

## **2021 - Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-0227**

### Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

#### **A. Justification**

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The Forest Service is authorized to implement the Community Forest and Open Space Program (CFP) under Section 8003 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-234; 122 Stat. 2043), which amends the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2103d).

The purpose of the CFP is to achieve community benefits through grants to local governments, Indian tribes, and nonprofit organizations to establish community forests by acquiring and protecting private forestlands. The authorizing language specifies that the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, may award grants to eligible entities to acquire private forests that provide specified public benefits to communities and are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses.

The authorizing language defines eligible entities as local governmental entities, Indian tribes, or qualified nonprofit organizations. Local government is defined as any municipal government, county government, or other local government body with jurisdiction over local land use decisions. Indian tribe is defined by section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b). Nonprofit organization is as an organization that is described in section 170(h)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 USCS § 170(h)(3)) and operates in accordance with one or more of the purposes specified in section 170(h)(4)(A) of that Code (26 USCS § 170(h)(4)(A)).

The rule states that community benefits under the CFP include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- (1) Economic benefits such as timber and non-timber products resulting from sustainable forest management and tourism;
- (2) Environmental benefits, including clean air and water, storm water management, and wildlife habitat;
- (3) Benefits from forest-based experiential learning, including K-12 conservation education programs; vocational education programs in disciplines such as forestry and environmental biology; and environmental education through individual study or voluntary participation in programs offered by organizations such as 4-H, Boy or Girl Scouts, Master Gardeners, etc.;

- (4) Benefits from serving as replicable models of effective forest stewardship for private landowners; and
- (5) Recreational benefits from public access, such as hiking, hunting and fishing.

The Federal contribution to the project cannot be more than 50 percent of the total project cost. Allowable project and cost share costs will include the purchase price and the following transactional costs associated with the acquisition: appraisals and appraisal reviews, land surveys, legal and closing costs, development of the community forest plan, and title examination. The following principles and procedures will determine allowable costs for grants:

- (1) Local governments and Indian tribes refer to OMB Circular A-87 (Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments); and Nonprofit organizations refer to OMB Circular A-122 (Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations).

The Agency benefits from the collection by receiving information necessary to fulfill our statutory obligation to ensure that applicants to the CFP are eligible for the program, and that the best CFP projects are selected. The CFP helps the Agency meet its goals and objectives outlined in the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

**a. What information will be collected - reported or recorded? (If there are pieces of information that are especially burdensome in the collection, a specific explanation should be provided.)**

The Forest Service will issue a national Request for Applications (RFA) no more than once annually (depending upon the availability of funds) for grants under the CFP.

Applicants representing local governments or non-profits will submit CFP applications to their State Foresters. Indian tribes submit applications directly to the Forest Service. The State Forester or the equivalent Indian tribe official, per section §230.3 of the rule, will forward all applications to the Forest Service, and, as time and resources allow:

1. Provide a review of each application to help the Forest Service determine
  - a. that the applicant is an eligible entity;
  - b. that the land is eligible, and
  - c. whether the project contributes to a landscape conservation initiative.
2. Describe what technical assistance they may render in support of applications and an estimate of needed financial assistance (§230.10).

The applicant will need to provide information as outlined in the rule and the

request for proposal. The rule defines the minimum application requirements (§230.4), but also states that the RFA may include additional requirements. Requirements outlined in the rule:

