



IRA Trees for Schools

Instructions and Requirements



INTENTION OF THE GRANT - Through the USDA Forest Service & National Association of State Foresters (NASF) 2023 Inflation Reduction Act, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) received funds for tree planting grants to schools. IRA Trees for Schools grants are available to public and private schools and school districts to help increase and diversify tree canopy on school grounds, encouraging students to take an active part in this experience and increasing the benefits trees provide to students.

ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAM RESTRICTIONS - Schools and school districts, both public and private, with 25% or higher free and reduced lunches and/or are eligible through the [Forest Canopy Socioeconomic Assessment Tool](#) may apply for IRA Trees for Schools funding (See Eligible Schools on the [DNR Urban Forestry](#) website). Funding is competitive, and grants are awarded in amounts of up to \$5,000 per project. No matching funds are required. Award money may be used to purchase trees, mulch, and supplemental watering cost when school is not in session (June - September). **Trees are to be 50% or more of the project cost.** Supplemental watering costs may also include water bags or tree diapers to aid in adequate watering. Supplies such as shovels, buckets, gloves, saws, as well as any costs associated with digging, site preparation, and other labor, are NOT covered by grant funding. Projects MUST take place on public or private school grounds. Plantings on property other than public or private school grounds are NOT eligible for grant funding.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION - IRA Trees for Schools grant applications and supplemental materials may ONLY be submitted electronically. To be eligible for the grant, **all materials are due to the DNR program coordinator by 4 pm Friday March 21, 2025.** Applications received after this time will NOT be accepted; the DNR program coordinator reserves the right to disregard any application that is incomplete or which does not include ALL supplemental materials. If, for any reason, you are unable to complete all required materials by the application deadline, please contact the DNR program coordinator as soon as possible to discuss alternatives. Please email applications and supplemental materials to Chip.Murrow@dnr.iowa.gov.

APPLICATION SCORING - Scoring will be based on the following: (1) project narrative and goals; (2) demonstrated need for trees and environmental impact; (3) student involvement and educational impact; (4) initial and ongoing care; (5) species diversity; (6) cost-effectiveness; and (7) map of planting site (8.5" x 11").

*A pre-application site visit is encouraged for all applicants. Please contact Laurie Dams at Lauren.Dams@dnr.iowa.gov or 515-782-6414 to set up a site visit for your event.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS - The purpose of the IRA Trees for Schools program is to educate children, teenagers, and young adults about the importance of trees and their myriad benefits, as well as to offer hands-on planting and maintenance experience. To achieve these goals, the program requires youth involvement in planting, mulching, and initial watering for all projects receiving funding. A DNR-led demonstration on proper planting, mulching and watering is required at the beginning of each event, and/or for each group involved in the project; projects that incorporate multiple groups working independently of one another will require multiple demonstrations.

****PLEASE NOTE: IRA TREES FOR SCHOOLS STRICTLY PROHIBITS THE USE OF AUGERS FOR DIGGING HOLES!****

PLANTING SCHEDULE AND MAKEUP DATE - Applications MUST include specific date and time for tree planting, as well as an alternative date and time in case of postponement. **Planting days are to be scheduled no earlier than April 14 and no later than June 7;** requests that fall outside of this timeframe will NOT be approved. Because the IRA Trees for Schools program is intended to provide positive experiences for the youth involved, weather events that may compromise such an outcome must be considered when discussing possible postponement. Rain, extreme wind, snow, or uncomfortably cold conditions are valid reasons to postpone an event. Postponement is at the discretion of the applicant; any event rescheduling, including weather-related postponement, MUST be communicated to the DNR

program coordinator. **Failure to inform the DNR program coordinator of rescheduling or postponement may result in withholding of grant funding.**

TREE REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIES DIVERSITY (*for species options, see list included in nursery letter*) - Trees may be provided by nurseries in Iowa or from bordering state's nurseries. Trees **MUST** meet the specifications set forth by the American Nursery Stock Standards (ANSI Z60.1). Please ensure that your nursery is aware of this, and encourage them to review the specifications detailed in the nursery letter. Trees **MUST** be container-grown or bag grown. Bare-root, balled-and-burlapped, field grown, and other non-containerized trees **WILL NOT** be reimbursed via grant funding and will be considered donations by the nursery. Containers must be in the range of 5-gallon to 10-gallon, or root bag equivalent; trees that are smaller than 5-gallon or larger than 10-gallon **MUST** receive approval from the DNR program coordinator.

