



2025 SENATE BILL 158

March 27, 2025 - Introduced by Senators QUINN, STAFSHOLT, JAMES, MARKLEIN and TOMCZYK, cosponsored by Representatives GREEN, ARMSTRONG, BEHNKE, CALLAHAN, HYSELL, B. JACOBSON, KRUG, MIRESE, MURSAU, PALMERI, PIWOWARCZYK, STROUD, SUMMERFIELD, SWEARINGEN, TITTL, TUCKER, VANDERMEER and WICHGERS. Referred to Committee on Insurance, Housing, Rural Issues and Forestry.

- 1 **AN ACT** *to renumber and amend* 28.11 (5m) (a); *to create* 28.11 (5m) (ad) 1. of
2 the statutes; **relating to:** county forest administration grant eligibility.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill makes a change, retroactive to January 1, 2025, to eligibility for a county forest administration grant.

Current law authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to make grants to counties that have lands designated as county forest to fund 50 percent of the salary and fringe benefits of a professional forester in the position of county forest administrator or assistant county forest administrator (county forest administration grant program). Under the bill, the grants may be used to fund 50 percent of the salary and fringe benefits of a county forest administrator. The bill defines “county forest administrator” as a person, excluding a person employed by the department, who is employed to manage a county forest program and who has any of the following qualifications:

1. A bachelor’s or higher degree in forestry from a school of forestry with a curriculum accredited by the Society of American Foresters or an equivalent degree, as determined by the chief state forester.
2. A bachelor’s or higher degree in natural resources, conservation, or wildlife and three or more years of experience managing a county forest program.

SENATE BILL 158**SECTION 1**

3. An associate degree in forestry and three or more years of experience managing a county forest program.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 28.11 (5m) (a) of the statutes is renumbered 28.11 (5m) (a) 2. and
2 amended to read:

3 28.11 **(5m)** (a) 2. The department may make grants, from the appropriation
4 under s. 20.370 (5) (bw), to counties having lands entered under sub. (4) to fund all
5 of the following for one ~~professional forester in the position of~~ county forest
6 administrator ~~or assistant county forest administrator~~:

7 a. Up to 50 percent of the ~~forester's~~ county forest administrator's salary.

8 b. Up to 50 percent of the ~~forester's~~ county forest administrator's fringe
9 benefits, except that the fringe benefits may not exceed 40 percent of the ~~forester's~~
10 county forest administrator's salary.

11 **SECTION 2.** 28.11 (5m) (a) 1. of the statutes is created to read:

12 28.11 **(5m)** (a) 1. In this paragraph, "county forest administrator" means an
13 individual who is employed to manage a county forest program under s. 28.10 and
14 this section and who has any of the following qualifications, except that it does not
15 include an individual who is employed by the department:

16 a. A bachelor's or higher degree in forestry from a school of forestry with a
17 curriculum accredited by the Society of American Foresters or an equivalent
18 degree, as determined by the chief state forester.

19 b. A bachelor's or higher degree in natural resources, conservation, or wildlife

SENATE BILL 158**SECTION 2**

1 and 3 or more years of experience managing a county forest program under s. 28.10
2 and this section.

3 c. An associate degree in forestry and 3 or more years of experience managing
4 a county forest program under s. 28.10 and this section.

5 **SECTION 3. Initial applicability.**

6 (1) This act first applies to an application for a grant under s. 28.11 (5m) (a) 2.
7 submitted on the effective date of this subsection.

8 **SECTION 4. Effective date.**

9 (1) This act takes effect retroactive to January 1, 2025.

10 (END)