



**Department of
Environmental
Conservation**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

2022 Community Forest Conservation Grant Program (Round 1)

Application Deadline: 2pm Wednesday April 13, 2022

NYS Grants Gateway ID

DEC01-CFC-2022

Available NYS Grants Gateway Training Webinar Information:

Topic: NYS DEC 2022 Community Forest Conservation Grant Application Webinar

Date: Wednesday, February 2nd, 2022

Time: 10:00am, estimated 2 hours

Meeting number (access code): 161 437 1438

To join the online meeting (Now from mobile devices!)

1. Go to <https://meetny.webex.com/meetny/j.php?MTID=m64f37891fe288b972576ea5c411234c7>
2. If requested, enter your name and email address.
3. If a password is required, enter the meeting password: wiVJ6S9hmE5
4. Click "Join".
5. After you join the webinar, you will see a button to join the audio conference from your phone.

NOTE: The phone conference may be muted when you join, and you may not hear any sounds until the presenter begins at 10:00am

For assistance: please contact the Grants Gateway help desk at grantsgateway@its.ny.gov or 518-474-5595

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I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Round 1 of the Community Forest Conservation (CFC) Grant Program! The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is pleased to announce available NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) funding for **municipalities** to acquire private land and establish community forests through use of fee title or conservation easements on areas of 10 acres or more.

The goal of this grant program is to fund municipal land acquisition for community forests, which are vital for wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, recreational opportunities, mental health, air quality, water quality, and to meet the obligations outlined in New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. Community forests are meant to build local ownership of forests, participation in forestland management, and encourage local residents to enjoy local forests and increase connection to forest benefits. All properties acquired through this grant program are required to allow 100% public access. Any restrictions, such as topography (water courses, mud flats, cliffs etc.) must align with the goals of this grant program and be approved by DEC.

This is a reimbursement grant.

All projects must comply with all local, state, or federal laws.

To view locations that may have extra protections, such as wetlands and rare plants and animals, visit the DEC Mapper <https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/erm/>.

1. TIMETABLE OF KEY EVENTS

Event	Date
Application Period Begins	Monday, January 24, 2022
Grants Gateway Training Webinar	10am Wednesday, February 2, 2022
Question and Answer Period Ends	Wednesday, March 30, 2022
Applications Deadline	2pm Wednesday April 13, 2022
Award(s) Announced By (anticipated)	July 2022

2. INQUIRIES AND DESIGNATED CONTACT INFORMATION

For information about registration and additional assistance with Grants Gateway, email the Grants Management Team: grantsgateway@its.ny.gov. Additional information is included below in (3) Application Deadline and Submission.

For general information on this grant program and for clarification of application requirements, contractual terms and procedures, contact:

Molly Hassett, CFC Program Coordinator, Division of Lands & Forests: molly.hassett@dec.ny.gov

Include **"2022 Community Forest Conservation Grants"** in the subject line of the email. Questions regarding this grant opportunity will be accepted by the DEC until C.O.B. on Wednesday, March 30, 2022. All questions and answers will be uploaded in the NYS Grants Gateway for all applicants to view.

3. APPLICATION DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION

All applicants must apply through the NYS Grants Gateway <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov>. This includes answering all program questions and uploading completed and required program documents and forms. Paper applications will NOT be accepted.

All applicants must be registered with Grants Gateway to submit an application <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/grantee-documents>. This includes submission of a substitute W-9 form, and a notarized Grants Gateway registration document. Registration for Grants Gateway can take up to 2 weeks. Applicants will not have access to the Grants Gateway until they have fully registered. All applicants must be registered with Grants Gateway to submit an application.

Instructions on how to submit an application in the NYS Grants Gateway are available at: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/grantee-documents>. Late applications will not be accepted. Applicants will be unable to click “submit” or make changes to the application after the deadline has passed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to finish the online application at least one week prior to the deadline, allowing time to double check that all mandatory requirements have been completed and to correct any technical errors. All applications must be developed and submitted in the NYS Grants Gateway by 2pm Wednesday April 13, 2022. Applications submitted after 2:00pm on Wednesday April 13, 2022 will not be accepted.

A note on grantee roles: Those logged in as Grantee may work on the application only. Those logged in as a **Grantee Contract Signatory or a Grantee System Administrator can submit the application to the State.** The Grantee role is designed for a grant writer, municipal staff or another third party, and allows a ‘sign off’ by the responsible person, elected official or municipal officer having the Grantee Contract Signatory or Grantee System Administrator roles. When the application is ready for submission, click the Status Changes tab, then click the “Apply Status” button under “Application Submitted.” The Delegated Administrator role will be the first generated by the applicant and its sole role is to add, modify and delete other roles.

II. GRANT OPPORTUNITY GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

Grant projects must result in the acquisition of community forests through use of fee title (purchase) or conservation easements. Projects must acquire private lands that are not already owned by the eligible applicant. Community forests must be publicly accessible and provide benefits for the public such as recreation access (fishing, hiking, biking, hunting, wildlife observation, etc.), flood mitigation, wildlife habitat, clean water, and forest products (timber, maple syrup, etc.). Several example project summaries can be found in Appendix A.

Costs eligible for reimbursement may include purchase price, appraisal, survey, and boundary line marking completed by a professional land surveyor following the Code of Practice for Land Surveys adopted by the New York State Association of Professional Land Surveyors, title search, owner's title insurance, tax service, seller's prepaid taxes, recording fees, and attorney fees. See additional eligible costs and details in section IV, Eligible Costs, below. Although federal funds cannot be applied as match or reimbursable funds as a part of this grant opportunity, funds from this grant may be used as match for federal funding opportunities, if allowed by those opportunities.

1. FUNDING

Approximately \$1,000,000 is available for Community Forest Conservation (CFC) Grant Program (Round 1) consistent with this Request for Applications (RFA). Should newly appropriated funding become available, the Department may make additional awards to fund applications received in this grant round. Funding for this grant opportunity is provided from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund. **This is a reimbursement grant.**

2. PROPOSED PROJECT TIMEFRAMES

All projects must have defined objectives, tasks, and deliverables accounted for in performance measures that can be completed and invoiced within a three-year contract term. Applicants should not begin their projects or

incur costs until a Master Contract for Grants (MCG) has been fully approved by DEC, and if applicable, approved by the Attorney General and the State Comptroller.

Prior to the MCG completion, awardees will be asked to submit insurance certificates appropriate for the project, including Workers Compensation and Disability (or exemptions). For projects that are performed by the Awardee or employees and not contracted out, liability insurance may be requested.

Awardees must submit quarterly progress reports and may seek partial expense reimbursement for work already completed.

