



2021 REGIONAL FOREST ECONOMY PARTNERSHIP (RFEP) OVERVIEW

AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$4,000,000

AWARD SIZE: The maximum award size is \$1,000,000. The minimum award size is \$250,000.

RFEP PURPOSE AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: The purpose of the program is to assist rural communities, institutes of higher education and research, and economic development support organizations in their efforts to transition the forest-based industry and its workforce to a focus on new technologies and viable business models across the 4-state NBRC region. NBRC's intention is to offer funding to rural communities through a competitive application process.

For those potential applicants familiar with the NBRC's core "Economic and Infrastructure Development" funding opportunity, the RFEP program is distinct in two important ways:

1. The RFEP program emphasizes the potential for impact across the entire NBRC region.
2. Infrastructure requests must directly support the forest industry, such as through research and development/innovation for new product development, harvesting, hauling/delivery wood (i.e., roads, rail), markets for mill residuals (i.e., biomass, softwood and hardwood pulp), and value-added processing.

The program will span two funding threads, which may or may not be considered mutually exclusive for purposes of a proposal:

1. New technology and innovations that seek to find new uses for forest products and evolve traditional forest economy business models into those that can create sustainable future commercial markets and opportunities. This category includes research and development at higher education institutions, and/or entities such as the Northeastern States Research Cooperative (NSRC), or State, Regional or municipal-based research divisions and departments.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Production of wood-based heating products
- Production of "Mass Timber" products (e.g., Cross-laminated timber)
- Existing industry upgrades or transitions to more innovative and sustainable forest products

2. Workforce re-training and development for the purpose of building the skills needed for forest industry businesses.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Establish training and re-training programs to support workforce development
- Coordination of collaborative efforts to identify strategic opportunities for economic investment supporting the redevelopment for former mill sites and communities
- Development of targeted workforce programs to support identified employers' needs for a skilled workforce

INVESTMENT GOALS:

1. Invest in the commercialization of new forest products and the development of new markets for forest product residuals.
2. Invest in new technology that seeks to find new uses for forest products.
3. Invest in workforce re-training for displaced forest economy workers in support of re-entry to the workforce in new industries, or in support of re-entry to new roles within legacy forest economy enterprises.
4. Encourage projects that leverage existing (or, in some cases, new) partnerships to effect multiple counties, states and/or the entire NBRC region, and/or have the potential to do so.

5. Invest in proposals focused on research and development within the forest products industry which demonstrate the potential to impact the entire NBRC region.
6. Support for pilot projects that may provide a foundation for future region-wide impact.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

- Local governments (village, town, city and county);
- Other political subdivisions of States (regional planning commissions, authorities of the state);
- Indian Tribes;
- Non-profit entities.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

LETTERS OF INTEREST: Letters of Interest are required for funding consideration and must be submitted to rfep@nbrc.gov. LOIs will be accepted from all eligible applicants no later than **5:00 p.m. EST September 10, 2021**.

FULL APPLICATION: Full applications will only be accepted from those entities expressly invited to apply based on the review of the Letters of Interest and must be submitted to rfep@nbrc.gov no later than **5:00 p.m. EST, November 12, 2021**.

Please refer to the 2021 RFEP Program Manual for detailed submission instructions which can be found on NBRC's website at www.nbrc.gov.

CONTACTS:

For those considering applications in 2021, please contact the NBRC Program Director and the NBRC Program Managers in the States where the proposed project will take place.

NBRC Program Director: Andrea Smith, asmith@nbrc.gov 603.369.3001 x3

Maine: Charlotte Mace, charlotte.mace@maine.gov 207.624.7448

New Hampshire: Benoit Lamontagne, benoit.l.lamontagne@livefree.nh.gov 603.419.9713

Vermont: Kristie Farnham, kristie.farnham@vermont.gov 802.398.5268

New York: Kyle Wilber, kyle.wilber@dos.ny.gov 518.473.3694

Additional RFEP program information can be found on NBRC's website www.nbrc.gov