In order to ensure species diversity and to protect against large-scale losses from future forest health threats, no more than three trees of any one species for projects of 30 or fewer trees, OR 10% of any one species for projects of 30 or more trees, will be allowed. No more than 20% of any one genus will be allowed for projects of ANY size. For example, a project with fifteen trees will allow no less than 5 species or genera in total, whereas a project with 50 trees will allow no more than 5 trees per species and no more than 10 trees per genera.

MULCHING - Mulching is required for every tree planted. The source and cost of mulch for your planting must be included in the application. If possible, you are strongly encouraged to take advantage of any mulch offered by your local community, as such mulch is typically free and comes from locally-removed trees. If purchasing mulch from a nursery, **please refrain from using cypress mulch or weed control mulch.** You are allowed to purchase up to two bags of mulch per tree.

WATERING AND ONGOING CARE - IRA Trees for Schools projects are required to include initial watering of 5-10 gallons per tree, depending on container size. Ongoing watering is required during the growing season for at least the first two years after trees are planted. Applications **MUST** include a detailed description of who will be responsible for ongoing watering, both during the school year and supplemental watering during the summer (June - September), and how frequently they will do so. Grant funding can only be used for the first year of supplemental watering cost. This may include watering devices such as watering bags or tree diapers. It is highly recommended that projects **DO NOT** rely on grounds and maintenance crews for watering during the school year, as time limitations for these staff often results in watering being neglected. Instead, it is best to formulate a plan that uses youth or adult volunteers, on a rotating basis if necessary, to meet watering needs during the school year.

AWARDED APPLICANTS - Applicants will be notified Tuesday, April 1, 2025 if they have or have not been awarded an IRA Trees for School grant. Awardees must sign a Grant Project Cooperative Agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources which will be sent out with grant award letters. Applicants must also provide a current IRS Form W-9, Federal ID and proof of current SAM registration.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS - Expenditures must be made between April 15 and October 1, 2025 to qualify. Applicants may use funds to purchase plant materials, mulch, and watering services. Personnel funds will not be reimbursed. The grants are reimbursable and each grant will be paid pursuant to the provisions of a Grant Project Cooperative Agreement entered into between the grant recipient and DNR. Reimbursement will be paid on the basis of the approved percentage of all eligible expenditures up to the amount of the approved grant. To receive reimbursement, grantees must complete the project by the project completion date stated in the grant announcement, undergo project inspection by a DNR forester, and submit all required documentation including proof of payment. A partial reimbursement for planted trees and mulch may be made after completion of the planting. All final requests for reimbursement must be submitted by Friday, **November 14, 2025.**

The DNR program coordinator will review the invoice and project report and upon approval, submit it to DNR accounting for reimbursement to the applicant. It may take up to 60 days from the time the DNR program coordinator submits the reimbursement materials for the applicant to receive payment. **NO** reimbursement will be made without Federal ID, W-9, SAM and project report sent to the DNR program coordinator.

IRA TREES FOR SCHOOL GRANTS - Are federally funded through CFDA #10.727 from the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. If your entity is required to have a single audit in accordance with OMB circular A-133, a copy of the audit report will be provided to the DNR if any findings noted are related to the award provided by the DNR. If no findings relate to the DNR award, a notification letter will be provided to the DNR stating findings noted did not relate to the DNR award.

USDA and Iowa DNR are equal opportunity providers and employers. Federal and State law prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, mental and/or physical disability, gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 1-800-457-4416 or DNR's Civil Rights Coordinators at civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov.