The possibility of a one year, no cost time extension (NCTE) beyond the initial contract term end date will be determined by the Department based upon written justification from the Grantee. Applicants should not submit an application if they do not anticipate their project can be completed within the specified contract term (3 years).

The activity for the request must fall within the contract term. Project expenditures prior to MCG start date and after the MCG end date are not eligible for reimbursement or match.

3. AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

Applications may be submitted in Grants Gateway starting on Monday January 24, 2022. The application will then be evaluated for eligibility. The DEC anticipates grant awards will be announced in early July 2022. Applicants will receive a written notification of award from the DEC, and additional information on how to proceed with expediting a Master Contract for Grants (MCG) in the NYS Grants Gateway. Applicants who are not successful will receive written notification of non-award with information on how to request a debrief.

4. MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNTS

Applicants may request a minimum grant amount of \$50,000, up to a maximum amount of \$300,000.

5. APPLICATION LIMIT

Applicants may submit only one application.

6. ELIGIBLE PROJECT LOCATION

Eligible projects must be current private land located within New York State and include 10 or more contiguous acres. At least 75% of the acres must be forested. Forests are determined by both the presence of trees and the absence of non-forest uses (fields, pasture, agriculture). All mineral rights must be included as part of the acquisition of the property. Applicants are required to upload a map of the project area in Grants Gateway.

7. MATCH REQUIREMENT

Match is the portion of project expenditures not paid for with grant funds. Applicants must provide ten percent (10%) cash match. For example, a \$50,000 grant would require a cash match of \$5,000 for a total project cost of \$55,000; \$50,000 of which would be funded by the grant, and \$5,000 of which would be cash match from the applicant. When submitting for reimbursement, at least 10% match must be included for each voucher until the total project match is met. Eligible sources of match for this grant project cannot come from other NYS or federal funding sources. Applicants will be required to provide the sources of matching funds using the Match Worksheet in the Grants Gateway. Federal funds cannot be used as match or reimbursable funds as a part of this grant opportunity. However, funds from this grant may be used as match for federal funding opportunities, if allowed by those opportunities.

8. APPLICATION PRE-AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Applicant must have the following completed prior to the application and submit proof of each as a part of the application. A checklist of required items to be submitted with the application can be found in Appendix B.

1. Map of the property

A map should be uploaded in a single PDF file and should be clearly labeled and/or referenced in a way to make it easy for application reviewers to identify the project site(s) and acreage. See Section V, II. Project Technical Evaluation and Scoring Criteria for more information on what should be included on a property map.

2. Copy of deed from the current landowner

3. Current school and town/county tax bills

4. Estimate of market value from NYS certified residential real estate appraiser

5. Municipal resolution

Applicants must provide a municipal resolution stating the intention to purchase the property (fee title) or enter the property into a conservation easement at the time of application. This resolution must include the municipality's commitment to pass a budget for the estimated market value and cash match for the next year to allow the property to be purchased. An example municipal resolution can be found in Appendix C.

6. Landowner agreement letter

Applicants will be required to provide a formal written agreement or letter between the landowner and the applicant demonstrating a willing intent to sell the lands or enter a conservation easement. Formal agreements must be a part of the public record.

9. ACQUISITION AND EASEMENT POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS

As a part of the acquisition or establishment of an easement on the community forest property through this grant, grantees must obtain an appraisal, survey, title report, title commitment, title insurance, and Phase I environmental assessment reports. Grantees must also complete a forest or recreation management plan, and incorporate provisions into the deed language prior to final closing. DEC will review and approve survey and assessment reports, management plans, and deed language before closing. All the items listed in this section are required and will need to be approved by DEC before releasing a final, post-closing payment.

Required for all projects:

1. Appraisal

Appraisals are required for all properties prior to reimbursement. Appraisals must be completed by a New York State general certified appraiser following the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and submitted as non-restricted narrative appraisal reports.

- Appraisals must list both NYSDEC and the municipality as intended users
- Two appraisals will be required if the property value is \$300,000 or more.

2. Surveys

Boundary surveys are required for all properties. Surveys must be completed by a professional land surveyor and follow the [Code of Practice for Land Surveys adopted by the New York State Association of Professional Land Surveyors](#) and submitted to the DEC for review. Survey maps must be certified to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the purchaser's title company and contain a title block template provided by DEC. Survey maps must be recorded in the County Clerk's office and recording info must be included in the Schedule A of the deed.

3. Title report, commitment, and insurance:

Title report, commitment, and insurance policy is required for all properties. Title commitment must be supplied to DEC for review together with the survey map.

- Title to lands acquired using CFC funds must not be subject to encumbrances, agreements, or encroachments of any kind that would be contrary to the purpose of the CFC Grant Program.
- DEC will review the title policy for exceptions to coverage

4. Phase I environmental assessment reports

Phase I environmental assessment reports are required for all properties and must be completed by a qualified consultant.

5. Grant language

The Grant Language must be included in the body of the deed referencing the attached Notice of Grant Exhibit. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/124345.html>

6. Recreation or Forest Management Plan

Post award, grantees must complete a recreation plan for properties under 25 acres or a forest management plan on properties of 25 acres or more. Commercial forestry cannot be completed on properties smaller than 25 acres.

Recreation plan (properties <25 acres) costs may not exceed \$10,000 and forest management plan (properties 25 or more acres) costs may not exceed \$20,000, including but not limited to any surveys, inventories, mapping, plan writing, and formatting.

- Recreation plans (under 25 acres) must include:
 - Property goals, a description of how goals fit in with Municipal Comprehensive Plans if applicable, zoning, and other local planning goals and objectives, long-term goals and plans for public recreation and public access to the property, a description on planned public participation in creation of goals and management decisions
 - A description of the property and past and present uses and a list of relevant public recreation opportunities and limitations
 - Identification of archeological sites, public recreation facilities, and infrastructure that already exist on the property
 - New public recreation facilities and improvements proposed to be constructed and maintained, such as trails
 - Impacts of current and proposed recreation on the property and natural resources
 - How public access and recreation will be implemented and managed and who will have responsibility management and meeting property goals
 - How public access is anticipated to interact with other uses of the property such as active forest management and private leasing programs.
- Forest management plans (25 or more acres) must be written by a [Cooperating Forester](#) and include:
 - Property goals, a description of how goals fit in with Municipal Comprehensive Plans, zoning, and other local planning goals and objectives, long-term goals and plans for forest management, and a description on planned public participation in creation of goals and management decisions
 - Plans for public recreation and public access to the property,
 - Boundaries and size of the forest and other types of land within the property, such as open fields, roads, and lakes
 - A description of the property and past and present uses and a list of relevant public recreation opportunities and limitations
 - Identification of public recreation facilities and infrastructure that already exist on the property
 - New public recreation facilities and improvements proposed to be constructed and maintained, such as trails
 - Impacts of current and proposed recreation on the property and natural resources
 - How public access and recreation will be implemented and managed and who will have responsibility management and meeting property goals
 - How public access is anticipated to interact with other uses of the property such as active forest management and private leasing programs.

