



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
DIVISION OF FOREST ENVIRONMENT
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America the Beautiful Grant Program Request for Proposals 2020

1. OVERVIEW

The America the Beautiful (ATB) Grant Program provides funding for urban forestry projects. For the 2020 grant cycle \$30,000.00 is available to be awarded. Urban and community forestry is broadly defined as the comprehensive management of trees, forests, and related natural resources in populated areas for the physiological, sociological, economic, and aesthetic benefits trees provide society.

The ATB is a competitive grant; applicants are encouraged to submit carefully considered and complete applications.

The deadline for submitting an ATB Grant Application is 4:00pm on April 30, 2020. Approved projects must be completed, and all paperwork must be submitted by September 30, 2021.

Program Authority

The ATB Grants are made possible through the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Program (www.fs.usda.gov/main/r9/communityforests). The RIDEM Division of Forest Environment (DFE) is responsible for the administration of the ATB Grant Program and for the distribution of these funds to municipalities and non-profit organizations.

Program Goals and Objectives

Historically, ATB Grants are awarded for a wide range of urban forestry projects. These projects must be reflective of the needs of the community and should demonstrate the community's commitment to urban forestry.

The DFE has defined **3 focused categories** for this grant application period. Applicants must identify which of these three categories best describes the proposal. In order of priority, the three categories are:

1. Municipal Urban Forestry Planning
2. Education and Outreach
3. Municipal Urban Tree Planting

2. FINANCIAL MATTERS & TIMING

Available Funds

Requests for assistance should range between **\$2,000 and \$4,000**. Funds are to be used to enhance or expand existing programs or to initiate new program development.

Funding is not available for the following:

- Expenses incurred before or after the contract period (i.e. receipt of the DFE Purchase Order and the contract end date)
- Any expense not part of the DFE approved budget
- Food, drinks and refreshments for meetings, volunteers, etc. (also cannot count as match)
- Costs associated with preparing the grant application
- Salaries of current staff, although they may qualify as match, if appropriate
- General overhead and administration charges, although they may qualify as match
- Expenses not supported by proper documentation (such as paid receipts, cancelled checks, invoices, etc.)

Matching Contributions

The Urban & Community Forestry Grant Program funds **must be matched 60/40 with non-federal funds** – e.g. a \$2,000 grant would have a \$3,000 minimum match requirement (1.5x the award amount), for an overall project cost of \$5,000. Match may be in the form of *cash purchase* or *in-kind contributions*, and all such contributions must come from non-federal sources. Matching funds for this project may not be used as a match for any other federal cost-share project. All matching funds must be specifically related to the proposed project. Documentation of all matching support must be maintained and submitted with reimbursement.

Matching Funds Requirements and Guidelines:

- A matching grant is a conditional award, requiring the grantee to contribute a specified minimum percentage of the project's total cost – this is referred to as “minimum match.”
- Minimum match – 60% of the total project required of grantee.
- Applicants may match grant funds with cash, in-kind contributions (volunteer labor, municipality/organization personnel and equipment), donations, and administrative costs directly related to the project.
- Volunteer labor may be estimated at \$25.43 per hour per person (per [Independent Sector](#) as of 2018).
- All project expenses and matching fund/in-kind contributions must be fully and appropriately documented. Instructions will be provided to successful candidates.

Grant Program Timeline

Proposed projects must be able to be completed within **12 months**. Approved projects must sign and return DEM contract forms and can only be started after receipt of a Purchase Order (PO) from the U&CF Program Manager.

March 31, 2020 – Application Deadline. Proposals must be **received** at the Division of Forest Environment, RIDEM headquarters in Providence by 3:00 P.M.

May 31, 2020 – Notification Date. All applicants are notified of the outcome of their grant application. Contracts are developed and sent to successful applicants to be signed and returned **within 30 business days**. [Exact dates that contracts will be received is subject to receipt of the USFS Federal award. Applicants will be kept notified.]

October 1, 2020 – Begin Project. The anticipated start date, subject to timeliness of returning a signed contract to the U&CF Program Manager and the creation of PO by Finance staff. No grant expenditures or grant match may occur before the receipt of the PO.

