



USDA Forest Service

National Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program

Request for Proposals: National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council Ten Year Action Plan

Reply Due: **September 13, 2024**

<https://nucfac-ten-year-action-plan-grant.urbanandcommunityforests.org>

INTRODUCTION:

Congress established the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (Council) to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on issues related to the nations urban and community forests and related natural resources. The Council is charged by law ([P.L. 95-313 Section 9 as amended through PL 110-246, \[16 U.S.C. 2105\]\(g\)\(1\)\(A\)](#)) with developing a ten year action plan; providing annual accomplishments for the action plan and assisting the U.S. Forest Service in establishing categories and recommendations for award to the agency's competitive National Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Cost-Share Grant Program .

The current [National Ten Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan \(2016-2026\)](#) (Action Plan) will expire at the end of 2026. To prepare for the next ten-year action plan, the Forest Service is requesting proposals from qualified organizations/entities to facilitate, coordinate, and manage a collaborative and comprehensive process for the development of the next ten year Action Plan.

Funding for a cooperative agreement will be provided through the U.S. Forest Service's Fiscal Year 2024 Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program.

DEFINITIONS:

Urban and Community Forestry: The art, science, and technology of managing trees, forests, and natural systems on public lands in and around cities, suburbs, and towns for the health and well-being of all people.

Green Infrastructure: Green infrastructure is strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations.

Underserved Communities: Underserved Communities are communities that do not receive equitable financial and technical assistance as other communities might, in maximizing the benefits from the conservation and management of their natural resources. These communities may be overburdened by being marginalized by society, overburdened by pollution, underserved by infrastructure and other basic services. These burdens are related to climate change, environment, health, outdated planning practices /policies, and equitable access to economic opportunities. In this context we consider underserved as low income, underrepresented racial / ethnic minorities; Federally Recognized Tribes, including Alaska Native Villages; people with disabilities and the elderly.

Justice40 Initiative: The Justice40 Initiative is a government effort to deliver at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities.

Nontraditional: Organizations, agencies, businesses not traditionally involved in urban and community forestry.

GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Urban and Community Forestry Program Requirements:

Please carefully read all instructions.

The Action Plan must align with the Urban and Community Forestry program authorities designated by Congress in the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act, law [\(P.L. 95-313 Section 9 as amended through PL 110- 246\)\(PDF, pp.19-24\)](#) and the annual criteria set forth by the Council.

Eligible Applicants: Any U.S. non-Federal organization operating within the United States or its territories, may apply for the grant. While collaboration with Federal agencies is encouraged, a Federal agency **may not** receive Federal funding or support. Federally recognized Tribal Organizations are eligible.

The Forest Service will address any conflicts of interest. Individuals are not eligible.

Matching Requirements: There is no matching requirement for this request.

Award and Reporting: The Forest Service will notify the grant recipient of their award and when they may proceed. Financial progress reports (SF 425) are to be submitted quarterly to the designated Forest Service financial office. Written progress reports are to be submitted bi-annually to the Forest Service Urban Forestry Program Specialist for verification and approval. Awardee can expect a small percentage of the awarded funds to be withheld towards the end of the grant period, based on the amount of work to be completed. Upon completion and approval of final reports and obligations, the final amount will be released.

Grant Proposal Writing Assistance: There are various internet sites that provide valuable grant writing tips and guidance for developing competitive grant proposals. Grants.gov provides grant proposal writing assistance. All entities applying for grants **must register with The System for Award Management (SAM.gov)** All Federal assistance programs are listed in SAM including the Urban and Community Forestry Program number 10.675.

Acknowledgement of the U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program

Grantees will be required to acknowledge the Forest Service and the National Urban and Community Advisory Council in any written, electronic, or verbal, documents, websites, publications, emails, video, photos, power points, webinars etc. that the Federal grant dollars supported. Written statements can be used such as:

“This project is funded in full or in part by the U.S. Forest Service National Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program as recommended by the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council.”
Use of the USDA and/or the US Forest Service logo requires review and approval of its use and placement on any media format.

The Forest Service shall be notified, thirty days prior to any information being presented to the public or peers.

The final report and supporting documentation will be the property of the U.S. Forest Service’s Urban and Community Program.

Inquiries: All program questions should be directed to Nancy Stremple, Council’s Executive Staff, at (202) 205-7829 or email: nstremple@fs.fed.us from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Eastern).

PROPOSAL REQUEST:

Coordinate, facilitate, and manage a collaborative and comprehensive process for the development of the next National Urban and Community Forestry Ten Year Action Plan (2027-2037). This includes publishing and rollout assistance.