- Forest inventory delineating stands, site characteristics, and forest composition including species composition, stocking levels, and volumes
- Maps showing forest types, forest stands, current and future roads and expected forestry-related improvements and locations of archaeological sites and special treatment areas
- Identification of planned commercial harvests, noncommercial thinning, road construction and other management practices
 - Identification of best management practices to protect natural resources during implementation of these practices

7. Real property sales contract copy

A copy of the real property sales contract must be supplied to DEC for review and approval before it is signed by the Grantee.

Additional requirements for conservation easements:

1. Baseline data and documentation

Baseline data and documentation is required for all conservation easement acquisitions, including information on existing structures, rights-of-ways, and other information on the existing condition of the property.

2. Deed language

Easement language must include a process for regular, productive communication between the easement holder and landowner. Applicants will be expected to make use of a Conservation Easement template that will be provided by DEC. Email molly.hassett@dec.ny.gov to request a copy of the draft template if needed.

3. Monitoring and Enforcement Plans

Applicants are required to submit protocols to demonstrate proper enforcement and monitoring of properties or easements acquired with funding through this grant opportunity. The Monitoring and Enforcement Protocol is a written document which must be submitted for review and approval and must include at least the following:

- Monitoring procedure
 - Annual frequency
 - Contact with landowners and participation in the monitoring program (only applicable to conservation easements)
 - Type of monitoring (ex: boundary survey, annual structure inspection, forest health survey)
 - Annual monitoring documentation (ex: updated site photos, maps)
 - Parties responsible for annual monitoring (ex: staff, volunteers, contractors)
- Enforcement
 - Violation definitions (ex: minor/major)
 - Potential violation response (ex: notification, mitigation period, enforcement warning)
 - Violation documentation
 - Resolving violations (ex: resolution agreement, remediation plan, legal actions)

10. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Although education and outreach will not be a part of eligibility or scoring criteria, outreach activities such as a grant award press release, social media, announcements and community involvement at local meetings, presentations at town board meetings and workshops, newsletters, mailings to residents, and press events will be required and will be coordinated with grantees upon establishment of the MCG. Typically, at least three education and outreach activities will be required as a condition of contract, and these activities will be reported on in progress reports.

11. DEBRIEFING REQUEST

In accordance with Section 163 of the NY State Finance Law, the Department must, upon request, provide a debriefing to any unsuccessful applicant that responded to the RFA, regarding the reasons that the application submitted by the unsuccessful applicant was not selected for an award. An unsuccessful applicant wanting a debriefing must request a debriefing in writing, within fifteen calendar days of receipt of the notice that their application did not result in an award.

12. DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION OVERSIGHT

The Department of Environmental Conservation reserves the right to:

- Award additional and available funding for scored and ranked projects consistent with this grant opportunity.
- Make an award, in whole or in part, in accordance with the method of award, or withdraw the RFA at any time at the DEC's sole discretion.
- Award a portion of a grant request based on the proposed work plan included in the application and ineligible project-related costs.
- Award only one application for funding from a single applicant or project.
- Rescind an award in the event a grantee fails to negotiate a grant contract with DEC within 60-90 days
- Monitor the progress of all grant awards and withdraw grant funding if the grantee fails to make significant and timely progress on the project or fails to receive the necessary permissions and permits for the project. This includes non-responsiveness on behalf of the grantee and/or tardiness with progress reports.
- Disqualify any applicant whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFA.
- Not fund projects that are determined not to be consistent with NYS's Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act.
- Not fund projects that are determined not to be consistent with the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act or its implementing regulations.
- Seek clarification from an applicant to effectively evaluate a project proposal.
- Reject any or all applications in response to the RFA at the Agency's sole discretion.

III. ELIGIBLE PROJECT EXPENDITURES

(Note: Use of state and/or federal funding sources and land donations used toward the project are not eligible for grant reimbursement or use towards the match)

1. BUDGET COSTS ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT OR AS MATCH:

Contractual: Fee purchase price or easement acquisition costs, provided such value is from an appraisal(s) deemed acceptable to the Department. These costs may include the value of the fee simple or conservation easement, appraisal(s) to DEC standard, recording fees, survey and boundary line marking completed by a professional land surveyor, attorney fees, cooperating forester fee, costs for management plans, title search, owner's title insurance, recording fees, tax service, and seller's tax proration at time of sale.

Personal Services: Salaries directly devoted to the project implementation are eligible, including staff time to negotiate and close the acquisition transaction, manage the preparation and compilation of required deliverables, and locally administer the award funding agreement. Itemize salaries according to job title and roles/responsibilities on the project. Grantees will be required to document time worked, tasks, pay ratio and payment. Fringe costs are not eligible for reimbursement. Up to 5% of total project costs can be allocated for personal services if needed.

Other: Materials and supplies directly related to the work plan, such as signage costs or advertising.

2. MATCH REQUIREMENT

A 10% cash match of the grant amount is required. Match must be provided from local general revenue. Match costs paid from State or Federal funding sources will not be considered eligible sources of matching funds. During the contract term, when requesting reimbursement each voucher should include 10% in cash match up to 10% of the total project cost. For example, a voucher requesting reimbursement for a surveyor for \$1,000 would request \$900 funding reimbursement and show 10% cash match paid by the municipality.

Land donations and bargain sale: Contiguous, forested land donated or sold to a municipality for a lower cost than the appraised value and associated costs will be eligible as match but will not be eligible for reimbursement. Land donation and bargain sale can only be used to replace cash match after the property closing. Cash match still needs to be included in the budget and will be collected in any partial reimbursement prior to the closing. Following the closing, any cash match replaced by donation or bargain sale will be reimbursed.

3. BUDGET COSTS NOT ELIGIBLE:

Cost not directly associated with acquisition are not eligible.

Other state or federal funding: Costs paid from other state or federal funding sources are not eligible for reimbursement or match.

Contractual grant administration costs: Contractual costs for administering the grant such as recordkeeping, preparation of grant contract documents, reports, payment requests, and paperwork.

Labor donations: Awardee labor is not eligible for match, however services paid for by awardee are eligible match. 3rd party donated labor and services are not eligible for match.

