



## WESTERN FORESTRY LEADERSHIP COALITION

### FY 2023 Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 09-15-2022

**Q: If I am applying for a Tribal or Alaskan Native Corporation project, where should I apply?**

A: There is a new separate tribal process this year. You can apply through the western process (or other applicable region if in the northeast or south) competing against all other eligible applicants OR you may apply through the tribal specific process. The Request for Proposals for Tribes is available [here](#).

**Q: How does the Forest Service provide assistance?**

A: The Forest Service helps with outreach efforts, answers questions regarding program authorities, can review application drafts, and acts as the points of contact in Regions to work with tribes opting for the separate tribal process. Post-award the Forest Service has a project oversight role: reviewing progress in regards to deliverables, timing and funding, ensure compliance with federal regulations and program authorities, and review/approves annual reports and project modifications.

**Q: Can federal funds be a match?**

A: No, federal funds cannot be used as match. Any federal funding must be designated as non-match leverage funds clearly within the budget and activities.

**Q: If tribes elect to submit via the direct tribal national process, is there likely a benefit or higher funding potential through that route considering the new equity components to this grant? The application (provided in grants.gov) appears much shorter.**

A: It is the first year of this separate tribal process so it is difficult to definitively say if the competition pool for the tribal process versus the western process would be smaller (and thus more likely to receive funding) but that may potentially be a consideration. There will be bonus points for equity considerations in our western process totaling 5 points, but the total possible score is 100 points. Tribes may prefer to work with their state partners through our western process if there is an existing relationship there which is another consideration. Those applying through the separate tribal process can request assistance from their LSR and Tribal Regional contacts listed within the tribal RFP. Ultimately, it is up to tribal applicants which route to apply through.

**Q: For multi-state projects: Is it \$300,000 max for the total project request or \$300,000 max request per state/applicant? Would a two-state project be capped at \$300,000 or \$600,000?**

A: The cap would be \$300,000 per state/applicant for the multi-state project. So a two-state project could receive \$600,000 across both states (\$300,000 per state) if neither of those states hit the 15% cap.

**Q: With an estimated 15% cap of \$600K (depending on total funding for the West), suppose a state/applicant submits 5 proposals that all rank high enough to receive funding. How would the funding be awarded across those projects?**

A: If the sum of the 5 projects did not exceed \$600K, the projects would all receive funding. If the projects in total exceed \$600,000 (or whatever the 15% cap ends up being), the top-ranking projects would be funded and projects ranking lower would not receive funding.

**Q: Do tribal applications count towards the state's 15% cap, whether they are submitted through the state agency in the western process (as opposed to the separate tribal process in grants.gov)?**

A: Yes, tribal applications count towards the 15% per state funding cap. The 15% cap applies to the state as a geographic area and therefore applies to all projects therein in order to ensure funds have a chance to be equitably distributed across landscapes in the West. This is specific to the western process. Please see the tribal process RFP on grants.gov for the guidelines for that process.

**Q: How would a project that implements a practice on the ground based on previous findings from ongoing research (but which is NOT research itself) be viewed if the research entity is involved as a partner doing the monitoring using only eligible non-federal, non-match funds?**

A: A research entity could be included as a partner, with their contribution included as non-match leverage. Any research items included in a project description MUST explicitly outline their funding source as being from non-federal funds.

**Q: What size of landscape is expected for these projects?**

A: There is no set geographic size expected.

**Q: Is there a match waiver for applicants with difficulty meeting the 1:1 match being considered like the Pacific Islands' match waiver?**

A: The match waiver for the Pacific Islands is set by law and currently waives match for up to \$500,000. Any other match waiver would need to be acquired directly from the Forest Service) Region through their processes.

**Q: Do LSR projects have to be forestry-oriented or are other vegetative types okay?**

A: If LSR projects are clearly linked to the state Forest Action Plan (or an equivalent state-wide restoration strategy) and to one or more Landscape Objectives, and are in line with the Cooperative Forestry program authorities, then projects could incorporate elements that might be relevant to other vegetation types. Be sure that the project abides by the definitions of “nonindustrial private forest land or State forest land” as outlined in the National LSR Manual.

**Q: Where can I find a map to determine eligibility for the rural requirement?**

A: Please see [here](#).

**Q: Tribes are now eligible under LSR. What tribal land qualifies?**

A: There has been a recent determination from USDA that Tribal trust lands are eligible. Tribal land owned in fee simple are also eligible.

**Q: What qualifies as an ‘equivalent state-wide restoration strategy’?**

A: As per the National LSR Manual, an equivalent restoration strategy:

- is complete or substantially complete;
- is for a multi-year period;
- covers non-industrial private forest land or state forest land;
- is accessible by wood processing infrastructure; and
- is based on the best available science.

