



**National Forest  
Foundation**

# **Program Overview Matching Awards Program**

**Deadline:** January 16, 2020 or June 9, 2020

**Kerry Morse** - Conservation Programs Officer  
**Adam Liljeblad** - Director, Conservation Awards  
**December 13, 2019**

# Webinar Overview

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Today's webinar will:

- Provide a coarse overview of the NFF and NFF grant programs.
  - Detail the funding priorities of the Matching Awards Program (MAP).
  - Provide information on requirements for grants.
  - Describe the application process.
  - Cover FAQs.
  - Provide a forum for Q&A.
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# Housekeeping

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- Feel free to submit questions at any time in the chat function. Questions that come in over the course of the presentation will be answered as soon as the main presentation is over. There will be plenty of time for Q&A.
  - The session is being recorded, so we'll be able to provide a web link afterward in case you want to revisit it or share it with someone who wasn't able to be on the session today.
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# Who's Here?

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A few quick questions to learn about who's on the call today:



# About the National Forest Foundation

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## Mission:

*Engage Americans to promote the health and public enjoyment of the 193-million-acre National Forest System*

- Chartered by Congress in 1991
  - Action-oriented projects
    - Enhance viability of natural resources & communities
    - Involve surrounding communities
    - Benefit America's National Forests and Grasslands
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# About the National Forest Foundation

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- The leading organization working on behalf of the American public to inspire personal and meaningful connections to our National Forests
  - NFF works in close partnership with the USFS nationwide The logo of the United States Forest Service, featuring a shield with a tree in the center, the letters 'U S' on either side, and the words 'FOREST SERVICE' at the top and 'DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE' at the bottom.
  - Why? Because we believe these lands are an American treasure and vital to the health of our communities
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# About the National Forest Foundation

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- How we work:
    - Direct site-based work
    - Tree planting programs
    - Grant programs
    - Facilitation of organizational capacity and constituency building
    - Inspiring people to get personally involved
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# NFF Grant Programs

Provide grants to:

- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations
- Colleges and universities
- Native American tribes
- Implement projects benefiting America's National Forests and Grasslands



# NFF Grant Programs

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Since 2001 we have:

- Funded more than 2,100 projects nationwide
    - On-the-ground conservation and restoration
    - Capacity building of collaborative groups
  - Awarded \$69 million in grant funds
  - Achieved conservation outcomes valued at an estimated \$233 million
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# NFF Grant Programs

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## Our Shared Accomplishments:

172,750 Volunteers

2,598,265 Volunteer Hours

21,612 Miles of Trail Work

284,534 Acres of Wildlife Habitat Restored/Maintained

1,992,994 Trees Planted

5,154 Miles of Stream Surveyed or Restored

118,971 Acres Treated for Invasive Species

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# NFF Grant Programs

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**Adam Liljeblad**

NFF Director, Conservation Awards



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# NFF Grant Programs

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## Funding for “On-the-Ground” Work

*(Work that physically changes the landscape)*

- Matching Awards Program
- Ski Conservation Fund



# NFF Grant Programs

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## Funding for Capacity Building