Outside contract term: Costs incurred prior to an award or prior to a contract start date or after the contract end date, including costs associated with grant preparation. A contract term start and end date will be determined by DEC at the time of an official award.

Indirect/Overhead: Costs including accounting fees, insurance, interest, legal fees not mentioned above, labor burden, rent, repairs, telephone bills, expenditures, space/property, and utilities.

Travel: staff and/or contractor travel to and from the project from home location.

Equipment: Costs for equipment purchase or rentals.

Other: Funds cannot be used for general operating support, fees for trainings or events, accreditation fees, insurance premiums, real estate commissions, property taxes, or other local, state, or federal taxes, or buildings.

IV. GRANT APPLICATION COMPONENTS AND REPORTING

All applicants must apply through the NYS Grants Gateway. This includes answering program questions and uploading required program documents and forms. Paper applications will NOT be accepted for these grant opportunities.

Please be sure to include with your application, information in accordance with the following guidance and requirements. Wherever uploaded information is required, separate pages, files, documents etc. must be combined into and uploaded in a single pdf document.

I. GRANTS GATEWAY INSTRUCTIONS

Go to the Grants Gateway home page (<https://grantsgateway.ny.gov>) to access the system. The Grants Management help desk/hotline can be reached at (518) 474-5595 or through email: grantsgateway@its.ny.gov

- A. Finding Community Forest Conservation Applications
 - i. Click the Grants Gateway Login button near the top left of the home page, then log in using your credentials. If your organization hasn't registered and received credentials, go to Grants Gateway (<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov>) to get started.
 - ii. Click on the "View Opportunities" button under View Available Opportunities
 - iii. In the Search by Grant Opportunity box, type in "Community Forest Conservation".
- B. Creating an application
 - i. From the Grants gateway homepage, to start creating your application, click on the Forms Menu link near the top of the page.
 - ii. Enter the required information as detailed below into the forms for Contract Information, Program Information, Expenditure Budget, Work Plan, and Pre-Submission Uploads sections. Information may be entered into the forms in any order. Remember to click SAVE near the top of the page. Click SAVE often while working on a form and always before exiting a form or the information that was input will be lost!
- C. Entering a budget
 - i. Open and complete budget forms as needed to enter budget information. After entering information for each detailed budget item, you must click the Save button near the top of the page before adding information for each additional budget item. The Add button will not appear until after you have saved your information. Use the Add button to add additional budget items.
- D. Submitting an application
 - i. Log in to the Grants Gateway with one of the following Grants Gateway roles: Grantee Contract Signatory OR Grantee System Admin
 - ii. Retrieve the completed application by searching for it under the Applications link on top of the screen. (Try leaving all search fields blank then scroll down to see multiple results).
 - iii. To check your application for errors, click on the CHECK FOR ERRORS link under the Management Tools link. This will provide you with a list of errors that need to be corrected before submission.
 - iv. To submit your online application, click on the Status Changes link located top of your application main page.

II. GRANTS GATEWAY COMPONENTS

- A. Contract Information
 - i. Contractor (Applicant) Addresses: Select the appropriate office address(es) in the dropdown menus in the Grants Gateway. This is not the project location, but organization address(es) to be used for contract award and administration.
- B. Program Information
 - i. Project/Site Addresses:
 - 1. Name/Description: Enter the name of the project location. This is not the project name/title that is entered under Program Specific Questions. If the project is to take place in a specific location such as a park, building, tributary stream, or an entire town or county, indicate that here. This can be a home office if applicable, or a project site.
 - 2. Address: Enter physical address where most of the work will take place
 - 3. Agency Specific Region: Select the DEC region that most closely aligns with the project address. For more information on DEC regions, visit DEC's Regions web page (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/50230.html>).
- C. Program Specific Questions
 - i. Project Title: Enter a title to identify the project e.g., City of Albany Community Forest.

- D. Work Plan Overview Form
 - i. Work Plan Period: Enter the timeframe for the entire program.
 - ii. Project Summary: Provide a clear, detailed summary of the project including the goal, a brief history (if any) of the possibility of this land acquisition, brief location details and community support (if any) for the proposed project.
 - iii. Organizational Capacity: Concisely summarize the organization's experience performing tasks similar to those proposed for this program. Specific details about key personnel (ex: staff, foresters, attorneys) should also be described in the Program Specific Questions section of the application.
- E. Pre-Submission Uploads
 - i. State Finance Law §139-I requires all applicants of grant funding to certify that they have a written policy addressing sexual harassment prevention in the workplace and provide annual sexual harassment training (that meets the Department of Labor's model policy and training standards) to all its employees. In the Grants Gateway pre-submission upload section of the application, applicants must download the Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification form. Applicants are required to sign the Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification form or prepare a signed statement detailing the reasons why the certification cannot be made. The signed form or signed statement must then be uploaded back into the pre-submission uploads folder. NOTE: The Department cannot accept an upload of an existing policy in lieu of the certification form. Important note: Be sure to check the form after uploading to ensure the correct file is uploaded and is completed as required.

V. APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Applications will first be reviewed for applicant and project eligibility on a pass/fail basis. Applications that fail one or more of the following eligibility criteria will be disqualified.

All eligible applications submitted by the due date will be reviewed and scored by members of a DEC review team in accordance with the Evaluation and Scoring Criteria contained in this RFA. Reviewers' scores will be averaged for each application to determine a final score. Final scores will be ranked from highest to lowest scores. Applications will be selected for funding beginning with the highest down to the lowest ranked project until all available funding is exhausted, or no eligible applications remain.

Tie Breaker: If there is a numerical tie between multiple applications within a funding category, the application that scores the highest in Cost-Effectiveness will determine placement on the ranked list. If a tie remains, the order applications were received will determine placement on the ranked list, with the earliest application placing highest.

I. ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

Applicants should carefully review the pass/fail eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, and the checklist in Appendix B contained in this RFA to avoid application disqualification. **Be sure to upload all required documents to the Pre-Submissions Uploads section of the application.**

1. **Project Type:** Does the project involve the acquisition of land (fee title or conservation easement) to create a community forest? *Pass: Yes: Fail=No*
2. **Project Location Map:** Does the applicant upload a map that identifies the project area and acreage?
Please upload maps under Section II. PROJECT TECHNICAL EVALUATION, SCORING AND SELECTION in question 2, Project Location. *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
3. **Property Eligibility:** Is the proposed project on 10 or more acres of contiguous private property within New York State? *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
4. **Forest Requirement:**

Does the proposed project location include at least 75% cover of forest, as defined in this RFA, and has the applicant provided a short description? *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*

5. **Deed copy:** Does the applicant provide a copy of the deed from the current landowner?
 - Upload a copy of the seller's deed in one .pdf, in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads. *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
6. **Current school and town/county tax bill(s):** Does the applicant include a copy of the current school and town/county tax bill(s) for the proposed acquisition?
 - Upload the current tax bills in a single .pdf, in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads. *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
7. **Estimate of market value:** Does the applicant provide a written estimate of market value provided by a NYS certified residential real estate appraiser?
 - Upload estimate in a single .pdf, in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads. *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
8. **Property interest attestation:** Does the applicant attest that there are no other known additional interests on the property such as reservations of mineral rights, leases, contracts, or life estates? *Pass/Fail*
9. **Municipal resolution:** Does the applicant provide a municipal resolution to set aside funds and match funds for purchase of the property or to enter a conservation easement? See example municipal resolution in Appendix C.
 - Upload municipal resolution in a single .pdf, in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads. *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
10. **Landowner agreement:** Does the applicant provide a formal written agreement or letter between the landowner and the applicant demonstrating a willing intent to sell the lands or enter into a conservation easement?
 - Upload landowner agreement in a single .pdf, in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads. *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
11. **Time Frame:** Does the applicant verify that the applied for project can be completed within three years? *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
12. **Sexual Harassment (Attachment S):** Has Applicant signed and uploaded the Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification form or uploaded a signed statement with their application detailing the reasons why the certification cannot be made into the pre-submission uploads folder? *Pass=Yes: Fail=No*
 - Applicants are required to sign and upload the Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification form or upload a signed statement with their application detailing the reasons why the certification cannot be made, into the pre-submission uploads folder. If the applicant has no employees, certify the second section. Locate the Certification form in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads.
 - Upload the signed Sexual Harassment Prevention Certificate in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads

II. PROJECT TECHNICAL EVALUATION, SCORING AND SELECTION

Applications that pass the eligibility pass/fail review will receive a technical and cost evaluation review by a DEC review panel. **Be sure to upload all additional documents for scoring to the Pre-Submissions Uploads section of the application.** Applications will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria:

1. Type of acquisition

Fee title acquisitions will receive additional points compared to conservation easement projects.

- | | |
|---|--------|
| (A) The acquisition is fee title. | 3 pts. |
| (B) The acquisition is through conservation easement. | 0 pts. |

2. Project Location

What is the location of the project and overall condition of the site? Has the applicant written a description in the dialogue box?

- Upload a **clearly labeled map or maps** identifying:
 - The boundaries of the desired community forest area (Neighborhood or hamlet references will be accepted)
 - location of the forested area,
 - a north arrow, a legend,
 - aerial imagery,
 - a scale, and
 - an approximate location address for the site

Hand drawn maps are not eligible.

- Upload **ground truth photos** of the site such as existing infrastructure, the property entrance, forest condition, and/or natural features.
- Upload maps and photos in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads.

- | | |
|--|--------|
| (A) Applicant clearly described the project location, uploaded a clearly labeled reference map and ground truth photos. | 8 pts. |
| (B) Applicant adequately described the project location and included either a clearly labeled referenced map or ground truth photos. | 4 pts. |
| (C) Applicant did not adequately describe the project location or did not include supporting documents. | 0 pts. |

3. Work Plan

Has the applicant completed a robust Work Plan ('tell us your story') for the project, including details, scope of work, the overall goals, and desired outcomes along with a detailed timeline. Include information such as:

- location,
- land history,
- market price estimate,
- current condition of the location,
- local needs,
- overall number of persons to be served and
- service delivery method (ex: personnel working on the project, contractors, outreach).

Include proposed project objectives and tasks associated with meeting each objective. Also include how tasks will be accomplished, including staffing and budget. The work plan should include steps that need to be completed for easement or acquisition closing and results or deliverables such as recreation and forest management plan writing. The Work Plan should include answers to other scored questions and these answers may be copied into this narrative to help provide the needed details and descriptions.

The Work Plan becomes the basis for the Master Contract for Grants awardee progress reporting and project reimbursement.

- | | |
|--|---------|
| (A) Work plan provides clear details on the project, location condition, and community local needs and the details provided clearly illustrate the project's intended outcomes and outline what tasks need to be accomplished to reach these outcomes. | 15 pts. |
| (B) Work plan provides adequate details on the project and the details provided adequately illustrate the project's desired outcomes and outline what tasks need to be accomplished to reach these outcomes. | 10 pts. |
| (C) Work plan does not adequately provide details on the project and/or the details provided do not illustrate the project's desired outcomes and outline what tasks need to be accomplished. | 5 pts. |

- (D) Work plan does not adequately provide details on the project and the details provided do not illustrate the project's desired outcomes or outline what tasks need to be accomplished. 0 pts

4. Community Project Vision and Long-term Planning

Has the applicant provided a narrative describing the intended outcomes and long-term vision for the project? Include information on how the community will use the land for recreation, forest management and products, environmental education, and engagement, how community members will access and get to the property, how the project relates to local recreation, local forest conservation, local climate-related resilience actions and planning, other community projects, and expected tasks that will need to be completed after the grant timeline. This narrative should also be included in the Work Plan.

- (A) The narrative provided clearly demonstrates the community's vision for the community forest and commitment to climate and conservation action. Details provided clearly demonstrate long-term planning needs and outline the actions that will be needed after the grant period to reach the vision provided. 10 pts.
- (B) The narrative provided adequately demonstrates the community's vision for the community forest and commitment to climate and conservation action. Details provided adequately demonstrate long-term planning needs and outline the actions that will be needed after the grant period to reach the vision provided. 5 pts.
- (C) The narrative adequately demonstrates the vision for the community forest and commitment to climate and conservation action, however details do not demonstrate long-term planning needs or outline the actions that will be needed after the grant period. 2 pts.
- (D) The narrative does not adequately demonstrate the vision for the community forest, long-term planning needs, or outline the actions that will be needed after the grant period to reach the vision provided. 0 pts.

5. Local needs

Why does the community want this forest? Forests provide many benefits to local communities. What benefits will this community forest provide to the local community now and in the future?

- (A) The narrative describes a clear local need for this project. 5 pts.
- (B) The narrative does not describe a clear local need for this project. 0 pts.

6. High Priority Location for a Community Forest

Describe the benefits of keeping the forest area and the risk for the forest being lost. Some specific priority scoring consideration include:

- Benefits:
 - o The forest is located nearby a population center and is easily accessible by the public.
 - o The forest provides high carbon sequestration and storage benefits or high resilience. The Nature Conservancy's interactive Resilient Lands Mapping Tool (<https://maps.tnc.org/resilientland/>) may be used to provide a basis for this description.
- Risk
 - o The forest is at high risk to development.
 - o There is a low existing amount of forest within the municipality and/or local area.

