

USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry 2021 Challenge Cost Share Grant Program Request for Proposals (RFP)

Proposals are to be received by **April 16, 2021**, 11:59 PM Eastern

INTRODUCTION

The [USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry \(U&CF\) Program](#) restores, sustains, and manages 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 also essential to the economic, environmental, physical, and mental well-being of our population. Increasingly, our urban and community forests are facing threats such as insects, diseases, extreme weather events and other hazards. Additionally, the lack of investment in urban forest disaster mitigation is contributing to community disasters such as urban flooding and human heat deaths in our cities--disproportionately affecting [vulnerable populations](#). New systemic solutions are needed to create and enhance green infrastructure in the right place and at the right scale and encompass pressing social, economic, ecological, and historic factors holistically.

GRANT CATEGORIES

(1) Increasing Resiliency of Urban Forests through Reforestation and Management

The USDA Forest Service seeks innovative grant proposals for establishing climate resilient tree species in urban and community forests that are resistant to impacts of invasive pathogens, pests, and severe weather events. Applicants should consider long-term forest health as it aligns with species of choice, diversity, and genetic variation. Consider which species have proven as the most problematic over the last 20 years and which species have been the most reliable, problem-free and can withstand the climate impacts. Genetic diversity within a species will depart from single genotype cultivars, which may be aesthetically pleasing in the short-term, but offer less resilience as a biotic and abiotic events/agents factor into survival in the future and help to adapt to climate change by reducing exposures to future hazards, like increased heat waves or flooding. This approach will require implementing standard protocols to assess forest health and species resilience across the country and may include development of new tools to improve propagation, development, or management of urban tree plantings.

Proposals that incorporate new or innovative planting protocols, with an emphasis on native tree species propagated from genetically diverse local seed sources, are encouraged. Projects should focus on capacity building and power sharing with communities as partners and stakeholders that can assist with education, training, and outreach on techniques to manage and monitor urban forests. Funded projects are expected to translate and implement findings on the ground as part of a comprehensive city / community master plan. Timelines should reflect installation, maintenance, and monitoring results, but not exceed 5 years.

This category aligns with Goal 4 in the [National Ten Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan \(2016-2026\)](#): Strengthen Urban and Community Forest Health and Biodiversity for Long-Term Resilience.

(2) **Planning Disaster Mitigation Strategies for Urban Forests**

The USDA Forest Service seeks innovative grant proposals for the critical management of our existing and future urban and community forests to promote disaster risk reduction and community resilience and better prepare communities for the increasingly destructive impacts of [climate change](#). With a focus on [environmental justice communities](#), solutions should bring together community members, planners, local and state government officials, urban foresters and resilience and sustainability professionals and may include, but are not limited to, prevention, planning, policy, preparedness, implementation, demonstrated best management and maintenance practices, uniform standards, risk mitigation, recovery, [social equity](#), and reforestation.

Proposed solutions should serve as replicable models and are to include on the ground implementation such as increasing community capacity to use green infrastructure in public space planning, infrastructure, private development, cost-benefit comparisons, monitoring and results. Projects that involve planting trees should be or become a part of an overall tree planting plan section of a community's comprehensive master plan, which also accounts for tree maintenance over the span of the project in their proposals and budgets as appropriate. Systems based solutions that position urban forests as part of addressing multiple economic, social, and environmental stressors, for example, unemployment and housing stabilization, are encouraged.

This category aligns with Goal 1 in the [National Ten Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan \(2016-2026\)](#): Integrate Urban and Community Forestry Into all Scales of Planning.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 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 identify with either Goal 1 or Goal 4 in the [National Ten Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan \(2016-2026\)](#).
- **All applicants are to contact their Forest Service Regional Coordinators** before applying to provide program guidance and address any program questions. Please click on the link to find your Forest Service Urban Forestry Program Manager: [Forest Service Urban Forestry Regional Program Managers](#).
- **Partnership collaboration is required** - two or more related stakeholders will be involved in these categories. All proposals will include formal letters of partnership. They may also include letters of support from other key stakeholders, as applicable.

- **Available Funding:** Based on the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260), the U.S. Forest Service may provide up to \$1,000,000 in national cost share grants based on the suitability/competitiveness of the proposals received. **Funds are to support national urban and community forestry projects on nonfederal public land that have a national or multi-state impact and application.**
- **All awards are based on the availability of funding,** which may be subject to change.
- Grant awards will range from \$100,000 - \$300,000.
- **Time to complete these grants** averages 2-3 years, up to 5 years with approval.
- The grant process may take between 6-9 months.
- **Eligible Applicants:** Non-Profits, educational institutions of higher learning, any U.S. non-federal and 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. **Update: Local governments may apply if their proposed process includes other local governments/eligible entities around the country that can implement their process and demonstrate national application with in the grant period.**
- **Matching Requirements:** All grant funds must be matched at least equally (**dollar for dollar**) Non-federal match may include in-kind donations, volunteer assistance, and private and public (non-federal) monetary contributions. **(While other Federal dollars or technical support may contribute to the project, they may not be used to match the Urban and Community Federal grant program dollars.)**
- **Registrations** - Please allow at least two (2) weeks to apply or renew these registrations.
 - All applicants must include a current Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number in their application.
 - All prospective awardees must be registered in the System for Award Management Ensure all applicable Indirect Cost Rates are current.
- An applicant organization may apply to both categories but will only receive up to one award per organization.
- [Definitions and Resources](#)
- [Proposal Evaluation](#)

Click on this link [2021 National UCF Grant Application Website](#) to complete the grant proposal application form. The dropdown windows and flow are self-explanatory. Applicants may edit the application until submission. Once the application is completed and submitted; the applicant will receive notice that it was successfully submitted.

Contact:

Nancy Stremple Nancy.Stremple@usda.gov 202-309-9873
National Urban and Community Forestry Specialist