The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council’s authorizing legislation requires the Council to prepare a National Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan every ten years. The current Action Plan, 2016-2026, is to be updated **by January 30, 2026**, for the Council to meet its mandate.

The Forest Service is seeking proposals from qualified organizations/entities to conduct a current assessment, and review and identify emerging issues of the nation’s urban forest resources and the urban and community forestry programs and activities conducted by Federal, Tribal, and State agencies, nonprofit organizations, community and civic organizations and other interested parties across the country.

Funds are to support the development of a National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council’s Ten-Year Action Plan, 2027-2037 as mandated by Congress. The award will be based on the availability of funding, which may be subject to change. The maximum award amount may not exceed \$300,000.

Proposals will be expected to address the following key elements, through implementation of the scope and criteria below. This will also include incorporating the Council’s comments and recommendations.

Key Elements:

- 1) Work with the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council and the Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry staff throughout the process for input and guidance.
- 2) Assess the current Action Plan’s accomplishments, gaps, and items to carry over into the next Action Plan.
- 3) Summarize the status of urban forest resources in the United States. This is to include the human dimension of urban forestry as well as the urban natural resources.
- 4) A review of urban and community forestry related programs and activities in the United States, including education and technical assistance activities conducted by:
 - the Department of Agriculture, and other Federal agencies,
 - the State forestry organizations,
 - private industry,
 - nonprofit organizations, community and civic organizations
 - Indian Nation and Indigenous communities, and
 - interested others.
- 5) Facilitate and integrate applicable public engagement recommendations for improving the status of the Nation’s urban and community forest resources, including education and technical assistance and modifications required in existing programs and policies of relevant Federal agencies.
- 6) A review of the urban and community forestry research, documents including-
 - a) a review of all past five years of research and ongoing research associated with urban and community forests, arboricultural practices, urban forest management, work with disadvantaged communities, and the economic, social, and psychological benefits of trees and forest cover in

urban and community environments being conducted by the Forest Service, other Federal agencies, and associated land grant colleges and universities.

- b) recommendations for new and expanded research efforts directed to and by the Forest Service Research, other Federal agencies, and associated land grant colleges and universities; around urban and community forestry concerns identified by this Action Plan; and
- c) a summary of research priorities and an estimate of the funds needed to implement such research, on an annual basis, by the Forest Service Research, other Federal agencies, and associated land grant colleges and universities; for the next ten years.

- 7) An estimate of the financial and technical resources needed to implement the National Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan and the Urban and Community Forestry Program for the succeeding 10 fiscal years.

Scope and Evaluation:

Applicants should be familiar with urban and community forestry and green infrastructure to work with the Forest Service, Council, and the urban forestry community of practice in developing the ten-year action plan. Applicants should consider the proposal as a multi-year project. The project is to be completed by **January 30, 2026**.

Proposals will be evaluated and ranked based on their ability to:

- 1) Produce a thorough ten-year action plan that addresses the key elements of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act. Demonstrate creative / innovative strategies for an on-going assessment, (including a five-year benchmark report), review, summary and recommendations that provide a thorough analysis of the Urban and Community Forestry field of practice, including, but not limited to: Federal, State, local, university, non-profit, and private programs and organizations.
- 2) Identify / include creative and innovative strategies to report the accomplishments of the Action Plan.
- 3) Develop a timeline driven strategy to meet the goals of the plan over the next ten years.
- 4) Collaborate with the U.S. Forest Service, Council and the urban and community forestry community of practice in developing approaches to complete the key elements listed above from the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act
- 5) Ability to publish a quality report that is 508 compliant, in Spanish, or electronic ability to be translated into other languages.

The following skill sets are desired in applicants submitting proposals:

- 1) Proven expertise in project management, communication, information collection, assessment, gap analysis, synthesis, writing, review, presentation of results and providing recommendations toward national program direction.
- 2) An understanding of past, present and future challenges and opportunities in the arena of urban natural resources, community, green infrastructure, and urban forestry.
- 3) Expertise in project planning that produces timeline driven strategies for overall project success.

Proposals are to follow the on-line outline criteria on the application website. If one needs to submit a hardcopy proposal an outline is provided below. Proposals that do not include all of the requested information will not score well in the evaluation process.

A review panel will evaluate each proposal and forward their recommendations to the Forest Service.

Online outline:

Proposal Cover Sheet and Abstract:

Fill out the requested cover sheet and abstract. The proposal cover sheet will provide the Forest Service and reviewers an overview of the applicant, their funding request, potential partners and a summary of their proposal. The abstract is not to exceed 200 words, summarizing the proposal.