- (A) The project meets all of the priority requirements as described above. 8 pts.
- (B) The project meets 3 of the priority requirements as described above. 6 pts.
- (C) The project meets 2 of the priority requirements as described above. 4 pts.
- (D) The project meets 1 or none of the priority requirements described above. 0 pts.

7. Organizational Capacity

Describe the roles, qualifications, and experience for key personnel, any additional staffing requirements, and the organization's experience in grant management.

- (A) The roles, experience and qualifications of key personnel and additional staffing needs are clear, well described, and sufficient to deliver the project on the proposed timeframe. 8 pts.
- (B) The roles, experience and qualifications of key personnel and additional staffing needs are not clear or well described or described roles may not deliver the project on the proposed timeframe. 4 pts.
- (C) The roles, experience and qualifications of key personnel and additional staffing needs are not clear or well described. 0 pts.

8. Funding Need

Does the project already have a funding source to which these grant funds will be used as match?

- (A) The project does not already have a funding source; funds from this grant will not be used to match another funding source. 5 pts.
- (B) The project already has a funding source and funds from this grant will be used as match for another funding source. 0 pts.

9. Environmental Justice

DEC demonstrates a commitment to Environmental Justice (EJ) and remedies for communities that may be burdened by negative environmental consequences. Environmental justice is defined by the DEC as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. For more information, visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/public/333.html>.

A project within one mile of an EJ community, or that serve an EJ community will receive points towards the application evaluation. Locations of Potential EJ areas in New York State are available at:

https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?url=https://services6.arcgis.com/DZHqZm9cxOD4CWM/ArcGIS/rest/services/Potential_Environmental_Justice_Area_PEJA_Communities/FeatureServer&source=sd.

To demonstrate location in an EJ area, include a map from DEC's web page (listed above). In addition, provide the zip code where the project is to be implemented or where the benefit will be provided with a brief (few sentences) description as context for the map.

To demonstrate location in an under-served community- a brief (few sentences) description of how the project will benefit minority or low-income populations that experience disproportionate adverse environmental impacts such as pollution from multiple industrial facilities, substandard water quality, concentrated diesel emissions from bus depots, or other heavy vehicle traffic, adverse health effects related to environmental impacts (high asthma), lack of access to green benefits such as open space, environmental education or parks, or other such impacts.

- When uploading more than one document, please include in a single .pdf file.

- (A) The proposed project is within one mile of a Potential Environmental Justice Area or underserved area and a map and zip code are provided and a demonstrated need is described. 5 pts.
- (B) The proposed project is not within one mile of a Potential Environmental Justice Area or underserved community, however a clear description on how a nearby EJ or underserved 2 pts.

community is provided, and a map and zip code are included.

- (C) The proposed project is not within one mile of a Potential Environmental Justice Area or under-served community and a proper description is not provided. 0 pts.

10. Community Support

Applications that include a letter (or letters, up to 5) of support from elected officials and any partnering organizations (not directly associated with the applicant) that support the community forest acquisition will receive additional points. Letters should state their reasons for supporting the community forest and any planned participation (ex: volunteers, recreation, education, and outreach). Community Support letters should not be from DEC personnel. Please upload Community Support letter in a single .pdf, in Grants Gateway Pre-Submission Uploads.

- (A) Two or more letters of support were uploaded. Participation and reasons for support are clearly defined within the letters. 5 pts.
- (B) One letter of support was uploaded and participation, and reasons for support are clearly defined within the letter. 3 pts.
- (C) No letters of support were uploaded or participation and reasons for support are not clearly defined within the letters. 0 pts.

11. Forest Management or Recreation Plan

Does the project location already have a forest management or recreation plan that was created or updated within the last 2 years, as described in this RFA?

- (A) Applicant answered "Yes" and uploaded a copy of the community's forest or recreation management plan, which was created or updated within the last 2 years. 3 pts.
- (B) Applicant answered "No" or did not upload a copy of the community's forest management plan, or recreation management plan was not created or updated within the last 2 years. 0 pts.

12. Cost Effectiveness 1 - Budget Level of Detail and eligible costs

Does the Work Plan contain an exceptional or adequate level of budget detail to assess the cost-effectiveness of the project and are all the project costs eligible? Explain all expenditures in the Work Plan.

- (A) All the project costs are eligible expenses and the Work Plan contains an exceptional level of budget detail to assess cost-effectiveness. 20 pts.
- (B) All the project costs are eligible expenses and the Work Plan contains sufficient budget detail to assess cost-effectiveness. 10 pts.
- (C) There are one or more ineligible costs, but there is an adequate level of detail to assess cost-effectiveness. 5 pts.
- (D) There are one or more ineligible costs included in the budget and/or there is an inadequate level of detail to assess that project costs are eligible. 0 pts.

VI. WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU RECEIVE AN AWARD

1. NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

Applicants selected to receive a grant award will be notified by email and in an official DEC award letter.

IMPORTANT NOTE: By accepting an award, applicant agrees to abide by all Master Contract for Grants (MCG) terms and conditions. Any changes to the terms and conditions will not be accepted and may affect applicant's award.

2. STATE OF NEW YORK MASTER CONTRACT FOR GRANTS (MCG)

Applicants selected to receive a grant award will be required to execute a MCG within 60 - 90 days from the time of their award notification. Failure to submit timely required MCG documents could cause a grantee to lose their grant award. Applicants should review and be prepared to comply with all MCG terms and conditions should grant funding be awarded. The MCG and attachments can be reviewed and/or downloaded in the Grants Gateway Community Forests application under the "Forms Menu" screen named 'Contract Document Properties.' The MCG and attachments include:

- MCG Grants Face Page
- Standard Terms and Conditions (NYS standard terms and conditions)
- Attachment A-1 Program Specific Terms and Conditions (Agency and Program Specific Terms and Conditions)
- Attachment B-1 Expenditure Based Budget (project expense categories and detail)
- Attachment C Work Plan Attachment D Payment and Reporting Schedule (claims for reimbursement and grant reporting provisions)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Project-related costs must be incurred within the term of the MCG to be considered eligible for reimbursement or match. Contract payments will not be approved or processed by DEC until a MCG is approved by DEC, and as applicable, the Attorney General and the State Comptroller. All contracts must be approved by the contract term start date of which will be determined at the time of an official award.

