



Department of Commerce

Washington Department of Commerce

State Energy Office

Olympia, Washington

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

PROJECT TITLE: Forest Products Financial Assistance Program

APPLICATION RELEASE DATE: September 18, 2019

BIDDER CONFERENCE DATE: September 19, 2019 3:00pm Pacific

APPLICATION DUE: October 10, 2019 5:00pm Pacific

PERFORMANCE PERIOD: 12 months from contract execution date

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

This funding opportunity is open to Washington-based entities, including state agencies, tribes, general and special purpose local governments, non-profit and for-profit corporations, and self-employed individuals.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Programmatic Goals

The Forest Products Financial Assistance Program (FPFAP) was established in 2014 with funds provided by the US Forest Service. The program supports the development and expansion of forestry and agroforestry products industries in the State of Washington, with an emphasis on use of woody biomass resulting from forestry management activities and wood products manufacturing to provide thermal energy, electrical energy, engineered fuel products, and/or significant energy efficiency improvements.

Additional goals include enhancing forest ecosystem function, reducing forest fire hazards, and supporting resiliency of rural, timber-dependent communities.

1.2 Americans with Disabilities Act

Commerce complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Respondents may contact the RFP Coordinator to receive this RFP in Braille or on tape.

1.3 Available Funding and Match Requirement

- There is \$482,768 available under a competitive application process.
- Commerce anticipates making 3-6 awards of between \$20,000 and \$200,000.
- A minimum 1:1 match of non-federal funds, including cash or in-kind services, is required.
 - Documentation of secured match must be provided prior to contract execution. Documentation must be on the match provider's letterhead and include a specific dollar amount dedicated for matching funds. Matching funds may be sought from lending institutions or investors, or provided by the applicants.
 - Successful applicants who do not provide documentation of secured match funding within three months of award may have their award withdrawn. Additional time may be granted to secure match, depending on circumstances, on a case-by-case basis.
- Contracts executed for awarded projects will be performance based, with negotiated milestones, tasks and deliverables. Budgets must be specifically tied to the deliverables for purposes of reimbursement.

1.4 Program Priorities

Feasibility studies should evaluate the technologies, operations and resources to be utilized in the proposed project, including a detailed explanation of the Applicants proposed approach and methodology.

Projects that examine synergies between the subject of the study and the broader ecological and economic needs of the region, including the potential to integrate into an existing or emerging biomass business cluster, are strongly encouraged. Preference will be given to projects that can help to catalyze a larger impact.

Projects that utilize wood products manufacturing wastes, as well as projects in close proximity to existing, functioning forest collaboratives, are preferred. Extra credit will be awarded to projects that address a local forest management need, such as forest health treatments or fire hazard reduction efforts.

Applicants are encouraged to pursue projects that make efficient use of both electrical and thermal energy. Proposals to study the feasibility of stand-alone electrical generation projects will not be considered.

2 GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

2.1 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Coordinator

The NOFO Coordinator is the sole point of contact in Commerce for this procurement. All communication between the Applicant and Commerce upon receipt of this NOFO shall be with the NOFO Coordinator, as follows:

Name	Kristin Ramos
Mailing and Street Address:	P.O. Box 42525, Olympia WA 98504-2525 1011 Plum Street SE, Olympia WA 98501
Phone:	360-515-6504
NOFO Website:	www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/forest-products-financial-assistance/
E-Mail Address:	energy_policy@commerce.wa.gov SUBJECT LINE naming convention: FPFAP _ applicants name _ topic

2.2 Bidders' Conference

Commerce will host a bidders' conference via Skype to review the application process and respond to questions from potential applicants. The online bidder conference will be held **Thursday, September 19, 2019 from 3:00-4:00pm Pacific Time**. Participants may join the conference via [computer](#) or phone (360-407-3813, conference ID 315128).

Written questions regarding the application process may only be submitted via email to energy_policy@commerce.wa.gov. All questions and responses will be published on a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) document which will be updated at least weekly at www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/forest-products-financial-assistance/. The last opportunity to submit questions is noon on Tuesday, October 8, 2019.

Applicants:

- Must submit applications following the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) instructions and processes.
- Must complete the required documents as indicated below and send as attachments with the application.

Summary of Documentation

Forms listed below are available for download on the FPFAP website:

www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/forest-products-financial-assistance/.

