

Local Government Forestry Assistance
Notice of Funding Availability from Montana DNRC Forestry Division
Proposals Due April 30, 2021

Program Goals: Provide financial support to help local governments engage in activities to accelerate the pace and scale of forest management to reduce wildland fire hazards, improve forest health and enhance economic productivity on federal lands in Montana.

Source of Funding: Grant funding from the State of Montana General Fund is made available through the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Forestry Division (DNRC) as authorized by HB 510 passed in the 2015 Legislature. Grant funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis.

Eligible Applicants: Grant funding is available to Montana **local governments**. 7-11-1002, MCA provides: "Local government" means a city, town, county, or consolidated city-county government or any combination of these acting jointly. DNRC has identified **collaborative groups** with significant local government involvement as a combination of governments acting jointly and therefore eligible to apply.

Allowable Activities:

- 1. Increase effective collaborative engagement.** Funds may be used to support a new or existing collaborative group or process in which county commissioners participate. Funding may be used for facilitation, administrative services, subject matter experts, workshops, or public engagement activities associated with federal forest management projects.

This year, priority for funding in this category will be for activities that will most likely achieve measurable results with regard to the purpose and goals of the collaborative group or effort.

Maximum \$10,000 per award in this category.

- 2. Support local government engagement in federal forest management.** Funds may be used to:
 - a) Provide travel stipends to help local governments with travel costs for meetings or workshops that facilitate project implementation or increase knowledge of federal land management policies and procedures. Approved travel expenses will be reimbursed at state rates and in accordance with state travel policy. Rates for lodging, per diem, and mileage are available at the following link: <https://doa.mt.gov/docs/Travel-Information-Summary-Sheet-Jan-2021.pdf>
 - b) Provide funding to hire qualified consultants and/or

contracted services to assist local governments in collecting information; developing policies or communication materials to enhance use and management of natural resources in their jurisdiction. This may include ~~such as~~ updates to community wildfire protection plans (CWPP) or natural resource use policies. Developing these policies or materials will require local governments to consider long-term outlooks within their jurisdiction. Policies must be developed using sound science and in accordance with public policy in a public process. Resulting products should help inform recommendations, promote better communication with agencies and partners, and provide federal land management agencies with local guidance ~~to consider~~ as they create new plans, projects and policies.

c) Fund innovative proposals to help federal projects move forward more quickly.

Maximum \$10,000 per award in this category.

3. Provide post-decision support. Funding may be used to support local government engagement in legal action associated with federal forest projects that are litigated. Funding may be used to pay attorney fees, provide experts in the field of natural resource litigation, or cover court costs. A small portion of the funds may go toward researching and vetting attorneys for hire.

Maximum \$10,000 per award in this category.

Grant Amount: Grants awarded **typically range from \$3,000 to \$10,000.** Award amounts may vary due to funding availability and the number and quality of applications received.

Grants may include one, two, or three activity categories described above but maximum to be awarded will be \$ 10,000 per grant.

Match: Grants require a 10% match. Match can be in the form of cash contributions to project activities; or county commissioners' time or staff time, valued at actual cost, or volunteer time, valued at \$20 per hour. Cash contributions are encouraged and will be used as an evaluation criterion during application review.

Deadline: Applications received by **April 30, 2021** will be reviewed for the first-round of funding. Applications will be evaluated on how well they meet the goals of the grant program. If funding remains after first-round selections or if additional funding becomes available, DNRC may consider additional applications at that time.

Upon selection for funding, DNRC will proceed with developing grant award documents. Funds will become available after the grant agreement is executed.

How to Apply: Please complete the attached form with the following information and return to DNRC's Local Government Forest Advisor Steve Kimball at stephen.kimball@mt.gov:

- Total amount requested
- Specific activities to be funded
- How match will be met
- Anticipated outcomes – describe how the funding will enable the local government to meet the stated goals of the grant program. For collaboration proposals describe how the funded activities will achieve measurable results with regard to the purpose and goals of the collaborative group or effort.

Letters of Support for the funding request from natural resources agencies, collaboratives, and other organizations are not required but will strengthen an application.

Award and Disbursement: Funds may only be used as described in the executed grant agreement unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the DNRC. **Disbursement of grant funds by DNRC will be upon approval of submitted documentation of reimbursable costs. Documentation may include itemized receipts, invoices, financial reports, and other documents that clearly show expenditures.**

Reporting: Grantees will report to DNRC on a semi-annual basis to describe project accomplishments and how funds are being utilized. A final report will be required stating how the funds were used and the outcomes that were achieved.