- Community Capacity and Land Stewardship Program



# Matching Awards Program

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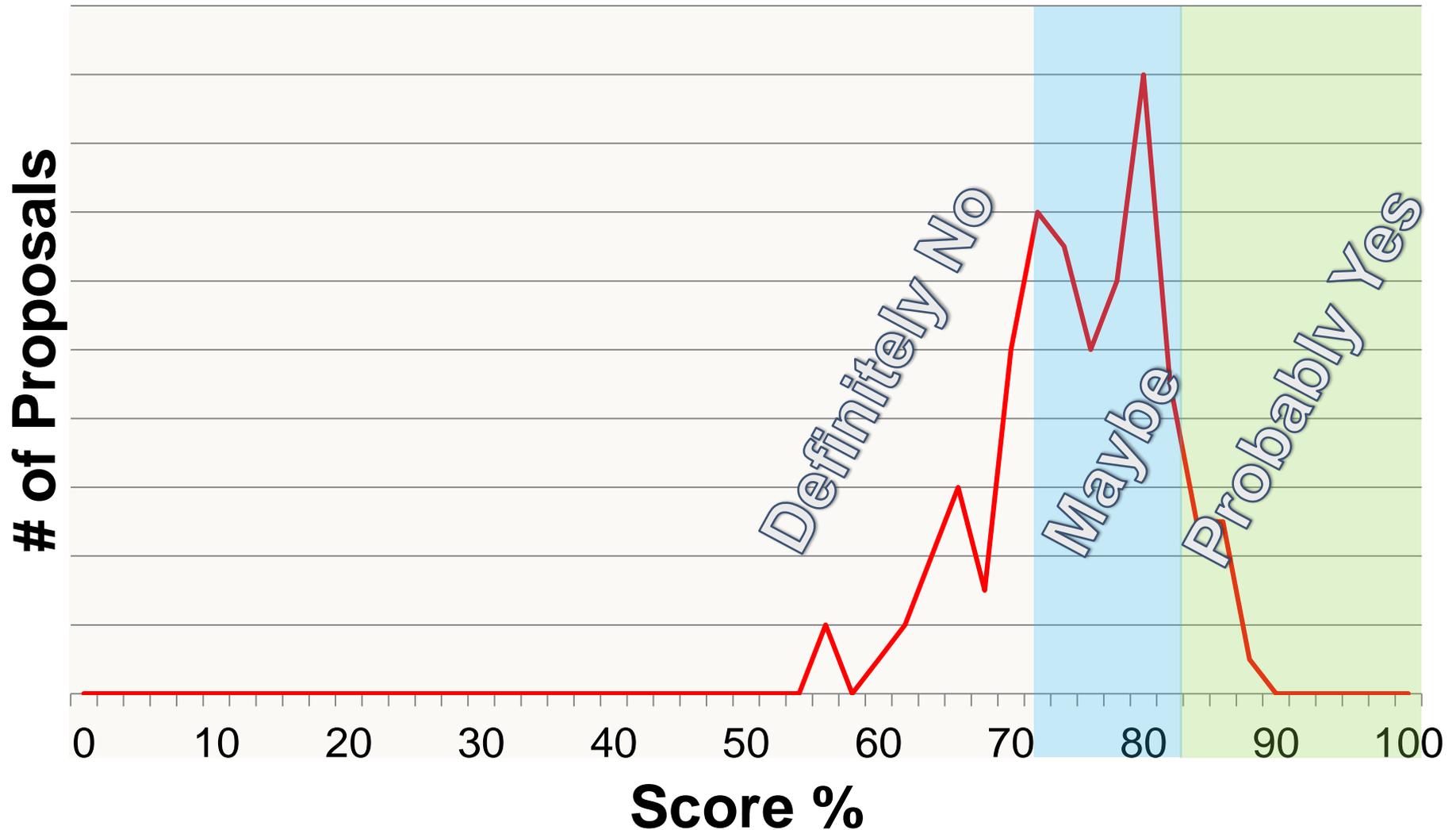
- Awards federal funds from the USFS
  - Supports action-oriented projects benefiting National Forest System (NFS) Lands
    - On-the-ground conservation and restoration projects
    - Must provide clear, direct benefits to National Forests or Grasslands
    - Projects not programs
    - Emphasis on:
      - Boots on-the-ground
      - Dirty knees and fingernails
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# Proposal Evaluation

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- Proposals Quantitatively Evaluated
    - NFF Staff
    - NFF Board
    - USFS Staff
  - Evaluation Criteria listed in RFP Appendix
  - Pay attention to all criteria
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# Typical Score Distribution



# Matching Awards Program

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## Good Fit for MAP

- On-the-ground work that benefits National Forest and Grasslands
  - Trails and recreation
  - Youth Crews
  - Volunteers
  - Forest and ecosystem Health



## Poor Fit for MAP

- General operating support
  - Work that doesn't directly benefit National Forests or Grasslands
  - Projects without on-the-ground benefits
  - Advocacy or litigation
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# Matching Awards Program

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## ✓ “On-the-Ground”

- Work that physically changes the landscape
- ...think dirty knees and dirty fingernails



## ✗ NOT “On-the-Ground”

- Inventory & Monitoring
- ‘Citizen Science’
- Signage and Kiosks
- Project Planning
- Community/Public Meetings





# Common Missteps

- Not fully reviewing, understanding and/or following requirements.
- Developing programmatic scope of work instead of project-specific.



