection or restoration, may also be addressed.



(Forest Service photo by Gary Garner)

The USDA Forest Service will not endorse any specific market or activity (e.g. carbon markets).

The agency supports Tribes in self-determining which, if any, emerging markets align with traditional practices and your community's vision.

All proposed activities should
support participation
in emerging private markets for
climate mitigation or forest resilience.

What We Are Looking for: Guiding Principles

- Forest management practices must **emphasize ecosystem resilience** rather than maximization of any single benefit to the detriment of ecosystem function.
- Forest management practices should **measurably demonstrate “net positive” outcomes** (additionality) over time for multiple public and ecosystem benefits including, but not limited to, carbon sequestration, biodiversity/habitat restoration, sustainably managed forest products and/or improved water quantity or quality.
- Activities and practices should **incorporate consideration of risk**, including disturbance and future climate conditions, and **contribute to forest resilience**.
- Activities and practices must be **designed for site-specific conditions** (e.g., forest type; climate change impacts and vulnerability; and relevant laws, regulations, and policies).
- Emerging private markets that support these practices should **optimize direct benefits to landowners while limiting their financial risk**.

Evaluation Criteria

- Alignment with **program and Focus Area priorities** (see Program Content and Structure);
- **Technical merit** (proposal is technically sound and feasible with a well-crafted workplan and achievable timeline);
- **Organizational capability and capacity**, including skills and experiences of key personnel (administrative infrastructure, subject matter expertise and relationships required to achieve intended results);
- Appropriate **measurement and monitoring of outcomes**, including ability to adapt activities as needed;
- **Budget cost-effectiveness**, including description of any non-Federal funds contributed (proposed budget is appropriate to scale and scope of program of work);
- **Optimization of benefits to landowners**;
- **Partner** commitment and coordination (as appropriate);
- **Strategic programmatic contribution**; potential to **replicate or amplify impact**.

Ineligible Activities

- **Basic research**
 - Technical transfer, education, and outreach activities associated with applying research *can be included* in the application.
- **Construction and capital improvements** including facilities, infrastructure, roads, new buildings, culverts, and boardwalks.
- **Land acquisition** (conservation easement and fee simple) projects.
- Small business start-up funding.
- **Lobbying**, litigation, or political advocacy.
- Initial resources to capitalize a revolving fund, defined as a pool of capital that can be loaned and replenished as a borrower pays back a lender.
- Cost-share, reimbursement, and other types of **direct payment to private landowners**.
 - Funding may be used to perform work on private lands; for example, a Tribe or Tribal organization could pay for consulting services or treatment activities to be performed on private lands with permission of the landowner.
- **Profit**

*Note on **EQUIPMENT**:* Equipment purchases are rarely approved and will be reviewed prior to grant award. Equipment rental should be considered as an alternative. Equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

Portfolio Balance

When making funding decisions, the USDA Forest Service will also account for program **portfolio balance**, which may include the following considerations, among others:

- Geographic location
- Entity type
- Scope of activities
- Program beneficiaries

When determining the scale of your proposal, consider how your proposal might measure up in the context of the total amount available (\$150M) and a balanced portfolio of funded proposals.

How to Apply

Prepare to Apply

Register your organization with www.Sam.gov and make sure your registration is “active.” Take note of the assigned Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

- Note that sam.gov registration can be tricky and it takes time to resolve any issues that arise

Create a Grants.gov account and add an organizational profile to the account using the UEI

- EBiz point of contact (POC) must log into Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles. The EBiz POC must also authorize people with the “AOR role”, which allows specific people to submit and sign applications.

Submit Application via Grants.gov

- 1) Create a workspace
- 2) Submit a workspace
- 3) Track a workspace submission
- 4) Check for acknowledgment of application receipt and take note of tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX)

<https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>

How to Access Application Assistance: Grants.gov Resources

- [Grants.gov overview of registration for new applicants](#)
- [How to register with SAM](#)
 - [Contact a PTAC center](#) for help with SAM registration
- [How to create a Grants.gov account](#)
- [How to authorize roles in Grants.gov](#)
- [How to track role status in Grants.gov](#)
- [Overview on applying to Grants.gov via Workspace](#)
- [Grants.gov applicant FAQs](#) (*different from NOFO-specific FAQs*)
- [Additional Grants.gov references and training resources](#)
 - [Creating forms in a Grants.gov Workspace](#)
 - [Instructions for SF-424 and SF-424A](#) (*see links in “Instructions” column*)

Required Proposal Documents: Cover Page

- **Cover page**

- Project narrative
- Detailed budget and budget narrative
- Financial statements (Tracks A and C only)
- Letter(s) of collaboration (if applicable)
- Match verification (if applicable)
- SF-424 (standard form)
- SF-424A (standard form)
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Assessment (if applicable)

- **Cover Page Contents:**

- Project title
- Project applicant entity name (list subsidiaries/affiliates and/or parent company)
- Contact information
- Project focus area(s) and track

Required Proposal Documents: Proposal Narrative

- Cover page
- **Project narrative**
- Detailed budget and budget narrative
- Financial statements (Tracks A and C only)
- Letter(s) of collaboration (if applicable)
- Match verification (if applicable)
- SF-424 (standard form)
- SF-424A (standard form)
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Assessment (if applicable)

