

# USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry

## 2023 Challenge Cost Share Grant Program

### Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Proposals are to be received by Tuesday **August 15, 2023, 5:00 PM Eastern.**

**INTRODUCTION** Urban forests are trees for people, where they live, work, and play, which includes natural resources on public and private property that contribute to quality of life, supports community development, **green infrastructure**, and provide a wealth of benefits to cities and towns. The **USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry (U&CF) Program** is the only dedicated urban forest program in the federal government. It is a technical, financial, and educational assistance program that delivers nature-based solutions to more than 84 percent of Americans. The program works in partnership with State and local forestry agencies, non-profit and tribal organizations, and institutions of higher education to restore, sustain, and manage more than 140 million acres of urban and community forest lands for the benefit of communities in the United States. Healthy urban & community forests and green infrastructure are not only critical to all our nation's forests, but research and studies have also shown that our urban and community forests are essential to the economic, environmental, physical, and mental well-being of our citizens. Through this Notice of Funding Opportunity, the Forest Service is seeking to address the [National Ten Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan \(2016-2026\)](#), (Action Plan) - **Goal 5 Improve Urban and Community Forest Management, Maintenance and Stewardship**

According to the [National Ten Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan \(2016-2026\)](#), (Action Plan) over the last decade the urban and community forest field has produced a significant amount of innovative tools, resources, programs and activities. These new technologies have provided urban foresters with a more accurate depiction of geospatial urban canopy cover data needed to inform management decisions. Urban and Community Stewardship has also made progress. Sixty (60%) percent of cities are utilizing new and emerging tools to assist management, maintenance, and stewardship practices.

Despite significant progress developing tools and strategies to better maintain the urban and community forest, work still remains to provide resources to strengthen urban forest management and maintenance practices over the next ten years. Forty two (42%) percent of states report a need to expand the use of technology, improve technical training, and provide more support in disciplines related to urban and community forestry management. The most frequently reported challenge was the lack of data or management plans.

The Action Plan's [National Action Plan's Five-Year Benchmark Accomplishment Report](#) recommends *expanding, refining, and customize technology tools for different regions. The report further recommends a need to prioritize robust technology that provides accessible data for a range of foresters, decision-makers, and community members.* This would include pairing

the different types of best management practices and technology with the size and capacity that a community can utilize.

With the increased need for tree planting to mitigate extreme heat in communities with low tree canopy, it is also critical to improve management and maintenance practices of existing urban and community forests to sustain urban tree canopy benefits that buffer the adverse impacts of climate change.

### **CATEGORY: Goal 5 Improve Urban and Community Forest Management, Maintenance and Stewardship**

The Forest Service is seeking an inventory, compilation, and assessment of existing hard copy and electronic urban and community forest management and maintenance best practices and case studies. The applicant should assess the information and determine which existing or new best practices are most cost effective and replicable that are scalable from small communities to large metropolitan areas in various geographical areas of the country and territories. The end result should be a comprehensive program/software that compiles existing and emerging technology and best management and maintenance practices into one comprehensive and adaptable application. Scaling and applicability of the application should be successfully piloted in small, medium, and large communities, including Tribal communities, island territories, and under-resourced/disadvantaged communities.

Successful urban forest management programs at all community scales should have access to tools and resources that include but are not limited to:

- A comprehensive national inventory and assessment of existing hard copy and electronic urban forestry best maintenance/monitoring/management practices, case studies, and informative cost-effective strategies for urban forest management and assessment such as, but not limited to: Geospatial tree inventories, forest canopy cover mapping and benefit analysis, planting space analysis, urban heat Island mapping, optimal species diversity and distribution,
- An urban tree maintenance and stewardship plan (i.e., optimal pruning cycle frequency, tree removal and reforestation operations efficiencies, pest, and disease management decision matrices, etc.).
- Technical assistance resources (manuals, videos, methods/models) that support arboriculture/urban forestry workforce development training, and job creation for disadvantaged community members.
- Tools and technical assistance support for scaling of urban forest management and maintenance methodologies and implementation strategies for different community sizes, capacity, and geographical areas across the country and territories.
- Identify pilot communities that can test and utilize these management protocols.

- Awareness of volunteer-based citizen science, community assisted maintenance models (i.e., tree stewards, neighborhood/block tree tenders, etc.) and continuing education resources that support and extend community forestry stewardship capacity.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Registration in System for Award Management (SAM):** Please note DUNs numbers no longer are used. All information has been transferred to the required SAMs System. Please allow at least two (2) weeks to apply or renew this registration. All prospective awardees **must be registered** in SAM <https://sam.gov/content/home> prior to award.
- Proposals must meet the **Urban and Community Forestry Program Authorities** as designated by Congress in the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act, (Section 9 PDF, pp. 19-24) [State & Private Cooperative Forestry Handbook of Programs](#) and identity with Goal 5 of the [National Ten Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan \(2016-2026\)](#).
- **Partnership collaboration is required:** Two or more related partners/partner organizations must be involved in these proposals and include formal letters of partnership explaining their role in the implementation of the proposal. They may also include letters of support from other key stakeholders, as applicable.
- **Available Funding:** Aligns with the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260), the U.S. Forest Service may provide approximately \$500,000 (Based on availability of funding, the quality of applications received, agency priorities, and other applicable considerations.)
- **Awards** will be made as grants.
- **Time Frame:** Grants or Agreements are to be **completed within 2-3 years**.
- **The grant review** and award process may take up to 2 months.
- **Eligible Applicants:** Non-Profits, educational institutions of higher learning, any U.S. federally recognized Tribal Organization that is operating within the United States or its territories, and state organizations representing multi-state or national proposals are eligible. Local governments may apply if their proposal includes other local governments/eligible entities around the country that can implement their process and demonstrate national application within the grant period. Private entities are not eligible but may be partners in the project.

- **Matching Requirements:** All grant funds are to be matched at least equally (**dollar for dollar**) with non- federal match, which may include in-kind donations, volunteer assistance, and private and public (non- federal) monetary contributions.
- If applicable, ensure all Indirect Cost Rates are current.
- **Federal Agencies: *Other Federal dollars or technical support may contribute to the project, but their contributions may not be used to match the Urban and Community Forestry Program dollars.***
  - *Federal Urban and Community Forestry Grant Dollars may not pay for any Federal employee salary, travel, or per diem, etc.*
  - *Federal partners must provide a letter of support stating their pro bono role in the project.*
- [Definitions and Resources](#) (Definitions and resources as they relate to this grant opportunity and assisting the applicant with creating a successful proposal.)
- [Proposal Evaluation Criteria](#) (Details the evaluation criteria and point system to be used by the UCF Grant Review team in evaluating applicant proposals.)

Click on this link [2023 National UCF Grant Application Website](#) on **July 7, 2023**, to complete the on-line grant proposal application. The on-line application workflow process is self-explanatory with help links to guide you through the application process.

All applications must be completed and submitted by Tuesday **August 15, 2023, 5:00 PM Eastern**. Once submitted, the applicant will receive an email notice confirming their application was successfully submitted.

**Contact:**

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