

IRA Urban Forestry Program Development Grant

Instructions and Requirements

INTENTION OF THE GRANT - Funding for this project provided by the Inflation Reduction Act and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program in partnership with Iowa DNR Forestry for Urban Forestry Development Grants for Iowa communities. The purpose of this grant is to support local jurisdictions in implementing improvements to urban tree health, enhanced protections for urban trees, increases in canopy cover, and delivery of tree ecosystem services in communities across Iowa. The Urban Forestry Development Grants will assist communities in developing urban forest planning, programming tools, and activities that may not otherwise receive local funding. These grants will improve management, care, and public engagement with trees growing in parks, natural areas, and along public rights-of way. Grants will also support projects in Iowa communities through investments in community-identified urban forestry needs, advancing environmental or health benefits. 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.

URBAN FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT 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 community 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 related to the DNR award, a notification letter will be provided to the DNR stating findings noted did not relate to the DNR award.

ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAM RESTRICTIONS -

Communities eligible through the [Eligibility Tool](#) may apply for Urban Forestry Program Development Funding. There is a total of \$1.5 million available. Funding is competitive, and grants are awarded in amounts starting at \$10,000 up to \$50,000 per grant. An application may be for multiple projects or locations within the community. No matching funds are required.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS -

Plans, assessments, ordinance and policy

Public street and park tree inventory

The applicant must demonstrate that the inventory will be tied to its tree maintenance activities as well as plans for future tree planting.

Development of community forestry plans

Projects related to the development of comprehensive master plans for urban forest management and community tree care, maintenance, and planting are eligible. Projects funded in this category should be from communities with limited resources to develop plans internally. Removal of hazardous and diseased trees may be completed as a part of a comprehensive community forestry plan which includes 2 trees planted for every tree removed.

City tree ordinance development or revision

The ordinance or policy should address the establishment of municipal authority over public trees; assign responsibility to a public department, arborist position, or established tree board or commission; and/or set maintenance and management standards. The ordinance or policy may also address other issues such as landscape requirements and tree retention or replacement on development sites, riparian buffers, and for the protection of urban forest ecosystems.

Planting site design

Funding can be used for designing plans and educational materials for community tree walking paths, especially those that increase access to public recreation areas such as parks and other trail networks or a canopy cover assessment.

Storm preparedness and recovery plan

Natural Disasters happen, but there are ways to manage the urban forest so that the trees are better prepared for disasters. Funding can be used for a Tree Risk Assessment, developing a community forest resilience plan or debris management plan, and necessary municipal pruning within critical zones on public lands.

Staffing and training

Employee forestry training

Educational assistance to expand knowledge and enhance the technical skills of individuals involved in community tree care, planning, development, and maintenance activities, such as planting and pruning.

- Example: Arborist Certification

Internships

Provides paid training experiences for residents to establish and maintain urban forests into the future and/or other professional training opportunities in tree planting, arboriculture, urban forest management, urban wood utilization, and related topics.

Workforce development

Full or part-time employment of an urban forestry professional to assist in community forestry program management. A draft position description and qualifications must be submitted with the application. Examples: staff or contract arborist positions.

Education and volunteer development

Volunteer community forestry training

Educational assistance to expand knowledge and enhance the technical skills of volunteers involved in community tree care, planning, development, and maintenance activities, such as planting and pruning.

Youth and adult education programs

Development of urban forestry curricula, classes, and materials for local schools or other public institutions. Planning and implementation of local training classes or workshops

Tree board training

Projects to organize a new tree board/commission or provide training or planning assistance for existing tree boards. A new tree board or commission should be charged by ordinance to act on behalf of the local government in coordination with the community's urban forestry program.

Resource Management

Urban wood utilization

Trees at the end of their natural life or determined to pose unreasonable risks to the public may be removed and replaced with a new tree or trees that are suitable for the location. Trees that are removed can be recycled by local sawmills into higher use wood products as part of a waste wood utilization project.

Urban food forests

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/features/urban-food-forests> (must include provisions for long-term care and maintenance)

Planting for extreme heat mitigation

Local governments may apply for funding to develop demonstration projects that focus on low canopy cover areas to offset urban heat.

Invasive species recovery and replanting

The management and removal of invasive tree species mitigates the detrimental effects to Iowa's ecosystems. Communities can apply for funds for the removal of Bradford Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) and Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). *There must be at least two replacement trees for each invasive tree removed.

Maintenance and tree care

Localities can apply for funding to support the care and maintenance of their urban forest and trees. Example: Funds can be used to do emerald ash borer treatment or deadwood pruning.

INELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING -

- Research
- Property acquisition
- Construction
- Capital Improvement
- Equipment purchase over \$5,000
- litigation/ advocacy
- Roads
- Buildings
- Gift cards
- Food/ beverages

AWARDED APPLICANT - Applicants awarded the Urban Forestry Development Grant will be sent a Grant Award Letter and Grant Project Cooperative Agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, both of which must be signed. Applicants must also provide a current IRS Form W-9, Federal ID, Federal AD-1048 and proof of current SAM ID number

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS - Grant work must be completed between April 1, 2026 and final expenditures must be made by November 1, 2027 to qualify. 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 quarterly of the approved percentage of all eligible expenditures up to the amount of the approved grant. Quarterly reports shall detail project expenditures incurred during the preceding quarter and shall be supported by documentation satisfactory to the Department, invoice and receipts included. All final requests for reimbursement must be submitted by December 1, 2027.

The DNR Program Coordinator will review the invoices and final project report and upon approval, submit final reimbursement to DNR Accounting for the applicant's reimbursement to the applicant. It may take up to 60 days from the time the DNR from the time the DNR Program Coordinator submits the reimbursement materials for the applicant to receive payment. NO partial reimbursement will be made at any time without Federal ID, W-9, SAM ID number and no final reimbursement without a project report, all sent to the DNR Program Coordinator.

SUMISSION OF APPLICATION

To be eligible for the grant, all material and applications must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. on March 17, 2026. Applications must be submitted to: <https://iowadnr.slideroom.com/#/login/program/87643>

Contact Chip Murrow at chip.murrow@dnr.iowa.gov or 515-822-1031 for questions about the application, reimbursement and rules. Contact Laurie Dams at lauren.dams@dnr.iowa.gov or 515-782-6414 for application assistance or to set up a site visit.