Applications that use an equivalent restoration strategy should address how the strategy is equivalent by addressing these factors within their application.

**Q: How should a Tribal entity go about applying through a state agency?**

A: Tribal entities should contact the state in which the project is located to run their application through the state agency (total application limit per state is 5). The separate tribal process is also available for those that wish to apply directly to the Forest Service and to only compete against other tribal applications.

**Q: Would National Forest staff have any role in developing proposals or administering the grant?**

A: National Forest staff can definitely play a role. Communication early can help demonstrate collaboration or other proximate projects that can help strengthen the proposal. Grant administration will happen at the State and Private Forestry Office in your Forest Service Region.

**Q: Under Financial Award Requirements it states, "A non-state entity can receive funding through a state/island or directly from the USDA Forest Service." If entities seeking direct funding are going through the state for project application submission, and the entity has proven financial eligibility for direct funds, will the state see any funding for the work associated with the processing/submission of the applications? How will this affect reporting requirements? Considering the funds are tied to the Consolidated Payment Grant (CPG) which goes to states, how does this change affect this?**

A: If an eligible entity submits through a state and gets funded, then the Forest Service, state, and entity will discuss the best mechanism for funding. Traditionally, this has gone to the state/island through the CPG or separately, outside of the CPG, depending upon the state. With the expansion to additional entities, if the state does not want to administer the grant with the entity as a subgrantee or if the entity wishes to do a direct grant, then the Forest Service can set up a grant or agreement with that entity separately (if they meet the financial requirements of direct granting with the Forest Service). The entity would do all of the paperwork associated with the grant if they are directly granted LSR funds. For both grant agreement reporting and project reporting, the recipient (the other eligible entity in this particular example) within the grant agreement would be required to fulfill those reporting requirements.

**Q: Must Tribes be federally recognized to apply?**

A: Only federally recognized Tribes may apply.

**Q: What do I do if the login information provided to the state forestry agency appears to not be working?**

A: If you are unable to login to the forestrygrants.org portal, a lockout may have occurred. After three failed login attempts, the system security locks the login. Sometimes this happens through no fault of the user trying to login, but merely due to the high security settings of the site. Please contact [info@westernforesters.org](mailto:info@westernforesters.org) if you are having any issues with your grant portal login.

**Q: Can LSR funds or match funds be used for meeting costs for collaboratives?**

A: Post award meetings for the parties that will be performing the work to plan/coordinate can be covered by LSR or match funds. The meeting space and facilitation are acceptable covered costs, but not lunch. If counting payroll or time towards match, you must make sure this time/cost is well documented. There must be outcomes outside of the meeting itself, meaning that the collaborative meetings are not the sole focus or purpose of the proposal.

- Non-match leverage funds can be used for any other meeting costs (such as lunch).

**Q: Can cost-share or landowner reimbursement be done under LSR?**

A: The State and Private Forestry authorities for this program are: Forest Stewardship, Rural Forestry Assistance, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health, and Cooperative Fire; all as included in the [Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act](#). Under these authorities listed above, we can fund landowner education and professional technical assistance, including the development of Forest Stewardship and other management plans for eligible nonindustrial private forest landowners. Under the Rural Forestry Assistance program, Federal funds (and the match for those funds) may be used to carry out a range of conservation practices (listed in the CFAA) on private forest land; for partners or contractors to carry out the work on private forest lands.

- The Federal funds (and associated match) cannot go directly to the private landowner, e.g., the funds cannot be used to cost-share individual forest management practices with individual landowners; and cannot be paid to, reimbursed, or granted directly to the private landowners. All 1:1 match for the Federal funds must meet these same requirements.
  - Note: There is additional information about eligible activities for Forest Stewardship and Rural Forestry assistance (which includes State Forestry Assistance) in the [Forest Stewardship Program National Standards and Guidelines](#).
- If you were planning to pay the landowners directly, then that is not allowable under LSR authorities. Here are a few options to consider:
  - Revise the project application so that, instead funding going to landowners, funding goes to partners/contractors to carry out the work on private forest lands, OR
  - Pay for that component of the project with some other funding source (funding beyond the 1:1 required match, such as additional non-match leveraged funds), OR
  - Remove that component, and associated administrative, travel, and other expenses for the sub-grants, from the project application.

**REMINDER!**

Please be sure to consult your USDA Forest Service Region and WFLC staff early and often in the proposal process to ensure that your project meets all the requirements (before submitting applications through the online portal).

Please see the Forest Service [LSR webpage](#) or Western Forestry Leadership Coalition [LSR webpage](#).