The following forms *must accompany the application* at the time of submission:

- Risk Assessment Form
- Debarment Certification Form
- Match Documentation Letter(s)
- Department of Revenue Compliance
- Ethics in Public Service Compliance
- Certifications and Assurances

If selected for a conditional award, the following must be completed and on file *prior to contract execution*:

- Countersigned Award Letter
- Certificate of Required Insurance
- Online Invoicing Registration Form
- EO 05-05 Process, if applicable
- Scope of Work
- Budget

Application process:

- Applicants are required to follow the instructions as indicated on the application.
- Applications must be received by Commerce by **5:00pm Pacific Time on Thursday, October 10, 2019**.
- Send questions regarding the application process to energy_policy@commerce.wa.gov.
- To ensure delivery, the maximum size of the application is 10 MB.
- Any violations of these instructions may result in point reductions and/or disqualification, depending on the severity of the infraction, at Commerce's discretion.
- Commerce will determine all final funding award decisions.

Awardees must:

- Conform to all state laws, regulations and policies, including Chapter 42.52 of the Revised Code of Washington. Proposers should familiarize themselves with these requirements prior to submitting a proposal that includes current or former state employees.
- Report all pass-through funding using the reportable expense template provided by Commerce under the Governor's Diverse Spend Initiative.
- Comply with Archaeological and Cultural Resource and Tribal consultation requirements under Executive Order 05-05, as applicable, and if awarded funds, complete the process prior to entering into a contract.
- Comply with audit and monitoring requirements, including scheduled site visits.
- Utilize the online invoicing process for reimbursement.

2.3 Estimated Timeline

Forest Products Financial Assistance Program (FPFAP)		
Estimated Date	Task Category	Subtask Description
September 2019	Policy Outreach	Outreach to external stakeholders
September 18, 2019	NOFO and Application Released	NOFO released, appropriate press release, web posting, application period opens
September 19, 2019	Bidders' Conference	Host and record Bidders' Conference
October 10, 2019	Application Closes	Application Period Closes
October 29, 2019	Awards	Awardees and non-awardees notified
November 2019	Contracts Executed	Contracts negotiated and executed
<i>Commerce reserves the right to modify dates as required for program implementation.</i>		

2.4 Period of Performance

Successful applicants are expected to complete their projects within twelve months of contract execution. Commerce may extend this period, at its discretion, on a case-by-case basis.

2.5 Application Steps

Step 1: Thoroughly review guidelines and Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and note any items for clarification. Email questions to energy_policy@commerce.wa.gov. Review posted questions and answers (Q&A) at the [Forest Products Financial Assistance Program webpage](#).

Step 2: Attend or review the Bidders' Conference, which will be recorded and published at the [Forest Products Financial Assistance Program webpage](#).

Step 3: Confirm the proposed project is eligible for funding under this program.

Step 4: Complete and submit an application, along with all required support documents.

Step 5: Scoring and recommendation of projects for funding will be conducted by Energy Office staff, and may include consultation with outside experts or advisory bodies as warranted.

Step 6: Commerce will make all final funding decisions. Notification of program grant awards, along with notification of unsuccessful proposals, will take place Tuesday, October 29, 2019.

Step 7: Successful applicants will enter into contract negotiations starting November 2019.

2.6 Eligibility Criteria

Any non-federal entity may apply, including state agencies, tribes, general and special purpose local governments, non-profit and for-profit corporations, and self-employed individuals.

If not currently licensed to conduct business in Washington State, the Applicant must indicate it will become licensed within thirty calendar days of being selected for an award.

Applicants must not seek funding to supplant or displace prior or existing match commitments.

2.7 Minority and Women Owned Business Participation

In accordance with Chapter 39.19 RCW, the state of Washington encourages participation in all of its contracts by firms certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE). However, no preference will be included in the evaluation of proposals, no minimum

level of MWBE participation will be required as a condition for receiving an award, and proposals will not be rejected or considered non-responsive on that basis. Annual procurement participation goals for this type of project are 10% MBE and 4% WBE. These goals are voluntary. For information, contact OMWBE at (360) 753-9693 or omwbe.wa.gov.

2.8 Recipient Reporting

Recipients of FPFAP funding will be expected to report to Commerce no less than quarterly regarding progress of the funded project. A final Fact Sheet summarizing project successes, lessons learned, and other information requested by Commerce will be required prior to processing the final invoice. Information deemed proprietary may be viewed, but not downloaded, via Skype or Google docs to demonstrate milestone completion.

2.9 Proprietary Information / Public Disclosure

The applicant acknowledges that Commerce is subject to the Public Records Act and that the application and any future contract is a public record as defined in Chapter 42.56 RCW. Any specific information claimed by the applicant to be Proprietary Information must be clearly identified as such by the applicant. "Proprietary Information" means information owned by the applicant to which the applicant claims a protectable interest under law. Proprietary Information includes, but is not limited to, information protected by copyright, patent, trademark, or trade secret laws.