1. Project Description (20 points)

Describe what you are going to do and how well the proposed approach will capture the proposal request criteria noted above. Specifically address the following:

- a. Methodology for addressing key elements required in developing the 10-Year Action Plan - This includes but is not limited to: an assessment of the current situation and a gap analysis, the clarity of the proposal and effectiveness and efficiency of the project's methodology.

- b. Strategies and timeline to describe the steps and benchmarks in the project. Describe the logical steps that will be performed to reach the desired goal(s).
- c. Proposed project outcomes- Indicate how each step achieves the desired outcome and goals of the project.
- d. Describe the steps to develop the final report and publish the results.
- e. Identify / include creative and innovative strategies to report the accomplishments of the Action Plan.

2. Experience/Personnel/Adequacy of Resources (10 points)

Describe the experience and training in the fields relating to the project and any other qualifications that pertain to the quality of the product. Provide past experience with similar projects. Are there adequate resources (e.g., personnel, facilities, equipment, supplies, and time) available to conduct the project? This proposal request is to include, as applicable, letters of partnership that describe the collaborating partner's role in the project and contact information. (Place letters in the appendix). Include in your descriptions, proven expertise in: Subject matter, project management, information collection, assessment, gap analysis, synthesis, writing, review, presentation of results and project recommendations.

3. Collaboration (10 points)

Applicants are to specifically address how the project will be implemented in collaboration with other entities. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with partners (Federal, Tribal, State, local, non-profit, universities, for-profit,) organizations, agencies or institutions, or other key target audiences.

4. Timeline (5 Points)

Applicants are to outline their estimated timeline.

5. Budget Justification (15 points)

Examples of the financial forms are provided below after the template evaluation criteria. In addition to the Federal Financial Forms SF 424, 424A and 424B a detailed budget narrative table that compliments the narrative should contain itemized details of the line items. The budget line items should coincide with the work elements provided in the narrative plan of work and show how they align under each SF424A cost header. The detailed budget and budget justification should provide sufficient details (e.g., personnel, equipment, consultants, supplies, administration, partnership contributions) to reflect costs needed to complete activities identified in the work plan.

6. Product (25 points)

Provide a detailed description of the deliverable electronic and written published report. Identify any additional products and identify the recipients/stake holders. How will the product or information be disseminated beyond the basic urban forestry or Forest Service network? How many will be produced? Please describe how you will gain awareness of these (or other) resources you make available from your project.

7. National Distribution/Technology Transfer of Your Findings (5 Points)

Provide a comprehensive roll-out plan to present and distribute the results to those who will benefit most from the findings. Does the distribution plan of your findings reach the target audiences?

8. Project Evaluation (10 points)

All proposals are to include a projected evaluation of their work. If successful estimate what that would the results look like? What could be potential barriers? Towards the end of the project provide any recommended changes. What metrics will be used to measure the project's success? Measures should be specific, measurable, and tractable over the period of the grant and any identified period after the project has been completed. Proposals are to include time and funding needed to complete the evaluation. Results can be included in the semi-annual performance reports. A final evaluation report is to be submitted to the Council's executive staff.

Federal Financial Application Forms: (Place in appendix)

These forms are available on the online application website under the tab for forms. These forms can be downloaded. Please use the downloadable SF 424, Core Form, and Attachments SF424A: Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs, and SF 424B: Assurances –Non-Construction Programs.

Be sure that costs are reasonable in relationship to the project’s objective and scope. See examples of the SF 424A budget form, Example 1, and narrative budget table, Example 2 below to assist in filling out these forms. Please confirm that the math is accurate before submitting the proposal.

If applicable, include a copy of the negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, if indirect costs are included in the budget or a copy of the submitted application to the cognizant or primary funding federal agency. NOTE REGARDING INDIRECT COSTS- Although indirect costs are allowable in Federal Financial Assistance Grants, the Council prefers that indirect costs are shared.

The Request for Proposals will also be advertised on www.grants.gov. (Search: Opportunity: **USDA-FS-UCF-02-2024**, or CFDA, 10.675, Agency Forest Service). A link will be provided to take applicants to the on-line website to apply. Or Applicants can go directly to the website at: <https://nucfac-ten-year-action-plan-grant.urbandcommunityforests.org>

All proposal applications are submitted on the online application website. If applicants have any difficulties applying or have questions about the application process, they may contact Nancy Stremple, executive staff

Nancy Stremple, Executive Staff,
National Urban and Community Forestry
Advisory Council, (NUCFAC)
U.S. Forest Service, State Private & Tribal Forestry
201 14th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20250
Email: nancy.stremple@usda.gov

All electronic applicants will need to be registered with www.sam.gov prior to the award of the selected proposal. If one’s organization is already registered in grants.gov, they do not need to register again. Please note the registration process can take up to 2-3 weeks depending on what information one may need to collect.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Executive Staff in developing their proposal. The staff will be able to provide assistance with a proposal that meets program authorities, and national application.