April 1, 2021 – Mid-Year Status Report due. Report covers grant activities from beginning of contract up to April 1, 2021. Form provided.

September 30, 2020 – End Project. Contract Period ends. No further work can be carried out for the grant, unless a time extension has been previously approved. Submissions of the Final Accomplishment Report and the Final Request for Reimbursement are due **within 30 days** of the Contract end date, or approved time extension deadline.

3. PROJECT EXAMPLES

Municipal Urban Forestry Planning

This category is provided to encourage improved management of a community's forest. Priority will be given to projects that enhance a local government's ability to maintain a comprehensive urban management program. This category is meant to advance urban forestry practices at the local level, engaging residents and staff in understanding the benefits of urban forestry and managing proactively.

Grant funding may assist with:

- Conducting a tree inventory and analysis
- Conducting an urban tree canopy (UTC) assessment
- Conducting an i-Tree Eco study (or similar type of analysis)
- Creating an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) management plan, survey, and/or detection program
- Promoting the use of trees as green infrastructure, such as in reducing storm water runoff, air pollution reduction or the mitigation of the urban island effect
- Developing a comprehensive municipal forest plan, or other similar project

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE MUNICIPAL FOREST PLAN?

The aim of a comprehensive forest management plan is to influence future decision making to improve the community's forest resources. The plan should integrate the economic, environmental, political and social realities, and values of the community.

A Comprehensive Tree Management Plan should include the following components:

1. Program Development Plan
2. Tree Inventory & Assessment Plan
3. Tree Planting Plan
4. Tree Maintenance Plan
5. Tree Risk Management & Removal Plan
6. Storm & Emergency Response Plan
7. Tree Preservation Plan
8. Public Education & Outreach Plan

Projects can be supported by the purchase of inventory software, GIS/computer hardware, and/or contracting of urban forestry planning professionals.

Non-profit organizations may apply through this category, but they must demonstrate that they have the cooperation of the municipality involved and that the project will directly benefit the municipality's tree management program.

Education and Outreach

Projects submitted under the Education and Outreach category should be a vehicle for community members to learn about and practice environmental stewardship. The education component should be locally-based and designed to give participants the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions and responsible actions about trees and urban forests.

Projects should be centered on tree planting, tree care, and/or urban forest management. Educational curriculum may be implemented prior to a community tree planting or tree care project, or concurrent with it, depending on the applicant's most effective way to reach a particular audience.

Grant funding may support:

- Public Education/Workshops – Funds may be used to conduct local seminars, training sessions and workshops regarding arboriculture and/or community forestry topics. Funds may cover brochure development, mailings, speaker fees, audio/visual equipment rental and related costs.
- Youth Programs – Funds may be used for educational and awareness efforts targeted to youth audiences, youth-at-risk, or underserved groups and designed to enhance an understanding of community trees and forests.
- In-House Training and Continuing Education – Intended to enhance the technical skills of individuals involved in planning, development and maintenance of community forests. Proposals may include costs associated with attending an educational event (registration, travel, and lodging expenses) and/or the purchase of reference materials for self-study.

Municipal Urban Tree Planting

This category is provided to facilitate strategic planting and maintenance of community trees for public benefits. Projects must show robust engagement with residents, community involvement, and public support. Priority will be given to projects with a community education and outreach component. The following is **required** when any tree planting funds are requested:

Tree Planting Project Guidelines:

- Plantings must conform to appropriate planting instructions and specifications.
- No invasive species will be permitted. *Recommended planting list available by request.*
- New tree plantings must be a minimum of 2" caliper, maximum 4" caliper. Funding for trees under 2" or over 4" by special exception only.
- Bare-root trees may be 1+" caliper.
- Planting stock should be purchased from firms in hardiness zones 5, 6, 7, and from State of Rhode Island certified nurseries, if available.
- There must be a three-year maintenance plan specifying maintenance activities and responsibilities submitted with the final documentation. Indicate who will be responsible for supervising and implementing the maintenance plan and their qualifications. Standard care and maintenance includes **supplemental watering for at least two years**, replenishing mulch, seasonal inspecting of all trees, early corrective pruning if needed, insect and disease control as needed, and removal of any guys, stakes, wraps and supports no later than one year after planting.
- There must be a two-year watering plan submitted with the final documentation.
- Monoculture plantings should be avoided.
- For **any** planting, information on tree species, size, and planting locations (street address and maps, if applicable) must be approved by the U&CF Coordinator before work is completed. Priority will be given to projects that include planting information at time of proposal
- **Trees that reach a mature height of thirty-five feet or greater planted directly under utility lines will not be funded.**

4. WHO MAY APPLY?

- State government agencies.
- Municipalities.
- Non-profit organizations.