- (a) Documentation verifying that the applicant is an eligible entity and that the proposed acquisition is of eligible land that contains forest land;
- (b) Applications must include the following regarding the property proposed for acquisition:
  - (1) A description of the property, including acreage and county location;
  - (2) A description of current land uses, including improvements;
  - (3) A description of forest type and vegetative cover;
  - (4) A map of sufficient scale to show the location of the property in relation to roads and other improvements as well as parks, refuges, or other protected lands in the vicinity;
  - (5) A description of applicable zoning and other land use regulations affecting the property;
  - (6) Relationship of the property within and its contributions to a landscape conservation initiative; and
  - (7) A description of any threats of conversion to non-forest uses.
- (c) Information regarding the proposed establishment of a community forest, including:
  - (1) A description of the benefiting community, including demographics, and the associated benefits provided by the proposed land acquisition;
  - (2) A description of the community involvement in the planning and long term management of the community forest;
  - (3) An identification of persons and organizations that support the project and their specific role in acquiring the land and establishing and managing the community forest; and
  - (d) Information regarding the proposed land acquisition, including:
    - (1) A proposed project budget (§ 230.6);
    - (2) The status of due diligence, including signed option or purchase and sale agreement, title search, minerals determination, and appraisal;
    - (3) Description and status of cost share (secure, pending, commitment letter, etc.) (§ 230.6);
    - (4) The status of negotiations with participating landowner(s) including

purchase

options, contracts, and other terms and conditions of sale;

(5) The proposed timeline for completing the acquisition and establishing the

community forest;

(6) Long term management costs and funding source(s).

(d) Applications must comply with the Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations (7 CFR 3015).

Additional requirements might be added to the above list in a subsequent RFA when determined to be necessary for improving the evaluation of the applications. Once a RFA is published the Forest Service does not anticipate amending the RFA to add additional information.

Within 120 days of final land acquisition, the grantee must complete the final community forest plan and update the plan periodically, in accordance with the final rule (§230.9(a)). The successful grantees must submit a self-certifying statement electronically, in person, or by mail to the Forest Service every five years to ensure that the land has neither been sold nor converted to non-forest use or a use incompatible with the purposes of the CFP, as required by final rule (§230.9(e)).

**b. From whom will the information be collected? If there are different respondent categories (e.g., loan applicant versus a bank versus an appraiser), each should be described along with the type of collection activity that applies.**

Information will be collected from eligible grant applicants. Eligible grant applicants are defined in the preamble of the rule as follows:

**Eligible Entities**

The statute establishing the CFP states that only local governments, Indian tribes, and qualified nonprofit organizations are eligible to receive a grant through the CFP. The statute also provided definitions for those three eligible organizations.

- Local governments - are defined as municipal, county, and other local governments with jurisdiction over local land use decisions.
- Indian tribes - are defined as those that are federally recognized tribes as prescribed by section 4 of the Indian Self- Determination and Education Assistance Act (U.S.C. 450b).
- Qualified nonprofit organizations - are defined as charities under the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) and which also have a conservation purpose (26 U.S.C. 170(h)(4)(A)). A conservation purpose is defined as the preservation of land for outdoor recreation or education, protection of natural habitat or ecosystems, preservation of open space, and preservation of historic lands or structures. Consistent with regulations of the Internal Revenue Service (26 CFR 1.170A-14(c)(1)) qualified non-profit organizations must also have a commitment to protect in perpetuity, the purposes for

which the tract was acquired under the CFP and demonstrate that they have the resources to enforce the protection of the property as a community forest. In general, a land conservancy or land trust is the type of organization that would be considered a qualified nonprofit organization under the authorizing statute of the CFP.

The State Forester or the equivalent Indian tribal official, per section §230.3 of the rule, will forward all applications to the US Forest Service, and, as time and resources allow:

- 1) Provide an assessment of each application to help the US Forest Service determine
  - a. that the applicant is an eligible entity;
  - b. that the land is eligible; and
  - c. whether the project contributes to a landscape conservation initiative.
- 2) Describe what technical assistance they may render in support of applications and an estimate of needed financial assistance (§230.10).

Participation in the CFP is voluntary, information will only be collected from grant applicants and State Foresters or the equivalent Indian tribe officials who chose to participate in the process.

**c. What will this information be used for - provide ALL uses?**

The US Forest Service will use the information in the application:

- (1) To determine that the applicant is eligible to receive funds under the program;
- (2) To determine if the proposal meets the qualifications in the law and regulations;
- (3) To evaluate and rank the proposals based on standard, consistent information; and
- (4) To determine if the projects costs are allowable and sufficient cost share is provided.