Applicants should be prepared to comply with the following Master Contract for Grants Requirements:

a. Insurance Requirements or CE-200 Exemption

Contractors will be required to carry appropriate insurance as specified in the MCG, Attachment A-1 Program Specific Terms and Conditions, and agree that each project consultant, project contractor and project subcontractor secures and delivers to the contractor appropriate policies of insurance issued by an insurance company licensed to do business in the State of New York. Policies must name the contractor as an additional insured, with appropriate limits, covering contractor's public liability and property damage insurance, contractor's contingency liability insurance, "all-risk" insurance and workers' compensation/disability benefits coverage for the project.

b. Permit Requirements (if applicable)

Contractor agrees to obtain all required permits, including but not limited to, local, state, and federal permits prior to the commencement of any project related work. The Contractor agrees that all work performed in relation to the project by the Contractor or its agents, representatives, or subcontractors will comply with all relevant federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations and standards, zoning and building codes, ordinances, operating certificates for facilities, or licenses for an activity.

c. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

Not-For-Profit contractors and/or subcontractors are subject to a vendor responsibility review by the State to ensure public dollars are being spent appropriately with responsible contractors. A vendor responsibility review may include a contractor and/or subcontractor to present evidence of its continuing legal authority to do business in NYS, integrity, experience, ability, prior performance, and organizational and financial capacity. To enroll in and use the NYS VendRep System, see the VendRep System instructions (<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/enroll.htm>) or go directly to the VendRep System (<https://portal.osc.state.ny.us>).

d. Iran Divestment Act

As a result of the Iran Divestment Act of 2012 (Act), Chapter 1 of the 2012 Laws of New York, a new provision has been added to the State Finance Law (SFL), § 165-a, effective April 12, 2012. By entering into a Contract, the Contractor certifies that it is not on the “Entities Determined To Be NonResponsive Bidders/Offerors Pursuant to The New York State Iran Divestment Act of 2012” list (“Prohibited Entities List”) posted on the OGS website at: <http://www.ogs.ny.gov/about/regs/docs/ListofEntities.pdf> and further certifies that it will not utilize on such Contract any subcontractor that is identified on the Prohibited Entities List. Additional detail on the Iran Divestment Act can be found in the MCG, Attachment A-1 Program Specific Terms and Conditions.

e. Minority/Women Business Enterprises (M/WBE) and Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Requirements

The Department is required to implement the provisions of New York State Executive Law Article 15-A and 5 NYCRR Parts 142-144 (“MWBE Regulations”) for all State contracts with a value (1) in excess of \$25,000 for labor, services, equipment, materials, or any combination of the foregoing or (2) in excess of \$100,000 for real property renovations and construction.

Applicants subject to executing a future NYS Master Contract for Grants agree, in addition to any other nondiscrimination provision of the MCG and at no additional cost to the Department, to fully comply and cooperate with the Department in the implementation of New York State Executive Law Article 15-A. These requirements include equal employment opportunities for minority group members and women (“EEO”) and contracting opportunities for certified minority and women-owned business enterprises (“MWBEs”). Contractor’s demonstration of “good faith efforts” pursuant to 5 NYCRR §142.8 shall be a part of these requirements. These provisions shall be deemed supplementary to, and not in lieu of, the nondiscrimination provisions required by New York State Executive Law Article 15 (the “Human Rights Law”) or other applicable federal, state, or local laws. Failure to comply with M/WBE and EEO requirements may result in a Department finding of non-responsiveness, non-responsibility and/or a breach of contract, leading to the withholding of funds or such other actions, liquidated damages, or enforcement proceedings.

Please refer to the NYS Master Contract for Grants - Article IV (J) and Attachment A-1 Program Specific Terms and Conditions - Article X, to review M/WBE and EEO requirements. Required M/WBE and EEO related forms can be found at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/48854.html>

- The local government is responsible for designating someone to serve as their Affirmative Action representative. The governing body should make this designation through official means.
- A list of certified M/WBE enterprises can be obtained via the internet from the NYS Department of Economic Development at <https://ny.newnycontracts.com/FrontEnd/VendorSearchPublic.asp?TN=ny&XID=9885>
- Contracts which meet the established M/WBE-EEO thresholds require the Contractor to submit Quarterly Reports, http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/quarterlyversion7.pdf, detailing payments made by the Prime Contractor to NYS Certified M/WBEs.

The following M/WBE-EEO “Fair Share” goals are established as follows:

Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Overall Participation Goals:

- Construction/Engineering – up to 30%
- Commodities – up to 30%
- Services/Technologies –up to 30%

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Participation Goals:

- EEO Minority Workforce Participation Goals (DEC Regions 1- 9) 0%
- EEO Female Workforce Participation Goals (DEC Regions 1-9) 0%

DEC M/WBE Compliance
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Bureau of Contract and Grant Development/MWBE Program
625 Broadway, 10th Floor
Albany, New York 12233-5028
Phone: (518) 402-9240
Fax: (518) 402-9023

f. Procurement of Contractors/Subcontractors

Municipalities must comply with General Municipal Law Sections 103 (competitive bidding) and 104-b (procurement policies and procedures). Failure to comply with these requirements could jeopardize full reimbursement of your approved eligible project costs.

g. Americans with Disabilities Act

In the event the monies defined herein are to be used for the development of facilities, outdoor recreation areas, transportation or written or spoken communication with the public, the Contractor shall comply with all requirements for providing access for individuals with disabilities as established by Article 4A of the New York State Public Buildings Law, Americans with Disabilities Act, and relevant sections of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. Standards for certain Recreation Facilities are found in the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design while others are found in the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Recreation Areas (<https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards>).

VII. GRANT PROGRAM PAYMENT AND REPORTING

PAYMENT AND REPORTING

- Project costs eligible for reimbursement and project match must be incurred between the MCG term start and end dates. Costs incurred prior to the MCG term start date or after the MCG term end date will not be considered eligible for grant reimbursement or match. Copies of supporting cost documentation (paid invoices, receipts, cancelled checks, etc.) must be audited and approved by the DEC for costs to be eligible for grant reimbursement.
- Quarterly Progress Reports must be submitted in narrative form, no later than 30 days from the end of the calendar quarter. The reports will summarize how the project progressed towards meeting project objectives and deliverables during the respective quarter. Quarterly reports shall be submitted in the NYS Grants Gateway.
- *Optional* - Quarterly Expenditure Reports, detailed by object of expense as defined in the MCG Attachment B-1 Expenditure Based Budget, may accompany the quarterly progress reports. These reports must correlate to vouchers submitted for payment. Approved project-required permits and permissions must be in place to submit a reimbursement request.
- Final Progress Report must be submitted and approved by the DEC prior to the release of the final contract payment to the Grantee. The Grantee must submit the Final Report no later than 60 days after the end of the contract period. The Final Report should report on all aspects of the program and detail how the use of grant funds were utilized in achieving the goals set forth in the approved MCG Attachment C Work Plan. Copies of appropriate documents (i.e., inventory and/or management plan, etc.) must be submitted and approved by the DEC.

