

# Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management



## Community Challenge Grants 2024

### REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS (Notice of Funding Opportunity)

Applications must be submitted electronically  
through DFFM's application portal.

Visit our website for more information:

<https://dffm.az.gov/grants/community>

### Application Deadline:

**No Later than October 20th, 2024**

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### Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management Urban and Community Forestry Community Challenge Grant Program Grant Guidelines

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<b>Project Timeframe:</b>	Quarter 1, 2025 – End of Quarter 1, 2026*
<b>Projects Closed:</b>	April 30, 2026 (Final Reports and Reimbursement Requests Due)
<b>Est. Total Program Funding:</b>	\$230,000.00
<b>Award Maximum:</b>	\$60,000.00
<b>Award Minimum:</b>	\$15,000.00
<b>Typical Granting Range:</b>	\$20,000.00 – \$50,000.00
<b>Cost Share/Match Required:</b>	10% (1:10) cost-share from non-federal source
<b>Grant Theme:</b>	<u>Trees as Strategies for Climate Adaptation and Mitigation</u>
<b>Application Submittal:</b>	<a href="https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/16g5dmjikxy13">https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/16g5dmjikxy13</a>
<b>Application Deadline:</b>	<b>11:59 PM Arizona Time</b> <b>Sunday, October 20th, 2024</b>
<b>Award Notification:</b>	<b>After October 27th, 2024</b>
<b>Questions:</b>	Madeline Burton UCF Program Manager mburton@dffm.az.gov 480-769-4184

*Major funding for this program is provided by the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management's Urban and Community Forestry Program and USDA Forest Service. These institutions are equal opportunity providers.*

# Notice of Funding Opportunity

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## DFFM reserves the right not to accept the following:

- Hand-written applications (except for signature)
- Applications that do not meet the grant criteria
- Incomplete applications

## Introduction

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) – Urban and Community Forestry in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry, is pleased to offer the Community Challenge Grant program.

Urban and Community Forestry is a cooperative program that focuses on the stewardship of urban natural resources. It is designed to encourage projects that promote tree planting, tree care, the protection and enhancement of urban and community forest ecosystems, and education on tree issues in cities, towns, and communities nationwide. Community Challenge Grants are awarded through this program to encourage and promote citizen involvement in creating and supporting long-term and sustainable urban and community forestry programs at the local level.

## Program Objectives

The Community Challenge Grants are to be used to promote and enhance the quality of Arizona's urban and community forests. Research project funding is provided as seed dollars. Projects should be aimed at improving the long-term health and care of the urban forest or initiating new urban forestry projects in Arizona communities that would not otherwise be funded through existing budgets.

## State Strategic Goals and Program Priorities

### *Arizona Forest Action Plan 2020*

To be eligible, all proposals must meet at least **one** of the State's strategic goals for urban and community forestry outlined in the **Arizona Forest Action Plan 2020**. This document can be found on the Forestry and Community Forestry website (<https://dffm.az.gov/forestry-community-forestry>). Projects should touch on one or more of the following goals relevant to Urban Forestry:

1. **People and Landscapes, Goal 1:** People and communities receive maximum benefits from forests and trees (p. 43)
2. **Ecosystem Health, Goal 1:** Resilient and diverse forest ecosystem structures, processes, and functions (p. 60).
3. **Climate Change, Goal 1:** Increase the resilience of ecosystems to climate change (p. 124).
4. **Climate Change, Goal 3:** Broad public and community understanding of climate change science, Arizona's variable climate, and current and future impacts (p.125).
5. **Cultural Resources, Goal 1:** Improved communication between all land management agencies, indigenous tribes, and other cultural groups about varying perspectives and beliefs related to forests, trees, and other natural resources (p. 141).

# Notice of Funding Opportunity

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## Eligible Applicants

- Units of local government (counties, municipalities, cities, towns, and townships)
- Tribal governments
- Non-profit organizations with 501(c)3 status
- 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) before receiving a new award.

*AZ DFFM does not discriminate against any person or organization because of race, color, religion, disability, sex, age or national origin.*

## Grantee Showcase

Each grant recipient will be **required** to participate in the annual Grantee Showcase during the year their grant is active. The Grantee Showcase typically takes place online every year in September or October. If the event is in person, 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).

## Projects Categories

Well-rounded projects include a scope of work that touches on one or more of the seven (7) categories listed below. Proposals that meet multiple categories are desired and more competitive; those that do not fall into at least one of the categories are ineligible.

The bulleted example projects under each category are listed for your reference. This is a **non-exhaustive list** of possible example projects by category; other projects that fit the category are encouraged. These examples should not be construed as a guarantee of project funding for any year or under any category.

