Office of the State Forester

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor

David Tenney
State Forester

September 2021

The Department of Forestry and Fire Management – Urban and Community Forestry program is excited to announce the next round for the Tree Resource Enhancement and Engagement (TREE) Grant Program! This program is open ONLY to currently recognized Tree City USA, Tree Campus USA, and Tree Campus K-12 program participants. The intended purpose of this grant is to provide additional support for local community forestry programs.

Notifications of awards are anticipated by **November 2021**. If your community or campus is interested in applying for a 2021 grant, please submit an online application through the eCivis portal at:

https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/7e6sxbt9s4ig

Please read all application materials thoroughly. Specific application instructions are included in this application guidance packet. Applications should be submitted online via eCivis by the listed deadline.

Deadline for submissions is 11:59 P.M. on Wednesday, October 20th, 2021.

TREE Grants are awarded through the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management – Urban and Community Forestry Program in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.

Please contact me with any questions you may have (520.262.5519; CDolan@dffm.az.gov). If you would like to add a contact or be removed from this notification list, please send me an email with your preference.

Sincerely,

Cori Dolan
Program Manager
Urban & Community Forestry

Urban and Community Forestry
Tree Resource Enhancement and Engagement (TREE)
Grant Guidelines

Project Timeframe: December 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022

Projects Closed:
(Final Reports and Reimbursement
Requests Due)   September 30, 2022

Estimated Total Program Funding: $10,000.00
Award Ceiling: $5,000.00
Award Floor: $1,500.00
Typical Award Range: $2,000 to $4,000
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement: 50% cost-share from non-federal source

Submit Applications to: https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/7e6sxbt9s4ig

Application Deadline: 11:59 PM
Friday, October 20, 2021

Award Notification: After Monday, November 15, 2021

Questions: Cori Dolan – Program Manager
CDolan@dffm.az.gov
520.262.5519

DFFM reserves the right not to accept the following:
- Hand-written applications
- Applications that do not meet the grant criteria

INTRODUCTION

The Tree Resource Enhancement and Engagement (TREE) Grant program is a competitive cost-share program provided and administered by the Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) – Urban and Community Forestry in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry program. These grants are offered only to currently recognized Tree City USA communities and Tree Campus USA and Tree Campus K-12 campuses that plan for, maintain, and manage landscape trees with a goal to increase canopy cover over time. The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to recognized Tree Cities and Tree Campuses for the management, improvement, or conservation of community forests.

PROGRAM GOALS

The TREE Grants are to be used to promote and enhance the quality of Arizona's urban and community forests, and may also be used for engaging decision makers through urban forest management initiatives. The goals of this funding program are:

- To assist recognized Arizona Tree Cities and Tree Campuses in initiating or significantly improving their efforts to care for the community forest, including assistance for achieving canopy cover goals.

- To encourage recognized Tree Cities and Tree Campuses to develop and maintain a sustainable, balanced, and comprehensive community forestry program that is based on a current tree inventory and managed with the guidance of a community forestry professional.

- To promote community forestry benefits through the proper management and care of trees in Arizona's recognized Tree City and Tree Campus communities. "Care" does include harvesting programs.

ELIGIBILITY

Communities or public educational institutions with current "recognized" status in the Tree City USA and/or Tree Campus USA programs in Arizona are eligible for grant funding. Grants may be awarded to units of local governments (counties, municipalities, cities, towns, and townships), tribal governments, and public educational institutions.

Organizations that have previously received any grant from DFFM must be current on their quarterly reporting requirements per their signed grant agreement(s) prior to receiving a new award. The TREE Grant program does not discriminate against any person or organization because of race, color, religion, disability, sex, age or national origin.

GRANTEE SHOWCASE

Each grant recipient is invited to participate in the annual Grantee Showcase during the year their grant is active. The Grantee Showcase typically occurs in Prescott in the fall

(September/October). Travel costs associated with attendance and participation in the Grantee Showcase are an eligible budget item (either reimbursable or used as a match toward the grant).

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES
Activities are listed in order of priority.

