



**EASTERN REGION
COHESIVE WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
FY 2025 REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS
Applications Due COB Wednesday, January 15, 2025**

Grant Application Instructions

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OVERVIEW

Applications are requested for the Eastern Region Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy – also referred to as Cohesive Strategy – Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR), CFDA 10.698 grant opportunity.

The WRR grant supports the goals of the [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#):

- **Restore and Maintain Landscapes:** Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances, in accordance with management objectives.
- **Create Fire Adapted Communities:** Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.

Other Considerations:

- On-the-ground activities must be on non-Federal lands and/or Tribal trust lands.
- Use of the [Northeast-Midwest Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal](#) (NMWRAP) is recommended to identify and document projects that are focusing on reducing wildfire risk and protecting values at risk. In addition to the NMWRAP, it's acceptable to use other comparable wildfire risk assessment tools such as [Wildfire Risk to Communities](#) or [Community Wildfire Defense Grants](#).
- The grant term is 5 years.
- The grant applications will be evaluated by application review teams of U.S. Forest Service and State Forestry agency staff.
- All applications will undergo a preliminary eligibility review prior to ranking. All applicants will be notified of the final selection or non-selection of their applications.
- "For Profit" organizations are not eligible for this funding opportunity.

COHESIVE STRATEGY GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) Grants

Successful WRR applications will align with the respective State's Forest Action Plan and meet one or more of the six [Northeast Regional Action Plan](#) options. WRR applications shall address one or more options under Goals 1 and 2 of the Cohesive Strategy.

Goal 1: Restore & Maintain Landscapes

- **Regional Option 1A:** Expand the use of prescribed fire as an integral tool to meet management objectives in the Northeast.
- **Regional Option 1B:** Maintain and increase, where possible, the extent of fire-dependent ecosystems and expand the use of fire as a disturbance process.
- **Regional Option 1C:** Focus on mitigating "event" fuels to reduce potential fire hazard.

Goal 2: Fire Adapted Communities

- **Regional Option 2A:** Focus on promoting and supporting local adaptation activities to be taken by communities.
- **Regional Option 2B:** Focus on directing hazardous fuel treatments to the wildland urban interface.

- **Regional Option 2C:** Focus on promoting and supporting prevention programs and activities.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- WRR grant funds must be matched 100 percent or more by eligible and allowable costs and are subject to match provisions in [grant regulations in the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#).
- WRR applications require completion of the 2025 WRR Planned Spending & Accomplishments Excel spreadsheet. This replaces the old National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS).
- Requested grant funds must be an appropriate and authorized use of Federal funds as described in [The Principal Laws Relating to USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Programs](#), SEC. 10. [16 U.S.C. 2106] RURAL FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL.
- Applications should contain maps to describe project location and activities.

INDIVIDUAL COMPONENT REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) CFDA 10.698

Eligible Parties

- State forestry agencies
- Forest fire compacts
- Groups of States
- Nonprofit organizations
- Academic institutions
- Tribes
- Fire science exchanges

Linkages

- NCS Goals 1 and 2 and corresponding Regional Options
- State Forest Action Plan
- Tribal Forest Protection plans or similar land management document

Accomplishment Data

- Provide data as required by the 2025 WRR Planned Spending & Accomplishments Excel spreadsheet.

Funding Limits

- The FY 2025 allocation for this grant opportunity is subject to funding availability.
- Each application can range from \$25,000 to \$300,000 in Federal funds.
- Any one applicant may submit no more than three applications per WRR grant opportunity (single or multistate).
- Equipment: No more than 25 percent of Federal funds requested.
- Maximum amount of WRR funding awarded to any one State (State Cap) via this competitive process cannot exceed 15 percent of the total FY funds allocated for this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
- Scoring priority will determine which applications are funded from a State, this includes third

party applications supported by a State. State/third party applications may be skipped, and a lower ranked application from that state/third party selected to stay within the 15% cap for the respective State.

- Forest Fire Compact awards and grants to Tribes will not impact State Caps.
- Multistate applications must identify the lead agency and the amount of funds to be allocated against each State Cap in the Project Budget Explanation.
- Third party applications will count against the State funding cap, but do not count against the State's limit of three applications.
- State supported third party applications (aka non-state) compete equally with state applications.

Support

- Third-party (non-State) applications must identify the lead organization, have State support, and specify the amount funding to be allocated against one or more State Caps. The exception is that Federally recognized Tribes do not require State support, and forest fire compacts require endorsement by their commission in lieu of specific State support.

