



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Rebecca Tepper, Secretary
Grant Announcement

BID ENV 25 DCS 06

Posting Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024

**Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant
FY 2025**

BID#: BD-24-1042-ENV-ENV01-100337

1. Grant Opportunity Summary:

A. PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR: Activities and programs that advance the goals of the Woodlands Partnership.

B. OVERVIEW AND GOALS: In support of Section 91 of Chapter 209 of the Acts of 2018, which established the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) and called for partnership and collaboration among state, regional, and local governments to advance the goals of the MTWP, the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) hereby offers grants to communities that have voted to participate in the MTWP (by Select Board or Town Meeting votes) and to regional organizations which work to engage in activities and programs to advance the goals of the MTWP in the region. The Board of the MTWP voted in 2022 to change its name to the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts (WP).

C. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: This bid is open to municipalities that have voted to join the Woodlands Partnership and Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs), or regional environmental, cultural, or economic development organizations named as WP Board members or working in the WP region. See also section 2A.

D. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS: EEA seeks to further two of the goals of the Woodlands Partnership for municipalities that have officially voted to join the Woodlands Partnership. These goals are: 1) increase economic development related to sustainable forestry and natural resource-based tourism in the municipalities and, 2) increase forest conservation and sustainable forestry on private and municipal lands.

Proposals can be for a project within a single municipality or for planning work or implementation of a project across municipal boundaries or for the entire Woodlands Partnership region. See also section 2B

E. APPLICATION DEADLINE: 3:00 pm on Thursday, May 9th, 2024

See further detail on deadlines and grant program calendar in Section 3.

F. INFORMATION SESSION: A 'virtual' information session will be held on Wednesday, April 10 at 2pm via MS Teams. Applicants are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP to Vanessa Farny (vanessa.farny@mass.gov; (857) 330-1978) for the Teams invitation. The workshop presentation and answers to any questions received at the workshop will be posted to CommBuys.

F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY: The Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant Program is a reimbursement program. Maximum grant awards are \$25,000 per municipal proposal and \$75,000 for regional

proposals for eligible projects within the Woodlands Partnership region, unless increased at the discretion of the Secretary.

A community may receive funding for a both an individual municipal grant as well as participate in a regional application submitted by another municipality, RPA or regional organization. However, municipalities may not receive funding for more than one municipal grant per community. See also section 2D.

Municipalities with representatives that are on the WP Board will receive preference for funding.

G. BUDGET REQUIREMENT: An application must include a budget outlining total project costs and associated services or tasks must be submitted with the grant application. Grantees may submit invoices for costs incurred by applicants or their contractors during the grant as tasks are completed. Upon receipt of all required deliverables the community will be reimbursed for the balance of any grant funds. Grantee must prepare a final report and invoice upon project completion that details all costs incurred, and matching funds provided with the reimbursement request. Only work completed during the period of the executed contract will be eligible for reimbursement.

H. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACT(S): The contract period will begin on the date of contract execution or a specified later date. Multiple contracts may be awarded for a single project, to multiple project partners, upon determination of the review committee. Contracts issued pursuant to this Bid limit reimbursement to approved project costs expended on or before the end of the fiscal year for which the grant is awarded (June 30, 2025 for FY25 awards) unless project applicant is informed otherwise by EEA in writing.

I. REGULATIONS, STATUTES, OR AUTHORIZATION GOVERNING THIS GRANT PROGRAM: This bid is issued in support of Chapter 209 of the Acts of 2018, Section 91, which created the Woodlands Partnership, established a process for communities in the region to opt into the WP, called for partnership and collaboration among state, regional, and local governments to advance the WP, and specified purposes for the WP. Such purposes are compatible with those of EEA and with funding authorized in line item 2000-7072 of Section 2 of Chapter 209 of the Acts of 2018 and Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2022.

