

HOW TO FUND AN URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM

Funds for community street tree management programs are available from a variety of sources. However, funds for tree planting are generally easier to obtain than funds for maintenance. Planting trees has an immediate visual impact. Tree planting gains recognition for the agency, group, or person doing it and is valued by urban residents. Because of this high visibility, street tree program funds can be obtained from local, state, and federal agencies and from private sources. Most funding for overall management of street trees comes from local government sources. Listed below are several potential sources of local funding.

- **General revenues.** These funds are derived from the local property tax. This is the most reliable source of funding for activities beyond tree planting.
- **Capital improvement funds.** These funds are from general revenues and are used to landscape public buildings and parks or to plant trees as part of a redevelopment project.
- **Permits.** A property owner pays for a tree permit, and the city plants and maintains the tree in front of the property. Permits cover a portion or the entire cost of the tree.
- **Frontage tax.** This tax is levied on the street frontage of private property. This tax must have permissive legislation from state government before being implemented by a local government. Funds are collected on an annual basis and can be used for the entire tree management program.
- **Building permit assessment.** A fee is added to each building permit, and funds are applied to the purchase and planting of a tree in front of the new building.
- **Subdivision ordinances.** Subdivision or landscape ordinances may require developers to plant street trees in new subdivisions. Builders must meet specifications for planting and guarantee tree survival for a given period.

- **Local businesses and organizations.** Businesses and organizations will often contribute funds for community beautification. Merchant associations in many communities fund tree planting in commercial districts to make the areas more attractive to shoppers.
- **Neighborhood associations.** Neighborhood associations will often assist in funding tree planting and maintenance projects within their area.

STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS

- **Emergency and special funds.** Wind, ice storms, and other natural disasters can cause extensive damage to community tree populations. State emergency funds may be available to assist with cleanup operations and are often available for replanting lost trees. Contact your local Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) office for more information.
- **Community development block grants.** The Community Development Agency within Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers long-term grants designed to assist communities with urban renewal projects in deprived portions of a city. Communities may spend a portion of these grants for urban tree planting. For more information, contact your local Department of Housing and Urban Development office.
- **Economic development grants.** The Economic Development Agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce administers a grant program designated for redevelopment of city housing. Grants are made on an annual basis, and portions of these funds may be used for landscape design and tree planting as part of the development efforts. For more information, contact your local area development district representative.

