



Trees Across Mississippi (TAM)

Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program

Administered by the Mississippi Forestry Commission

Introduction

The Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC), in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (USFS), announces the Trees Across Mississippi (TAM) Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Grant Program. This program is designed to encourage projects that plant trees, increase the benefits of tree canopy, create and support long-term urban and community forestry programs, and promote tree care in communities throughout Mississippi.

Objectives of the Urban and Community Forestry Program

Legislative Authority

The USDA Forest Service, authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act and the Community Forestry Assistance Act of the 1990 Farm Bill, has allocated funding to the Mississippi Forestry Commission for statewide distribution.

Subtitle D, Sec. 23003 (a). State and Private Forestry Conservation Programs via the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) appropriated \$1,500,000,000 to provide multi-year, programmatic, competitive grants. Of this total allocation \$1,500,000 was allocated to Mississippi to be distributed statewide over 4 years.

The USDA is a partner in the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Promoting Equitable Access to Nature in Nature-Deprived Communities, which seeks to reduce the number of people without access to parks and nature in their communities. The America the Beautiful Initiative supports the prioritization of locally led conservation and park projects in communities that disproportionately lack access to nature and its benefits.

Funding Sources

1. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Funding:

- Exclusively for communities identified by the Mississippi Forestry Commission Urban and Community Assessment Tool (UCAT). UCAT identifies qualifying communities with low canopy, low income, and high heat areas.
- Projects qualify for up to \$40,000 without requiring a match.

2. Non-IRA Community Forestry Assistance Funds:

- Includes Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Urban and Community Assistance Program (U&CF).

- Projects qualify for up to \$40,000, may require an 80/20 match, and must be completed within one year.

Federal Program Objectives

The Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program aims to:

- Integrate urban forestry into planning.
- Promote human health and wellness through urban forestry.
- Cultivate diversity and equity in urban forestry leadership.
- Strengthen forest health and biodiversity for resilience.
- Improve forest management and stewardship.
- Increase public awareness and environmental education.
- Prioritize projects addressing extreme heat mitigation, urban wood utilization, and workforce development.

State Program Goals

Mississippi's Statewide Forest Resources Strategy 2020 outlines the following goals:

1. Increase awareness of urban forest management.
2. Ensure a healthy urban environment in Mississippi cities.
3. Provide education and training for urban forest managers and volunteers.
4. Develop self-sustaining urban forestry programs.
5. Encourage partnerships to support urban forestry.
6. Seek funding opportunities for urban forestry programs.

Eligible Projects

Projects must meet Federal and State Program Objectives. Examples include:

Urban Forestry Program Support

- **Professional Staffing:** Funding for urban forestry professionals to assist in program management.
- **Workforce Development:** Training programs, internships, and certifications to build a diverse workforce.
- **Technical Assistance:** Canopy mapping, tree inventories, and urban heat island mapping.
- **Tree Ordinance Development:** Establishing municipal authority over public trees and setting maintenance standards.
- **Storm Readiness:** Developing storm readiness plans and risk mitigation strategies.

- **Invasive Species Removal:** Addressing invasive species impacting community forests.

Tree Planting

Projects must address tree equity, mitigate extreme heat, and increase environmental benefits. Eligible activities include:

- Planting on non-federal public property.
- Developing a 3-year maintenance plan.
- Must include a tree planting plan/map and a watering plan.

Tree Advocacy Group Development

- **Tree Board Creation:** Organizing new tree boards or providing training for existing ones.
- **Non-Profit Program Development 501(c)3:** Enhancing non-profit groups to support tree care and education.

Urban Wood Utilization

Projects to increase awareness of urban wood recycling and utilization.

Ineligible Projects

Examples of ineligible projects include:

- Beautification projects.
- Research.
- Trail design, construction, or maintenance.
- Property acquisition.
- Construction projects.
- Equipment purchases.
- Gift cards.

Eligible Recipients

Funds may be awarded to:

- Local governments (city, town, county).
- Non-profit 501(c)3 organizations.
- Public educational institutions.

Other organizations must apply in partnership with a non-profit or local government.

Grant Timeframe

Applications must be submitted by **November 21, 2025**. Approved projects can begin after signing a grant agreement.

Available Funds

- Both IRA-qualified projects and non-IRA projects: up to \$40,000.00

Match Requirements

- IRA-qualified projects: Match waiver available for projects benefiting MFC-approved communities that meet UCAT qualifications.
- Non-IRA projects: 80/20 match required with non-federal funds.

Reports and Payment Process

Periodic progress reports and a final report are required. Funds are available on a reimbursement basis after project completion. If reports are not submitted on time, reimbursements will be frozen until reports comply, or the grant award will be revoked.

Project Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Alignment with urban forestry needs.
- Meets federal and state program objectives.
- Cost-effectiveness.
- It has a realistic time frame for completion.
- Volunteer involvement and partnerships.
- It can be identified as a model for other MS cities and has a continued effect after completion.

Additional Resources

- Mississippi Forestry Commission: www.mfc.ms.gov
- Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA Program: www.ArborDay.org

Questions?

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