

Mississippi Forestry Commission 2020 Urban & Community Forestry Grant Program

Proposal Information Package
Application Deadline: Postmarked August 15, 2020



Photo by Leslie Robertson, courtesy National Association of State Foresters

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2020 Urban and Community Forestry Grant

**Administered by the
Mississippi Forestry Commission**

Introduction

The Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) in cooperation with the United States Forest Service announces the Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Grant Program. The program is designed to encourage communities to create and support long-term and sustained urban and community forestry programs throughout Mississippi.

Background

The Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Assistance Program was authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL 95-313), Section 9, and amended by the 1990 Farm Bill (PL 101-624).

Primary emphasis of the U&CF program is to provide technical assistance through state forestry organizations to support U&CF planning, training and continuing education, demonstration projects, and assistance to local and state governments and non-profit, volunteer organizations in developing viable and continuing U&CF programs. All Federally funded projects shall meet the Congressional authority established and which accomplish the national U&CF program goals, and specific objectives identified in State U&CF Strategic Plans/State Action Plans. Funds are provided for states to sub-grant to participating organizations, to build statewide program development, and for state program institutional capacity.

Federal Program Objectives

Priority should be given to projects that maximize leveraging of federal funds, target the national U&CF program goals, stimulate U&CF activity and program development, and create involvement of volunteers.

National U&CF Program Goals Include

1. Mitigate and adapt to climate change
2. Protect and improve air and water quality
3. Conserve energy
4. Reduce the impacts of land use change, fragmentation, and urbanization on forest landscapes
5. Improve community health and well-being
6. Build urban forest resilience and mitigate the impacts of invasive pests and catastrophic events.

Climate Change: State partners are encouraged to further focus program educational and technical assistance and outreach efforts on helping localities improve the resilience of their urban and community forests in response to climate change stresses. Several of the areas where program partners can provide assistance to communities include strategic tree planting and active management of the urban forest to 1) increase carbon sequestration, 2) reduce energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, 3) reduce the forest's susceptibility to insect and disease, 4) improve the forest's ability to contribute clean water quality and quantity, and 5) generate bio-fuels from urban wood waste products to off-set fossil fuel usage.

Regional U&CF Program Guidance Include

The focus of activities conducted within this program area should include the following:

1. States are encouraged to conduct larger statewide significant projects.
2. Address urban forestry issues and opportunities in major metropolitan areas.
3. State programs should focus on accomplishment within the 6 national program goal areas.
4. State programs should focus on implementing goals and objectives outlined in their state forest action plans.
5. State programs should also be focused on developing their communities' capacity to manage urban forest.
6. Tree planting (site specific) demonstration projects are allowable, however; the total percentage of funds dedicated to these types of projects must be agreed upon between the states and Regional Office. States must indicate their preferred percentage in their grant narrative.

States must use funds to focus on activities as indicated above. All activities must be consistent with the U&CF program authority and standards.

State Program Objectives

The following Priority Issues and Strategies will be specifically emphasized to help meet Mississippi Urban and Community Forest Program objectives:

- Priority Issue: Forest Sustainability
 - Strategy 1.6 – Encourage land use planning.
- Priority Issue: Resource Markets
 - Strategy 2.3 – Evaluate opportunities for non-traditional markets and ecosystem services.
- Priority Issue: Forest Health
 - Strategy 4.4 – Invasive species awareness and management
- Priority Issue: Stewardship Education – All Strategies
 - Strategies include creating and utilizing partnerships, establishing funding and final delivery of urban and community forest management throughout the state and with extra emphasis in priority areas identified in the Forest Action Plan.
- Priority Issue: Wildfire Fuel Reduction
 - Strategy 6.4 – Identify high fire risk areas.
- Priority Issue: Climate Change
 - Strategy 7.4 – Conserve/Protect urban carbon stores
- Priority Issue: Wildlife
 - Strategy 8.4 – Land use practices
 - Strategy 8.7 – Encourage conservation of natural habitats.

Current Mississippi Urban and Community Forest Program objectives are listed below:

1. Increase awareness of the importance of trees and urban forest management in the urban environment.
2. Work to ensure a healthy urban environment and livable cities in Mississippi through urban forest management.
3. Increase technical expertise in urban and community forestry practices and provide education and training opportunities to urban forest managers, tree care providers, consultants, foresters, and volunteers on urban and community forest management and proper tree care.
4. Develop self-sustaining urban and community forestry programs at the local and state levels.
5. Encourage partnerships in support of urban and community forestry in Mississippi.
6. Seek funding opportunities for implementing urban and community forestry programs in Mississippi.