J. CONTACT INFORMATION: Vanessa Farny
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge St. – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114
vanessa.farny@mass.gov

2. PERFORMANCE AND CONTRACT SPECIFICATIONS

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: This grant is open to:

- Municipalities that have that have joined the Woodlands Partnership. If a municipal vote is still pending, this vote (by Select Board, Town Meeting, City Council or Signature of the Mayor) must be taken prior to the grant application deadline. Municipalities may submit an application for projects within their town or city, and/or participate as a joint partner with one or more other communities on a regional application.
- Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) or regional environmental, cultural, or economic development organizations named as WP Board members or working in the WP region are eligible to submit an application for a regional project.

Regional projects must include the endorsement, via a letter of support on Town letterhead, from each community that is participating in (or impacted by) the proposal. RPA's and regional organizations are encouraged to include the municipality/municipalities in which the project is located as a partner(s).

Individual municipalities may submit both an individual proposal *as well as* partner with other municipalities, an RPA or a qualified regional organization on a regional proposal.

B. ELIGIBLE PROJECT(S)/SCOPE(S) OF WORK:

EEA seeks to further the goals of the Woodlands Partnership by increasing economic development related to sustainable forestry and natural resource-based tourism, and increasing forest conservation and sustainable forestry on private and municipal lands. Therefore, tasks suitable for funding under this bid include, but are not limited to:

- Innovative projects that support local sustainable forestry, forest conservation or natural resource-based tourism including those outlined in the Woodlands Partnership 2022 Plan;
- Acquisition of trail easements, river protection easements or municipal forest or conservation land or the purchase of conservation restrictions to conserve forest;
- Studies to inform natural resource-based tourism programs or implementation of projects such as signage, tourism facilities or woods roads or trail repairs that support hiking, bicycling, rafting, hunting, fishing or other outdoor recreational activities;
- Planning work and/or the implementation of demonstration or research forests;
- Projects that increase or improve visitor use and access to town forests, trails, or rivers including addressing public safety.
- Studies or inventories required to prepare a forest carbon credit market project, or forest stewardship plan and/or other, related tasks such as implementation of a forest stewardship climate plan;
- Technical assistance to businesses or landowners that will promote sustainable forestry practices or enhance opportunities for natural resource-based tourism; or
- Planning work or other activities to assist communities with funding applications to secure additional financial assistance to further the Woodlands Partnership goals;

Municipalities may apply for \$25,000 to pursue eligible projects within their community, or partner with additional communities on a regional grant of up to \$75,000 for projects that extend beyond municipal boundaries. A municipality submitting a regional grant of >\$50,000 must identify at least two additional communities to participate in the project.

For example, multiple communities interested in forest stewardship for municipal lands may submit a regional application to increase coordination for forest stewardship across town boundaries. The application is eligible for the full \$75,000 if three or more communities participate. Regional proposals require the endorsement, via a letter of support on Town letterhead, from each community that is participating in the proposal.

Municipalities are expected, subject to EEA approval and following public procurement laws, to sub-contract with a non-profit, planning consultant, regional planning agency, a construction firm, or other appropriate vendor to complete approved proposals. Regional organizations may, with EEA approval, sub-contract with a vendor appropriate to the proposed activity.

A regional organization named as an WP Board member or working in the WP region may apply for a regional project on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Board with the Committee's approval.

Note that the following activities are *ineligible* for funding:

- Maintenance activities or activities that are or were previously funded by municipal budgets;
- Staff costs;
- Projects that do not directly support sustainable forestry and natural resource-based tourism goals.

C. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Proposals will be evaluated based on the following considerations:

- Advancement of one or both goals of the Woodlands Partnership (20 Points)
- Efficient use of funding to address a demonstrated, prioritized need within the community or region; (20 Points)
- Project achieves a product that is readily usable (whether a plan, design or physical structure) to further the above goals; (15 Points)
- Project is informed by, has incorporated, or will solicit community input or includes an educational or technical assistant component; (15 Points)
- Municipal partner(s) are involved and/or the project deliverables are directly transferrable to other communities in the WP (10 Points)
- Project brings match in the form of volunteer time or staff time or donated services or materials or by leveraging other, non-state sources of funding; (10 Points) and
- Promotes climate change resilience or achieves climate mitigation (10 Points).