- Development and adoption of a written community tree management plan or community readiness plan.
- Tree planting projects as part of a comprehensive management program to meet state, county or community canopy coverage goals.
- Community tree inventory support (hazardous tree survey and maintenance needs survey). The format for all inventory projects must be compatible with i-Tree software (for more information, go to itreetools.org).
- Removal of hazard trees.
- Pruning according to ANSI A300 specifications – no topping.
  See American National Standards Institute *A300 Standard Practices for Woody Plant Maintenance* (ANSI A300). Copies available from: International Society of Arboriculture, PO Box 3129, Champaign, IL 61826, phone 217.355.9411, isa-arbor.com
- Municipal tree ordinance development by a certified forestry professional (certified arborist, forester, or similarly qualified person using ISA standards).
- Training of city employees and volunteers to improve community forestry practices.
- Initial costs of certification for in-house employees by the International Society of Arboriculture.
- The Arizona Forest Action Plan (also known as Arizona's Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy) sets the priorities for tree management in Arizona. Other activities not specifically listed here but that meet needs identified in the Plan are desired.

GRANT LIMITATIONS

1. *All trees and all projects must be located within recognized Tree City or Tree Campus management jurisdictions*.
2. Any project involving tree planting* must include a five-year (5-year) maintenance plan, that is funded separately by the applicant. All trees purchased must meet the American Standard for Nursery Stock and Arizona Nursery Association Standards.
3. Planted trees must be guaranteed for one year after planting. Such guarantee must be provided by the nursery or contractor and clearly indicated on their estimates.
4. All hazardous trees must be identified by a certified arborist, forester, or similarly qualified person using ISA standards.
5. This is a reimbursable grant program. At least 50% of the total cost of the project must be contributed by the applicant from sources other than the federal government. This amount may be in the form of cash, services, volunteer time,

equipment usage, and/or in-kind contributions. Grant funds will be distributed on a 50% reimbursement basis, and at no time can they be used to cover more than 50% of the project cost. No grant funds will be distributed until project expenditures and local match have both been incurred.

6. All project costs approved for reimbursement must be documented, whether the costs are charged or used as match to the grant funds.

7. The funding source for these grants is the USDA Forest Service and payments are contingent upon the availability of funds and reimbursement by them.

8. Funds may be used for specific projects only, and may not be used to meet ordinary operational expenses or to purchase food or beverages.

9. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase capital equipment (i.e., costing >$5,000). However, they may be used to rent equipment.

*Note: Organizations that receive a grant related to tree planting must have a Certified Arborist or Certified Landscape Professional (CLP) on-hand at the time the plants are delivered and when planting occurs. If the applicant already has either on staff, they may perform this function and credit their time as a match toward their awarded grant.

PAYMENT PROCESS

Reimbursement will be processed after requirements have been met and verified, which includes receipt in the DFFM office of applicable paid receipts, itemized documentation and forms. Instructions will be provided for the reimbursement process once grants are awarded. The final report is required before final reimbursement will be awarded.

Reimbursement payments may take up to ninety (90) days.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants must submit proposals according to the following instructions. Failure to do so will render your application ineligible.

All proposals should be submitted online through the eCivis portal. Project proposals should clearly and concisely address an urban and community forestry need. The application form, proposal narrative, and budget form will be included by reference in the awarded contract.

If selected for an award, a detailed project work plan will be required prior to initiating the proposed project.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

Grant funds may be used for a variety of expenditures related to the grant projects. Budget proposals should reflect realistic estimates of costs associated with producing the product or fulfilling the objectives of the grant. The Budget Proposal Form must summarize budget expenditures, but additional budget information may be included in an attached budget narrative.

Volunteer labor is an appropriate matching item. Volunteer time may be valued at the local market rate for equivalent work (children at minimum wage). Hourly rates exceeding $20.00 per hour must be justified in a budget narrative.

GRANT AMOUNTS AND MATCHING FUNDS

The minimum grant request is $1,500 and the maximum is $5,000. An applicant may submit no more than one proposal in a given granting year to the TREE Grant Program. DFFM reserves the right to limit the total amount of each grant depending upon the total number of grant requests in order to achieve an allocation which best meets the needs of urban forestry in the State.

Grant amounts must be matched or exceeded by the community or organization receiving a grant, and this funding must be verified by DFFM. The applicant's matching funds may come from several sources including, but not limited to, local tax revenues and donations of money, trees, labor, or equipment. Matching funds may not be supplied from other funding programs administered by the Federal government.

Successful applicants will sign an agreement with DFFM stating their intention to complete the project as proposed within a specified time limit. If approved, the application becomes a part of the grant agreement. Grants will be dispersed on a reimbursable basis unless otherwise authorized. Successful applicants must comply with the requirement of the Federal Government Single Audit Act and all relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars.

All payments are contingent upon the availability of funds and reimbursement by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.