An important goal of Mississippi's Urban and Community Forestry Program is to inspire or enhance local or statewide urban and community forestry programs with emphasis on increasing local capacity, volunteer involvement, planning, training, and continuing education. Projects that demonstrate use of funding to provide the largest impact will receive priority. Grantees are encouraged to do projects of state-wide significance such as training, publications, or research that could be used to provide information on a state-wide basis. First-time municipal applicants and municipalities seeking Tree City USA status are also given priority for funding. Tree planting and demonstration projects will have the lowest priority for funding.

The Mississippi Forestry Commission maintains sole discretion to fund a project of merit.

Grant Program Overview

Eligible Recipients

Funds may be awarded to units of local governments (city, town, county), 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 eligible, must apply in partnership with a non-profit organization or with their local government. All grant recipients must be able to receive grant funds via Electronic Fund Transfers (EFTs).

Available Funds

Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program funds will be awarded on a competitive basis. **Requests for funding cannot exceed \$20,000.** Sub-awards will be awarded and projects completed as single year funding, unless otherwise specified. Funding is for programs, projects, or activities not otherwise currently funded, and cannot be used to substitute for existing funds. **Funding is not available for entertainment, food and beverages, or purchase of equipment (including computers, printers, PDAs, landscaping or construction tools and machinery).** The Mississippi Forestry Commission reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or to approve partial funding for any and all proposals.

Match Requirements

Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program funds may not exceed 50 percent of the total project cost and shall be provided on a matching basis with non-federal funds. These non-federal funds cannot be used as a match for any other Federal cost-share project. The match may include in-kind contributions, volunteer assistance, and private and public (non-Federal) monetary contributions. All matching funds must be specifically related to the proposed project. The source of the match, cash and in-kind, must be identified and quantified in the application by enclosing letters of intended support. Funds expended prior to or after the date of the grant agreement cannot be used as match. **Funds expended for entertainment, food and beverages, computers, or construction and landscape equipment cannot be used as match.** Costs and third party in-kind contributions counting toward satisfying a matching requirement must be verifiable from sub-recipient records. Documentation of all matching funds must be provided before reimbursement of the grant award will be issued.

In-Kind Contributions include: on-hand supplies, third party donations of supplies or equipment, and the value of time (including fringe benefits) and equipment spent by the Grantee's employees or volunteers on eligible project activities. Rates for volunteers performing tasks in their normal line of work are calculated at their current job rate. Assistance provided by Federal or Mississippi Forestry Commission employees **may not** be claimed as part of the local match.

In-Kind Matching Guidelines

- Adult volunteers - \$15/hour
- Youth volunteers - \$7.25/hour (Federal minimum wage)
- Donated professional services – use customary rates for services provided
- Donations of materials – use customary retail rates
- Personnel/staff – use hourly wage rates (may also include fringe benefits)
- Equipment – use established rates per hour, per mile, etc.
- Vehicle mileage – \$.55/mile (current federal standard mileage rate, business use)

Ownership of Equipment and Supplies Purchased with Grant Funds

Unless otherwise specified, all equipment and supplies reimbursed remain the property of the grant recipient throughout their useful life span, to be used *exclusively* for activities related to the project or for other activities consistent with the goals and objectives of the *Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program*. If these conditions cannot be met, arrangements will be made to transfer ownership to the State.

Grant recipients must be able to document allowable expenses to prove match. An itemized budget must be included with the proposal outlining federal and non-federal portions of the project. Grant Recipients must abide by all applicable federal requirements connected with this grant, including anti-lobbying prohibitions. Recipients must certify that they are not debarred from receiving federal grant or contract funds by completing Form ODA/FS-10.

Records must be maintained according to federal regulations. The financial management system of the grantees shall meet the following standards:

1. Records shall comply with generally accepted accounting principles.
2. Records will document allowable costs.
3. Records will include source documentation such as canceled checks (front and back) or "paid" receipts, itemized invoices, purchase orders, payrolls, time and attendance records, contracts, etc. Invoices must be marked paid and reflect how payment was made (i.e. check number and date).
4. Records will be maintained for 3 years following final payment.

