

Iowa DNR Urban Tree Utilization Program

Purpose: To help communities become more sustainable by networking with local businesses to better utilize wood from urban trees removed.

The Iowa DNR has a forester and limited grant funding (\$15,000 for each of 5 different communities in Iowa) available to help communities look into different options for making the most from the wood the trees they remove each year. Trees removed on public property are a public resource that could be converted into different wood products to benefit lower income populations within that community. Communities with a sustainability initiative or a zero waste program are the best candidates for this program.

Looking for communities with an in-house tree removal program and a sustainability initiative to demonstrate to their community the responsible use of these urban trees, which are a public renewable natural resource. A community can show they are good stewards by not wasting wood material on low end uses when it could have been used to build something meaningful for that community.

Some examples to consider for using urban wood that have worked in other communities:

- Milling logs for lumber and selling the lumber at Habitat Restore or providing the lumber for Habitat for Humanity for their housing projects.
- Milling logs for lumber and partnering with a local woodworking group to make products for the community or low income housing projects.
- Instead of buying tables and chairs, pay a local company to make tables and chairs from the trees removed in the community for local schools, city buildings, non-profit organizations that need them.
- Write tree removal contracts that requires the tree care company to stage the logs, meeting certain size requirements, so they can be made available for local wood businesses to use or be sold at a public auction.
- Providing a staging area for communities and tree services to bring logs, so they can be milled for lumber- uses for that lumber would be up to that communities priorities (sell, use for in-house projects, provide to NGO's)
- Municipalities look for partnerships with their local high schools, tech schools/community colleges, and universities classes including wood shops, agricultural/environmental science classes, architecture, construction, forestry, urban planning classes to incorporate local wood into projects.
- There is an [Urban Tree Removals – Reducing Costs and Promoting Utilization webinar](#) that has several ideas for municipalities.
- The [urban wood toolkit](#) is an excellent resource for developing an urban wood program.

Substituting wood for more CO2 intensive materials means carbon is stored for at least the lifetime of the building. Make a difference in your community by looking for ways to improve how tree waste is used has been done in other progressive minded communities, we are available to discuss with you further about how a program like this may work in your community.

For more information about this opportunity, please contact Aron Flickinger, DNR forester, at 515-725-8455 or email at aron.flickinger@dnr.iowa.gov