### Category 1 – Information and Education

- Arbor Day programs
- Workshops/seminars with an urban forestry emphasis
- Urban forestry reference library development or enhancement
- Arborist and tree worker training classes
- Urban forestry youth programs or education

### Category 2 – Planning

- Planning or management document development (e.g., Street-tree Master Plan, Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan)
- Tree ordinance development or revision
- Efforts toward becoming an approved Tree City USA community
- Community forest management or shade master plans
- Urban Forestry Board or commission development

### Category 3 – Community and Natural Resources Management

- Asset Management (that includes urban trees)
- Tree inventories (including protocol development)

## Notice of Funding Opportunity

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- Canopy inventories (including protocol development)

### Category 4 – Maintenance

- Hazard tree evaluation, removal, and replacement
- Contract pruning using the International Society of Arboriculture standards
- Tree and sidewalk conflict resolution with an emphasis on tree-preservation
- Risk Management programs

### Category 5 – Demonstration Projects

- Technology transfer
- Tree habitat implementation and restoration projects
- Market-driven Forest Fire Hazard Reduction in urban-rural interface areas

### Category 6 – Climate Change Resiliency

- Strategies that build urban forest resiliency
- Urban forest vulnerability mapping (related to drought, flooding, and other climate change impacts)

### Category 7 – Assessment

- Expansion of existing assessments intended to improve understanding of tree growth and maintenance, tree physiology and morphology, and species adaptations in Arizona.
- Projects that further explain the role of urban trees in human health, conserving energy, and mitigating the urban heat island.

## Grant Limitations and Projects that DO NOT Qualify

1. No more than 20% of the *total project dollars* may be used for **non-tree** plant materials.
2. Funds used to purchase trees as part of the project may not be used to substitute for existing tree planting and care expenditures. Any tree planting project\* must include a five-year (5-year) maintenance plan. This maintenance must be funded separately by the applicant. All trees purchased must meet the American Standard for Nursery Stock and Arizona Nursery Association Standards.
3. Indirect costs associated with the proposed activities may not exceed 10% of the reimbursable project costs.
4. All project work must be **completed by March 31, 2026**, unless otherwise authorized by the grant administrator or specified in the grant agreement. Priority may be given to projects that are able to be completed before this date.
5. This is a reimbursable grant program. At least 10% of the total cost (match) of the project must be contributed by the applicant from sources **other than the federal government**. This amount may be in cash, services, volunteer time, equipment usage, and/or in-kind contributions. Grant funds will be distributed on a 90% reimbursement basis, and at no time can they be used to cover more than 90% of the project cost. No grant funds will be distributed until project expenditures and appropriate match are accrued. Ten percent (10%) of the funds may be withheld from the final payment until the project is completed and approved by the Urban and Community Forestry representative.

## Notice of Funding Opportunity

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6. Funds may be used for specified projects only and may not be used to meet ordinary operational expenses or to purchase food or beverages.
7. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase capital equipment (i.e., costing >\$5,000). However, they may be used to rent such equipment.
8. Projects involving infrastructure and construction are not allowable. Construction is the building of foundations and permanent surfaces and includes structure remodeling, bridge building, road maintenance or infrastructure, water development, etc.
9. Research and development projects are not allowable.
10. Projects that include purchase of capital equipment (valued over \$5,000 per item) are not allowable.

**\*Note: Organizations that receive a grant related to planting must have a Certified Arborist or Certified Landscape Professional (CLP) on hand when 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.**

### Cost-Share/Matching Requirements

All awards have a cost-share/matching requirement of 10% of total project cost. Good practice includes finding 100% of the project cost then calculating the grant request based on the amount of match the applicant can provide.

#### *Example*

Amount Requested in Grant Share (90%)	Minimum Match Requirement (10%)	Total Project Cost (100%)
\$30,000	\$3,333	\$33,333

If funding is awarded, each submitted reimbursement request must satisfy the total amount of the required match to be reimbursed for the grant share.

### Federal and State Regulations

Grantees must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, policies, and procedures, including obtaining all permits and approvals necessary to proceed with proposed grant activities. Successful applicants must also comply with all regulations pertaining to Federal Grants. It will be the applicant's responsibility to develop, document, administer, and manage the grant in accordance with all applicable Federal and State laws, including the Federal Government Single Audit Act and all relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars. Awardees will be subject to the OMB requirements and guidance in subparts A through F of 2 CFR 200 as adopted and supplemented by USDA in 2 CFR part 400.

CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) – <http://www.ecfr.gov>. If grantees need assistance obtaining any of these documents in electronic or printed form, please contact DFFM for assistance.