To the extent consistent with Chapter 42.56 RCW, Commerce will maintain the confidentiality of all such information marked Proprietary Information. If a public disclosure request is made to view the applicant's Proprietary Information, Commerce will notify the applicant of the request and of the date that such records will be released to the requester unless the applicant obtains a court order from a court of competent jurisdiction enjoining that disclosure. If the applicant fails to obtain the court order enjoining disclosure, Commerce will release the requested information on the date specified.

2.10 Revisions to the NOFO

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), a new version will be posted on the website, along with the current revision date. Applicants are responsible for checking the website to determine they are referring to the most current NOFO version. Failure to check for the most current version or updated requirements may result in an incomplete application based on earlier versions of this NOFO. Commerce also reserves the right to cancel or to reissue this NOFO, in whole or in part, prior to execution of a contract.

2.11 Disclaimer

Commerce will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Applicant in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this NOFO, in conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this NOFO.

This solicitation does not commit Commerce to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies.

Only applications with responses meeting all Mandatory Eligibility Criteria will be approved for further evaluation. Commerce reserves the right to determine at its sole discretion whether the proposer's responses are sufficient for further review.

Commerce reserves the right to:

- Disqualify any project at any time for any reason.
- Waive minor administrative irregularities.
- Contact an Applicant for clarification of its proposal.

This solicitation will be distributed electronically to subscribers who have signed up for [email updates](#) and by posting on the FPFAP website: www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/energy/forest-products-financial-assistance/. Applicants are responsible for checking the website for updates, amendments and addenda. Commerce accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation for applicants who submit an application based on out-of-date solicitation documents.

2.12 No Obligation to Contract

This NOFO does not obligate the state of Washington or Commerce to contract for services specified herein.

3 EVALUATION AND CONDITIONAL AWARD

3.1 Proposal Content

Project Summary: Describe the project in one to three paragraphs, including its specific goals and objectives, general scope and how it is expected to increase the productive use of woody biomass in Washington State. Frame the project's novel additions to the development of woody biomass industries and its expected broad impacts in the context of relevant markets.

Methodology and Context: Discuss how this proposal will evaluate the technologies, operations and resources to be utilized in the proposed project. Include a detailed explanation of the proposed approach and methodology, and the locations of proposed activities. Projects that examine synergies with the broader ecological and economic needs of the region, including the potential to integrate into an existing or emerging biomass business cluster, are strongly encouraged. Preference will be given to projects that catalyze a larger impact.

Feedstocks: Discuss the project's proximity to available sources of woody biomass. This section should also address the preference for projects that can utilize wood industry waste, as well as projects in close proximity to existing, functioning forest collaboratives. Extra credit will be awarded to projects that address local forest management needs such as forest health treatments or fire hazard reduction.

Work Plan: Include proposed tasks, services, activities, deliverables and any additional aspects necessary to accomplish the scope of the project. Describe what permitting needs and/or strategies are being considered to enable the project to move forward. This section should contain detail sufficient to convey to members of the evaluation team the Applicant's knowledge of the subjects and skills necessary to successfully complete the project. Include any required

involvement of Commerce staff. The Applicant may present creative approaches and pertinent supporting documentation to support their work plan.

Project Schedule: Include a schedule indicating when the elements of the work would be completed. The project schedule must ensure that deadlines for proposed deliverables are met.

Budget: Submit a fully detailed budget including staff costs and any expenses necessary to accomplish the tasks and produce the deliverables under the proposed contract, including the level and sources of matching funds. Applicants are required to collect and pay Washington state sales and use taxes, as applicable. Costs for subcontractors are to be broken out separately. Please note if any subcontractors are certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises.

Outcomes and Performance Measurement: Describe the outcomes the Applicants propose to achieve as a result of the delivery of these services, including how these outcomes would be monitored, measured and reported to Commerce.

Risks: Identify any significant potential risks to the success of the project, and discuss how these risks would be effectively monitored and managed, including reporting to the Commerce contract manager.

Local Support: Identify sources of local support and their levels of engagement, including local governments, community organizations, and especially forest collaboratives and existing or potential business relations. Letters of support and other expressions of commitment are not required, but may strengthen the application.

Staff Qualifications/Experience:

- Identify staff, including subcontractors, who will be assigned to the proposed contract, indicating the responsibilities and qualifications of such personnel, and amount of time each will be assigned to the project. Describe the project team structure and internal controls to be used during the course of the project, including any subcontractors.
- Provide resumes for the named staff that include information on the individual's particular skills related to this project, education, experience, significant accomplishments, and any other pertinent information. Identify any current or former state employees employed by or on the Applicant's governing board as of the date of the proposal. Include their position and responsibilities within the Applicant's organization. If following a review of this information, it is determined by Commerce that a conflict of interest exists, the Applicant may be disqualified from further consideration for the award of a contract.
- The Applicant must commit that staff identified in its proposal will actually perform the assigned work. Any staff substitution must have prior approval from Commerce.