# Focus Areas

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- Outdoor Experiences
- Forest Health



# Focus: Outdoor Experiences

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Results-oriented, on-the-ground, projects that improve the quality, condition, and care of Outdoor Experiences on National Forests.



# Focus: Outdoor Experiences

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## Project Types:

Improving, or maintaining recreation resource connectivity including, and similar to: trail maintenance, bridge and crossing construction or repair, and installation of trail drainage structures; and/or

Engaging youth, volunteers, or diverse, underserved or under-engaged populations in hands-on stewardship activities; and/or

Employing youth and/or veterans crews to implement on-the-ground conservation, stewardship and/or restoration work.

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# Focus: Outdoor Experiences

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- Projects **should** generate tangible conservation outcomes or enhance high quality recreational experiences for the users of the National Forest System.
  - Funds **cannot** support improvements of hardened facilities including, and similar to: campgrounds, parking lots, restrooms, visitor centers, and major signage.
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# Focus: Forest Health

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The NFF supports results-oriented, on-the-ground, citizen-involved projects that maintain and/or restore ecosystem resiliency on National Forests



# Focus: Forest Health

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## Project Types:

Promoting ecosystem structure, function and diversity; and/or

Promoting forest health through the removal or control of non-native invasive species, and/or reintroduction of native plants and trees.

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# Focus: Forest Health

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- Projects should be consistent with or supportive of identified large-scale conservation initiatives.
- The NFF will only consider monitoring projects focused on determining the long-term effectiveness of NFF funded on-the-ground work.

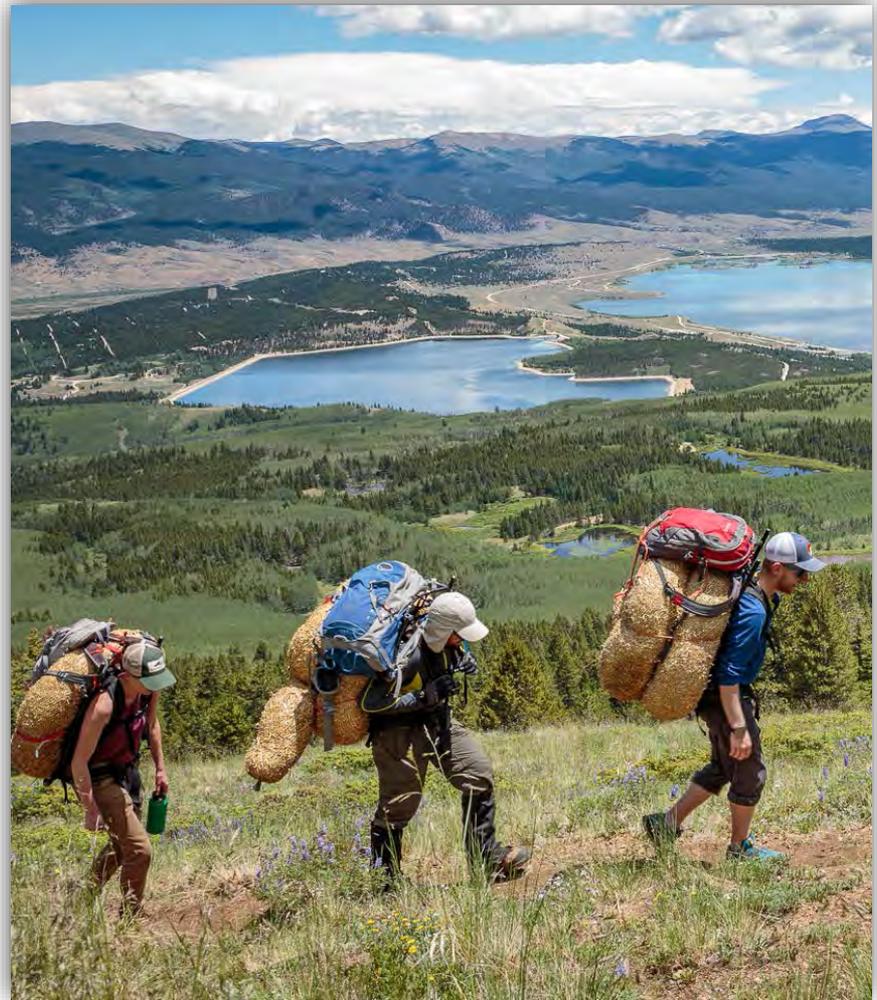


# Integrated Emphasis

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Projects that cohesively integrate Outdoor Experiences and Forest Health program areas are strongly encouraged.

