



Program to Support Economic Recovery in the Forest Products Sector

Request for Proposals

Please respond by December 20, 2024

Background

The Forest Recovery Program provides one-time grant funding for economic recovery and development opportunities in the forest products sector to address reduced demand from the economic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and other industry effects.

The Forest Recovery Program is intended to stabilize and aid in the recovery of Maine's \$8.5 billion forest economy that was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with pandemic-related market shifts as well as supply chain and workforce disruptions that still exist today. This program's investments in Maine's forest products sector will provide two key benefits to support the sector. The first benefit of the program is the injection of much needed capital to parts of the industry that faced and continue to face market disruptions, supply chain, and workforce challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health response. The second benefit is investments in Maine businesses and organizations to aid transitions to address new market demands that are a direct result of the COVID – 19 pandemic and related health response, sustainable products, and provide long term stability across the industry.

The Maine Technology Institute, in partnership with the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development, [seeks to attract proposals for \\$3,000,000 in grant funding to help enable the establishment of a Forest Recovery Program](#), where businesses engaged in the forest products sector may have access to critical funding to help mitigate the adverse impacts associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic and other industry effects.

Project Goals

MTI seeks a qualified organization with a successful track record of supporting strategic projects within the state that address the significant changes that have occurred in the forestry industry due to the pandemic. These strategic projects will address global market shifts in supply and demand, supply chain disruptions, and new technology that impacts the growing, processing, and use of the natural resources from this key sector of our economy.

Although non-discriminatory, this program is narrowly aimed at the forest industry members who have demonstrated injury due to the pandemic. The Maine forest products economy exists primarily in rural parts of Maine. The Forest Recovery Program will target the businesses and organizations that exist in these rural communities and provide for a significant portion of employment, GDP, and both the state and local tax base.

In this first round of funding, \$3 million is being made available to 501C3 industry partners and organizations who can demonstrate that this capital will be used to support companies in the forestry products industry that can clearly demonstrate the economic damage caused by the pandemic.

The service provider will use the funding to target existing companies that are developing new technology or new markets that bolster Maine's forest products sector. Funds can also be used to support new companies with unique and innovative solutions for the forestry industry. This capital will be deployed to companies and organizations in this industry that can clearly demonstrate the economic damage caused by the pandemic (revenue loss, profit loss due to supply chain, transportation, labor, etc.) and who can articulate a plan for the use of the funds that potentially restores economic vitality and sustainability.

Companies receiving the allocated funding will be asked to provide economic goals associated with their plan and as a condition of award, they will be required to provide semi-annual reporting on their progress for a five-year period after the award. The results of the semi-annual reporting will be captured by MTI and will be provided to DECD and Forestry officials for review and upline reporting.

Only those programs deemed to have viable plan for the use of the funds will be eligible for an award.

Anticipated Components of a Successful Proposal

- I. Detailed summary of the 501C3 organization, its mission/purpose, and a brief summary of its annual budget.
- II. Describe the leadership team, its expertise, and the organization's corporate governance model.
- III. Identify prior success(es) and the organization's track record of supporting forest products businesses in rural Maine.
- IV. Provide an overview of its existing financing vehicles and support programs to assist businesses within the forestry sector and the timelines typically associated with them.

- V. Demonstrate that your organization has a Unique Entity Identification (UEID) number. For more information about UEID numbers and how to obtain one for free, see our FAQs or [click here](#).

Eligible Providers

Eligible organizations must be Maine-based 501C3 non-profit organizations whose services include supporting businesses and communities in rural Maine through the promotion of economic development and the deployment of financing and assistance that encourages the creation and retention of jobs in the region. At the time of submission, the organization must be in compliance with all laws, rules, regulations and ordinances of the United States, the State of Maine, and if selected, must remain in compliance during the term of the service agreement. Eligible providers must have experience financing businesses within the forest products sector in rural Maine, and encouraging, promoting, stimulating, and supporting startups engaged in the sector.

Timetable

The following timetable will be followed to assure a timely response for all parties:

- **Submission of written proposals due December 20, 2024**
- Final selection on or before December 31, 2024

Inquiries

Inquiries or notices concerning this RFP should be directed to:

Brian Whitney, President
Maine Technology Institute
16 Middle Street, STE 201, Portland, ME 04101
Email: bwhitney@mainetechnology.org
Telephone: (207) 582-4790

Submissions

Proposals must be received by MTI no later than 5:00 PM on December 20, 2024. Proposals may be electronically transmitted, mailed, or delivered to the attention of Brian Whitney at the address noted above (see Inquiries). Timely delivery of the proposals is the sole responsibility of the provider.

Proposals received after the stated date/time will not be considered. All providers acknowledge and understand that MTI will not pay for any costs incurred in connection with the preparation or submission of a proposal.

Proposal format

Proposals should not exceed 5-10 pages. That said, MTI does not endeavor to be overly prescriptive. We are open to innovative and creative proposals that will help us achieve our goals.

Selection process

Proposals will be evaluated by MTI. Factors to be considered in evaluating proposals include relevant experience and ability; the written proposal; references; and a commitment to work with MTI as an integral partner.

MTI reserves the right to reject any and all submissions without the right of recourse by proposers.

References

Please provide two to three references that can speak to the organization's experience in supporting forest products businesses and enabling job creation and retention.

About Maine Technology Institute

The Maine Technology Institute's core mission is to diversify and grow Maine's economy by encouraging, promoting, stimulating, and supporting innovation and its transformation into new products, services, and companies, leading to the creation and retention of quality jobs in Maine.

The Maine Technology Institute (MTI) is an industry-led, State-funded, nonprofit corporation that offers early-stage capital and commercialization assistance in the form of competitive grants, loans, and equity investments, as well as entrepreneurial guidance and mentorship, to support the research, development, and application of technologies that create new products, processes, and services, generating high-quality jobs across Maine.