

# ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION

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## Logging Efficiency Grant Fund Application

Alabama Forestry Commission  
Post Office Box 302550  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2550  
513 Madison Avenue  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Applications are due by \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor Entity: \_\_\_\_\_

Commission Chairman/Chief Elected Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Elected Official Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Program Overview**

Pursuant to the Rural Logging Efficiency Act of 2023, enacted by the Alabama Legislature and funded through the Alabama General Fund Budget Act of 2024 at a level of \$2 million, the Alabama Forestry Commission (the Commission) is authorized to adopt program rules and administer the Logging Efficiency Grant Fund. Eighty-five (85) percent of Program funds received by the Commission in a fiscal year from the Logging Efficiency Grant Fund within the State Treasury will be allocated for grants to maintain, repair, replace, and/or construct public rural bridges. Applications for such grants may only be made by a county commission. Rural bridge grant applications will be prioritized according to the amount of matching contributions (cash or in-kind) proposed by an applying county commission, as well as the rural economic impact of the proposed project. Emphasis will be placed on proposed projects benefitting forest products production.

Each county commission that applies will be limited to one application under this program. The maximum amount of funding to be applied for through this opportunity is \$400,000 per application; however, county commissions are encouraged to submit applications for bridge projects requiring less than the maximum funding. An application for more than one bridge is allowable if it does not exceed the grant ceiling and each bridge meets the eligibility requirements of this program. In the case of multiple structures being requested, the application should show where the several structures are needed to open up a "Point A to Point B" corridor to heavy truck traffic.

Any recipient of grant funds will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred from the implementation of the approved project or program. The Commission will accept invoices with actual expense documentation as frequently as monthly.

Grant recipients must submit quarterly reports for the duration of a project's implementation. Such reports shall describe the status of the project funded by the grant and shall include information necessary for review by the Commission.

Pending future funding allocations to the "Rural Bridge Grant" program from the State Legislature in successive budget years, no applications will be accepted from counties with grant activities from this program year's funding that have not been completed.

## **Advisory Committee**

The Commission has appointed seven (7) persons to serve on an advisory committee which will review and prioritize rural bridge grant applications. The rural bridge grant advisory committee will meet as required, and it will make recommendations to the Commission regarding which applications should receive funding, and to what extent they should receive funding. Recommendations of the committee are non-binding on the Commission.

## **Eligible Activities**

Maintaining, repairing, replacing, and/or constructing public rural bridges.

Under the guidelines of this program, projects that are considered “bridges” include bridges, culverts, and storm water piping that, when completed, allow maximum legal vehicle weights.

Construction, administration, engineering, utility relocation, rights-of-way, temporary construction easements, and similar project costs are all considered eligible expenses.

For the purposes of this application, “Rural area” means any unincorporated area within the state, or any incorporated area within the state with a population of 2,500 inhabitants or fewer, according to the most recent federal census. “Rural bridge” means a load-restricted public bridge located in a rural area that is posted to limit commercial or school bus traffic. This definition includes any new bridge or culvert constructed using Program funds, even if such crossing has no load restriction.

## **Recaptured Funds**

Recaptured funds consist of any funds returned to the State due to funded project withdrawal or cost underruns. Should funds become available, the State Forester may first notify recipients whose awards are below grant ceilings. These recipients will be allowed to submit a written response expressing their interest in receiving the recaptured or unutilized program funds. If all funds are not awarded after the first notification, the remaining recipients will be allowed to provide a written request for use of these funds for eligible activities.

If recaptured funds have not been exhausted after recipients have been notified, unawarded eligible applications may be considered.

Factors to be considered when reallocating recaptured funds include: (1) extenuating or unusual circumstances which may have necessitated the additional funding, (2) the recipients’ demonstrated ability to expend funds in a timely manner, and (3) the recipients’ ability to supply any required matching funds.

## **Application Process**

The submission deadline for Logging Efficiency Grant Fund applications will be announced during a Program Introduction Workshop. This will occur at the State Office of the Alabama Forestry Commission, 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery. Applicants for maintaining, repairing, replacing, and constructing public rural bridges funding are limited by legislation to Alabama county commissions.

## **Grant Application Requirements**

**1.** Requests for grants from the Program shall be submitted to the Commission in a format specified by the Commission. Applicants must provide applications in a narrative format that clearly state relevant information pertaining to the Funding, Impact, and Technical Application of the proposed projects.

**2.** Applications for grants from the Program must be submitted to the Commission no later than the deadlines established and published by the Commission to be considered for funding.

**3.** All applications must include the following information:

**A.** A cover letter addressed to the State Forester from the applicant county's Chief Elected Official that clearly and unambiguously states the following information:

1. The dollar amount of the county's request for Logging Efficiency Grant funds from the Commission.
2. Confirmation that the bridge included in the scope of work is on a public road, has deeded or prescriptive right-of-way, and is maintained by the applicant county commission.
3. Assurance that no work has begun or will begin prior to the funding award.
4. Commitment of all matching funds necessary to complete the project as proposed.
5. Assurance of the county's ability to maintain the subject improvements after project completion.
6. Certification that if funded, at a minimum, the recipient agrees to abide by all statutes and regulations pertaining to the Rural Logging Efficiency Grants Program, as well as any other requirements imposed by state law, policies, or procedures.