The State Forester or the equivalent Indian tribal official, per section §230.3 of the rule, will forward all applications to the Forest Service, and, as time and resources allow:

- (1) Provide an assessment of each application to help the Forest Service determine:
  - a. that the applicant is an eligible entity;
  - b. that the land is eligible; and
  - c. whether the project contributes to a landscape conservation initiative.
- (2) Describe what technical assistance they may render in support of applications and an estimate of needed financial assistance (§230.10).

The US Forest Service will use the community forest plans and self-certifying statements to ensure that the CFP purposes are secured in Community Forest funded projects in perpetuity. The updated plans will be used in periodic spot checks by US Forest Service personnel to verify that the uses listed are in practice and are compatible with the purposes of the CFP.

**d. How will the information be collected (e.g., forms, non-forms, electronically, face-to-face, over the phone, over the Internet)? Does the respondent have multiple options for providing the information? If so, what are they?**

The information will be collected via written submissions, generally via electronic means (text documents using word processing software or shapefiles using geographic information system (GIS) mapping software), to meet program requirements defined in sections § 230.3 Application process, § 230.4 Application requirements, and § 230.7 Grant requirements.

**e. How frequently will the information be collected?**

The US Forest Service proposes to issue a request for applications annually pending adequate funding. The final rule discusses the application process in 230.3 and 230.4. The Forest Service plans to issue the request for applications at the same time each year but this is subject to the timing of the appropriations process.

**f. Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside USDA or the government?**

The authorizing statute requires applicants to submit their applications to their State Forester or equivalent Indian tribal official who, as time and resources allow, may review the proposals as outlined in §230.3, and will forward all applications to the US Forest Service.

Once the US Forest Service has received the applications from the State Foresters or equivalent Indian tribal official, the US Forest Service will share limited collected information with other entities inside or outside the Government. The Forest Service will summarize information collected, such as number of proposals submitted, total number of acres to be acquired, total funding requested by all applicants, and summary of project benefits, and will share it with the Department of Agriculture, the Administration, Congress, and the public. This information will be compiled and posted to the CFP website following each grant award occurrence. The appropriate Congressional delegations will be provided summarized project briefing sheets prepared by the Forest Service. Following grant awards State Foresters or Indian tribes may provide technical assistance for the acquisition or for the development of the community forest plan. The US Forest Service will collect community forest plans for the project files and anticipates sharing only compiled information gathered from community forest plans.

**g. If this is an ongoing collection, how have the collection requirements changed over time?**

The Agency revised the final rule on April 5, 2021. The rule reduces the burden of paperwork and information collection on applicants. Effective May 3, 2021, applicants are no longer required to submit standard grant forms (SF 424, SF 424c, SF 424d and SF425) or a draft Community Forest Plan.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

In an effort to increase efficiency, convenience for the respondents, and to reduce burden, US Forest Service allows applicants to submit the requested information by the means of their choice including electronically, hand delivery, hard copy, postal delivery, or by fax. Forms are readily available from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The CFP is a grant program, and applicants will be developing grant proposals for new projects. The Forest Service is the only agency charged with administering this program and issuing these funds. Since all projects will be new, information about them will not be available from existing sources.

**5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

The information requirements for all entities are necessary to protect the public interest, are not administratively burdensome or costly to meet, and are within the capabilities of all entities to perform. The use of State Foresters or Indian tribal official equivalents is intended to provide a means of minimizing the technical burden of preparing a community forest plan. Technical assistance funds may be made available to State Foresters or Indian tribes in accordance with the enacting legislation (16 USC 2103d) and Section 230.1 of the final rule.

**6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

The Forest Service would not be able to implement the program effectively or at all if the collection was conducted less frequently or not at all, respectively. The information collection would correspond with Congressional or other requirements for issuance of financial grant awards (anticipated once for each appropriations cycle).