Municipalities with representatives that are on the WP Board will receive preference for funding.

Note that EEA reserves the option to interview some or all of those submitting a proposal for the purpose of clarifying a proposal prior to making a final award.

D. FUNDING AVAILABILITY:

Reimbursement rate:	Up to 100% of total eligible project costs. Match in the form of volunteer or municipal staff time or additional municipal or regional planning agency funds is encouraged, but not required.
Maximum award:	Up to \$25,000 per municipal proposal and up to \$75,000 will be available per regional proposal. Exceptions may be made at the Secretary's discretion.

If Regional Planning Agencies, regional organization, or a community apply on behalf of more than one community in a regional grant, the application may seek \$25,000 for each community participating up to the \$75,000 limit for regional proposals. Proposals are expected to vary in the amount of funding requested based on the anticipated activity.

Successful applicants may receive funds provided to Massachusetts under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2022 (“ARPA”). As such, these awardees may be considered sub-recipients of ARPA funds and will need to comply with all governing federal laws and regulations. These include, but are not limited to: 2 CFR Part 200 UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS (Uniform Guidance); 2 CFR Part 25 UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT; various reporting requirements; and various federal non-discrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Grant agreements will include language reaffirming these requirements and providing the Commonwealth with remedies if a grant recipient fails to

comply with these requirements. All grant awardees will be notified of the source of funds for their grant award.

E. BUDGET REQUIREMENT: A detailed budget for all project component(s) is required.

F. PROJECT TERMS: Awarded projects must abide by the Standard Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions, and/or an Interdepartmental Service Agreement. All contracts are subject to successful negotiation of a Final Scope of Services. EEA does not guarantee that any contracts may result from this bid. It is anticipated that projects will commence when the relevant contract is executed.

G. ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACTS: Contracts awarded for FY 25 will end on June 30, 2025. Deliverables for these contracts must be received, along with final billing, by July 31, 2025. Extension of a contract is at the sole discretion of EEA.

H. DELIVERABLES, OWNERSHIP, AND CREDIT DUE: Grant recipients agree to share the product of the funded activities with EEA and with other communities in the Commonwealth through reports, meetings, workshops, and to highlight these activities in print, on the web or other media outlets. EEA Woodlands Partnership grant program funding must be acknowledged in any press or other materials issued by the applicant or its partners pertaining to the project.

I. REPORTING: A brief project update with a summary of tasks achieved will be required three to four months after contracting via an electronic copy submitted via email. A final report will be required at the time that reimbursement is requested. The final report must provide a description of the completed tasks as contracted. All final reports and deliverables are requested to be sent via email.

J. INVOICING: The Woodlands Partnership Grant Program is a reimbursement program. Award recipients must submit a billing form with proof of payment for all project costs for which reimbursement is sought. Only approved expenses incurred by the contracted entity during the period of contract, and for which appropriate documentation is submitted, are eligible for reimbursement.

3. Instructions for Application Submission

A. APPLICATION SUBMISSION: An electronic copy of the application must be received via email by **3:00 pm on Thursday, May 9, 2024.** Applications will not be accepted after the deadline.

Submit a scanned copy of the completed application with all required documentation via email (no paper mailing is required) with the subject line "Woodland Partnership Application_[Applicant]_[Project Name] to vanessa.farny@mass.gov. Failure to provide any of the materials listed below may result in the disqualification of the Proposal.

B. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS: A complete application includes:

- The completed application form with a 1-2 page project description as requested. If the project description references recommendations from the WP Plan, a Master Plan or other plan, Climate Vulnerability Assessment, or other document, include a copy of relevant pages.
- An itemized project budget that reflects the full project costs, identifies any match proposed, and the total funding request.
- A project timeline with task-by-task description of proposed project components including anticipated start date and completion dates for tasks and/or components; the date by which any product will be delivered and/or outcome(s) will be realized.

