

## **IFKF FAQs**

### **How does the program determine eligible Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities? For example, is there any distinction in federal vs. state-recognized tribes?**

Both state and federally recognized Tribes are eligible recipients for NSRC funding as well as tribal organizations (e.g., tribal nonprofits, intertribal organizations, tribal businesses, etc.).

### **Must Tribal Nations leading a proposal be located in the Northern Forest?**

Although we recognize that Indigenous homelands do not align with state lines, the lead Tribal Nation must be based in the NSRC region in the states of Maine, New Hampshire, New York, or Vermont. As stated in the RFP, project leaders and/or project settings should be on or directly related to Tribal homelands/territories or ancestral territories of the NSRC region. Research must aim to directly benefit the communities—people, plants, and animals—in the forest of the northern tier of the four states.

### **Can the project lead be from a Canadian institution?**

No, a PI cannot be from outside the US; however, project members may be from Canada or outside the US.

### **What Is Considered “Northern Forest”?**

#### **In the context of this RFP, what ecosystems can be considered part of the “Northern Forest”?**

The original boundary of the Northern Forest in the context of NSRC was the so-called “Champion Forest Lands” which had holdings throughout the northern tier of the northeastern states. This boundary has expanded to include other forest types and land holdings in the northern tier. The current approximate boundary map is posted on the NSRC web site. The essential test of applicability is whether the trees in the proposed study site are predominantly the ones you’d find in the areas of this map, but even more importantly, whether the research that is proposed would directly benefit the communities – people, plants, and animals – in the forest of the northern tier of the northeastern states. Whether the site is mountain top or valley riparian area, or natural or fragmented lands are not criteria.

### **Can a project extend beyond the northern tier of the four states, to include forests and communities within New England or Canada, as long as communities within the northern forest as defined do directly benefit?**

The general RFP states, “Participation in this RFP is open to scientists, resource managers, policy makers, and other stakeholders pursuing research relevant to forest lands in the northern tier of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Any field research proposed must be conducted in or near the boundaries of the Northern Forest.” If extending beyond the boundaries of the Northern Forest, the federal budget should focus on communities in the four state Northern Forest to the extent possible.

### **What additional Indigenous-related resources are available?**

We suggest using a web search to find specific Indigenous communities in your area and the greater Northern Forest region. In addition to Tribal Nations’ websites, you may find the following useful resources:

- The [Bureau of Indian Affairs \(BIA\)](#) partners with tribes to help them achieve their goals for self-determination while also maintaining its responsibilities under the Federal-Tribal trust and government-to-government relationships. The BIA carries out its core mission to serve 574 Federally recognized tribes.
- The [Office of Environmental Resource Management \(OERM\)](#) assists the [United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. \(USET\)](#) member Tribal Nations with a wide range of environmental concerns, such as supporting protection of human health and ecosystems, risk assessments, climate change adaptation and mitigation, providing clean and safe drinking water, cultural resource protection, traditional and conventional agriculture, and sustainable development.
- [The Intertribal Timber Council](#) is a nonprofit nation-wide consortium of Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and individuals dedicated to improving the management of natural resources of importance to Native American communities. The ITC works cooperatively with the BIA, private industry, and academia to explore issues and identify practical strategies and initiatives to promote social, economic and ecological values while protecting and utilizing forests, soil, water, and wildlife.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT) prepared [a federally mandated assessment of forestry on American Indians lands](#) in 2023. This report contains numerous findings and recommendations for tribal forestry that promote environmental stewardship while providing important economic, social, and cultural resources to tribal communities. The ITC organized the IFMAT IV.

### **I would like to connect with a Tribal leader, how might I do that?**

The [BIA's Tribal Leaders Directory](#) provides contact information for each federally recognized tribe. It is possible to search the directory by state or using their map-based directory.

### **Budgets**

USFS funds the NSRC and all budgetary requirements as stated for the general RFP are in play with IFKF funding.

### **Will pre-award spending be allowed?**

Pre-award spending will be allowed up to 90 days before project start date.

### **May I add budget lines for graduate students or undergraduate students?**

Please create budget rows for graduate student RAs and undergraduate field assistants for both salary and fringe, if needed. Assistants may be grouped together or separated; just be sure to explain your calculations in the budget narrative. Proposal reviewers should be able to see that your project proposal is adequately resourced and that proposed efforts and costs are reasonable.

### **Are there budget items not allowed?**

NSRC funds may not be used to purchase equipment (defined as \$5,000 or more per unit and a useful life of more than one year).