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**

- **Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more**

**often than quarterly;**

- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**

Required records are those normally maintained for landholding, the community forest plan, and the self-certifying statement (collected every 5 years) that the use and ownership has not changed in a manner which would contradict the CFP purposes. These records would be maintained for the duration of the ownership of the land by both the grantee and the US Forest Service. The land acquired in the CFP must be managed in accordance with the CFP purposes in perpetuity. The final rule also requires occasional spot checks by US Forest Service personnel, which may require grantees to provide the current version of their community forest plan to verify that the ownership is unchanged and that the use and management of the property is consistent with the plan and the purposes of the CFP. The rule states that the US Forest Service will conduct spot checks periodically. We have not yet determined the interval for these spot checks. The current situation is that Forest Service Program Managers continue to have partnerships and communication with the partners that have completed projects. Over time, as there are more projects, the Forest Service may need to develop a check-in protocol and calendar. Over the next five years the US Forest Service anticipates conducting spot checks no more than annually and may elect to conduct them less frequently.

- **In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are no other special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner similar to those described above. The collection of information will be conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior**



**to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

A notice of request for comments for this information collection was published in the Federal Register on June 7, 2021, Vol. 86 No. 107, pages 30251-30252. One comment was received which was not germane to the information collection and the agency has not provided a response.

**Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

In FY 2014, we contacted three individuals by phone who manage similar federal programs and information collections related to land acquisition. All indicated that the requirements were reasonable, clear, and necessary. Program information collection has not changed since 2014 so we believe that these responses are still valid. In fact, we have reduced the burden since these interviews were conducted. The questions we asked were:

- 1) Are the data we collect available from other sources (i.e. is this collection redundant)?
- 2) Is the frequency of data collection (once per fiscal year, appropriation dependent) burdensome or unnecessary?
- 3) Are the rules, recordkeeping requirements (CF Plan, Self-Cert statement), disclosure, and/or reporting format (application and certification) burdensome, unclear, and/or unnecessary?
- 4) Are the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported reasonable and clearly stated?

Summaries of the conversations are included below.

Sharif Branham, Health Forest Reserve Program Manager, at the Natural Resource Conservation Service, believed the 40 hours was an overestimate as much of the information collected is already prepared to present projects to nonprofit boards, city councils, etc. when proposing community forest projects and plans internally at eligible entities. She believed that the burden was light primarily because the information would already be compiled by respondents, and this information collection is required for the government to receive the information and administer the program responsibly.

Leakhena Au, the North American Wetland Conservation Act Program Manager, at the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In response to the first question Ms. Au stated that the nature of a land acquisition grant program required new information to be collected that is not available anywhere else and is therefore unique. Ms. Au indicated that the type of data and frequency of data collection appears to be appropriate for a land acquisition program. She also indicated that the rule requirement do not appear to be burdensome.

Elisabeth Morgan, Branch Chief for Recreation Grant Programs, at National Park Service, had a similar perspective as Leakhena Au, but wanted to emphasize that the elements of data collected are necessary and consistent with other federal grant programs. Regarding the burden, Elisabeth cautioned against treating the 40 hours for developing the grant application as anything more than the average, because the wide variability in project complexity could result in divergent burdens based on project needs and forest plan development.

**Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.**

We contacted three nonprofit organizations familiar with the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program. We contacted the organizations by phone. Two of those interviewed represent organization that have applied to the Community Forest Program, received funding and successfully completed the acquisition of the proposed property. The third is from an organization that has worked with applicants to the Community Forest Program and has extensive experience working with land conservation grant programs. Their feedback is presented as representative of the experience we would expect nonprofits, and local or Indian tribal governments to have when applying for this program. These conversations were guided by the same questions that were used with the Federal Program Managers discussed in the previous section. After discussing the information collection requirements, the organizations agreed that the data are not available elsewhere and would need to be collected uniquely for each land acquisition project. Summaries of the conversations are included below.