APPLICATION EVALUATION

In order to be evaluated, applications must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The application must be submitted through the online eCivis portal.
2. The applications must be received in our office by the deadline.
3. The proposal must be consistent with all stated grant limitations.

JUDGING CRITERIA

The application process is competitive. Applications will be evaluated by the following criteria:

1. Inclusion of all required information
2. Proposals demonstrating that the project is a component of a total tree management program
3. Project's capacity for promoting, improving, and developing a Tree City's or Tree Campus' urban forest resource
4. Technical merit
5. Relative value to the site and community
6. Percentage of community census block with household income below poverty level (2010 U.S. Census Data)
7. Thoroughness and completeness of planting plan and five-year maintenance plan, if applicable
8. Reasonable estimates for all expenditures
9. Plan for publicizing project

Not all criteria will apply to all projects. Funds will be awarded based upon the number of applications and available funds. Requested funds may be reduced if cost estimates are judged to be excessive.

APPLICATION NARRATIVE DETAILS

When drafting your proposal, please include the following information:

- ☐ Completed Application Form
    - ☐ Proposal Application Questions:
        1. Email address of submitter
        2. Application Title
        3. Organization Name
        4. Program Congressional District
        5. Project Legislative District
        6. Affirmation of Tree City or Campus Designation
        7. Applicant Information – A basic overview/description of applicant, including their purpose or mission statement.
        8. Project Need
        9. Project Objectives and/or Goals
        10. Anticipated Project Benefits – Benefits to the local urban and community forest program, public relations, education, and the potential for project sustainability should be included.
        11. Project Methods – A narrative detailing how the project will be accomplished should include the following elements:
            - Activities (include scope of work)
            - Participants (project personnel, volunteers, corporate sponsor, etc.)
            - Administration
            - Facilities and equipment
            - Timetable (include project start and end dates)
            - Outcome/Results

- ☐ Budget Narrative – Discuss how each of the identified financial needs will be met.

- ☐ Completed Budget Proposal Form

- ☐ Optional Materials
    1. Supporting documents – limited to 2 pages
    2. Proposed projects that include planting require the following additional documents (not included in the 2-page maximum mentioned above):
        - A detailed five (5) year maintenance plan specifying the entity responsible for maintenance and how it will be accomplished.
        - If trees will be planted within the Arizona Department of Transportation's right-of-way, Grantee must provide proof of permission prior to planting.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can applications be emailed?
No. Applications must be submitted through the eCivis grant portal listed on the grant overview sheet.

Do I need letters of support from my Board of Directors or contributors that are providing a cash and/or in-kind match with my application?
Letters of intent and signatures from volunteers that will be providing cash or in-kind match are not required. However, letters of support from sponsors, partnering organizations, and community leaders may help your application.

What is the allowable Overhead/ Administration rate?
It is intended that the majority of grant funding be available for specific project implementation and not general organizational support or administrative costs. Expectation is that less than 10% of grant funding will be utilized for general overhead expenses such as administrative labor, accounting, office expenses, etc. These expenses need to be allocable to the project and documented as any other direct project expenses. If "Indirect Costs" are proposed, an indirect cost rate plan must already be established by the organization and approved by the Department of Forestry and Fire Management prior to allowance of these expenses. Reimbursement of Indirect Costs greater than 10% will not be allowed.

Can I get funding for a project that has already been funded or started? Can money spent on another previous component be used as a match?
No, previously funded projects and on-going projects are not eligible. However, if the proposed project is a second phase or component to a previously funded project, it may be eligible for funding. Matching funds for another grant project cannot be used.

Will the grant funds be given out at the beginning of the grant cycle?
No, funds are only given out as the project is worked on and monies spent (reimbursement-based grant). No money will be given out without a fully documented report and supporting paperwork. Match greater than or equal to the costs incurred must be shown before a reimbursement is made.

What is the value of volunteer labor? Volunteer time may be valued at the local market rate for equivalent work (children at minimum wage). Hourly rates exceeding $20.00/hour will require specific support documentation for justification and approval. If you use a consultant, forestry professional, planner, etc., who donates their professional services, appropriate hourly rates may be documented in a letter from the individual or their organization.

When will I know if my grant was accepted? What is the next step? Applicants will receive a confirmation email indicating whether their application made the deadline and is being considered. After grant proposals are reviewed, applicants will be notified if their grant requests have been funded after the announcement date listed on the grant overview sheet. The contract

will be emailed to the grant recipients for approval/execution. Billable, funded work on your grant can not begin until you receive a copy of the final executed grant agreement.