Program Guidelines:

- The certification form must be signed by an authorized signatory of the organization/municipality.
- All projects must be on public property.

- Only grant requests from \$2,000 up to \$4,000 will be considered. Some grants may be partially funded as funding allows.
- Funds will be reimbursed when the project has been satisfactorily completed with final documentation and reports received and approved.
- A representative of the grantee will attend a grant reimbursement workshop if deemed necessary by RIDEM.
- Technical support is available throughout the application process and the project duration from the RI Division of Forest Environment. For assistance, please contact:

Robert Allard
 Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator
 RI DEM Division of Forest Environment
 Phone: 401-222-2445 x2056
 Email: robert.e.allard@dem.ri.gov

Judging Criteria

- Applications will be evaluated by representatives of the RIDEM Division of Forest Environment and the Rhode Island Tree Council.
- Application must be technically consistent and complete.
- Project must demonstrate a substantial capacity for developing or extending a sustainable community forestry program.
- Project description must demonstrate that the proposal is a component of a comprehensive tree management program.
- Project must show it will produce results leading to sustainable forestry.
- Project must incorporate the involvement of volunteers, partners who will be advocates for sustainable forestry practices.
- Priority will be given to projects that include volunteer commitments and supporting letters from project partners.
- Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate they will create meaningful impact in underserved and/or marginalized communities – e.g. underrepresented minority groups, low-income communities, and/or low-tree cover neighborhoods.

REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO RIDEM URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM:

- April 1, 2021 – INTERIM PROGRESS REPORTS REQUIRED.
- September 30, 2021 – FINAL PROJECT REPORT AND FINANCIAL REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE U&CF PROGRAM MANAGER.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

3:00 pm, March 31, 2020

Send (USPS, FedEx or UPS) or hand-deliver 1 original (clearly marked and signed by an authorized representative of the agency or organization applying) and 7 copies (8 total) of the complete proposal package (Application Form, Budget, Project Schedule and Proposal Narrative and any supplemental information) to:

**Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program
RI DEM, Division of Forest Environment
235 Promenade Street, Suite 394
Providence, RI 02908**

Or hand deliver to 235 Promenade Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 394

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AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL U&CF GRANT PROGRAM
2020 GRANT APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATION FORM

Name of Organization/Department: _____

Contact Person & Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Amount you are requesting: _____

Eligible Project (Title): _____

Federal Tax ID # _____ DUNS number: _____

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Grant Application Form
2. Project Narrative – On up to two sheets of paper please:
 - a. Describe the project and explain how it meets the goals of building a sustainable, comprehensive, tree program in your community.
 - b. Describe how the project adheres to the guidelines.
 - c. Strong narratives will include: a statement of need, project objective(s), proposed strategies for accomplishing objectives, project coordinators and partners, outreach strategies, public visibility and impact, and expected project accomplishments and/or final projects.
3. Project Schedule/Timeline – For all key project tasks or milestone activities, please include:
 - a. What will be done, who will do it, and when tasks/activities will be started and completed
 - b. How activity will be documented (i.e. sign-in sheets, invoices, reports, staff timesheets)
4. Project Budget – On one sheet of paper please:
 - a. Describe total project cost and include match requirement.
 - b. Identify itemized costs for labor, supplies, and equipment.
 - c. Provide detail on anticipated # hours estimated and rates.

GRANT REQUEST	(40%)	_____
APPLICANT MATCH	(60%)	_____
TOTAL PROJECT COST	(100%)	_____

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that I have reviewed the application and will adhere to all rules, regulations, guidelines, and deadlines as provided herein and required of grantees. I also certify and attest that I am authorized to act as signatory for the organization identified below.

Name of organization/municipality

Printed Name

Signature

Title