Mac Stone, Executive Director Naturaland Trust, states that data collected is not redundant or burdensome. Frequency of data collection is fine. They are having lots of graduate student researchers call for research on Community Forests which is becoming burdensome. Following all of the rules and guidelines has been straightforward. He has found all follow-up requirements to be fair and all communications with Forest Service staff to be friendly and positive.

Kate Warner, a Senior Program Manager with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), states that all data collected is necessary and the information is necessary to protect the interests of everyone involved in the Community Forestry Program. Kate has not been involved in any compliance or follow-up data collection and submission, TPL generally helps with application and acquisition then hands off all responsibility. Most of the remaining data is collected with compliance and we should ask other partners about that step. The Community Forestry Program roadmap is an amazing document filled with useful examples and is a better resource than anything else available for any other grant program she has participated in.

Jim Bonesteel, Executive Director Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, states that

submitting forms with application, award reception, and compliance likely creates some redundancy. Less frequent data collection would be nice, such as every other year, but he acknowledges that annual compliance documentation is reasonable. Rules around reporting and recordkeeping are reasonable and better than other federal grant programs. Some forms take more effort to figure out how to comply with than others, but everything has been doable. (Note: The redundancy Jim Bonesteel referred to has been addressed with this revised final rule.)

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than re-enumeration of contractors or grantees.**

No payment or gift will be given to respondents.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

Names, job title, and organizational affiliation of the official signing the grant application and required forms are the personally identifiable information being collected in the Community Forest Program. This information will only be used internally for grant management purposes. None of the information compiled and shared publicly will include Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Applications from Indian tribes may also indicate Indian tribal affiliation and Tribal government role if forms are signed by an elected Indian Tribal government official. Information collected containing PII will be managed in accordance with US Forest Service policy (FSM 6682.9).

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

No questions of a sensitive nature will be asked as a part of this information collection.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.**

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form.**

In order to access funds through the CFP an eligible entity must submit an application. Projects will be selected on a competitive basis. The enacting

legislation requires applications to be submitted to the State Forester or equivalent Indian tribal official. The State Forester or equivalent Indian tribal official submits those applications to the Forest Service. On strictly a voluntary basis the officials may provide a review of the applications to help the Forest Service determine eligibility of the entity and the land, determine if the project has also been submitted as a Forest Legacy proposal, and determine if the project contributes to a landscape conservation initiative. Applicants can request these officials to provide technical assistance through the use of technical assistance grants.

The Request for Applications is issued annually (given adequate funding). The initial Request for Applications limits the information collected to an 8-page narrative with 2 maps (no form required). The narrative should describe the property to be acquired, the community benefits, the threat to the tract in question and how the property complements nearby conservation land.

Successful applicants that receive grants are responsible for grant reporting, developing a community forest plan, record keeping, completing and submitting self-certification statements, and assisting with spot checks.

Entities that are awarded CFP grants are responsible to provide quarterly financial reports and annual grant reports while the grant is open. Following the purchase of the CFP tract the grantees have 120 days to complete the community forest plan. A project file is to be maintained by the grantee which includes pertinent landowner records and the community forest plan.

Approximately 5 years after the purchase of the property the grantee will be required to submit a self-certifying statement that the CFP tract is still in their ownership and is being managed according to the community forest plan and the purposes of the CFP. During a 5-year period the grantee will be subject to at least one spot check of the CFP tract which would normally include a review of the current community forest plan and site visit.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 50; the number was derived from an average of applications submitted for funding considerations since the program’s initial request for applications was issued in 2012.

The CFP has a large number of eligible entities that could submit applications (see table below). Equally important in determining an estimate was the considerable number of inquiries received by Community Forest Program Managers around the country since the first year of funding. It is estimated that the application submissions will likely remain the same in 2022 or increase slightly and will continue to increase if the program continues to grow. To ensure that the burden is not underestimated, calculations in the table of burden show the expected burden of 50 applications.