Grant Timeframe

All applications submitted must be postmarked by August 15, 2020. Recipients will be notified by mail of project and funding approval in September 2020. Approved projects can begin only after Federal Assurances are signed by the grantee, and a grant agreement is signed by the grantee and the Mississippi Forestry Commission State Forester. Final program funding is contingent upon receipt of USDA Forest Service program funds by the MFC. **Projects must be completed within one (1) year of finalized grant agreement.**

Interim and Final Reports

Three periodic progress reports and a final report may be required of the grantee. The schedule and content of final and periodic reports will be set in advance of initiating the project. Final Reports must be submitted within 30 days of project completion.

Payment Process

Reimbursement payments will be made by electronic fund transfer upon project completion and review of the Final Report, or according to a payment schedule agreed to in advance. The Mississippi Forestry Commission 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.

Eligible Projects

Eligible Projects must meet Federal and State Program Objectives. Projects must be consistent with the comprehensive plan of the city or county where the project will take place. The Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program is intended to support new initiatives, programs, projects, staff positions or activities not currently being funded through other sources. The Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program is not intended for the purpose of beautification tree plantings. A maximum of 15% of the Federal funds awarded (Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program dollars) is allowable for plant material and tree planting.

Projects will benefit from having clearly stated goals, well-thought-out budgets, and well planned scheduling that utilizes volunteers, creates local partnerships, promotes development of local community forestry

programs, has a long-term focus and benefits, and/or has an educational or technology transfer component. The program is designed to support new and innovative initiatives or expand existing programs that would not occur without grant funds. It is not intended to substitute for current funding levels. Some project examples, which support the program's objectives, are offered as a guide below.

Examples of Eligible Projects

The following list includes examples of projects that can be funded. ***Tree planting projects related to the proposal are an allowable expense for up to 15% of the federal funds.*** For assistance in determining if your project is eligible, please call the Mississippi Forestry Commission at (601) 213-6683.

Urban & Community Forestry Program Development

Grant funding may assist with:

- Creation and training of a Tree Board
- Development of a Tree Ordinance or Tree Conservation/Preservation Ordinance
- Conducting a Hazard Tree Evaluation
- Holding a Public Meeting on the Benefits of Trees

Urban & Community Forestry Program Improvement

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. Grant funding may assist with:

- A. ***Professional Staffing**** – Full or part-time employment of an urban forestry professional to assist in community forestry program establishment, development and improvement. A draft position description and qualifications must be submitted with the application.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Staffing of certified arborists, consulting foresters or landscape architects
- b. Educational seminars and workshops for industry professionals
- c. Forming student chapters of professional organizations
- d. Internships

*Organizations seeking funding for the first time for professional staff positions will be eligible for a grant up to \$20,000. Organizations seeking funding for a second time for professional staff positions will be considered. Second-year funds will generally be limited to awards of \$10,000, based on funding availability. All funding for staff positions is expected to be used as seed monies to help establish or build local program capacity. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to identify and secure other future sources of funding to maintain staff positions.**

- B. ***Conducting a Tree Inventory and Analysis*** – Projects designed to inventory public trees on streets, parks, school campuses, etc. The applicant must demonstrate that the inventory will be tied to its tree maintenance activities as well as plans for future tree planting. A management plan *should* accompany or be developed after an inventory. The purchase of inventory software and field data recorders is allowed using grant funds; however, the purchase of a desktop or laptop computer may not.

C. Conducting a Resource Assessment - The assessment of local natural resources either on public or private properties (includes parks, rights-of-way, cemeteries, residential & commercial areas and college campuses). A resource assessment will result in a document or database containing specific, standardized information on groups of trees, other natural resources, and other features (such as the built environment) in the community. For example:

- A satellite imagery or aerial photography study that documents community tree cover and identifies current vegetative cover types and land uses. The study may include an analysis of the change in tree cover over time.
- A GIS study that identifies sensitive land areas (forested areas, floodplains, steep slopes, problem soils, etc.) and overlays parcels, landownership, zoning district, and utility and street rights-of-way.
- An i-Tree Eco analysis, or similar type of analysis, using randomly located plots to model the environmental services provided by a community's forest.
- A survey of public property to identify available tree planting locations including community street rights-of-way, park land, and other public properties.

