Please note that the Letter of Inquiry submission deadline is **January 1st**

WEYERHAEUSER FAMILY FOUNDATION®

Sustainable Forests and Communities Initiative Funding Guidelines

Program Goal

The goal of the Sustainable Forests and Communities Initiative is to support the development of environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable communities in forested regions of the United States.

Background

For the past 30 years the Sustainable Forests and Communities Initiative (SFCI) of the Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation (WFF) has funded proposals responding to the triple needs in forested communities for forest conservation, economic development, and healing deep rifts opened by timber market changes and Federal reductions in timber harvests. SFCI has supported programs within specific communities that promoted, in an integrated fashion, forest conservation, the creation of jobs or businesses based on sustainable forestry, and public consensus-building.

WFF notes that there has been real progress in many communities, as consensus on integrated approaches to conservation and forest-based enterprise has emerged. Multiple benefits from forest restoration and sustainable silviculture have been realized. But we also note how ongoing challenges place obstacles in the path of continued progress. Communities have found it particularly difficult achieving business growth, new business formation, and job creation. We continue to encourage proposals in these areas.

As part of the SFCI goal to promote environmental sustainability and financial viability in forest communities, WFF is also seeking proposals in the area of forest ecosystem services. Many vital public benefits are derived from forests, but their costs and values are either ignored or underpriced and undervalued in the wider economy and in local forested communities. Thus, we encourage proposals that aim to include forest ecosystem costs and values in market-based pricing in order to improve ecosystem benefits or halt their degradation, thereby leading to greater forest and economic sustainability. We aim to internalize the economic externalities of sustainable forestry.

Program Guidelines

WFF, through SFCI, is interested in supporting organizations that work in forested landscapes to enhance the environment, the economy, and the community. Programs that implement integrated approaches in these areas and enhance market valuation of forest ecosystem services are favored.

Priorities

WFF gives priority to programs that promote vibrant forest-based communities and address the following outcome areas:

- **Environment**: Employ sustainable forest management, conservation, and ecological restoration.
- **Economy**: Develop and encourage enterprise-based sustainable economic activities.
- **Community**: Use innovative social and locally-based processes to meet agreed upon environmental and economic sustainability goals.

Projects of potential interest include the following examples:

- Creation of local market-based jobs for in-forest activities (such as sustainable forest management, forest restoration, or sustainable silviculture).
- Development of demand for certified wood and for products made with sustainably produced forest resources, including non-timber forest resources (e.g. boughs, biomass, and mushrooms).
- Promoting sustainable forest management alternatives to conversion of private forested land to other uses (e.g., community forests, working forest conservation easements, or other title-related forest conservation tools).
- Creating value in forests and forest communities through developing, producing, and marketing new forest products or forest ecosystem services.
- Advancing community-wide, long-term planning for monetizing the full range of forest values, including explicit valuation of and creation of markets for forest ecosystem services.
- Forest Ecosystem Services: using innovative business or policy models to better establish prices and markets for ecosystem services. Forest ecosystem services can include, but are not restricted to, carbon sequestration, forests' role in the carbon, nutrient, and water cycles, providing habitat to support biodiversity, and providing aesthetic, educational, and other cultural services.
- Partnerships: utilizing partnership-based programs that build on the strengths and capacity of collaborating organizations. Benefits of this approach may include:
    - facilitating expansion of successful program models to new geographies;
    - enabling organizations to broaden the impact of their expertise or benefit from the expertise of partners;
    - allowing organizations to deploy their core expertise without creating redundant capacity.

Geographic Focus

SFCI focuses on supporting activities in forested communities throughout the United States.

Organization Eligibility

Organization must be classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) public charity or a state or political subdivision or a tribal governmental entity.

Applications from an organization acting as a fiscal sponsor will be considered when a Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement has been signed by both parties and submitted with the application. Fiscal Sponsors must be able to demonstrate substantial and direct fiscal and program oversight. WFF does not accept applications from fiscal agents.

Grant Size

The maximum grant size for SFCI is $50,000 per year. The average first year grant award in 2026 was $42,500.

Multi-Year Funding

SFCI may support multi-year programs, but will not commit funds for additional years without an annual review. It is SFCI's desire to continue funding successful programs for multiple years, subject to available funds. Because programs will not be funded indefinitely, applicants are encouraged to plan for the long-term sustainability of the program and to describe the long-term funding plan in the application.

Organizations requesting multi-year funding must indicate the number of years that the program will request funding in the initial application. Organizations will be required to submit a grant report with renewal information annually until the project is complete.

Restrictions

WFF will not consider proposals in the following areas:

- Relief and rescue programs.
- Programs whose purpose is to create specific media, film, photography, or books.
- Programs that attempt to change behavior by education of the general public.
- Capital projects, including land acquisition or the construction of buildings. Note, while WFF funds cannot be used to purchase land, SFCI will fund work associated with land acquisition such as staff time, community engagement, and management planning.
- Grants or scholarships to individuals.
- Camps or cultural exchange programs.
- General operating costs not connected to the project proposal.
- Lobbying prohibited by the Internal Revenue Code.
- Endowments.
- Start-up costs for new organizations.
- Research projects.

Outcome-Based Assessment

WFF has a particular interest in measurable outcomes. Applicants are asked to clearly state program goals on the application and include a plan for an outcome-based assessment of the program activities. Applicants will be required to report on the program's success by providing metrics on the qualitative and quantitative outcomes at the end of each grant period.