**B.** Identification of federal, local, and other funding sources to be used as matching funds to complete the proposed project.

**C.** A narrative demonstration of how the proposed maintenance, repair, replacement, or construction of this public rural bridge will materially improve transportation access to forest products. Such demonstration may include letters or reports from knowledgeable and relevant professionals (i.e. registered foresters or industry representatives).

**D.** A summary of the engineering and construction aspects of the proposed project, including a detailed preliminary estimate of total project cost, along with the time required for its completion, which should not exceed 24 months from the date the grant agreement is properly executed by all parties. If extenuating circumstances require more than 24 months for completion, a written request for such extension shall be

submitted to the Commission for consideration and will be followed by a written response indicating an approval or disapproval of the request.

**E.** Identification of any project phases that could adversely impact the project's progression. Examples include environmental or cultural resource concerns, right-of-way, or temporary/construction easements, and/or utility relocations, etc. which could cause the project timeline to extend past 24 months.

**F.** Any supporting photographs, detailed maps, drawings, or plans that will lend support to the project application.

### **Subrogation of Funds**

Under no circumstances will funding be awarded for the following:

1. Funds to supplant funding already in place to conduct the work being described in the application.
2. Funds for projects already under way on or before the date of executed Agreement between the Commission and the Recipient.
3. Projects for which other funding must be obtained after the award of funds requested in this application.

### **Monitoring**

Each awarded project will be monitored at least once during the duration of the project.

### **Amendments**

Amendments to the approved grant will be required in the following circumstances:

1. Proposed post-award material change(s) to the scope of the bridge activity(ies) funded. Examples include but are not limited to, adding, or deleting bridge improvement activities, geographic relocation of any activities, increases or decreases in amounts or sizes of critical construction items, etc.
2. A proposed change in costs more than 10 percent (increase or decrease) of the total project costs.
3. A proposed change in costs more than 10 percent (increase or decrease) to any budgeted line item or combination of line items.

The amendment process requires a written request to the State Forester outlining the necessity of the proposed changes and including an explanation of the circumstances, beyond the control of the county, which have necessitated the request. The county will

receive written correspondence from the State Forester approving or disapproving the request.

Unless notified in writing by the State Forester that additional funding has become available and has been awarded, amendments that increase the overall cost of the project will be the county's financial responsibility.

### **Application Template**

Applications should be submitted to the Alabama Forestry Commission and addressed to the attention of the State Forester.

They can be delivered to the State Office during normal business hours (8:00am – 5:00pm M-F, except state holidays). The physical address is 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.

If submitting by UPS or FedEx, the physical address should be used.

If submitting by the USPS, the following address should be used:  
Post Office Box 302550, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2550

Applications should be assembled and submitted in the following order:

**1.** Cover letter from Chief Elected Official containing each item requested under “Grant Application Requirements” listed in this document above.

**2.** Narrative discussing Project Impact:

In 500 words or less, demonstrate how the proposed maintenance, repair, replacement, or construction of the public rural bridge will materially improve transportation access to forest products. This documentation should provide assurance that upon completion, no other bridge, road, or other condition will prevent the free flow of forest products to or from local landowner properties and forest industries.

**3.** Supporting letters/reports:

Provide up to four letters of support or reports from relevant professionals (such as Registered Foresters and forest industry representatives) who have a keen awareness of area landowners and industries who suffer economic losses due the extra time and distance required to transport timber to markets because of an inadequate or non-existent bridge.

#### 4. Cost Estimate

In a table format such as the example below, identify all federal, state, local and other funding sources to be used to complete the proposed project. To increase the accuracy of the cost estimate, please be advised that if funded, administrative costs must be documented by employee, salary and fringes, and time spent on the project and if applicable, force account construction costs must be documented by employee, salary and fringes, FEMA rates for equipment used and hours on the project.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Logging Efficiency Grant Funds</b>	<b>Other Matching Funds (List all sources and amounts)</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
Construction			
Engineering			
Administration			
Other (please detail)			

Actual expenses should remain within 10% of budget estimate.

**5.** In narrative form, identify any project phases that could adversely impact the project's progression. Examples include environmental or cultural resource concerns, right-of-way, or temporary/construction easements, and/or utility relocations.

#### **6.** Supporting Documentation:

Provide relevant documentation including photographs, maps, drawings, plans, census data and any other documentation which further demonstrate the need for the proposed project, benefits in transportation efficiencies to the forest industry, rural nature of the bridge location, 2020 census information clearly showing a population of 2,500 or less for incorporated areas, and any ancillary benefits of the project. For the purposes of Commission verification that location is in a qualifying rural area, provide latitude and longitude coordinates.

\*Please direct any questions to AFC's Al Jones at **334-451-8628**.