Except for projects by Tribes, a letter of support from the State Forester – Director of Forest Protection in NY and State Fire Warden in NJ for examples – or appropriate designated authority for approving activities must be submitted with the application.

WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION (WRR) ACTIVITY EXAMPLES

Qualifying

- Use of prescribed fire
- Use of mechanical fuel reduction
- Vegetation management (pruning, mowing, chemical treatment, grazing)
- Use of small-diameter wood from wildfire risk reduction activities
- Defensible space around homes and communities
- Development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans or equivalent
- Development, creation, and/or maintenance of fuel breaks and fire breaks
- Slash removal/disposal
- Pamphlets, brochures, handouts, PSAs, DVDs
- Property inspections/assessments
- Training programs that support the use of prescribed fire or Fire Adapted Communities
- Exercises/drills that support local Fire Adapted Communities
- Information and Education, Awareness, Firewise, Ready Set Go, and Fire Prevention Programs
- Installation of dry hydrants that support a Fire Adapted Community
- Weather station network upgrades that support a Fire Adapted Community
- Fire management planning in fire adapted landscapes with Fire Adapted Communities

Non-qualifying

- Research and development projects
- Capital improvements
- Economic development projects

EASTERN REGION CONTACTS

For the Eastern Region Cohesive Fire Strategy Competitive grant program, contact:

Ray Parrish, Program Manager

raymond.j.parrish@usda.gov

(414) 323-2589

For WRR in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia or Connecticut, contact:

Maris Gabliks, Cooperative Fire Specialist

maris.g.gabliks@usda.gov

(609) 235-7524

For WRR in Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin, or Michigan, contact:

Caleb Schreiber, Cooperative Fire Specialist

caleb.schreiber@usda.gov

(715) 628-6999

For WRR in Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, or Vermont, contact:

Helene Hochholzer, Cooperative Fire Specialist

Helene.Hochholzer@usda.gov

860) 861-7322

KEY RESOURCES

- [Eastern Region Grant Opportunity: Cohesive Fire Strategy](#)
- [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#)
- [State Forest Action Plans](#)
- [Northeast Regional Action Plan - 2015](#)
- [Northeast Regional Action Plan - 2020 Update](#)
- [Northeast-Midwest Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal \(NMWRAP\)](#)
- [Wildfire Risk to Communities](#)
- [Community Wildfire Defense Grants](#)
- [Wildfire Risk in Eastern Region National Forests \[Report\]](#)
- [Risk Management Assistance Dashboard \[National Weather Service\]](#)

APPLICATION NARRATIVE AND SCORING CRITERIA

Applications must include a project narrative that contains the following **required** items:

- ◆ Project Title
- ◆ Applicant organization
- ◆ Project overview
- ◆ Project budget explanation
- ◆ Responses to the five scoring criteria

The **required** WRR scoring criteria are:

- ◆ Address the National Cohesive Strategy and the Northeast Regional Action Plan’s Identified Options **(30 Points)**
- ◆ Engage in Partnerships and Collaboration **(20 Points)**
- ◆ Assist Underserved Communities **(10 Points)**
- ◆ Explain the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Project **(20 Points)**
- ◆ Demonstrate a Wildfire Risk Focus **(20 points)**

Narrative responses should be succinct and **no more than one page each** for the project overview, project budget explanation, and the five scoring criteria. Applicants should review the optional [Project Narrative Template](#) for more details on the scoring criteria. Applicants may choose to use the provided form to ensure all required information is provided, or their own format if it contains the required information listed in this section.

The following information sources are recommended when responding to the Wildfire Risk and Underserved Communities scoring criteria:

- ◆ [Northeast-Midwest Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal \(NMWRAP\)](#),
- ◆ [Wildfire Risk to Communities](#) (select “Explore”), or
- ◆ [Community Wildfire Defense Grants](#).
- ◆ Other sources are allowable for scoring criteria; however, the data cited, and your explanations **must demonstrate** how the project targets a priority landscape(s) and accounts for current and future drivers of fire risk; and **must demonstrate** a clear, meaningful benefit to or engagement with underserved communities/people.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Apply through [Grants.gov](#) for WRR applications.

Applications are due close of business (COB) Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING GRANT APPLICATIONS THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

Search for grant Opportunity Number **USDA-FS-2025-COHESIVE-STRATEGY** in [Grants.gov](#).