## Notice of Funding Opportunity

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All records for awarded grants must be maintained for five (5) years following final payment or longer if required by law. These grants include an audit requirement and instructions are provided in the Code of Federal Regulations: 2 CFR 200.

### SAM Registration

Recipients are required to register with the federal government System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov> before receiving an award. You will need a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), Taxpayer ID number (TIN), and financial information to set up an Electronic Funds Transfer. Please allow at least two (2) weeks to apply or renew this registration. Please note DUNS numbers are no longer used. All information is now in the SAM System.

Recipients must also register with the Arizona Department of Administration's Vendor Portal (<https://app.az.gov/>) to receive reimbursements.

### Payment of Funds

**Payment of Funds Payments are made on a reimbursement basis, and only approved eligible costs with proper documentation can be reimbursed. Reimbursements may take 60-90 days to process after approval from DFFM. Payments may be held until all reporting and paperwork requirements have been met by the recipient.**

*No funds will be reimbursed for expenses incurred prior to execution of the formal written agreement between the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management and the applicant organization.*

### Award Selection and Notification

Award Selection and Notification Applications are competitively scored by staff from DFFM and partner organizations. Funding is expected by mid-December 2024. Applicants will be notified of the status of their proposal via email, and those selected for funding will be provided with further instructions.

### Application Submission

Applicants will complete an online application via eCivis with multiple parts. After creating an individual user login, the applicant will complete three required online forms:

1. **Required Organization Profile Form** – This includes information about the applicant's organization and points of contact.
2. **Required Application Form** – This includes questions about your proposed project. Several questions are common to most state grant applications. Some questions are specific to this grant program. All questions and required responses are outlined below.
3. **Required Budget Form** – The budget form details how the requested grant funds and contributed match will support the project.

## Notice of Funding Opportunity

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4. **Other Attachments** – Tree maintenance plans are required for those projects involving tree installation, **If specific partners have been identified, then *Letters of Partnership or Collaboration* are required—a maximum of 5 pages (8 ½ x 11) in one electronic file.** Letters of support (no more than five pages in one file) may be included but are not required.

### Required Organization Profile Form

1. This form includes information about your organization, your management contacts, and who will be responsible for implementing the grant if it is awarded.
2. Employer Identification Number (EIN)
3. A Unique Entity Identifier from SAM.gov is required before an award can be made. (See page 6 above for more information)
4. The form also allows the identification of a separate point of contact for a business/finance representative and an authorized representative other than the online applicant.

### Required Application Form

Applications meeting the minimum requirements listed above will then be evaluated and scored based on how the proposed project meets the following criteria:

1. Fitting this year’s grant theme - 1500 Characters (10 points)  
**Trees as Strategies for Climate Adaptation and Mitigation**
2. Project Need and Justification - 500 Characters (10 points)
  - Clearly state the need for work
  - Describe how they will project positively and directly impact urban forest canopy
  - Clearly convey the benefits of this project
  - Describe how the project aligns with AZ Forest Action Plan Goals.
3. Project Outcomes - 500 Characters (15 points)
  - Clearly describe your anticipated outcomes
  - Outcomes are the measurable (how many, how much) results of your actions
4. Scope of Work - 2000 Characters (10 points)
  - How will your project be implemented?
  - Include sufficient detail about your project activities
  - Include a description of who is responsible for completing the work
5. Project Timeline - 1000 Characters (10 points)
  - Ensure the timeline is reasonable and specific
  - Provide a specific timeline with beginning and end dates that show the project is achievable in 1-1.5 years
  - Describe anticipated quarterly accomplishments or other milestones
6. Collaborative Elements - 1500 Characters (10 points)
  - Identify the collaborative partners and what each will contribute
  - Describe how each partner will contribute to the planning and implementation phases of the project



## Notice of Funding Opportunity

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7. Results and Evaluation Plan - 2000 Characters (10 points)
  - Provide a clear plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the project
  - How will you assess your success throughout the project timeline, and when will you know if you need to change course, if at all?
  - How will you share your results and impacts?
8. Sustainability Plan - 2000 Characters (10 points)
  - Document your plans for making this project's implementation sustainable.
  - How will it be maintained without additional federal and state financial support?
  - What is your long-term commitment to success? What are your long-term goals (3+ years)?
  - If you are planting trees include some basic details about your tree maintenance plan here, and attach a full tree maintenance plan to the submission.
9. Project Budget and Financials - (10 points)
  - On the required budget form, in the narrative section, mathematically describe how you arrived at the figures in each category
  - Is your budget reasonable and specific?
  - Differentiate between grant share and match
  - Ensure you provide and describe 10% match
10. Complete and understandable application (5 points)
  - Is your application complete?
  - Can someone other than you understand what you are trying to achieve?
  - Are your details consistent between all criteria?

