



REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

Urban and Community Forestry Tree Planting Grant

Funding provided by USDA Forest Service

Application Deadline:

April 3, 2025

Submit via Email to:

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY TREE PLANTING GRANT
Kentucky Division of Forestry
300 Sower Blvd, Frankfort, KY 40601
forestrygrants@ky.gov
502-782-3932

<https://eec.ky.gov/Natural-Resources/Forestry>

INTRODUCTION

The **Kentucky Division of Forestry**, in cooperation with the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (USFS)**, announces the Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Tree Planting Grant Program. The program is intended to encourage communities to increase urban and community tree canopy cover through the planting of trees across the Commonwealth.

OBJECTIVES OF THE URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

Legislative Authority

Subtitle D, Sec. 23003 (a). State and Private Forestry Conservation Programs via the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) appropriated \$1,500,000,000 to provide multiyear, programmatic, competitive grants. Of this total allocation \$1,800,000 was allocated to Kentucky to be distributed over a 5-year period.

USDA is a partner on the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Promoting Equitable Access to Nature in Nature-Deprived Communities, which seeks to reduce the number of people without access to parks and nature in their communities.

Federal Program Objectives

The objectives of the Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program are to:

- 1) Integrate Urban and Community Forestry into all scales of planning.
- 2) Promote the role of Urban and Community Forestry in human health and wellness.
- 3) Strengthen Urban and Community Forest health and biodiversity for long-term resilience.
- 4) Improve Urban and Community Forest management, maintenance, and stewardship.
- 5) Diversify, leverage, and increase funding for Urban and Community Forestry.
- 6) Increase public awareness and environmental education to promote stewardship.
- 7) Prioritize projects focusing work on extreme heat mitigation, urban wood utilization, urban food forests and workforce development.

State Program Goals

The Kentucky Division of Forestry's goals for the Urban and Community Program are to:

- 1) Promote the development and enhancement of self-sustaining urban and community forestry programs.
- 2) Increase access to urban tree canopies and associated environmental, economic, and human health benefits.
- 3) Expand engagement in local community forestry planning.
- 4) Help make communities more resilient to pests, and natural disasters.
- 5) Improve levels of engagement and knowledge about trees and tree care across small and large communities.
- 6) Increase community preparedness by developing storm mitigation plans.

- 7) Prioritize projects focusing work on increasing urban and community tree canopies, mitigating heat islands, increasing stormwater benefits, and workforce development.

Available Funding

Funding available is \$156,721. The State reserves the right to reject or approve partial funding for any and all proposals. Consideration will be given to ensure smaller communities have equitable access to funding. Records will be maintained for at least 3 years following final close out of Urban and Community Forestry Tree Planting Grant project.

Eligibility Information

Funds may be awarded to units of local governments (city, town, county), 501(c)3 non-profit organizations, or educational institutions. Other organizations, such as community tree volunteer groups, neighborhood associations or civic groups which are not 501(c)3 are eligible but must apply in partnership with an eligible non-profit organization, educational, or local government. Organizations that have received Inflation Reduction Act funding through the USDA Forest Service NOFO or the Kentucky Division of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Grant may apply for funds through this grant for separate, unrelated projects from their initial awards.

All applicants applying for a federally funded award must have BOTH a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Information on UEI provided here: <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/organization/federal-acquisition-service/office-of-systems-management/integrated-award-environment-iae/iae-systems-information-kit/unique-entity-identifier-update>

If awarded, applicants will not need to provide project match funding.

Proposals must be clearly defined within the designated urban forestry priority planting areas. Applications must clearly delineate proposed project areas in the Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Eligibility Map as part of application materials.

The following tools are required to be used:

- Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Eligibility Map
<https://arcg.is/1TPPyP>

Eligible Projects

Eligible Projects must meet Federal and State Program Objectives. The U&CF Tree Planting Grant Program is intended to support new tree planting initiatives currently being funded through other sources. All plantings must be located in defined urban forestry priority planting areas. Grants will be limited to no more than 3 per locality (county, city, or town). Typical grant projects should range in size from \$1,000 to \$40,000.

Tree Planting Projects

All projects funded through this grant should be able to provide a site plan, tree list, tree planting specifications, tree protection needs, site photos, and maintenance plan. Applications should include a letter of permission/support for the planting if the project and property access for maintenance is not on the applicant's property. Grant funds will not pay for trees larger than 4 inches in caliper. Projects must either be located on publicly owned lands or municipal public right-of-ways. The costs of tree protection and watering supplies are allowable expenses.

URBAN ORCHARDS may be organized to address food insecurity. Trees planted under this category must be a minimum of 1.5 inches in caliper.

STREET TREE PLANTING projects including planting strips and cutouts. Cutouts must be at least 4 feet x 10 feet or equivalent to be considered for funding under the program. Proposed projects with planting strips or cutouts less than 3 feet wide will not be considered. Trees planted under this category must be a minimum of 1.5 inches in caliper.

TURF TO TREES PROJECTS include conversion of regularly mowed lawns greater than 0.1 acres to trees. Trees planted under this category must be a minimum container size of five (5) gallons or larger.

COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING projects include any tree planting on public lands. Trees planted under this category must be a minimum of 1.5 inches in caliper.

Ineligible Projects/Activities

Ineligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- administrative oversight
- planning
- research
- property acquisition and related costs
- construction and capital improvement projects
- equipment purchases
- food or beverage purchases
- gift cards
- sub-granting of awarded funds

Grant Timeframe

Approved projects can begin only after receiving a fully executed copy of the grant contract agreement.

All applications must be received by 11:59 PM EST on April 3, 2025. All projects must either be completed within two (2) years from the date of the executed grant contract agreement or no later than June 30, 2028.

