

Announcement and Request for Proposals for the Mass Timber University Grant Program

A. Background

The U.S. Forest Service in a cooperative partnership with the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (“Endowment”) is initiating the Mass Timber University Grant Program (“Grant Program”) to support the construction of mass timber buildings on institutions of higher education campuses across the United States. We are conducting this Grant Program to showcase the architectural and commercial viability of mass timber in building construction in order to maintain the health and resiliency of the Nation's forests, support employment opportunities in rural communities, and advance sustainability in the built environment. Using wood obtained through sustainable forestry practices in green building applications promotes a healthy environment and a strong economy. The timber industry is an important job creator and supports hundreds of local communities, many of them rural.

A thriving mass timber market has the potential to help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. After a century of suppressing forest fires to protect communities, many U.S. forests are now overly dense and susceptible to large and severe fires. Mass timber products present an opportunity for large, solid structural elements to be potentially manufactured from relatively small-diameter trees as well as other traditionally lower-value resources (such as trees that are dead or dying due to bark beetles or other insects and disease). Demand for these byproducts of sustainable forest management practices helps provide a market incentive for forest thinning and other landscape restoration efforts that reduce the risk of high-severity fire. As a construction material, mass timber is attractive to designers for its strength, affordability, aesthetics, construction efficiency, structural performance, reduced carbon footprint, and ability to work alongside other materials as a structural element.

Mass timber demonstration projects are needed throughout the United States to increase familiarity at the local permitting and approval agencies, as well as with design practitioners, developers and construction contractors about the viability of these products and their ability to help with current forest health issues.

B. Intent and Goals

The intent of this Grant Program is to inspire interest and support for mass timber products among the architectural, developer and building communities as well as the general public, by showcasing them at institutions of higher education. The funds available will support costs associated with pioneering the use of mass timber products and systems in buildings and open the door for more widespread adoption of these innovative building materials. Funds will support incremental activities that are institutional hurdles for new building projects and retrofit building projects using mass timber.

The goals of this Grant Program are to:

- Support institutions of higher education in the United States to break through barriers of related to designing and constructing a cost competitive, code compliant mass timber demonstration project;
- Showcase the viability, application, repeatability, and sustainability of mass timber construction across the country; and
- Clearly illustrate the direct link between the use of mass timber components and the health and resiliency of U.S. forests and economic development opportunities in rural communities.

C. Dates

March 19, 2019 – Announcement of Request for Proposals

May 31, 2019 – Proposal Submission Deadline

August 1, 2019 – Approximate announcement of awardees & signing of funding agreements

D. Eligible Applicants and Materials

Eligible applicants are [institutions of higher education](#) (e.g., universities, colleges, technical schools) and their design and construction partners.

Eligible materials include cross-laminated timber (CLT), nail-laminated timber (NLT), glue-laminated timber (GLT), dowel-laminated timber (DLT), mass plywood panels (MPP), and other mass timber products as approved by the competition organization on request. Mixed material (hybrid) solutions that includes mass timber components along with other structural materials are eligible.

E. Preferences

Preference will be given to proposals that:

- Turn their funded activity through this Grant Program into a case study for wide distribution.
- Have plans to construct a building within the next 18 months

F. Available Funding

The U.S. Forest Service and the Endowment plan to award up to \$1 million under this announcement. The target funding for each award is \$100,000. All awards are based on availability of funding. Awards will be made for a variety of incremental activities for new building projects and retrofit building projects using mass timber. Eligible expenses are listed below. Awardees will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Endowment.

G. Cost Sharing/Matching

Applicants must contribute an amount equal to what is received by the Grant Program. For every \$1 of funding requested from the Grant Program, applicants must provide at least \$1 in match. For example, if the requested amount is \$50,000, the applicant match must be at least \$50,000. The applicant's match must come from non-Federal sources. The match may include cash or in-kind contributions. All matching funds must be directly related to the proposed project. Please note: Applicants must submit letters of support from third-party organizations confirming the amount of cash or in-kind services to be provided, up to the minimum required match.

The match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to match provisions in Federal regulations. For information about Federal cost principles and related topics, go to the [Government Publishing Office](#) Web site. Applicants should use this [budget detail worksheet](#) as a guide to determine project costs. Additional funds can be shown as leverage, but letters of financial commitment are not required.

H. Eligible Incremental Activities and Related Costs

Following are examples of activities and costs that are eligible for funding should a project be selected.

Eligible expenses include schematic design, design development, cost estimates and/or comparisons to alternate materials and construction drawings.

- Architecture
 - Concept and design development
- Engineering
 - Incremental preliminary evaluation of possible structural solutions and building serviceability related issues.
 - Incremental design expenses related to the design of the wood structure.
 - Integration of novel solutions when detailing structural documents for tendering and construction.

- Code Review
 - Pre-application meeting expenses
 - Code consultant and peer view costs
- Cost study to compare the proposed mass timber solution to a more traditional solution
- Project Life Cycle Assessment study

Note: For any cost studies, the identified general contractor must have prior experience with mass timber projects and estimates must be attained from at least three potential mass timber suppliers.

I. Application Instructions

This announcement contains all instructions to complete an application package and includes Web links to required financial forms. Applications must include all of the following elements. All applications will be screened to ensure compliance with the administrative requirements as set forth in this Request for Proposals. There is a maximum of **5 pages** per proposal for Part 1 of the Application, not including the Cooperator Contact Information page, Letters of Support, or appendices. **Applications that do not follow the directions for submission or incomplete applications will be disqualified without appeal.**

1. Formatting requirements:
 - a. Formatted to print on 8½- by 11-inch plain paper with 1-inch margins.
 - b. 11-point font (Arial, Calibri) or larger.
 - c. Page numbers
 - d. PDF format.
 - e. Each “page” of the application is one side of a single-spaced, typed page.

2. Elements of Application: each application must include each of the following elements with clear articulation of the listed requirements:
 - a. Basic Project Information
 - b. Project Goals and Objectives
 - c. Building Project Description
 - d. Grant Budget
 - e. Project and Market Impact
 - f. Institutional Readiness
 - g. Qualifications of Team and Partners
 - h. Letters of Support
 - i. Appendices

J. Submission Date and Time

Applications must be received electronically at michael@usendowment.org by 5:00 p.m. EST on May 31, 2019. NO EXCEPTIONS. No proposals will be accepted by fax or hard copy.

K. Evaluation Criteria

Eligible projects submitting the required documents above will be evaluated on the following criteria to determine successful applicants. Approximate point values are listed to provide teams with relative weight values for the judging criteria (100 point total).

1. **Project Goals, Objectives and Budget —25 points**
 - Viability of the proposed project—based on site ownership, zoning, and parameters, proposed financing plan, and willingness of local authorities to approve this project.
 - How grant funds will be used to resolve the hurdle(s) identified at your institution.

2. **Project and Market Impact —25 points**

- Ability of the project to foster transformative change at the institution and national scale
- How the project will function as a public educational display to showcase the benefits of using mass timber for construction.

3. **Institutional Readiness—25 points**

- How prepared is the institution to be a leader in the mass timber market.
- Institutional leadership intent for a mass timber building.

4. **Qualification of Team and Partners—25 points**

- Appropriate skill set and experience for success.
- Past experience with mass timber construction.