References: List names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of three (3) business references for the Applicant and three (3) business references for the lead staff person for whom work has been accomplished, and briefly describe the type of service provided. Do not include current Commerce staff as references. By submitting this request, the Applicant grants permission to Commerce to contact these references and others who from Commerce's perspective may have pertinent information.

3.2 Scoring and Weighting

The following weighting and points will be assigned to the proposal for evaluation purposes. The highest possible score will be 100 points:

Methodology and Context (30 points): Points will be awarded after examining a number of factors, including feasibility of the technologies, operations and resources to be utilized in the proposed project. Reviewers will also award points if synergies exist between the subject of the proposed study and the broader ecological and economic needs of the region.

Feedstocks (20 points): Points will be awarded to projects in close proximity to available sources of woody biomass, with preference to those that can utilize biomass resulting from forest management activities such as forest health treatments or fire hazard reduction.

Applicant Strength (20 points): Reviewers will evaluate the proposed scope of work and schedule, including the project team and additional expertise to be drawn upon to complete the scope of work. Priority will be given to projects proposed by experienced teams with demonstrated expertise and proven track records of seeing projects through to successful completion.

Potential Integration (10 points): Points will be awarded based on the potential of the project to integrate into an existing or emerging biomass energy cluster, or the potential of the region to develop such a cluster. Preference will be given to those projects that can help to catalyze a larger impact, and/or are readily replicable elsewhere in the state.

Local Support (10 points): Points will be based upon the level of engagement and commitment to success expressed by local governments, community organizations, and existing or potential business relations. Projects which work closely with forest collaboratives are preferred.

Matching Funds (10 points): Points will be based on the level of match included in the proposal. Applications with less than a one-to-one match will not be reviewed. A two-to-one match or higher will be necessary to receive the full 10 points. Lesser match levels will receive five points.

Commerce reserves the right to award contracts to Applicants whose proposals are deemed to be in the best interest of Commerce and the state of Washington.

3.3 Debriefing of Unsuccessful Applicant

Upon request, a debriefing conference will be scheduled with any unsuccessful applicant. The request for a debriefing conference must be received by the NOFO Coordinator within three (3) business days after the Notification of Unsuccessful Applicant letter is sent to the applicant. The debriefing must be held within three (3) business days of the request.

Discussion will be limited to a critique of the requesting Applicants proposal. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of other proposals will not be permitted. Debriefing conferences may be conducted in person or on the telephone and will be scheduled for a maximum of 30 minutes.

3.4 Protest Procedure

This procedure is available to Applicants who submitted a response to this solicitation and who have participated in a debriefing conference. Upon completing the debriefing conference, the Applicant is allowed five (5) business days to file a protest of the decision with the NOFO Coordinator. Protests may be submitted by email to: energy_policy@commerce.wa.gov.

Applicants protesting the process shall follow the procedures described below. Protests that do not follow these procedures shall not be considered. This protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to Applicants under this procurement.

All protests must be in writing and signed by the protesting party or an authorized agent. The protest must state the grounds for the protest with specific facts and complete statements of the action(s) being protested. A description of the relief or corrective action being requested should also be included. All protests shall be addressed to the NOFO Coordinator.

Only protests stipulating an issue of fact concerning the following subjects shall be considered:

- A matter of bias, discrimination or conflict of interest on the part of the evaluator
- Errors in computing the score
- Non-compliance with procedures described in procurement document or Commerce policy

Protests not based on procedural matters will not be considered. Protests will be rejected as without merit if they address issues such as: 1) An evaluator's professional judgment on the quality of a proposal, or 2) Commerce's assessment of its own and/or other agencies' needs or requirements.

Upon receipt of a protest, a protest review will be held by Commerce. The Commerce director or an employee delegated by the director who was not involved in the procurement, will consider the record and all available facts and issue a decision within ten business days of receipt of the protest. If additional time is required, the protesting party will be notified of the delay.

In the event a protest may affect the interest of another Applicant that submitted a proposal, such Applicant will be given an opportunity to submit its views and any relevant information on the protest to the NOFO Coordinator.

The final determination of the protest shall:

- Find the protest lacking in merit and uphold Commerce's action.
- Find only technical or harmless errors in Commerce's acquisition process and determine Commerce to be in substantial compliance and reject the protest.
- Find merit in the protest and provide Commerce options which may include:
 - Correct the errors and re-evaluate all proposals
 - Reissue the solicitation document and begin a new process
 - Make other findings and determine other courses of action as appropriate

If Commerce determines that the protest is without merit, Commerce will enter into a contract with the apparently successful Awardees. If the protest is determined to have merit, one of the alternatives noted in the preceding paragraph will be taken.

End of Notice of Funding Opportunity