



Collaborative Capacity Program for Forests & Communities

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and Definitions

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General Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Collaborative Capacity Program funding program?

The purpose of the CCP's financial awards is to support the critical capacity elements and activities that make collaboration for forest stewardship successful. The program aims to provide capacity for communities and collaborative groups to progress towards on-the-ground stewardship outcomes on forests and grasslands currently managed by the USDA Forest Service as part of the National Forest System.

2. How do you define "collaborative group" or "collaborative capacity"?

See Program Definitions listed below.

3. What do you mean by equitable decision-making and inclusive collaborative processes?

Equitable decision-making and inclusive collaborative processes involve clearly articulated processes that share who is involved and how they were recruited; methods for how perspectives are gathered and noted; and steps for how decisions are ultimately made. Equitable decision-making processes and inclusive collaborative processes include necessary checks to prevent bias, such as a required quorum for voting. These processes can be documented through charters, MOUs, or other similar governance documents.

4. What is the total amount you are awarding in the 2024 round of funding? Are you targeting specific regions?

The CCP intends to host three annual funding rounds from 2024 through 2026. The total CCP funding amount for the three rounds is \$2.5 million or approximately \$800k per round. In 2024, approximately 25% of funding is targeted for recipients in Forest Service Region 6 (Oregon and Washington), including Tribal or All Applicants. The remaining 75% is available nationwide. Additionally, at least 25% of the total program amount is targeted for federally recognized Tribes and tribal organizations.

5. Why is a percentage of funding dedicated to Washington and Oregon and not other areas of the country?

The percentage of funding available specifically for USDA Forest Service Region 6 (Oregon and Washington) Washington in the program is because Region 6 contributed funding to the program. This funding is dedicated to their specific region.

6. Will you target other states in future rounds of funding?

It's possible but it will depend on whether we can raise additional funds.

7. What are National Forest System lands?

National Forest System lands include the public lands managed by the Forest Service, including forest, grasslands, and related lands throughout the United States and its territories. [Click here](#) to view a map of existing National Forest System lands. Examples include the Mount-Baker Snoqualmie National Forest and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. This program supports all National Forest System lands.

8. What is the source of funding for the Collaborative Capacity Program?

The CCP is funded by appropriations to the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Section 40803-c-10) to support “collaboration and collaboration-based activities”.

9. What types of technical assistance does the Collaborative Capacity Program offer? Who is eligible for technical assistance?

More information on technical assistance with this program is forthcoming and will be available on the [program's website](#).

Eligibility and Application Questions

1. My organization currently has an open grant agreement (e.g., MAP) with the National Forest Foundation. Are we still eligible to apply for this funding?

Yes, your organization is still eligible to apply for CCP funding even if your organization has an open grant agreement with NFF, as long as it is a different project. NFF can and does support multiple, distinct projects at a single organization via different grant programs. If your

organization has two different projects, it would be fine to propose one for CCP and another for a different program.

2. Can I apply to CCP to increase the funding for a project that NFF is already supporting?

No, if the NFF is supporting a project through another funding program (such as through MAP or an invited grant) you cannot propose the same project to CCP. You can only propose a different project to CCP.

3. Can we submit multiple CCP applications?

No, NFF will only accept one application per organization per program round (e.g. CCP 2024 funding cycle). This limit includes both the Tribal Applicants and All Applicants Pathways for a total of one 2024 application per organization, regardless of Pathway.

4. Can recreation-based collaborative groups be eligible for funding?

Yes, recreation-based collaborative groups that can clearly describe how this funding will support their collaborative efforts and how their work leads to stewardship benefits on forests and grasslands currently managed by the USDA Forest Service are eligible for funding.

5. What are some examples of “a future stewardship benefit to forests and grasslands currently managed by the USDA Forest Service as part of the National Forest System”?

There are several examples of how collaborative groups and communities can provide a future stewardship benefit to forests and grasslands. Some examples include determining areas within a forest or grassland for prescribed or cultural burning, completing accessibility improvements to a trail, restoring an area of historical or cultural relevance with appropriate signage, and planting native plants along a restored waterway.

6. Can we propose a project involving multiple Tribes or multiple collaborative groups? If so, should we submit one proposal or multiple proposals?

Yes, we encourage collaboration amongst potential applicants. One proposal for the proposed scope of work is preferred.

7. Would development of master plans or other multi-partner planning efforts be a good fit for this program?

Potentially, yes. The proposed activities should describe how investments in collaboration will support a long-term strategy for stewardship in your region or specific location. The proposal should describe why and how engaging in collaboration to develop a plan is important and how the plan will impact your region or specific location.