Estimated number of entities eligible to participate in the Community Forest Program*	
Qualified Non-profits	1,667
Local Governments	39,044
Federally Recognized Tribes	574
Total	41,285

## Additional Information Collection Assumptions for the Burden

After consulting several successful applicants, it has been determined that it will take an average 24 hours to assemble the information needed in the application. This information includes the 8-page narrative and 2 maps.

Applicants that successfully compete for grant funding have 120 days to complete the final community forest plan after the acquisition is complete. This effort includes community involvement, a determination of activities to be allowed on the forest, and a listing of improvements to support the activities. This effort is estimated on the average to take 160 hours to complete.

Additionally, an assumption is made that there will be 10 CFP grant awards per year and funding will remain at the FY 21 level of \$4,000,000 (10 projects were funded in FY 2021) This number may vary depending on the size of grants awarded to projects each year. Each grantee will be required to provide grant reports (both acquisition and technical assistance) quarterly (SF 425) and annually (suggested example provided in supporting documents) during the time the grant is open. For the purposes of estimating the burden, it is assumed that grants will be open for one year on the average which will generate 4 quarterly financial reports and 1 annual report taking a total of 10 hours per grant. Ongoing record recordkeeping requirements for grantees will take 4 hours each per year. Every 5 years grantees will need 1 hour to prepare self-certifying statement and 2 hours to participate in the spot check.

State foresters and Indian tribal officials have the responsibility to collect and forward applications. An assumption is made that 20 officials will be involved in this effort and they will need 2 hours to collect and forward applications. Additionally, it is assumed that these officials on the average will conduct the non-required tasks at 10 hours each. While the Rule and FRN allow for technical assistance from state officials for these grants none have been awarded as part of the last two-year grant awards. We account for a small level of technical assistance (0.5 hours per official per year) for our burden estimate.

The following tables shows the collective burden of the applicants, officials and the annual costs.

### Estimated Hour Burden to Applicants (and recipients)

Applicants	Activity	Hours	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
50	Develop and submit application	24	1,200	1,200	1,200
Recipients	Activity	Hours	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3

10	Grant Application for Federal Assistance	4	40	40	40
	Develop Community Forest Plan	160	1,600	1,600	1,600
	Grant Reporting	6	60	160	60
	Recordkeeping	8	80	80	80
	Spot Checks	2	20	20	20
	Self-Certifying Statement	1	10	10	10
	TOTALS		1,810	1,810	1,810
Total for Applicants and Recipients			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
			3,010	3,010	3,010

#### Estimated Hour Burden to State Foresters and Indian Tribal Officials

Officials	Activity	Hours	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
20	Technical Assistance	2	40	40	40
	Application Collection	2	40	40	40
	Other Application Tasks	8	160	160	160
	TOTALS		240	240	240

#### Estimated Cost Burdens

	Hours	Hourly rate	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Applicants	1,200	\$27.07*	\$32,484.00	\$32,484.00	\$32,484.00
Recipients	1,810	\$27.07*	\$48,996.70	\$48,996.70	\$48,996.70
Officials	240	\$27.07*	\$6,496.80	\$6,496.80	\$6,496.80

\*Average hourly earnings from Bureau of Labor News Release, May 2020 were used to identify the national average income per hour. The program is national in scope with multiple types of applicants so a national average is most applicable.

In conclusion, the burden for this collection can be divided into 3 categories of

affected publics. Over the next 3 years the average annual burden for applicants (50) is approximately 1,200 hours at a cost of \$32,484. Those applicants that receive grants (10 recipients) will have an additional annual burden of approximately 1,810 hours at a cost of \$48,997 (per year each year, excluding application cost). State Foresters and Indian tribal officials will have an annual burden of approximately 240 hours at a cost of \$6,497.

