



Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance Program

Fiscal Year 2024 Overview

The USDA Forest Service is announcing the availability of \$23.3 million to provide financial assistance to facilities that purchase and process byproducts from ecosystem restoration projects in areas at risk of unnaturally severe wildfire or insect or disease infestation through funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The intent is to substantially decrease the cost of conducting restoration projects involving vegetation removal on federal and Tribal lands and expand industry use. These ecosystem restoration byproducts could include trees and woody biomass harvested through timber sales, thinning, hazardous fuels reduction treatments, or other restoration management activities.

Program Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, the project facility must be in close proximity to federal or Tribal lands and procure raw materials from federal or Tribal lands. Eligible applicants include:

- For-profit entities
- State, local governments
- Indian Tribes
- School districts
- Communities
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Institutions of higher education
- Special purpose districts (e.g., public utilities districts, fire districts, conservation districts, and ports)

To be eligible for funding, the project facility must be in close proximity to federal or Tribal lands and procure raw materials from federal or Tribal lands. Project facility or sourcing area must be located in an area identified as being in high or very high need of ecosystem restoration.

Funding Priority

Funding priority will be to provide financial assistance to an entity seeking to establish, reopen, retrofit, expand, or improve a sawmill or other wood-processing facility that will utilize the byproducts from projects on federal land, Tribal forestland, and Tribal rangeland that have been identified as at risk for fire, insect, or disease and a high priority for ecological restoration. Applicants are encouraged to show a clear benefit to underserved communities (defined by Executive Order 13985 as “populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life”), the communities where they reside, or the forest areas that they value. Applicants are asked to identify if the project directly or indirectly benefits disadvantaged communities by using the Council on Environmental Quality’s [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#).

Additional priority will be given to projects that meet some or all the following criteria.

- Proposed project will reduce the cost of ecosystem restoration activities.
- Proposed project facility will procure at least 50% of the raw materials from federal or Tribal land in need of ecosystem restoration.
- Applicant shows that at least 25% of the total project cost will originate from non-federal dollars. This does not apply to Tribal applications or projects that demonstrate benefits to disadvantaged communities.

Funding Limitations

Minimum financial assistance request is \$50,000. Maximum financial assistance request is \$1,000,000. There are no requirements for a financial match ; however, cooperator contribution funding level is a project selection criteria. USDA Forest Service funds cannot be used to fund USDA Forest Service or other federal involvement in the project.

Personnel and Benefits

Personnel and benefits costs for construction or general facility operations are not allowed for Forest Service or cooperator catch funding.

Construction

Federal funds and cooperator match cannot be used for construction of buildings (*facilities*), however, federal funds can be used to reimburse for facility engineering, permitting, or design costs.

Equipment

Procurement of mobile equipment (*e.g., forklifts, skidders, feller bunchers, self-propelled in-woods chipping units*) will NOT be funded under this funding opportunity. Use of federal funds to lease mobile equipment will be allowed if they are not lease-to-own arrangements. The purchase of mobile equipment will be allowed for Indian Tribes only.

Stationary or permanently installed wood processing and manufacturing equipment are the only types of equipment eligible for purchase with federal funds. Applicants should be aware that the purchase of equipment greater than \$5,000 with Forest Service funds creates a federal interest in the equipment until the fair market value of the equipment falls below \$5,000. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use non-federal funding to purchase equipment and use federal financial assistance to cover other relevant project associated costs, which include but are not limited to the engineering, design, transportation, and installation of the equipment. Purchase of equipment with cooperator funds does not create a federal interest in the equipment.

Application Information

The Notice of Funding Opportunity is anticipated to be made available during National Forest Products Week (October 15-21, 2023).

Application information and forms will be available on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and the [Wood Innovations website](#)

Applicants must be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM), which is located at <https://sam.gov/>. DO NOT go through a third party that may charge for registration. There is no charge for registering at SAM.gov. This process will take time, so please register immediately.

Proposal Submission

Proposal packages (including application materials and required financial forms) must be emailed to the corresponding Regional Wood Innovation Coordinator, as outlined in the Application Instructions.

Deadline: December 1, 2023, at 5:00 pm local time for your Forest Service Regional Coordinator. No proposals will be accepted by fax or hard copy. Incomplete proposals and those received past the official deadline will not be accepted. If any part of the application is missing, the proposal will not be accepted.

Award of Funding Notice: It is planned that applicants will be notified by email about funding decisions in April 2023. Successful applicants will receive notification from the appropriate USDA Forest Service Grants and Agreements Office.

Regional Program Contacts: Questions that arise should be addressed to USDA Forest Service Regional Wood Innovations Coordinators. Contact information for the Regional Wood Innovations Coordinators, by state, can be found below or at the following weblink: [USDA Forest Service Regional Wood Innovations Coordinator Contacts](#).