Resource assessments should be developed by *professional staff* with experience in conducting inventories and/or assessments. The inventories and assessments must be conducted using industry-standard data collection, data analysis and data presentation techniques and protocols. Volunteers involved in the inventories and assessments must be trained and proficient in the industry standard protocols and techniques.

D. Development of Management Plans or Street Tree Master Plans - A management plan will result in a detailed document or set of documents, developed from professionally-based resource assessments/inventories, which outlines future management of the community's trees and forests. A management plan addresses the systematic planning, planting, protecting, conservation, storm damage mitigation, and/or maintenance of community trees. The plan should reflect the goals and objectives established by the City Forester, a local tree board, and/or City Council. A current tree inventory/resources assessment is generally a prerequisite for a management plan. For example:

- **Urban Forest Master Plan** based on a satellite imagery study and GIS analysis, or other inventories and assessments, which sets goals for tree canopy cover in residential and commercial areas, recommends areas for reforestation, recommends areas for preservation, promotes community education and outreach efforts, and recommends tree maintenance policies for City or County properties.
- **Street Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan** based on an inventory of trees and open spaces in street rights-of-way. These types of plans include information such as a prioritized list of tree pruning and removals, a prioritized list of replacement and new tree plantings, a recommended yearly budget, and a recommended list of tree species for replanting.
- **Regional Watershed Management Plan** whose resource assessment includes specific analysis and management recommendations for the community's trees and forest resources. The plan includes management recommendations for vegetative buffers and invasive species in the community including areas for preservation and restoration.

- **City Parks Vegetation Management Plan** based on an inventory of park trees and invasive plants that includes a plan for the removal of invasive species, abatement of tree hazards and reforestation.
- **Hazard Tree Reduction and Replanting Plan** based on a survey of community commercial or residential rights-of-way.

E. *Revising an Existing Tree Ordinance/Policy* – Projects to revise an ordinance will be eligible. The ordinance or policy should address the establishment of municipal authority over public trees and set maintenance and management standards. A specific department or staff personnel should already be in place and assigned to enforce and implement policies on the local level. The ordinance or policy may also address issues such as tree preservation during development, watershed preservation or buffer requirements, natural area preservation, reforestation and building restrictions, etc.

F. *Professional Certification* – Projects that promote level of professionalism within community forest management program. Proposals may include the costs associated with ISA certification.

Non-Profit Program Development

Organizations must qualify as non-profits under state and federal guidelines. If your organization has not participated in this program in the past please provide information about your organization's mission, structure and past activities in regard to urban and community forestry.

- **Staffing and Administration** – Part-time staff personnel to assist with administration, program development, volunteer coordination, etc. These funds should be viewed as start-up funds and not be relied on in subsequent grant cycles for continuation of the position.
- **Volunteer Training and Coordination**
- **Publications and Communication** – Projects which develop publications, exhibits, videos or websites that increase public awareness and understanding of the benefits of urban forests.

Tree Planting Projects

The proposal must demonstrate how the project will help develop or enhance a community forestry program. The following is **required** when any tree planting funds are requested:

1. Include tree planting as a separate component in the narrative section under Strategy:
 - List the number of trees to be planted by species and size - caliper, container, bare root, B&B (a species list is required and must be approved by the grant administrator).
 - Outline strategies for the tree-planting component, including personnel and volunteers involved, their roles and their qualifications.
2. Include a site plan map or drawing showing the location of trees to be planted at the site. Include species, spacing between trees, and existing features such as other trees, buildings, roads, sidewalks, and utility lines, etc. Include a general vicinity map or description.
3. Develop a maintenance plan for the first 3 years following planting. Indicate who will be responsible for supervising and implementing the maintenance plan and their qualifications.

Standard care and maintenance is to include supplemental watering as needed, replenishing mulch, seasonal inspection 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. If trees die during this period, they must be replaced with comparable trees at the applicant's expense. At the end of three years at least 90% of the trees must be living and vigorous. No grant money may be used to replace trees that have died.

Additional Tree Planting Priorities and Considerations:

- The use of volunteers in tree planting is highly encouraged.
- Cost efficient projects – planting smaller caliper trees that are a convenient size for volunteers to acquire, transport, handle and plant by hand will receive priority.
- The planting of small or ornamental or non-native trees is considered a low priority.
- Tree planting without a well-planned education, public awareness, demonstration or volunteer component is a low priority.