Ideal projects will have a strong connection to each of the individual program areas, and effectively integrate both in a clear, direct manner.



# Integrated Emphasis

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- The most compelling projects will strongly integrate the Outdoor Experiences and Forest Health Program Areas, and will receive a weighted advantage in evaluation.
  - A project will not be eligible for full weighted advantage if it does not cohesively integrate the two program areas, or only does so nominally.
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# Integrated Emphasis

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Examples of integrated projects include, but are not limited to the following:

Engaging community volunteers to complete riparian plantings as part of a watershed-scale restoration project;

Utilizing youth crews from underserved communities to complete habitat stewardship work and forest stand treatments.

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# Out-of-Scope Requests

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- Education and interpretation
  - May only receive consideration as minor components of otherwise well-aligned larger projects.
- Inventory or monitoring components
  - May only receive consideration if those components focus on determining the long-term effectiveness of previous NFF funded on-the-ground work.



*We encourage applicants to use funding from other sources (including project match) for any portion of a project focused on education, interpretation, inventory, or monitoring.*

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# Common Missteps

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- Not ensuring a project is strongly aligned with funding priorities
- Poorly defining a project.
- Not being fully ready to take on a project.
  - Organizational capacity
  - Timing





# Eligibility

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## Eligible Organizations:

- 501(c)(3) nonprofits
  - And projects fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- Universities
- Federally Recognized Native American Tribes

Must have a high degree of active community involvement in one or more phases:

- Pre-Implementation
  - Project Implementation
  - Post-Implementation
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# Matching Requirements

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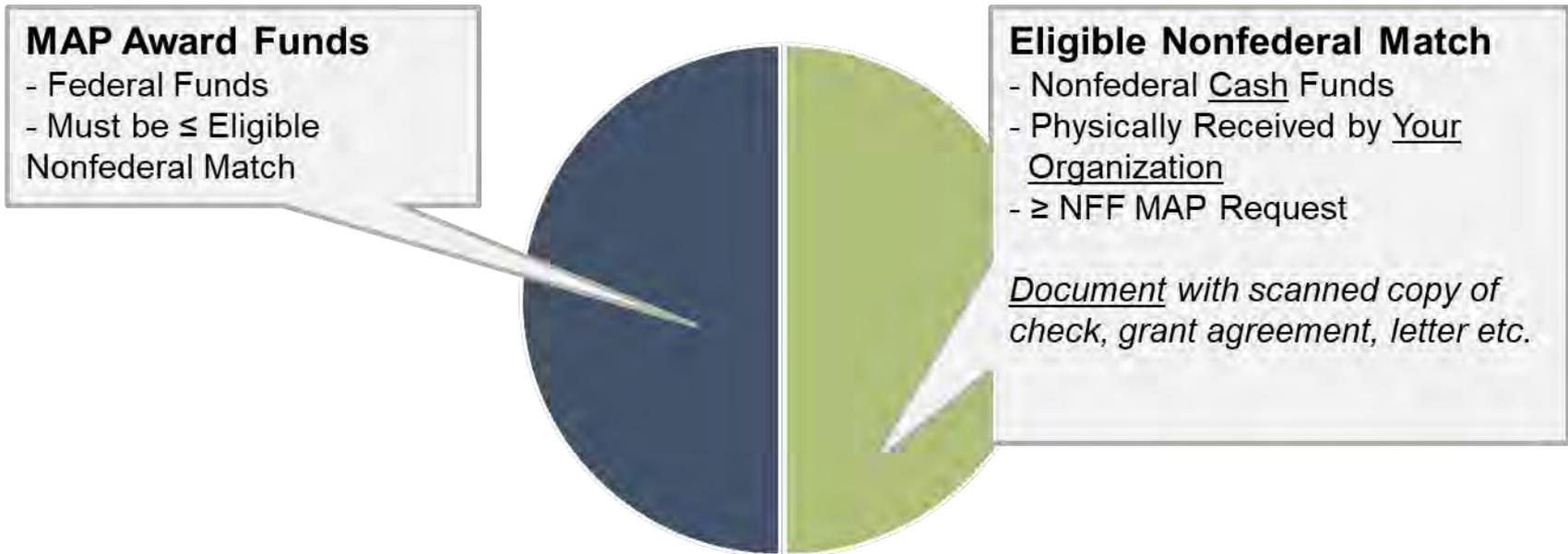
- Minimum 1:1 **Cash** Match in nonfederal funds
- Applicant organization must **physically possess** matching funds
- Match must be **concurrently spent** on MAP project
- Ineligible matching sources:
  - In-Kind contributions
  - Federal contributions