----- End -----

APPENDIX A

Example Project Summaries

1. **Example fee title project** – “Town of Roseville requests \$200,000 for the acquisition of 22 acres of forested land within 2 miles of the town hall. It is very rare that a parcel this size becomes available, and its purchase would signal a significant and dynamic environmental progress for our town, and the landowner, a life-long Roseville resident of several generations, would prefer it goes to the Town rather than to commercial developers. The land is flat and cleared at the base (where we envisage a small 6 car parking lot, bike rack, tables and benches and kiosks), and then slopes up to a peak of 500’, facing south and west. Soils are mostly humus/loam on top of sandy clay so should have a good base for walking and hiking trails. As a town with a young population, we will assist and encourage local schools to develop programs for outdoor ecology including bird watching, plant and tree identification and forest appreciation. We would also open the land to hunting on specific weekdays during the season. In the early years following purchase, we may benefit from light timber removal and intend to utilize the wood for on-site trail marking. We have been in close discussion with George Green, landowner, for the past 18 months (see formal written agreement) and the release of this DEC grant will enable the town to proceed with the market evaluated purchase price of \$172,000.”
2. **Example conservation easement project** – “The Village of Hornsby in Oneida County has been approached by a local landowning family having 68 acres of forestland which was previously used for dairy production over a period of 50 years. A new generation of the family intend to hold the land and enjoy the trout stream and many trails, wildlife and birds that inhabit the area and have expressed the intent to enter into an easement with the Village so the community may enjoy the same benefits. The property is a mile south of the local Post Office and there is a local bus service that regularly passes the farm, which would accommodate the senior citizen center, the schools and village residents who don’t drive, walk, or bike in the area. The Village has a small transport grant and proposed footpaths to the easement are possible in coming years.”
3. **Example of funded projects as a portion of an existing federal grant** – “The City of Glenelg requests \$300,000 towards the acquisition of land (2.5 acres) bearing a total agreed price of \$525,000, the balance of which will be committed by U.S. Dept. Of Agriculture GoGetUm large city grants of 2020. The City is 15 miles west of Buffalo and has seen a tremendous growth in housing estates in the last 25 years and the lack of green space has become glaringly evident. We have been able to make several small purchases of land in the last 10 years and the original planned parks have an annual budget. However, there is no open space forest land of this size left in the area, so it is quite critical that the acquisition be realized. It should be noted that the City has been successful with four land negotiations for green space and have had bids accepted on the basis of long-term care and community support. We applied for the USDA grant in 2019 and have been looking at various forms of leverage since the award in 2020, including local bond and loans but have needed to address pressing issues such as an upgraded sewage plant and increased police force. The landowners are keen to see the property be purchased and maintained by the City but are beginning to lose patience as developers approach them.”

APPENDIX B

✓ Application Submission Checklist

Be sure to submit the following items with your application to avoid disqualification:

- ☐ Map
- ☐ Deed
- ☐ Current School and Town/County tax bills
- ☐ Estimate of market value
- ☐ Municipal resolution
- ☐ Letter of agreement from landowner
- ☐ Sexual Harassment form

Be sure to submit the following items with your application to receive additional points

- ☐ Ground Truth photos
- ☐ Community Support letters
- ☐ Potential Environmental Justice area map from DEC website (if applies)
- ☐ Forest Management Plan (if already created)

APPENDIX C

Sample Municipal Resolution

[Official Letterhead of Municipality]

Resolution No. _____

A RESOLUTION OF [MUNICIPALITY NAME] TO SET ASIDE FUNDS FOR COMMUNITY FOREST ACQUISITION

WHEREAS, [Municipality name] desires to apply for [\$request amount] in financial assistance through the [Year] DEC Community Forest Conservation Grant Program, a reimbursement grant; and

WHEREAS, the application proposes funding for acquisition of land to establish community forests for public benefit; and

WHEREAS, community forests provide benefits such as recreation [list potential property-specific recreation uses such as fishing, hiking, biking, hunting, wildlife observation], [list other benefits for this property, which may include flood mitigation, wildlife habitat, clean water, forest products (timber or maple syrup), tourism, and carbon sequestration and storage]; and

WHEREAS, the property located at [property address] is available for [fee title or conservation easement] acquisition and the landowner wishes to [sell the land to or enter into a conservation easement with] the municipality for the purpose of establishing a community forest

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the [Governing body] of the [Municipality] approves and endorses the application for the [Year] DEC Community Forest Conservation Grant Program and commits to passing a budget of [\$match funding] for the next year to support this project.

Passed by the vote of [Governing body] Members voting in favor thereof:

Affirmative:

Negative:

Abstain:

RESOLVED this [Date] day of [Month], [Year]

I, [Clerk name], do hereby certify that resolution [Number] was passed at a meeting of the [Governing body] held on [Date], and is [incorporated in the original minutes of said meeting OR on file and of record], and that said resolution has not been altered, amended, or revoked and is in full force and effect.

[Signature of Clerk]

[Official Seal of Municipality]

APPENDIX D

Additional Guidance for Project Purpose and Land Use

The goal of the Community Forest Conservation Grant Program is to fund municipal land acquisition for community forests, which allow free public access. Any restrictions to public access must align with the goals of this grant program and be approved by DEC. In addition, lands purchased through this grant opportunity:

- Will be used for public forest conservation purposes and is required to be dedicated for use as a community forest. However, this support is not intended to be subject to Article 54, Title 3 as an "Open Space Land Conservation Project" nor Title 9 as a "Municipal Parks Project."
- Will not be converted from forest or otherwise developed
 - In general, structures, impervious surfaces, exterior lighting, dams and water impoundments, and utilities may not be installed
- Will not be subdivided
- Will be managed for the public benefit
 - No dumping of wastes, trash, or debris
 - No mining
- Will only allow sustainable forms of recreation
 - Follow a recreation management plan, which is updated at least every 10 years
 - Trails may be constructed of non-impervious surface
 - No motorized use of public trails except for accessible access
- No planting of non-native species
- Will implement sustainable forestry for timber harvests, if 25 or more acres
 - Follow a forest management plan, which is updated at least every 5 years

For additional details of what is intended for both fee title and conservation easement acquisitions, email molly.hassett@dec.ny.gov to request a copy of the draft template.