- For regional applications, a letter(s) of support and/or commitment(s) to participate from each municipality within the project boundaries.

C. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED IF SELECTED TO RECEIVE FUNDING: If an application is selected to receive funding, each non-state project partner seeking funding will be required to submit the following forms to complete a contract:

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form with Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (FRF) Contract Addendum;
- Commonwealth Scope and Budget Form;
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing; and

Respondents should review the Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, Commonwealth Scope and Budget Form, and Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing prior to submission of a Response, available under the Forms and Terms tab of this Commbuys posting, as well as: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/osd-forms>.

D. ESTIMATED AWARD DATE: Awards will be announced as soon as is feasible after the grant application deadline and are estimated to be announced 120 days from the deadline. Contract negotiations will begin immediately thereafter.

E. ESTIMATED CONTRACT START DATE: Notwithstanding any verbal representations by the parties, or an earlier start date listed in the Standard Contract Form, and only after an award is issued and a final scope of services has been negotiated, the effective start date of a contract shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form.

4. MISCELLANEOUS

A. TYPE OF PROCUREMENT: Grant

B. USE OF THIS PROCUREMENT BY SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS: This bid is a single department procurement.

C. REQUEST FOR SINGLE OR MULTIPLE CONTRACTORS: This bid may result in multiple contracts.

D. BID DISTRIBUTION METHOD: This bid has been distributed electronically using the COMMBUYS system. It is the responsibility of every Applicant to check COMMBUYS for any modifications to a bid to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Applicants who fail to check for amended bids and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential applicants are advised to check the “last change” field on the summary page of bids for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent bid files. The application and answers to questions will be posted on COMMBUYS and the [DCS website](#).

E. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BID:

- A. Application form

Attachment A

Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant Program APPLICATION FORM – FY2025

Deadline: Thursday, May 9, 2024 at 3:00 pm

Instructions: Submit one electronic copy of the completed application with all required documentation via email to: Vanessa.Farny@mass.gov with the subject line “Woodlands Partnership Grant Application_[Lead Partner]_[Project Name].”

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Project name: _____

Project Applicant: _____

Contact Person:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Formal Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Please note: the contact person is the official representative for this project, usually not the chief municipal officer.

2. PROJECT DETAILS

Please provide a 1-2 page project description that describes the goals, as well as the planned tasks to accomplish the project. Please address the following:

- The project goals, and community needs that the project proposes to address as well as measures of success;
- The deliverables that will be readily usable at the end of the project (whether a plan, design or physical structure);
- How the project will advance one or both goals of the Woodlands Partnership;
- Whether community input has been considered or is reflected in the proposed project;
- If the project contains an educational or technical assistance component;
- If more than one municipality collaborating or the deliverable is transferable to other communities in the Woodlands Partnership;
- If funding requested will be matched with other funding, or with volunteer time or staff time or donated services or materials (although this is not required, it is encouraged);
- If the project considers or incorporates climate change resilience, mitigation or other measures;

- If the project type will require long-term maintenance (of trails, sites or other features), identify who will be responsible for long-term stewardship or upkeep, the resources identified to accomplish this and next steps to ensure the facilities, site or features will be maintained appropriately after the project is completed.

If any permits are required, the permit or application for the permit must be submitted with the grant application. Should the project be selected for funding, the permit will be required as part of the final contract.

2. PROJECT BUDGET

This grant program is a reimbursement program. Grant recipients are reimbursed after invoices have been received from the municipality, regional organization or their contactors and work has been completed. Costs incurred prior to an executed contract are ineligible for reimbursement. Municipal account labor, volunteer hours, and donations are also ineligible for reimbursement.

Attach a detailed budget with total project costs. Please make sure to identify the source of all local funding including donations and municipal funds and other funding sources.