



Forest Economy Program Frequently Asked Questions

Funding & Scoring Related Questions

Q: How will the funding be split between the Spring and Fall award rounds?

A: The Forest Economy Program is subject to the availability of funds. Upon completion of the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations process NBRC will post available funds for the 2024 Forest Economy Program. NBRC will not split the available sum between the Spring and Fall award rounds.

Q: Where can I find scoring information?

A: Scoring criteria is detailed within the Forest Economy Program Manual found on NBRC's website, [here](#).

Q: Will partial awards be considered?

A: Awards are based on the availability of NBRC funding, and partial awards may be made.

Eligibility Related Questions

Q: Are for-profits eligible for funding through NBRC's Forest Economy Program?

A: No. For-profits may not receive direct or indirect funding from the NBRC.

Forest Economy Program funding is available to:

- State governments of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York
- Local governments (village, town, city, and county)



Northern Border Regional Commission

- Other political subdivisions of States (regional planning commissions, authorities of the state)
- Indian Tribes; § 200.54 **Indian tribe** (or “federally recognized Indian tribe”). Indian tribe means any **Indian tribe**, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (**43 U.S.C. Chapter 33**), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United **States** to Indians because of their status as Indians (**25 U.S.C. 450b(e)**). See annually published Bureau of Indian Affairs list of Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services.
- Non-profit entities. The term ‘nonprofit entity’ means any organization described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under 501(a) of that Code. The non-profit entity must be able to demonstrate they have federal grant experience related to economic development.

Ineligible applicants include for-profit entities, LLCs and other entities that are not a 501(c), 40 U.S.C. §15101(c). Ineligible entities are also those entities normally deemed eligible but, due to prior federal or state funding history have been identified as ineligible for future investments. Additionally, a non-profit identified by a state that does not have a federally recognized 501(c) status is not an eligible applicant.

Q: What is the Commission’s Service Area?

A: Only projects within the NBRC’s service area are eligible for funding under 40 U.S.C. §15733. The NBRC service region includes 60 counties across the four-state region. More information about the NBRC region and eligible counties is available [here](#).

Each county in NBRC’s service area is classified as “distressed”, “transitional”, or “attainment” using pre-determined distress criteria as directed by 40 U.S.C., Subtitle V. Distress criteria is applied to communities within attainment counties to identify Isolated Areas of Distress. More information on the process used to assess distress in NBRC counties and the current classifications can be found [here](#).

Q: Can an eligible entity within an attainment county apply for funding for a project that serves distressed and transitional counties?



A: An eligible entity located within an attainment county may be eligible for NBRC funding if the project occurs within NBRC's service area and provides substantial, significant, and measurable benefit and economic impact to communities within NBRC's region. In this case, the entity must submit a Significant Benefit Waiver at the pre-application stage, to be approved by the Governors of each state and the Federal Co-Chair in order to be eligible for an invitation to submit a full application.

Q: Do projects need to span multiple states?

A: Projects are not required to span multiple states.

Funding Priorities

Q: Do outdoor recreation projects fit within the forest economy program?

A: Outdoor recreation projects that include the use of wood products or wood heat are eligible for Forest Economy Funding. Projects that simply include components of outdoor recreation in forested areas will not be competitive under the Forest Economy Program.

Q: Do non-wood products derived from Northern Border forests count as "forest products"?

A: No. When we refer to forest products, we are strictly referring to products produced using trees from forests within NBRC's service territory.

Q: Can one organization apply for multiple grants?

A: One organization may apply for multiple grants, however the entity is unlikely to be awarded twice in one year.

Q: Can one applicant apply under more than one NBRC grant program (for example Catalyst and FEP)?

A: It is not our recommendation that entities plan to apply through multiple NBRC grant programs in a given year. NBRC's various programs



have different application requirements and applying through multiple programs will be time intensive.

Instead, should you need help determining to which NBRC program to apply, we recommend entities contact NBRC staff with your project concept. NBRC staff can help determine in which program your project will be most competitive. In the event an eligible entity submits a letter of interest to the Forest Economy Program (for example), which would be more competitive in another NBRC program, NBRC will make a recommendation to the applicant at that time, before a full application has been developed.

Q: How should partnerships be identified on the pre-application and application?

A: Any and all project partners and their respective roles should be clearly identified in your pre-application.

Budget Related Questions

Q: What are eligible expenses for this program?

A: Eligible expenses are listed on page 9-10 of NBRC's Forest Economy Program Manual, which can be found [here](#).

Q: Can NBRC funds match other federal funds?

A: NBRC requires that no more than 80% of total project costs come from federal sources. NBRC allows the use of multiple federal funding sources up to the 80% ceiling. **It is equally important for applicants to check with other federal sources, as each federal agency may have its own restrictions.**

Q: We already have funds available for the project that we are proposing. Can these funds be part of our match if we start and/or complete the work before an NBRC grant would be awarded?

A: No. Eligible project expenses (match/cost share and NBRC funds) are only



those committed or expended following the issuance of a Notice to Proceed.

Q: Can funds be used for the planning/ design/ permitting (pre-construction) phase of building infrastructure?

A: Planning/design costs are eligible; however, a stand-alone design/planning project would likely not be competitive in the Forest Economy Program. If planning and design is part of a larger project, that would make for a more competitive application.



Grant Administration Related Questions

Q: Is my project required to complete an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act?

A: Yes. Federal agencies are required to consider potential impacts of their actions before implementation or spending funds on the proposed action. Applications for NBRC funding are required to complete and submit a [NEPA Intake Form](#). If the project is selected for funding, this information will be utilized to determine the appropriate level of NEPA analysis that will be required. All applicants are encouraged to review the NEPA guidance and include in their project budget (SF424cbw) and project timeline the completion of NEPA. Completion of NEPA is required for a project to receive a Notice to Proceed.