Project Narrative Contents:

- Problem statement
- Program alignment (with guiding principles)
- Organizational alignment
- Project partners
- Geographic focus
- Implementation strategy/methodology/timeline
- Strategies for addressing barriers/challenges to market participation
- Matching funds (if applicable)
- Measurable outcomes and impact
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Capability and capacity

- Standard typeface
- 12-pt font
- <10 pages

Required Proposal Documents: Budget

- Cover page
- Project narrative
- **Detailed budget and budget narrative**
- Financial statements (Tracks A and C only)
- Letter(s) of collaboration (if applicable)
- Match verification (if applicable)
- SF-424 (standard form)
- **SF-424A (standard form)**
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Assessment (if applicable)

Budget Categories

Use these categories for both detailed budget and SF-424A form

- Personnel
- Fringe benefits
- Travel
- Equipment (>\$5000/unit acquisition cost)
- Supplies
- Contractual
- Other (includes sub-awards)
- Indirect costs

Budget Notes and Tips (1 of 2)

- There is **no match requirement**, no requirement that applicants contribute a percentage of matching funds.
 - Proposals are encouraged to maximize grant funding by using it to leverage contributions from non-Federal entities (such as private capital, corporate funding, and philanthropy) as well as partner or network resources. Please include a written description of any non-Federal contributions and signed support letters (or other form of verification).
 - Such contributions should be clearly described in the project narrative. These contributions should not be included in the detailed budget, 424, or 424A.
- **Anticipated project income** should be noted in budget documents and will be discussed after a project is selected. The recommended path is to utilize project income to augment project activities.

Budget Notes and Tips (2 of 2)

- The **budget categories and amounts** in the Detailed Budget and 424-A should match. There should be clear linkages between the proposed budget and proposed project activities.
- If your proposal addresses **both Focus Areas**, benefiting both underserved **and** small-acreage landowners), your detailed budget must have three components: Focus Area 1, Focus Area 2, and combined total for both Focus Areas
- For-profit entities, keep in mind:
 - Profit is not an allowable expense, but you are eligible to include a 10% de minimis indirect cost rate in your budget (assuming you do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with the US Government)
 - “Personnel” should include salary only and cannot be a loaded rate or billable rate. Benefits should be included in “Fringe benefits.” Pooled administrative/overhead costs are included in indirect costs.

Required Proposal Documents: Summary

- Cover page
- Project narrative
- Detailed budget and budget narrative
- Financial statements (Tracks A and C only)
- Letter(s) of collaboration (if applicable)
- Match verification (if applicable)
- SF-424 (standard form)
- SF-424A (standard form)
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Assessment (if applicable)



How to Access Application Assistance: Navigators

- Reach out to **Navigators organizations**. These organizations have been specifically supported to provide assistance to organizations representing underserved communities and small-acreage landowners

Navigator Organization	How to Request Assistance
Coalitions and Collaborations (CoCo) The Watershed Research Training Center (WRTC)	Submit intake form for assistance 
Hispanic Access Foundation (HAF)	TBD

Additional Navigator organizations forthcoming, including focus on Trives

How to Access Application Assistance: U.S. Forest Service

- [Sign up for and attend Friday 9/8 webinar](#) for Q&A
- Visit our [website](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) document](#) to be updated weekly
- Email us at SM.FS.LandownerIRA@usda.gov

What Happens Next

Additional webinars:

[9/8/2023 – FAQs, Q&A, and Track C](#)

TBD – Quarterly webinars for Track B

Deadlines:

10/21/2023 – Track A (\$2M-\$25M)

8/21/2024 – Track B (<\$2M) and Track C*

**Proposals considered on a rolling basis*



(USDA Forest Service photo by Kelly Martin)

What Happens Next (continued)

Proposal Review Period:

Proposal review and selection will take several months.

Applicants who submit larger proposals should expect dialogue with the agency on proposed project scope, timeline, and budget, including potential for adjustments.

Announcements and Awards:

Early 2024: Track A and initial round Track B award announcements

Throughout 2024: Track B announcements

Award agreements to be signed following announcements.

Funding is made available after awards are executed.



(Photo by Carol Underhill.)

Additional **Tribal-focused NOFO** with **similar scope** in **early 2024** with eligibility limited to Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations and Villages, Other Tribal Entities

Applicants can apply for both the current NOFO and the future Tribal-focused NOFO (even with the same concept)

Key Dates and Resources

What Happens Next

Additional Webinars:

- [9/7/2023 webinar: Tribes and Tribal organizations](#)
- [9/8/2023 webinar: FAQs, Q&A, and Track C](#)
- TBD – Quarterly webinars for Track B

Deadlines:

10/21/2023 – Track A (\$2M-\$25M)

8/21/2024 – Track B (<\$2M) and Track C*

**Proposals considered on a rolling basis*

Award Announcements:

Early 2024: Track A and initial round Track B award announcements

How to Access Application Assistance

- 1) Attend [Friday's Q&A session](#)
- 2) Explore existing www.Grants.gov resources
- 3) Contact a Navigators organization
- 4) Contact the Forest Service [IRA Forest Landowner Support Team](#)

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/state-private-forestry/coop-forestry/ira-forest-landowner-support>

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=349857>