Additional Tree Planting Standards and Requirements:

- Plant materials must, at a minimum, meet the American Standard for Nursery Stock.
- Planting must be performed in accordance with standards described in Watson, G.W. and Himelick, E.B. Principles and Practice of Planting Trees and Shrubs or an alternate source approved by the Division of Forest Resources.
- Trees must be planted on non-federal public property.

Information, Education, and Training

- 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.
- 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. Topics include, but are not limited to, growing greener communities, tree care & maintenance, hazard tree evaluation, certified arborist training, tree ordinance development, tree protection methods, etc.
- Youth Programs
- Materials/Brochures for public use/training

Demonstration and Site-Specific Projects

- Volunteer Nurseries (contact the Program Coordinator directly for information of suitable options for developing a small-scale nursery)
- Urban Stream Restoration/Management
- Technology Transfer

Regional and Statewide Special Projects

Encourage creative and innovative proposals to address urban and community forestry needs and issues on a regional or statewide scale.

Ineligible Projects

Ineligible projects include, but are not limited to;

- Trail design, construction or maintenance
- Property acquisition and related costs
- Beautification projects
- Tree removal and maintenance
- Construction projects
- Equipment purchases
- Projects that will take place on private property (land not open to the public)

Application and Proposal

Application Submission

This RFA serves as the application package for this grant and contains all the instructions that an applicant requires to apply for grant funding.

Full applications will be accepted through email, mbooth@mfc.ms.gov Subject: "U&CF 2020 Grant Application". Applications submitted via paper mail, courier, or delivery service will also be accepted and should be sent to:

Mississippi Forestry Commission
Attn: Misty Booth, *Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator*
660 North Street, Suite 300
Jackson, Mississippi 39202

Proposals not formatted according to these instructions may be rejected without notice.

Application Form

Complete the enclosed Application Form with Federal employer identification number (required), authorizing signatures, etc.

Budget Proposal

Provide an itemized budget of all grant expenditures requested **and** for the match – indicate amounts for cash and in-kind contribution values. Each major project component from the proposal narrative **must** have a corresponding budget component. Budget estimates and match values must be reasonable and directly related to accomplishing the project objective. Refer to the sample budget for guidance, use multiple pages if needed.

Project Schedule/Timeline

Using the form provided (refer to the sample for guidance), provide the project outline, with the project steps: what will be done, who will do it, when it will be done, and accomplishments upon completion of each step (that is, significant events, deadlines, responsible parties, and measurement of success). All major activities listed must occur within the grant year, 10/01/20 – 9/30/21, whether funded by the grant or with matching funds and should be represented in the budget.

Proposal Narrative

The narrative should be specific and to the point. Departures from the format described below may result in automatic rejection. A draft job description is required if you are applying for funds to create an urban forester/arborist position. Complete narratives will include the following components:

- A. Project Title:** Short descriptive title of planned project.
- B. Background:** Briefly describe your community, agency or organization's current community forestry program/activities.
- C. Objectives:** Briefly describe what you plan to accomplish. List objectives in order of priority. Objectives should be realistic, measurable and attainable within the contract period.
- D. Statement of Need:** Briefly explain why this project is important **and** justify how it will enhance the community forestry program. Public relations, education, and the potential for continuation of the project should also be included.
- E. Strategy/Methods:** If further detail is necessary beyond the Project Schedule/Timeline form, describe in detail the activities (or steps) that will take place to achieve the stated objectives. For projects with multiple objectives, this section may be divided into the major components and organized around specific activities or measurable objectives, such as tree inventory and analysis, tree ordinance, Arbor Day Festival, educational brochure, etc.
- F. Visibility and impact:** Explain how this project will be communicated to the public, stakeholders, public officials, targeted groups, etc. Describe any impact the project will have on public education concerning urban forestry. Describe the long-term impact this project will have in the community. Describe what future plans/projects will follow or arise out of this project.
- G. Project Coordinators, Partners and Cooperators:** Provide a primary contact (name, title and brief description of qualifications), for each individual responsible for:
 - (1) overall project coordination
 - (2) financial/contractual matters
 - (3) technical matters. List any partnering/cooperating organizations/agencies and describe their role. Describe any volunteer involvement/partners.

H. Final Products and Accomplishments: Provide a bullet list of measurable accomplishments and/or final products which will result from completion of this project, and which will be submitted in the final report.

I. Outreach: Describe any specific strategies to reach out to and include underserved populations and those with the greatest need, and how they will benefit from this project.