Submittals in any other format other than the online format or Hardcopy Template below will not be accepted.

Example 1: SF 424A

Example of SF 424A - Example 1

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

OMB Approval No. 0348-0044

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY						
Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. National Urban and Community Forestry Program	10.675	\$	\$	\$ 75,000.00	\$	\$ 75,000.00
2.						
3.						
4.						
5. Totals		\$	\$	\$ 75,000.00	\$	\$ 75,000.00
SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES						
6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		
a. Personnel	\$ 25,000.	\$	\$	\$	\$ 25,000.	
b. Fringe Benefits	2,000.				2,000.	
c. Travel	5,000.				5,000.	
d. Equipment						
e. Supplies	3,000.				3,000.	
f. Contractual	15,000.				15,000.	
g. Construction	0	0			0	
h. Other	10,000.				10,000.	
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)					0	
j. Indirect Charges						
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i-6j)	\$ 75,000.	\$	\$	\$	\$ 75,000.	
7. Program Income	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$	\$	\$	

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Standard Form 424A (Rev. 7-97)
Prescribed by OMB Circular A-102

SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES					
(a) Grant Program	(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e) TOTALS	
8. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program	\$ 0.0	\$	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	
9.					
10.					
11.					
12. TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)	\$	\$	\$	\$	
SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS					
	Total for 1st Year	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
13. Federal	\$ 75,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 5,000
14. Non-Federal					
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT					
(a) Grant Program	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (Years)				
	(b) First	(c) Second	(d) Third	(e) Fourth	
16.	\$	\$	\$	\$	
17.					
18.					
19.					
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16-19)	\$	\$	\$	\$	
SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION					
21. Direct Charges: 75,000.		22. Indirect Charges: 0			
23. Remarks: See appendix for negotiated indirect cost rate. Equipment provided by Partners Society of Municipal Arborists. Other Covers Website design, postings, printing costs and					

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Standard Form 424A (Rev. 7-97)

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Example 2: Suggested Budget Narrative Table

NOTE: If one is unsure if the item, they are proposing is eligible, please contact the executive staff, Nancy Stremple.

This Narrative Budget Table should be cited in the narrative when the applicant is discussing the work to be performed and the cost to execute the specific work activity.

Applicant: ABC University

Project: XYZ

	Federal Funds (requested)	Non-federal Match Cash / In-kind		Total	Source of Matching Funds
Personnel*	8,200	4,200		12,400	ABC University.
Brochure layout	1,000	800	200	2,000	XYZ Design
Printing costs**	9,000	3,000		12,000	EZ Printing Co.
Distribution costs***	1,800	5,000		6,800	Green Foundation and local volunteers
Travel to meetings^	2,400	3,000		5,400	ABC University
Sub Total		6,600		6,600	
Total Cost:	22,400	Total Match = \$22,800		\$45,200	

*Personnel: 1. 300 hours @ \$14 per hour = \$4,200
 2. 100 hours @ \$10 per hour = \$1,000
 3. 500 hours @ \$ 6 per hour = \$3000

**Printing: 20,000 copies, 8-pages each, 4 colors

***Distribution: copies will be sent to federal and state urban forestry coordinators and will be available on request to all callers for at least one year from date of completion.

^ Travel for 2 people to present at two conferences.

Make sure a break-down of hours is listed

Application Deadlines:

Proposals must be completed and submitted on:

<https://nucfac-ten-year-action-plan-grant.urbanandcommunityforests.org>. The on-line application website will be available starting August 1, 2024

or Courier hard copies received by 5:00 PM Eastern, **September 13, 2024**. The U.S. Forest Service typically will award the successful proposal as Federal Financial Assistance Cooperative Agreement no later than September 30, 2024.

NOTE: Successful applicants will receive formal notice of their grant award from the Forest Service grant official. Once selected the awardee will complete a pre-award package of the following forms and any additional clarification requests.

