
Tongass National Forest COMMUNITY CAPACITY & LAND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM 2021 Request for Proposals

Geographic Restrictions:	Benefit the Tongass National Forest and Surrounding Communities
Application Deadline:	October 15, 2020 at 11:59 pm AKDT
Application Type:	Online
Funding Type:	Federal Funds in partnership with the USDA Forest Service (CFDA: 10.693)
Funding Available:	Approximately \$60,000.00
Matching Requirements:	None
Award Period:	The approximately 8-month award period will run from November 1, 2020 through July 10, 2021. Recipients must complete all work and expenditures within this period and no extensions will be available.
Informational Webinar:	October 1, 2020 at 12:00 pm AKDT [Register Here]
Other Considerations:	This Request for Proposals (RFP) contains important information about Community Capacity and Land Stewardship Program requirements and the application process. The 2021 grant rounds will be especially competitive. The NFF only funds projects that align exceptionally with programmatic criteria. Be sure you have reviewed and fully understand this RFP in its entirety before continuing with the application process. We encourage you to save it and refer to it as your organization completes the online application.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION

The National Forest Foundation is the leading organization working on behalf of the American public to inspire personal and meaningful connections to our National Forests, the centerpiece of public lands. Through direct fieldwork, facilitation, grant programs and promotion of responsible recreation, the National Forest Foundation inspires people to get personally involved in caring for the 193 million acres of public lands that make up our National Forest System. We do this because we believe these lands are an American treasure and are vital to the health of our communities.

OVERVIEW AND GOALS

As part of a broader economic diversification strategy for Southeast Alaska communities, US Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies are collaborating with business leaders, state and federal agencies, and other partners to support sustainable job growth and healthy communities. Strengthening the capacity of rural communities to respond to new economic opportunities and be responsible stewards of their rich natural resources is essential to achieving these goals.

As one component of the economic diversification strategy, the Alaska Region (R10) of the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the NFF launched a program to support collaborative natural resource management, benefitting the watersheds of the Tongass National Forest. This *Community Capacity and Land Stewardship* (CCLS) grant program supports and builds the capacity of organizations that help build sustainable economic opportunities in local communities through natural resource management and watershed restoration.

The NFF offers this program with the financial support of the USFS. It provides grants of up to \$20,000 to enable organizations and collaborative groups to build their capacity to convene, plan, and monitor watershed and landscape projects. Additionally, the program strives to help organizations build internal and community capacity to meet objectives associated with the creation of jobs that contribute to the economic sustainability of communities. This year, there is additional emphasis on projects that support the transition to young growth-based forest management. Work may take place off the Tongass National Forest, but there must be a clear benefit to its watersheds. Organizations are not required to match CCLS Program award funds, but are encouraged to leverage additional private and local, state, or governmental resources to illustrate broad support for the project.

DESIRED GRANT OUTCOMES

The CCLS Program seeks to fund efforts that will measurably contribute to one or both of the following outcomes:

Desired Grant Outcome 1:

Organizations are successful in coming to agreement on the design and implementation of watershed and/or landscape scale enhancement projects that benefit the Tongass National Forest.

Desired Grant Outcome 2:

Organizations accomplish activities that directly support or help advance the transition to young growth-based forest management on the Tongass National Forest.

Applicants should explain how their proposal supports one or both of the above two primary outcomes and, if successful, provide measurable results at the end of the grant period.

Additionally, applicants should consider the following outcome as an additional goal, as practicable:

Desired Grant Outcome 3:

Organizations have developed plans for facilitating job creation and retention and business development that will lead to improved watershed health or landscape-scale restoration projects that benefit the Tongass National Forest.

USE OF FUNDS

Recipients may use grant funds for the following categories of work:

- Outreach and plan development that supports a collaborative group and improves on-the-ground effectiveness;
- Workshops and training related to facilitation, contracting, and other topics that will assist groups in building their capacity to meet the program goals;
- Dissemination of best practices and tools to assist community-based nonprofit organizations and collaborative groups in project development, implementation, and monitoring;
- Organizational and staff support, including facilitation, technical assistance, networking, and peer-to-peer evaluations leading to shared learning;
- Travel related to collaborative group activities; and
- Development of action plans, project strategic documents, or other similar documents as a result of or necessary for collaborative processes.

Funding from grants cannot fund USDA agency personnel or resources or be directed to any other federal entity.

WHO CAN APPLY

Applications will be considered from 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations; regional, state or local governmental entities; colleges and universities; and federally-recognized Native American tribes implementing activities that lead to forest or watershed enhancement activities benefitting the Tongass National Forest. Organizations that are not a federally recognized tribe or tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code must utilize a fiscal sponsor with that status. Please contact the NFF with questions about an organization's eligibility or additional requirements if a using fiscal sponsor.

Previous CCLS grant recipients are encouraged to apply for either continuation of previous work or for new projects. Funding for continuation of previous CCLS-funded projects is contingent on demonstrated success in previous NFF-funded projects and fulfillment of all grant obligations under other NFF awards.