Supplements (if applicable)

Supporting Documents: Letters of support within your organization and from partners, as well as committed volunteer organizations, community groups or schools. Sample documents, photos, etc. may also be included. *Optional*

Draft Position Description, including Qualifications: Required if applying for staff funding.

Location Map and Site Plan: *Required for all demonstration and site-specific projects, including tree planting.* Include a general location map and a site plan for all on-the-ground projects. Site plan may be a sketch but should be detailed enough to show what you propose to accomplish.

Required Forms

Standard Forms: The following forms must be completed with an original signature and enclosed or scanned as part of the proposal

- SF 424: Official Application for Federal Assistance
- SF 424A: Budget Summary

Note: On SF 424 “Application for Federal Assistance”:

Check box “C” to item 19, as Review by State Executive Order 12372 does not apply to these grants.

- SF 424B: Assurances—Non-Construction Programs
- SF LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities -- as revised in 1996 (2 pages, 46 kb) (For additional guidance on lobbying restrictions and disclosures, see the applicable cost principles in OMB Circular A-21, A-87, or A-122 and the applicable Federal agency rule on lobbying)
- AD 1047: Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions
- AD 1049: Certification Regarding Drug-Free Work Place Requirements (Grants) Alternative I – For Grantees Other Than Individuals

NOTE: All standard grant application forms are available through “Grants.gov.”

http://www.grants.gov/agencies/forms_instruction_information.jsp

- List of Key Contacts including the Project Officer and Financial Officer who is responsible for completing the Financial Status Report (SF-425)

Useful Grant Links to find additional information on the following questions/topics:

1. Which Circular Do I Follow?

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/financial_fin_grants_expanded/#resource

a. States, local governments, and Indian Tribes follow:

- i. A-87 for cost principles, [Relocated to 2 CFR, Part 225](#)
- ii. [A-102](#) for administrative requirements, and
- iii. [A-133](#) for audit requirements

2. Audit Requirements:

[OMB Circular A-133](#), Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations (includes revisions published in *Federal Register* June 27, 2003, and June 26, 2007)

3. Where Can I Find Copies of the Forms I Need? <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/type/SF>

The Selection Process

Evaluation Criteria

Grant proposals submitted under the Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program will be evaluated by a group of qualified reviewers chosen by the Mississippi Forestry Commission. Each proposal will be ranked by the group based on the criteria listed below, using a point system similar to the one below. Be sure each issue is clearly addressed in the written narrative and budget sheet. Projects must score a minimum of 70 points in order to be considered for the funding. Recommendations for grant funding are presented to the State Forester for final approval. Recipients will be notified by mail of project and funding approval in September.

Project Evaluation

Only applications that meet all General Requirements will be reviewed and scored. Project proposals will be scored on whether or not the information provided about the project indicates that the project:

- Meets a demonstrated urban forestry need
- Meets Federal and State Program Objectives – Priority areas, strategies align w/ MS Forest Action Plan
- Helps strengthen and develop local urban & community forestry capacity
- Has a realistic time frame for completion
- Is cost effective
- Has documented cash and in-kind matching commitment
- Has continued effect after completion
- Uses innovation or involves research and new technology
- Has culturally diverse values
- Enhances volunteer involvement
- Involves various partnerships
- Utilizes personnel that have qualifications to complete activities
- Generates local visibility, incorporates public relations and awareness
- Can be duplicated and/or used as a model in other Mississippi cities
- Enhances environmental, social, cultural, historical, psychological and economical values
- Shows demonstrated ability of the applicant to follow through on project completion
- Accomplishes one or more goals in the community's comprehensive plan

Evaluation Form

Each proposal will be ranked, by the group, based on the criteria listed above, using a point system similar to the one below.

Application/Purpose/Need

- Is the application/proposal complete, accurate and does it follow format?
- Are project goals and objectives clearly stated and reasonable?
- Does this project start an urban forestry program or enhance an existing program?
- Will public awareness of the benefits of trees, forests or urban forest management be improved?
- What is the social, educational and/or environmental value of the projects? Long term?
- Describe the environmental and aesthetic value of the project.