Reports

Quarterly progress reports and a final report will be required of all grantees. Final reports must be submitted at the conclusion of the project prior to final payout.

Payment Process

The funds awarded under the grant are available on a reimbursement basis after report submittal and in accordance with a payment schedule agreed to in advance. Grantees must file a Request for Reimbursement Form and send records of expenditures along with documentation of all costs to the Kentucky Division of Forestry. The Kentucky Division of Forestry reserves the right to make partial payments subject to completion of scheduled milestones. The Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program Coordinator will evaluate the progress of the project to determine eligibility for full payment.

The Kentucky Division of Forestry strives to uphold the highest standards in tree care. As such, all projects being funded involving tree planting will be held to the following standards: (1) Trees are expected to be planted to [ANSI 300 Tree Care Standards](#) or as specified in the [US Forest Service's Tree Owner's Manual](#). All root ball packaging and containers must be removed. (2) Organizations planting trees are expected to commit to and follow through with watering of newly planted trees throughout the growing season for a minimum of the first two years after planting. (3) Organizations planting trees are expected to commit to not removing living planted trees from the site for a minimum of 15 years after planting. (4) Organizations contracting with third parties to plant trees are expected to effectively communicate all the above standards to the contractor prior to planting.

Payments for all trees planted under this grant will be processed after planting quality site inspections by Kentucky Division of Forestry staff. Failure to meet planting quality standards and expectations may result in the need for remediation of planting prior to payment or rejection of payment to planting. Kentucky Division of Forestry staff will be available to assist in answering and advising on all tree planting covered in the above standards.

All awardees must be registered in Kentucky's eMARS (Management Administrative & Reporting System) prior to a grant contact agreement being created. For more information about eMARS or to register visit <https://finance.ky.gov/office-of-the-controller/office-of-statewide-accounting-services/customer-resource-center>.

TIMETABLE

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED no later than 11:59pm, April 3, 2025.

The Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator will notify successful applicants of funding approval as soon as possible. Successful applicants must submit required state and federal forms **within thirty (30) days** of the date of the award notice. Municipalities needing city/town council or Board of Supervisor approval must contact the Division of Forestry for an extension of this time, if needed.

APPLICATION FORMAT

Written proposals must be included in addition to the online Application Form and Budget Worksheet. The proposal narrative **must not exceed two pages**. Applicants may also include maps, photos, etc. in addition to the narrative. Clear and concise proposals should address an urban and community forestry need and meet one or more of the objectives of the Urban and Community Forestry Program (see page 2-3). The information that should be presented in the narrative and budget includes:

1. The purpose, objective, or mission statement of the applying organization and the purpose and objectives of the project. The project's purpose should be explained in one concise paragraph or less.
2. Explain why the project is important. Identify the project audience, why they should be addressed and describe what condition will be changed because of the project. The narrative should include these elements:
 - ◆ **Activities** – List all the activities you will undertake to complete the project.
 - ◆ **Partnerships and Participants** – List project personnel, volunteers, participating organizations, etc.
 - ◆ **Public, Educational Benefits, and Community Engagement** – Strategies for the project should also be described.
 - ◆ **Benefits** – Provide a written description of how the planting will benefit communities. Location of project area in relation to communities must be delineated via the Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Eligibility Map (see page 3).
 - ◆ **Administration** – Specify who will be responsible for project management and record keeping.
 - ◆ **Timetable** – Show project start date, project milestone completion dates, and total project completion dates. This may be written as a bulleted list with descriptions and clarification, or in chart form.
3. A detailed project **budget** should include sources and description of materials and supplies (trees). The budget will be compared to the project narrative to determine if proposed expenditures are reasonable and allowable.

State assumes no liability for any contractors, volunteers, or local government employees working on any projects.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Fill out survey and delineate proposed project area online through the **Kentucky Urban and Community Forestry Grant Eligibility Map**, <https://arcg.is/1TPPyP>. This must be completed with or prior to submittal of online proposal package.
2. Once the Eligibility Survey has been completed, applicants will receive an email directing them to the online application form.
3. Fill out the **online application form, budget worksheet, and upload all required documentation (W-9 form and Narrative Proposal)**. These documents must be submitted with your proposal package.
4. **Non-profit organizations must additionally upload documentation of 501(c)3 status (IRS letter).**
5. Please make sure you receive a confirmation email once your application is submitted.

GRANT PREPARATION ASSISTANCE

Assistance in developing proposals is available to all potential applicants from the Kentucky Division of Forestry. We will also provide guidance as to a project's suitability under this grant program. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit potential projects with the Division of Forestry before proposal submittal. Contact information is listed below to reach out with any questions.

Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator

Chris Wiedemann

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cwiedemann@ky.gov

502-782-3932

FUNDING CRITERIA AND PROPOSAL REVIEW

Only applications that meet all General Requirements will be reviewed. Proposals ranking is based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Clearly defined purpose or objective of project.
- ✓ Meets a demonstrated urban forestry need.
- ✓ Meets federal and state program objectives.
- ✓ Local visibility or awareness of the project.
- ✓ Long-term benefit of the project.
- ✓ Clarity of budget presentation and use of budget worksheet (enclosed).
- ✓ Cost effectiveness.
- ✓ Has a realistic time frame for completion.
- ✓ Demonstrated ability of the applicant to follow through on project completion.
- ✓ Clearly defined maintenance plan.
- ✓ Clearly defined project/planting area
- ✓ Clearly defined tree list
- ✓ Scientifically sound plan/practices meeting professional standards.

Consideration will also be given to ensuring smaller population, rural-urban interface areas have equitable access to funding during proposal ranking process.