Applications must be submitted no later than 4:00pm on Friday, March 21, 2025. Applications must be submitted to: Chip.Murrow@dnr.iowa.gov.

For questions or assistance with the application, please contact Chip Murrow at (515) 822-1031 or Chip.Murrow@dnr.iowa.gov.

To request a site visit, please contact Laurie Dams at (515) 782-6414 or Lauren.Dams@dnr.iowa.gov.

Spring 2025 APPLICATION

Application Eligibility - For schools to be eligible for the IRA Trees for Schools grant, they must meet one of following requirements. Please mark all requirements the school meets (See Eligible Schools on the [DNR Urban Forestry](#) website).

25% or higher Free & Reduced Lunches

[Forest Canopy Socioeconomic Assessment Tool](#)

Applicant Information

School or School District _____

Primary Contact _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Project Information (Please see "Instructions and Requirements" above)

Project Title _____ Funding Amount Requested _____

Project Supervisor (if different from above) _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Project Location/Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Planting Date/Time (be specific) _____ Makeup Date/Time _____

Planting Location Type Public School Private School

Number of Youth Involved _____ Number of Supervising Adults _____

Nursery Information

Nursery Name _____

Primary Contact _____

City _____ Email _____ Phone _____

	Total Number/Quantity	Total Cost
Trees		
Mulch (number of bags)		
Watering Equipment (bags, diapers, other)		
Supplemental Watering (gal/tree & times/week)		
Total *(Trees must be more than 50% of cost.)		

Project Narrative and Goals (10 pts)

Please provide a brief plan of the project and the goals you wish to achieve.

Need for Trees and Environmental Impact (15 pts)

Please explain in detail the need for trees and the impact they will make on your school grounds. (i.e. educational uses, reducing temperature, stormwater control)

Student Involvement and Educational Impacts (20 pts)

Please tell the role students will have on this project (i.e. initial planting, watering, mulching, future care) and the educational impacts the trees will provide. (i.e. outdoor classroom, calming area)

Initial and Ongoing Care (10 pts)

Please provide a detailed summary of care for the planted trees including mulching and how trees will be watered and maintained for AT LEAST two years after the trees are planted, including who will be responsible and how often duties will be performed.

Supplemental Materials - Nursery Quote (Diversity - 10 pts, Cost Effectiveness - 10 pts) and Site Map - 5 pts

Please include the following supplemental materials:

- 1) "Nursery Notification Letter" document, signed and dated by participating nursery
- 2) Quote from participating nursery including ALL of the following:
 - Species common name and cultivar (if applicable)
 - Species scientific name
 - Quantity per species
 - Container size and type for each species (hard pot, air-pruned container or growbag)
 - Cost per tree and total cost, including mulch (if applicable)
 - Cost for supplemental watering including gal/tree & times/week (if applicable)
- 3) Site Map of planting (8.5" x 11")

Certification

- By checking this box, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application and its supplements is correct and true. I acknowledge that I have read the "Instructions and Requirements" document and that any deviations from the specifications outlined have been approved by the DNR program coordinator. **I fully understand that any deviations from said restrictions that have NOT been expressly approved by the DNR program coordinator may result in withholding of funds by Iowa Department of Natural Resources.**
- By checking this box, I hereby certify that the project funds will be spent in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations.
- By checking this box, I hereby certify that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is released from any liability associated with this project.
- By checking this box, I acknowledge that the Grantee agrees to provide a two-year maintenance agreement, as described above, for all trees planted using funds from this grant.

Applicants applying for IRA Trees for Schools grant must have a current SAM registration. Please provide your SAM registration number: _____

Signatures

Signature of Applicant: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature and Title of Authorized Official of state, regional or local government under whose jurisdiction the project will occur (this is not required if the applicant has jurisdiction over the project site):

Signature of Landowner: _____ **Date:** _____

(if different from above applicant)