WHO SHOULD NOT APPLY

Ineligible applicants include:

- Federal agencies;
- For-profit organizations;
- Consultants;
- Educational and research organizations proposing work that does not advance watershed or landscape-scale improvement;
- Organizations seeking funding for litigation or advocacy;
- Organizations seeking general operating or programmatic support unrelated to the scope of this program; or
- Organizations considering submitting a proposal for work that cannot be completed by July 10, 2021.

USE OF FUNDS

The USFS Alaska Region provides program funding under the [Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Agreement Authority](#), sometimes known as the *Wyden Amendment*. As such, all awarded grants must support the protection, restoration, or enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and other resources on public or private land, or reduce the risk of natural disaster upon these resources when public safety is threatened. CCLS funding is not for on-the-ground implementation. These funds cannot fund the personnel or resources of any federal entity. Further, award recipients cannot use funding from CCLS grants to lobby or influence any federal, state, or local legislative body or any federal, state, or local legislative proposal.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Evaluation occurs based on answers to the narrative questions provided below, and the extent to which the organization's work will contribute to the outcomes listed above. Reviewers use the following criteria to rank proposals:

- The extent to which the increased capacity provided through this grant is likely to result in a tangible benefit to National Forests and Grasslands during the short- or long-term future.
- The extent to which funds will accomplish activities that directly support or help advance the transition to young growth-based forest management on the Tongass National Forest.
- The extent to which the scope of work will likely result in job creation, business development, or workforce development benefits during the short- or long-term future.
- The extent to which the applicant fits program criteria as a community-based organization or a collaborative group with a broad base of local support.
- The extent to which the grant will help the organization facilitate the completion of restoration actions and treatments, or help remove barriers to enhanced landscape or watershed restoration.
- The extent to which the scope of work will likely result in economic, social, and human capital benefits.
- The extent to which award funds are critical for organization's success in an identified program of work.
- The likelihood the applicant will complete grant activities within the allowable award period.
- The extent to which the budget is reasonable given the anticipated outcomes.

- When applicable, the extent to which the grant builds upon demonstrated success of a previously-funded CCLS Program grant.

AWARD TIMING

The NFF will announce funding decisions in late October, 2020. The approximately **8-month award period** will run from November 1, 2020 through July 10, 2021. **Recipients must complete all work and expenditures within this period and no extensions will be available.**

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

The online application contains the components listed below. Greater detail on the requirements for each component is in the online application.

1. Abstract
2. Project Narrative
 - a. Context
 - b. Need
 - c. Goals
 - d. Activities
 - e. Outcomes
 - f. Grant History
3. Program Documents
 - a. Timeline
 - b. List of Participants
 - c. Budget Narrative
 - d. NFF Financial Plan form
 - e. US Forest Service District Ranger's letter of support
4. Organizational Financials

FOREST SERVICE LETTERS OF SUPPORT

All applications must include a letter of support from each Forest Service Ranger District included in a proposal. Do not submit any additional letters of support. If not uploaded with the proposal, email letter(s) of support to grants@nationalforests.org within three days of the grant deadline. Please do not send any letters by mail.

TO APPLY

I. How to start a new application:

1. Go to this link <https://www.grantinterface.com/sl/Yf5Feb> and either:
 - a. Log on with an existing account; or
 - b. Click [Create New Account](#) and follow the steps to create a new account.
Tip: You are required to create a new account if you have not previously applied for an NFF grant through this online system. [\[View Registration Tutorial\]](#)
2. Once logged in, click the blue [Apply](#) button
3. Follow the instructions provided on the online form.

II. How to return to the application you have started:

1. Go to the application login page at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=nationalforests>
2. Log in with your existing account
3. Click "Edit Application" to the left of the name of your saved application

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The National Forest Foundation and partnering organizations and agencies will help award recipients to build capacity through ongoing communications and will facilitate idea sharing between established and emerging organizations.

The NFF has developed [Conservation Connect](#) to provide tools needed for engaging in collaborative, community-based stewardship on our National Forests and Grasslands. Conservation Connect follows the NFF's peer learning philosophy of creating opportunities for practitioners on the ground to share their successes and challenges and to learn from the experiences of others. Conservation Connect hosts peer-learning teleconferences and offers mentoring, access to coaches, a resource library with best practices and tools, and a variety of information on emerging topics of interest.

The NFF publishes the quarterly [Taproot eNewsletter](#), which shares resources for organizations working towards conservation on National Forest lands including upcoming webinars, new tools developed by other organizations, and profiles of successful projects.

The Forest Service and the NFF have also jointly developed the online [Partnership Resource Center](#), an excellent resource for community groups that focus on natural resource management issues.

Resources for grant seekers offering tips and best practices for writing successful proposals are widely available on the internet.

NFF staff is available to respond to questions about the application process; receiving help will not affect an organization's competitiveness for the program.

INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR

An informational webinar regarding CCLS proposal requirements and the submission process will take place October 1, 2020 at 12:00 pm AKDT [\[Register Here\]](#)

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Please contact the NFF with additional questions regarding the CCLS Program or the grant application process. Seeking help will not affect an organization's competitiveness for the program.

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