

## **Forestry Recovery Initiative (FRI) FUND FAQ**

### **Eligibility Questions:**

#### **What are the eligibility requirements in order to apply?**

- *Your business has a significant presence in Maine (25% of employees in Maine or headquarters (HQ) in Maine).*
- *Your business is registered with [Maine Secretary of State's corporate registry](#). If you are a sole proprietor and **not** registered with the Secretary of State, you can use alternate methods:*
  - *You can upload a copy of last year's 1040 and Schedule C for your federal income tax. WE will review this and return the document to you. We will NOT store your tax information anywhere in our system.*
  - *Any state certification as a licensed harvester or transporter of wood products*
  - *Self-certification that you are an engaged proprietor of this business*
- *You conduct business involving the harvest, transportation (>50% of revenue from forestry operations), or processing of forest products utilizing Maine timber*
- *Your business was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic*
- *You can demonstrate a clear plan to utilize FRI funds to directly address the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, suffered by your business here in Maine*
- *Your company has fewer than 250 full time employees*
- *You are able & willing to comply with simple bi-annual reporting updates required by State and Federal law*

#### **What qualifies as a “negative impact of the pandemic”?**

*A company's “negative impact” can be defined in multiple ways. The easiest way is to show a revenue decline in 2020 vs. 2019 or YTD 2021 vs. the same period in 2019. Some other ways include:*

- *Supply chain disruptions that caused a reduction in production or revenue*
- *Worker unavailability*
- *Distribution disruptions*
- *Other resource limitations*

*Companies should think broadly about the damage the pandemic caused their business. That damage should be fully explained in the application.*

#### **How much funding is available and when can awardees expect funding?**

*For this state fiscal year ending in June of 2022, \$10M in funding has been allocated by the Maine State Legislature. The funds will be split between a Phase 1 and a Phase 2.*

*Phase 1 is targeted for those businesses with acute damage caused by the pandemic. These are businesses with immediate capital needs to sustain operations. Phase 2 will be a competitive grant program to help improve market opportunities for Maine timber, which has suffered serious declines due to market disruptions from the pandemic. Funding will support forward-looking projects that address new market demands, provide new sustainable products, or otherwise advance the long-term stability of the industry, helping to create and sustain jobs in rural Maine and strengthen Maine's economy.*

**How long must a business have been in existence to be eligible?**

*An eligible business needs to be able to meet the other eligibility criteria and have an approved Certificate of Formation or Articles of Incorporation dated before January 1, 2021.*

**Will companies with a significant Maine presence, but out-of-state ownership, be eligible?**

*Companies with a "significant presence" in Maine are eligible to apply - even if the company's headquarters (HQ) or state of incorporation is outside of Maine. A "significant presence" is usually defined by MTI as a company with more than 50% of its employees in the state or a short-term plan to achieve more than 50% of its employees within the state.*

**Will prior MTI awards impact eligibility?**

*This program is a stand-alone initiative and prior award(s) or declines will not impact eligibility for an FRI award. FRI funds are federal funds supplied by the state and administered by MTI.*

**Do public-private partnerships have to focus only on impact to the organization applying or can they focus on the economic impact to the community(ies) they serve?**

*The federal guidelines on eligibility indicate an organization that serves a community of businesses/industry which can demonstrate industry-wide damage from the pandemic can apply for funding. That funding will be used to support efforts/programs that mitigate the impact of the pandemic for that group of businesses/industry in an innovative manner. The public/private partner will need to provide the specific metrics that show the positive impact of the funding over time.*

**How much funding can a company request?**

*We expect that the number of applications and the amounts requested will exceed the available funding for Phase 1 of this round. An additional round with \$10M will be scheduled for later in 2022 and the eligibility and use of those funds may be different than this round. The amount requested by an applicant will be judged against the*

*quality of the plan to utilize these funds for recovery and growth and the economic impact of the investment. It will also be judged by a business panel to ensure that the amount requested is proportional to the plan outlined in the application. The maximum amount of an award will be \$200,000 although we expect that most awards will be within a range of \$25k-100k. We expect that many qualifying applications may only receive a fraction of the award they requested.*

**How much detail is needed to include in the application for the use of the FRI funding? If I have Excel spreadsheets and Word documents already created to support my plan, can they be uploaded to the MTI portal as part of my application?**

*The purpose of this funding is for recovery and growth for our forestry industry. The plan you submit with your application should provide the details of how the funds will be used to achieve those goals for your company/organization. If plans have already been created using Word or Excel, those files can be uploaded and referenced in your application. Your plan should be brief but contain the goal you expect to achieve (new hires, revenue growth, client churn rates, etc.) as we will ask you to report on those goals and progress every 6 months in a brief survey sent semi-annually.*