# MAP Budget Requirements

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## Total 1-Year Project Budget

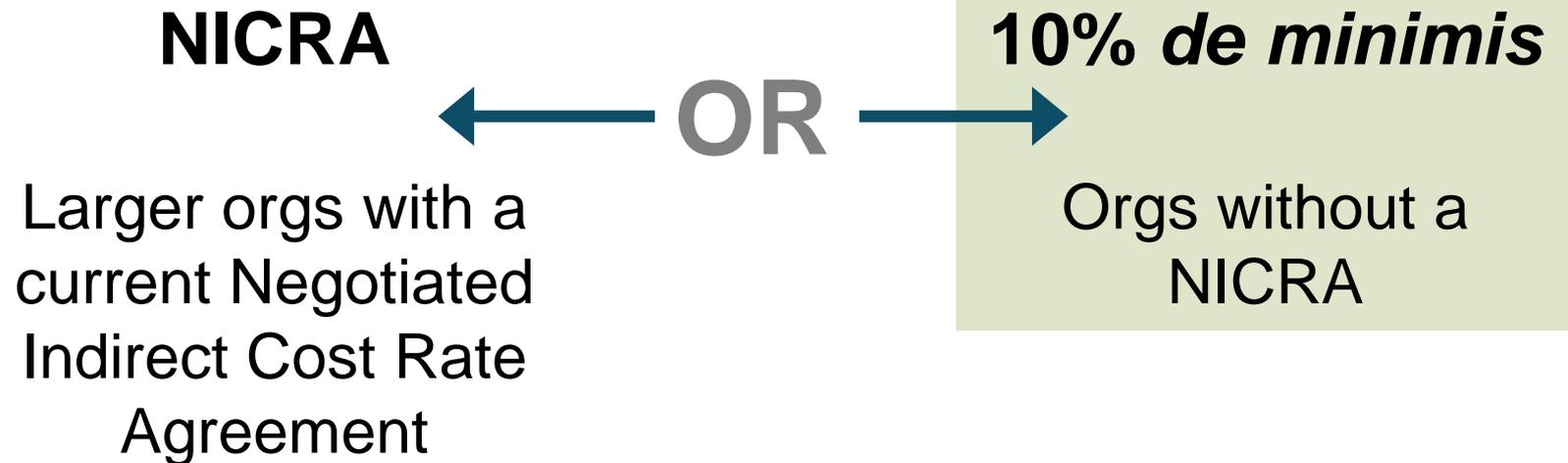


- *Show further leverage with in-kind and other fed. contributions*
  - *Be sure to follow NFF budget category definitions*
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# Indirect Costs

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- OK to charge overhead costs for MAP
- Allowable indirect rates:



- *Be sure to review and understand NFF's full Indirect Costs Policy*
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# Project Timing & Compliance

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- MAP projects must be completed within one year
    - *Anticipated* start dates:
      - **Round 1:** March / April 2020
      - **Round 2:** August / September 2020
  - Environmental compliance *must* be complete at the time of application for funding
    - NEPA and other permitting in-hand
    - All applications with incomplete environmental compliance work are rejected outright
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# Eligibility

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- No geographic priorities
    - Projects eligible nationwide
    - Must benefit National Forests and Grasslands
  - Letter of Support from Forest Supervisor required with application
  - MAP funding is for projects not eligible under more specific NFF grant programs including all invited grant programs
    - Ski Conservation Fund
    - Forest Stewardship Fund
    - *Treasured Landscapes*
    - Other Strategic Programs
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# Common Missteps

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- Not aligning the narrative and the budget.
- Including ineligible funding components without indication that they will be paid with non-NFF funds.
- Matching funding does not overlap enough with project time period.