**Points
10**

Planning and Implementation	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project have a needed, realistic and/or innovative approach to solving urban forestry issues? What individuals and organizations are cooperating on this effort? Is there documentation of broad based community or partner support? What is the level of volunteer/partner involvement? Is any technical assistance being used? Is a realistic schedule included? Are technical aspects adequately explained in the project proposal? Are proper technical procedures proposed? 	
Budget	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project cost realistic and is it an efficient use of funds (cost efficient)? What percent of project does the local community supply? (including in-kind and cash match) 	
Results	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the benefit to the community and/or state? How visible is the project to the community and/or state? What is the public relations impact? MS Forest Action Plan Priority? 	
Long term commitment to urban forestry	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there an existing or proposed tree ordinance? Is there an existing or proposed Tree Board (include list of members)? Is community involved as a Tree City USA or working towards this goal? List past accomplishments in Urban and Community Forestry (previous awards, news releases, projects etc.). _____ 	
Total	100

Federal Regulations

Grantees must comply with all federal regulations pertaining to federal grants including, but not limited to the following:

- State or Local Government-
 - Sections 3015, 3016, and 3017 of the Code of Federal Regulations
 - OMB Circular A-87
- Educational Institutions-
 - Section 3015 and 3017 of the Code of Federal Regulations
 - OMB Circular A-21
- Non-profit Organizations-
 - Section 3015 and 3017 of the Code of Federal Regulations
 - OMB Circular A-122

For additional information about this program or for assistance in developing a proposal, please contact:

Mississippi Forestry Commission
Attn: Misty Booth
Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator
660 North Street, Suite 300
Jackson, Mississippi 39202

Appendix

<i>Detailed Budget.....</i>	<i>18</i>
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Detailed Budget				
Itemize each expenditure or match value under Grant, Cash Match or In-kind Match categories	Detailed Explanation of Expenditures and Match Values	Grant Funding	Cash Match	In-Kind Match
Component 1: Conduct a street tree inventory and prepare a management plan for downtown business district and old town neighborhood.				
Grant Funding				
Consultant fee for inventory and plan	estimated by phone quotes from 2 urban forestry consultants	\$5,500		
Printing inventory report & management plan	50 copies @ \$5.00	\$250		
Inventory software	Canopy software - Natural Path Forestry Consultants	\$2,600		
Cash Match				
Clip Boards & inventory supplies	\$100 estimated		\$100	
In-Kind Match				
Tree Board volunteers - data collection	6 hrs/week @ \$15/hr for 3 weeks X 6 volunteers			\$1,620
Asst. Parks Dir., David Meadowlark	Project admin. & volunteer coord. 10 hrs/week @ \$23/hr for 4 weeks			\$920
Plat & street maps by engineering dept.	7 sets @ \$17/set			\$119
Vehicle mileage - tree board volunteers	200 miles @ \$.345/mi. estimated			\$69
	Subtotal	\$8,350	\$100	\$2,728
Component 2: Prepare first draft of municipal tree conservation and landscape ordinance.				
Grant Funding				
Reference books	2 copies - U.S. Landscape Ordinances, Abbey @ \$50	\$100		
	2 copies - Tree Conservation Ordinances, APA @ \$40	\$80		
Cash Match				
None expected				
In-Kind Match				
Town Planner, Joe Johnson, ASLA	80 hrs research and preliminary draft @ \$35/hr			\$2,800
Tree Board volunteers - research/review samples	8 hrs/month @ \$15/hr for 4 months X 8 members			\$3,840
Town Engineer, Fred Bridge	12 hrs review preliminary draft @ \$35/hr			\$420
Town Attorney, Carson Spivey	12 hrs review preliminary draft @ \$45/hr			\$540
Office Assistant - Planning Dept., Karen Stover	16hrs/month @ \$10/hr for 4 months to assist Tree Bd. & Planning Dir.			\$640
	Subtotal	\$180	0	\$8,240
	TOTAL	\$8,530	\$100	\$10,968

Detailed Budget				
Itemize each expenditure or match value under Grant, Cash Match, or In-kind Match categories	Detailed Explanation of Expenditures and Match Values	Grant Funding	Cash Match	In-Kind Match
Component 1:				
Grant Funding				
Cash Match				
In-Kind Match				
	Subtotal			
Component 2:				
Grant Funding				
Cash Match				
In-Kind Match				
	Subtotal			
TOTAL		0	0	0

Sample Schedule/Timeline

This form, at minimum, must include the key or milestone activities of the project. These activities should also be addressed in the budget, that is, all elements included in the budget as grant or match; this includes the paid activities and volunteer or staff estimates.