- Certification forms
 - AD-1047 - Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension
 - AD-1048 – Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion- Lower Tier Covered Transactions.
 - AD-1049 – Certificate Regarding Drug Free Workplace Requirements Alternative
 - AD-3030 – Tax Delinquency
 - FS-1500-22 – Financial Capability Questionnaire, or
 - FS-1500-22A – Financial Capability Questionnaire
 - FS 1500-35 Lobbying
 - Once awarded a FS1700-0006A Civil Rights Questionnaire for Federally Assisted Programs will be performed.

Consequently, the grantee may not begin their project prior to official fully signed grant award notification.

Hardcopy applicants will be required to utilize a courier service to send their application to Nancy Stremple. Hardcopy applications should be submitted on white 8.5” x 11” paper. Please do not enclose proposals in folders or binders (staple in the top, left hand corner of each copy) and do not include unsolicited material as it will be removed and destroyed.

To apply by hardcopy, please use a courier service to send one hard copy and a copy on a thumb drive to:

Nancy Stremple,
Executive Staff to the NUCFAC
USDA Forest Service
201 14th Street SW
Sidney Yates Building 3SC-01B
Washington, DC 20024

****Note: To ensure delivery, include both the 3SC-01B number and the street address when addressing your package for shipment.***

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PROCEDURE CHECK LIST

- Have you completed your SAM's registration or renewal? (As Applicable)
- The Cover Application Form
- Did you complete your Abstract? - (limit 200 words) summarizing the proposal, explaining what you plan to do, being clear about the challenge, general methods, expected outcomes, partners (with letters documenting participation and support), post-project information, technology transfer, and approximate cost.
- The narrative template is not to exceed 10 pages.
- **Is your proposal template:**
 - Filled out correctly
 - Does your budget reflect the correct totals? Does the SF424a and budget narrative align?

(HARDCOPY SUBMISSIONS ONLY)

- Filled out in order as shown?
- In Times New Roman font?
- In 12-point pitch?
- In a format with empty 1-inch margins on the top and bottom of the document and in the left and right margins?
- Have you formatted your narrative to match the numbered Evaluation Criteria? Have you addressed all the criteria in your narrative and labeled each selection criteria accordingly?
- Does your budget reflect the correct totals?
- Federal financial forms
SF 424 Core Form, Attachments SF 424A Budget Information Non Construction and, SF 424B, Assurances, and Non Construction and certification forms
- Did you include your **SAMs number on your SF 424?**
- Budget Narrative Table, that specifically breaks down funds being requested. Show other sources of funding, hourly rates for those working on project, supplies, contracts and their rates, travel, indirect cost rate.
- If applicable, partnering organization letters of those partners who will be assisting with the implementation and national delivery of the proposal findings. Specifically state their role in the project proposal. The narrative is to specifically note the roles and responsibilities of the partners.
- Please do not attach unsolicited documentation to your proposal as it will be removed and destroyed.
- If applicable, did you include a copy of your indirect cost rate?
- If, hard copy, did you staple each copy of your pre-proposal in the top, left-hand corner? **Do not enclose your Pre-proposal in any bindings or folders.**
- If hardcopy, did you include 1 copy with a copy on a USB drive of your proposal?
- Have you arranged for the proper delivery service to ensure that your pre-proposal will be received? (Not postmarked) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on **September 13, 2024.**

HARD COPY ONLY PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Forest Service use only

Control Number: _____

COVER SHEET

**U.S. Forest Service
National Urban and Community Forestry
Assistance Program**

Proposals are due by September 13, 2024, 5:00 PM Eastern

INNOVATION GRANT CATEGORY:

Develop the National Urban and Community Forestry Ten Year Action Plan

PROJECT CONTACT NAME, ORGANIZATION, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, FAX NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS:

FUNDING REQUEST _____

REQUESTED TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$ _____

LIST PROJECT PARTNERS: Project Partner letters are to describe their role and contribution with the project.
[Provide: NAME, ADDRESS Phone Number and Email:]

ABSTRACT: Summarize the proposed project in 200 words or less.

Proposal Narrative Template: *(The Innovation proposal is not to be more than 10 single spaced pages.)*
Please make sure each page is numbered.

- 1. Project Description (20 points):**
- 2. Experience/Personnel/Adequacy of Resources (10 points):**
- 3. Collaboration (10 points):**
- 4. Timeline (5 Points):**
- 5. Budget Justification (15 points):**
- 6. Product (25 points):**
- 7. National Distribution/Technology Transfer of Your Findings (5 Points):**
- 8. Project Evaluation (10 points):**

Appendix: The appendix is not part of the 10 pages.
Federal Financial Application Forms: (Place in appendix)