# 2019 Awards

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Average Request:	\$25,178
Median Request:	\$24,859
Average Award:	\$24,867
Median Award:	\$25,000
% Props Funded:	61%
% \$ Req'd Funded:	61%

*Requests from new applicants should come in at or below the average*

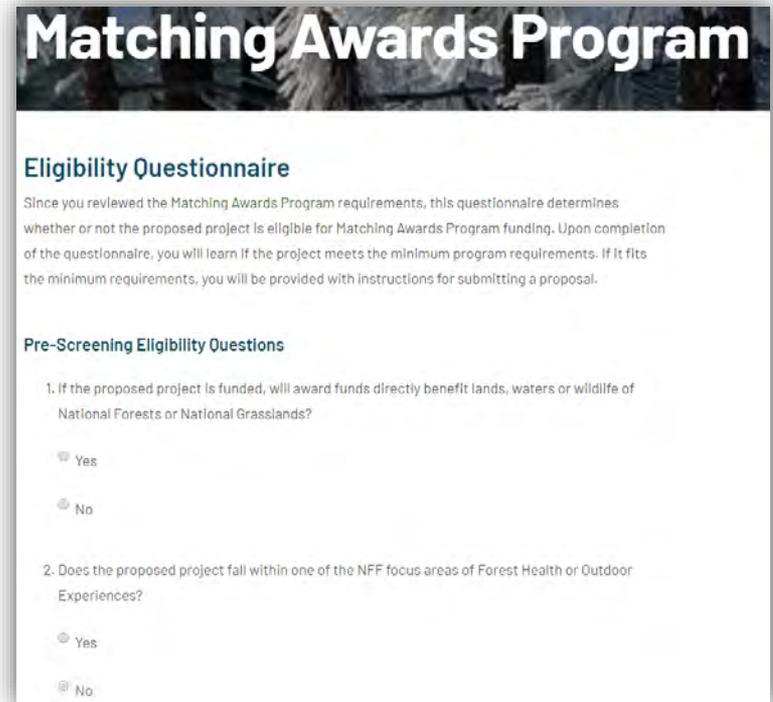


# Application Information

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## Application Process:

1. Review program guidelines online
2. Complete online pre-screening questionnaire
3. Access RFP containing proposal submission guidelines by passing pre-screening questionnaire
4. Prepare proposal online
5. Submit proposal online



**Matching Awards Program**

### Eligibility Questionnaire

Since you reviewed the Matching Awards Program requirements, this questionnaire determines whether or not the proposed project is eligible for Matching Awards Program funding. Upon completion of the questionnaire, you will learn if the project meets the minimum program requirements. If it fits the minimum requirements, you will be provided with instructions for submitting a proposal.

#### Pre-Screening Eligibility Questions

1. If the proposed project is funded, will award funds directly benefit lands, waters or wildlife of National Forests or National Grasslands?  
 Yes  
 No
2. Does the proposed project fall within one of the NFF focus areas of Forest Health or Outdoor Experiences?  
 Yes  
 No

# Grant Payment Process

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An advance of grant funds can be requested incrementally or in full at any point during the award period.

- Complete a **Cash Request Form**
- Include **documentation that eligible nonfederal match has been received** by your organization
- Send cash request to NFF by email
- Advance funds transferred via EFT typically within 1-2 weeks

**There is no longer a requirement to mail NFF a physical check for matching funds.**

Award Recipients submit match documentation + paperwork via email to release MAP award funds.

# Competitive Proposals

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- Grant rounds are very competitive
  - Majority of proposals meet baseline standards
  - Focus on the core and on the edges
    - Strong Proposal
    - Integrates Forest Health + Outdoor Experiences
    - Check off all the boxes
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# Common Missteps

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- Not making sure you address all evaluation criteria
- Not acknowledging shortcomings
  - Timing
  - Questionable history
  - Questionable capacity
  - Unfulfilled obligations



# Questions?

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## Matching Awards Program Deadlines:

January 16, 2020 11:59 pm MST  
or June 9, 2020 11:59 pm MDT

*Use the chat box to enter questions*

### Primary Contact

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**<https://www.nationalforests.org/grant-programs>**

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