What will be done	Who will do it	When will it be started and completed	Evaluation/ Documentation
<u>Component 1 - Inventory and Management Plan</u>			
Provide guidance to conduct inventory	Consultant	Oct 2020	Invoices
Prepare for Plats and Street Maps for Data Collection	Engineering Dept	Oct-Nov 2020	Maps/Time sheets
Purchase Inventory Software	Asst. Parks Director	Oct 2020	Invoices
Purchase clipboards and inventory supplies	Asst. Parks Director	Oct 2020	Invoices
Data Collection	Tree Board Volunteers	Nov 2020	Data/Sign in sheets/Mileage reports
Administration and volunteer coordination	Asst. Parks Director	Nov 2020	Time Sheet
Prepare management plan	Consultant / Asst. Parks Director	Dec 2020	Invoices/Time sheets
Print inventory report and management plan	Asst. Parks Director	Jan 2021	Report and Management Plan
<u>Component 2 - Prepare Draft Ordinance</u>			
Purchase reference books	Town attorney	Feb 2021	Invoices
Prepare draft municipal ordinance	Town Planner / Office Assistant / Town Attorney	March-June 2021	Time sheets / Draft Ordinance
Review Draft Ordinance	Town Attorney / Tree Board / Town Engineer	May-Aug 2021	Time sheets / Sign in sheets / Ordinance
<u>Reporting*</u>			
Submit Mid-Year Status Report	Project Coordinator	March 1, 2021	Mid-Year Status Report form
Submit Final Accomplishment Report and final Reimbursement Request	Project Coordinator	September 30, 2021	Final Accomplishment Report form; Accomplishment Narrative; additional required documentation; Request for Reimbursement form with invoices.

**The Reporting section must be included on the schedule timeline as worded here or similar language.*

Schedule/Timeline

This form, **at minimum**, must include the key or milestone activities of the project. These activities should also be addressed in the budget, that is, all elements included in the budget as grant or match; this includes the paid activities and volunteer or staff estimates.

What will be done	Who will do it	When will it be started and completed	Evaluation/ Documentation
Reporting*			
Submit Mid-Year Status Report	Project Coordinator	March 1, 2021	Mid-Year Status Report form
Submit Final Accomplishment Report and final Reimbursement Request	Project Coordinator	September 30, 2021	Final Accomplishment Report form; Accomplishment Narrative; additional required documentation; Request for Reimbursement form with invoices.

**The Reporting section must be included on the schedule timeline as worded here or similar language.*

U&CF 2020 APPLICATION FORM

Mississippi Urban and Community Forestry Grant

Project Title: _____

Project Location: City: _____ County: _____

Applicant Information:

Applicant (Organization) Name: _____

Applicant Address: _____

City

State

Zip Code

Primary Contact Person/Title: _____

Primary Contact Info: _____

Phone:

Fax

Email

Employer Identification Number EIN (Required):

Applicant Description: ☐ Local Govt. ☐ Non-profit 501(c)3 ☐ State Govt. ☐ Education Institution ☐ Other (describe) _____

Other Information: Is this community a Tree City USA? Yes ☐ No ☐ Pending ☐

Does this organization participate in MS Urban Forest Council programs & training? Yes ☐ No ☐

Has this organization received a U&CF gran in the past? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what grant year(s)? _____

Project Information:

Brief List of Project Objectives:

Grant Funds Requested: \$ _____

Cash Match: \$ _____

In-Kind Match: \$ _____

Total Amount of Project: \$ 0 _____

Project Type (Check one that best applies)

U&CF Program Development ☐

U&CF Program Improvement ☐

Education & Information/Training ☐

Non-Profit Program Development ☐

Tree Planting ☐

Demonstration & Site Specific ☐

Other ☐

Brief Description of other Project Type:

As a duly authorized representative of the organization making this application, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, all information provided herein is true and represents the desires of this organization. I further certify that I understand the purpose and rules of the program as outlined in the Application Package.

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Title/Position

Signature of Authorized Representative

Date of Signature

2020 Urban & Community Forestry Grant Program

Funding for this program is provided through the USDA Forest Service.
This program is administered in Mississippi by the Mississippi Forestry Commission.



The Mississippi Forestry Commission provides equal employment opportunity and services to all individuals regardless of disability, race, age, religion, color, gender, creed, national origin, or political affiliation.

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