Award and Reporting Questions

- 1. If awarded, what is the disbursement schedule for grants? Are grant funds provided up front or as a reimbursement?**

NFF prefers to distribute all funds up front for CCP awards. In some cases, funds will be provided in installments, which occurs on a case-by-case basis.

- 2. May an applicant be awarded part of their request? For example, if an applicant requests \$50k, could NFF decide to grant them \$25k?**

Potentially, however, NFF prefers to award applicants their full request. NFF determines whether partial funding is appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

- 3. What are the reporting requirements for grantees?**

Reporting requirements for grantees include update reports that are completed every six months. These reports include a financial status report, plus a brief descriptive report on activities completed. This brief report on activities completed can be in written form or through an interview.

A final report is also required at the end of the performance period. This final report includes a written financial report plus a written narrative describing the activities completed. Final report narratives may also include video, photo essay, story map, or media.

National Forest Foundation staff are available to provide guidance for these reporting requirements and will work with grantees to make sure reporting requirements are not a burden.

Tribal Applicants Pathway Questions

- 1. Are Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal 7871 Organizations eligible to apply under the Tribal Pathway?**

Yes. While Alaska Native Corporations are not included in the FRN published list of federally recognized Tribes, they are covered under the ISDEAA definition of Tribal organizations 25 USC 5304(l).

As Tribal entities chartered by federally recognized Tribal governments, Tribal 7871 Organizations are also eligible for the Tribal Applicants Pathway.

- 2. Can you provide an example of how a successful application from a Tribal Nation and/or Tribal organization would use this funding?**

The CCP financial awards can offset the costs of staff time and provide facilitation or meeting resources to Tribes who are seeking capacity to support efforts such as resource management of fish and game across boundaries, prescribed burning activities, co-stewardship agreements, and other collaborative land management efforts.

4. Is writing or working towards co-stewardship agreements an eligible activity?

Yes, activities supporting co-stewardship agreements are eligible activities. While co-stewardship agreements remain relatively undefined, the CCP uses Oregon State University's College of Forestry [definition](#) of co-stewardship as opportunities which involve one or more Tribes working directly with the USDA Forest Service to promote an approach to managing national forests and grasslands that seeks to protect the treaty, religious, subsistence and cultural interests of federally recognized Tribes.

Program Definitions

The CCP operates under the following definitions:

Collaborative capacity is essential for all types of collaborative groups and communities to effectively work together, especially those working in forest stewardship. Collaborative capacity is made up of elements, or specific resources and skills, needed for a collaborative to function, perform, and endure. These capacity elements support and allow collaborative activities to occur, which lead to durable stewardship outcomes on-the-ground.

Collaborative Forest Stewardship is when people with different perspectives work together to find shared solutions to complex forest management challenges, like extreme wildfire, climate change stressors, and concerns about sustainable recreation. This type of collaboration can succeed at multiple levels – from local to national – to build shared understanding and solutions. A variety of support is required to make collaborative forest stewardship successful, like coordination, facilitation, communications, fundraising, training, and more. Collaborative forest stewardship is a tool for working across land ownership boundaries to reduce wildfire risk, ensure sustainable recreation and access, and build forests and communities that are resilient to climate change and other stressors.

Collaborative groups consist of multiple partners and interests who work together to identify common ground. They may aim to lead, coordinate, organize, and provide feedback on collaborative forest stewardship projects in a specific place or region. The term “collaborative groups” refers to all partnerships, networks, coalitions, and initiatives working towards shared place-based or regional goals.

Many have observed there has historically been a lack of meaningful inclusion and genuine engagement with Tribes and underserved communities in the field of collaborative forest stewardship, creating

inequities in decision-making and planning for forest stewardship projects. What collaboration means is evolving and expanding into a broader range of ways of reaching and engaging with people and communities, including those who have been previously excluded from accessing National Forests and the benefits derived from them. For example, through their government-to-government relationships, Tribes are increasingly collaborating with the Forest Service through co-stewardship agreements.¹ Several opportunities exist to collaborate with underserved communities through natural resources projects as well as sustainable recreation and cultural heritage projects. The CCP uses definitions of equity and underserved communities cited in the Forest Service's Equity Action Plan²:

Equity is the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Underserved Communities are 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 **National Forest System** includes the public lands managed by the Forest Service, including forest, grasslands, and related lands throughout the United States and its territories. [Click here](#) to view a map of existing National Forest System lands.

¹ [Annual Report on Co-Stewardship USDA \(2022\)](#)

² [Forest Service Equity Action Plan \(2022\)](#)