**13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.**

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

**The response to this question covers the actual costs the agency will incur as a result of implementing the information collection. The estimate should cover the entire life cycle of the collection and include costs, if applicable, for:**

- **Employee labor and materials for developing, printing, storing forms**
- **Employee labor and materials for developing computer systems, screens, or reports to support the collection**
- **Employee travel costs**
- **Cost of contractor services or other reimbursements to individuals or organizations assisting in the collection of information**
- **Employee labor and materials for collecting the information**
- **Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information**

Table 2: Annualized cost to the Federal Government

<b>ACTION ITEM</b>	<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>GS LEVEL</b>	<b>HOURLY RATE*</b>	<b>HOURS</b>	<b>SALARY COST TO GOVERNMENT</b>
Request for Proposal preparation	1	14 (Step 6)	\$52	16	\$832
Review applications and manage project selection	1	14 (Step 6)	\$52	100	\$5,200

<b>ACTION ITEM</b>	<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>GS LEVEL</b>	<b>HOURLY RATE*</b>	<b>HOURS</b>	<b>SALARY COST TO GOVERNMENT</b>
process					
Review reports and track accomplishments and status of projects	1	13 (Step 8)	\$47	240	\$11,280
Review by Forest Service field units to evaluate completeness of application and determine eligibility	6	13 (Step 6)	\$44	40	\$9,400
		13 (Step 6)	\$44	20	
		13 (Step 4)	\$42	40	
		13 (Step 6)	\$44	40	
		13 (Step 9)	\$48	40	
		12 (Step 4)	\$35	40	
Evaluations of Applications by Forest Service to determine projects to fund	7	13 (Step 9)	\$48	40	\$12,080
		13 (Step 1)	\$38	40	
		12 (Step 4)	\$35	40	
		11 (Step 1)	\$27	40	
		14 (Step 6)	\$52	40	
		14 (Step 5)	\$51	40	
		14 (Step 5)	\$51	40	
Manage grants	4	13 (Step 4)	\$42	80	\$19,120
		13 (Step 6)	\$44	80	
		13 (Step 9)	\$48	80	
		12 (Step 4)	\$35	240	
Annual accomplishment reporting	1	14 (Step 6)	\$52	20	\$1,040
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$57,912</b>

\* Taken from: [SALARY TABLE 2021-GS \(opm.gov\)](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/salary-tables/)

The estimates included in this table include costs of information collection associated with the new program. The Agency has determined that the amount of work to collect the information from applicants is the same whether the Agency receives 5 applications or 75. However, if information collection does not occur, then the program could not be implemented, and therefore the cost to the agency would be zero.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14 of OMB form 83-I.**

In the last submission, after consulting several successful applicants, the agency determined that it would take an average of 40 hours, not 45 hours, to assemble the information needed in the application. Since the last submission, the Agency revised the final rule. The rule reduces the burden of paperwork and information collection on applicants. Effective May 3, 2021, applicants are no longer required to



submit standard grant forms (SF 424, SF 424c, SF 424d and SF425) or a draft Community Forest Plan. After consulting several successful applicants about the new application requirements, the agency determined that it would take an average of 24 hours, not 40 hours, to assemble the information needed in the application.

**16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.**

The CFP summary and accomplishment information will be published on the US Forest Service website and in administrative documents to highlight program accomplishments. Additional program information will be made available to the United States Department of Agriculture, the Administration, and members of Congress. The information planned to be published includes acres acquired, acquisition costs, cost share dollars, community benefits provided by projects as defined in the rule Section 230.2, contributions of projects to landscape scale initiatives, relationship to Administration initiatives such as America the Beautiful, names of entities that received grants, maps, and project names. Each year, after grants have been issued project information will be posted to the website. Accomplishment information on the website will be updated upon completion (acquisition) of each project. We also intend to include cumulative program accomplishment information on the program website.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

The expiration date is already displayed on the SF-424, SF-424c, SF-424d and SF 425 approved under other OMB control numbers and used in this information collection.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19, "Certification Requirement for Paperwork Reduction Act."**

There are no exceptions.