## Required Budget Form

1. **Budget Form** (Required) - 1 form per project (maximum of 2 pages). Applicants **must use the budget form provided by DFFM on the eCivis platform**. Reach out to the UCF Program Contact if you cannot locate this form. This form asks for financial details about how the recipient will use the requested grant funds. A 10% match is required. Budget categories include:
  - a. **Administrative Labor** – What personnel will contribute to administrative labor? What is their approximate rate per hour? Administrative labor is reserved for grant administration and general supervision of the project. You may include **Fringe Benefits** in this category.
  - b. **Project Labor (including Fringe Benefits)** – What personnel will contribute project labor? What is their approximate cost per hour? The Project Labor category should be reserved for **staff working for the grantee organization or agency and not contractors**. **Fringe Benefits** (approximate costs) should be included in the Project Labor category and broken out in the description as separate line items. **Note:** Reimbursement requests must be accompanied by payroll documentation and timesheets.
  - c. **Travel** – Include travel costs necessary for project completion.

## Notice of Funding Opportunity

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- d. **Equipment** – What equipment is planned for purchase, rental, etc.? (Purchase of capital equipment greater than \$5000 is not allowed in this program). Equipment budgets may include operational costs or equipment rental to implement the project, but they may not include purchasing any capital equipment (valued over \$5,000 per unit).
- e. **Supplies** – What supplies are needed for the project?
- f. **Contractual** – What work will be completed by a contractor?
- g. **Other** – Describe other expected project costs as needed. This could include volunteer labor, IDC, etc.

### **FOOD OR BEVERAGES ARE NOT ALLOWABLE BUDGET ITEMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT OR MATCH**

Use the Budget Narrative boxes to provide a **mathematical** explanation (not only a verbal narrative about what you are doing) of how the dollar figures in your request were calculated. Provide as much mathematical detail as possible (amount per item times the number of items, rate per hour, etc.). Reviewers will evaluate whether the costs are reasonable and necessary to complete the proposed work.

## Grant Review and Ranking

The grant review policy promotes a process whereby each grant application submitted is independently evaluated on its own strengths and merits. Applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of AZ DFFM Staff and the Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Committee members. Committee members may represent organizations that submit applications for funding if conflicts of interest exist; the following Recusal Procedures will be followed:

*Recusal Procedures: Committee members with a conflict of interest for specific applicants will be asked to recuse themselves from discussions and ranking those grant applications. Recusal includes leaving the room during discussions and refraining from influencing committee votes through dialogue.*

*Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest exists if a review committee member, or member of their family, is a director, principal officer, key employee, or member of a committee with delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest. A person has a financial interest if the individual has, directly or indirectly, any actual or potential ownership, investment, or compensation arrangement with the grant applicant.*

All grant reviewers must complete a Community Challenge Grant Application Evaluation Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form, which will be kept on file at the State Forester's Office.

The grants awarded are discretionary funds. The review committee's recommendations will be presented to the State Forester for consideration and the final funding decision.

## Application Evaluation

To be eligible, applications must meet the following *minimum requirements*:

1. The applications must be submitted online by the deadline.

## Notice of Funding Opportunity

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2. Funding requested should fall within the granting range (\$15,000 - \$60,000).
3. The proposal must be consistent with all stated grant limitations.

**\*NOTE: Priority may be given to projects addressing social justice, shade inequity, and underserved populations.**

# Notice of Funding Opportunity

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How do I submit my application?**

Applications must be submitted online through the eCivis portal.

[https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn\\_redir/T/16g5dmjikxy13](https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/16g5dmjikxy13)

### **Do I need letters of support from my Board of Directors or contributors who provide a cash and/or in-kind match with my application?**

Letters of intent and signatures from volunteers 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 most grant funding is required for specific project implementation and not general organizational support or administrative costs. The 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 must be allocated 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 or be permitted under 2 CFR 200 and approved by DFFM before 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 ongoing projects are not eligible. If the proposed project is a second phase or component of a previously funded project, you may apply for Community Challenge Grant funds. 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 are 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 aged ≤14 years at minimum wage). Hourly rates exceeding \$30.00/hour will require specific support documentation for justification and approval. If you use consultants, forestry professionals, planners, etc., who donate 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 that their application was submitted. After grant proposals are reviewed, applicants will be notified if their grant requests have been funded. The contract will be emailed to the grant recipients for approval/execution. Billable, funded work on your project cannot begin until you receive a copy of the final executed grant agreement.