*Companies are asked to think broadly about steps they could take in their businesses that would cause transformative change and resiliency. If the program you envision causes real stability and an opportunity for growth of your firm, it may be a good candidate for funding from the FRI Fund.*

**What options – other than MTI – are available to receive federal funding?**

*There are many other state, regional, and municipal organizations that are also administering portions of the available federal funding. If you apply for the funds administered through MTI's FRI Fund and are not eligible, or if your award is less than you expected or need, we will connect you with other American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding options that may be a better fit for your business.*

**What is the deadline for the application?**

*The deadline for the Phase 1 applications is midnight on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. If we have questions about your application, we may reach out during the month of January or February 2022.*

**When will awards be announced and when will funds be available?**

*We expect that awards will be announced by the end of February 2022 and assuming we have the W-9 and all necessary documents signed, funds will be released in March 2022.*

**What are the reporting requirements from MTI?**

*The funds awarded from this program are funded from the federal government and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Maine has specific reporting requirements back to the federal government on a semi-annual basis on how the funds were used and the status of the projects. We anticipate a simple survey will be sent to each awardee*

*asking for the status of the project and use of the funds every 6 months. We expect the report can be completed in 5-10 minutes.*

**Will I need to sign a contract with MTI if I receive an award?**

*We expect to execute a simple agreement with each awardee to confirm that the information provided is accurate, the Form W-9 provided is accurate, and you are a going concern (an active business) that meets the eligibility requirements. We will also confirm compliance with the semi-annual reporting requirements.*

**How much support will MTI provide to prospective applicants developing their proposals?**

*We recognize there may be parts of this application that require some assistance. Each Wednesday at 11:30am, members of our staff will be available on a Zoom call to answer questions from businesses. [Click here for schedule and registration information.](#) If the question is very specific to a business, we may ask to move you into a Zoom breakout room where you can get individual assistance. Meetings will be recorded and if a question is not already in our FAQ list, we will add it as a response for the benefit of future applicants.*

**Will the application be available in different languages?**

*A static version of the application guidance document is available on the website in 3 of the most common languages used in the state of Maine (English, French Canadian, Spanish). However, the Online Application Portal will be in English and we would ask the business to fill in the application as best they can in English.*

**For economic impact, can we count total employees added even if some may not be in the state of Maine? What else should we include for economic impact?**

*As you execute the plan outlined in the application, we would expect that your business will achieve new levels of recovery, success and stability. This recovery and growth are usually reflected in revenue growth of the company over time, and either the retention of existing employee counts or growth in quality positions at the company over time. We recognize that some positions are best staffed outside of Maine. As long as the company maintains its headquarters (HQ) or a significant presence (see above FAQ) in the state, MTI will allow a company to count non-Maine based employee growth in the economic impact goals outlined in the application.*

**If I receive an award, I understand that I will need a DUNS number in order to receive my check. How do I get or find my DUNS number and is there any cost to me to get a DUNS number?**

If you don't have a DUNS number, you can get one here at no cost

<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html> or by calling this number: 1-(800)-700-2733.

- Step 1: After clicking link, under How to Register for a DUNS Number select the Visit the Dun & Bradstreet (DE&B) Website
- Step 2: Select Click Here to request for D-U-N-S Number Via the Web
- Step 3: Select United States of America from drop down menu. This is the first selection available. Click Continue.
- Step 4: Enter Business Name, Address and State. Enter Code shown to prove you are not a robot. This is NOT case sensitive, so all lower case is fine.
- Step 5: This will pull up search results, if you don't have a DUNS you will not find your business. Under Search Results select Request a New D-U-N-S Number.
- Step 6: The following page will provide a list of acceptable documents you may provide in order to register for a DUNS Number. You will need TWO of these documents. The documents you submit must match the business name and address. If you do not have two of these documents, please call customer service to see if other acceptable documents can be provided. The two documents must be stored on your computer for upload. Once you have these documents available hit Continue.
- Step 7: Select Federal Government Contractors or Grantees DUNS Number Support
- Step 8: Select Create a New DUNS Number
- Step 9: Select For Entities Within the United States
- Step 10: Select Proceed
- Step 11: Enter Company Information
- Step 12: Upload acceptable documents
- Once completed, this will create a case code showing you the submission has been accepted. If information is correct, you will receive an email typically within several days with your DUNS Number