Tribal applications should be submitted directly through Grants.gov. Application submission to State Foresters and a letter of support is not required for Tribes. All other partners and collaborators must submit an initial draft of their application to their respective State Foresters – Director of Forest Protection in NY and State Fire Warden in NJ for examples – by **Monday, December 16, 2024**. You can find contact information for each State Forester in the member roster available on the [National Association of State Foresters \(NASF\) website](#). The State sponsor will submit their support letter to

the applicant for upload to Grants.gov before the application deadline, **COB Wednesday, January 15, 2025**.

Grants.gov provides applicants **24/7 support** via the **toll-free number 1-800-518-4726** or **send an email to support@grants.gov**. The following section provides guidance on how to submit applications through Grants.gov. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number, be active in the System for Award Management (SAM) registration, and a Grants.gov account to apply for grants. Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but **UEI and SAM registrations may take several weeks or more to complete**. Therefore, ensure you apply for your UEI and SAM registration promptly.

Complete instructions for organization registration at Grants.gov can be found at [Organization Registration | Grants.gov](#).

1. [Register with SAM](#): All organizations must register with the System for Award Management (SAM), and SAM registration must be renewed annually.
2. [Register | Grants.gov](#)
3. [Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account](#): A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations and have a profile for each, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the UEI Number for the organization in the UEI field while adding a profile.
4. [EBiz POC Authorizes Profile Roles](#): After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the organization applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access are sent to the E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC). The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization.
5. [Track Profile Role Status](#): After registering with Grants.gov and adding a profile, you may want to check whether roles have been added to your profile.

Electronic Signature: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role.

How to Apply to Eastern Region SPTF via Grants.gov

Workspace is the standard way for organizations or individuals to apply for federal grants in Grants.gov. Workspace allows a grant team to simultaneously access and edit different forms within an application. Plus, the forms can be filled out online or offline — your choice. Please refer to [Workspace-Overview](#) to get started on your Workspace application. **NOTE: Grants.gov applicants are required to use Workspace to apply online.**

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov:

1. **Create a Workspace:** Creating a Workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
2. **Complete a Workspace:** Add participants to the Workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the status of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.
 - a. **Adobe Reader:** If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drive(s), then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page at [Adobe Software Compatibility](#) on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software.
 - b. **Mandatory Fields in Forms:** In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.
 - c. **Complete SF-424 Fields First:** The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant's name, address, and UEI Number. Once completed, information will transfer to the other forms.
3. **Submit a Workspace:** An application may be submitted through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.
4. **Track a Workspace Submission:** After successfully submitting a Workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted Workspace.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applications must be received by COB Wednesday, January 15, 2025. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANT#####) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. This applicant with the AOR role will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When Eastern Region State, Private and Tribal Forestry (SPTF) successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the

established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by Eastern Region SPTF.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role attempting to submit the application. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

Preparing and Applying for this Funding Opportunity

Applicants should also be familiar with their State's Forest Action Plan(s). Procedures and policies regarding how State Foresters work with partners vary from State to State, so be sure to consult your State Forester – Director of Forest Protection in NY and State Fire Warden in NJ for examples – before preparing an application. A single letter documenting support for all proposals supported by that State is also acceptable.

Only authorized Grants.gov Workspace representatives for the applying entity are eligible to submit applications to Grants.gov for consideration. Partners and collaborators must submit draft applications to their respective cooperating State Foresters for evaluation **no later than Monday, December 16, 2024** (some States may have additional requirements and deadlines). You can find contact information for each State Forester in the member roster available on the [National Association of State Foresters \(NASF\) website](#). The final submission deadline to Grants.gov is **COB Wednesday, January 15, 2025**. Complete application packages will include the following (**remember, complete all forms in your Workspace at Grants.gov**):

Required forms available through the Grants.gov application package:

- ▶ SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance
- ▶ SF-424A Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- ▶ SF-424B Assurances for Non-Construction Programs
- ▶ AD-1047 (Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension)
- ▶ Attachments Form (must be included in the application package to attach additional required and optional forms below)

Required Agency-specific information to be submitted through the Attachments Form in Grants.gov:

- ▶ Project narrative ([Project Narrative Template](#))
- ▶ Shapefiles or maps
- ▶ Letter(s) of support
- ▶ 2025 WRR Planned Spending & Accomplishments Excel Spreadsheet

Optional forms available through the Grants.gov application package (fill out only if applicable):

- ▶ AD-1049 (Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace for all non-State entities) **OR**
- ▶ AD-1052 (Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace for "State and State Agencies")
- ▶ SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (for entities that lobby)
- ▶ AD-3030 (Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants) if applicable (recipient will determine if form applies to them)

Optional forms to be submitted through the Attachments Form in Grants.gov:

- ▶ FS-1500-35 for entities that do not lobby (only if applicable)