**2021 URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT PROGRAM**

**Request for Proposals**

Funding provided by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service through direction of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Urban & Community Forestry Program

Grant funding administered by The Morton Arboretum

**Proposals Due: Monday, November 1st, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.**

Contact: Zach Wirtz

Community Manager, Chicago Region Trees Initiative;

The Morton Arboretum

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<http://chicagorti.org/FY21grant>




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For more information, please visit: <http://chicagorti.org/FY21grant>

## Or please contact Zach Wirtz zwirtz@mortonarb.org

# Introduction & Allowable Costs

This request for proposals provides funding assistance to “communities” (public entities e.g., municipalities, park districts, counties, tribal governments, townships, forest preserves, and other units of government) to improve the urban forest. Funding is provided by the Urban and Community Forestry program of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The Morton Arboretum is the grant administrator.

The total maximum allowable funding amount for any one organization is $15,000. The minimum allowable funding amount is $3,500.

**Assistance is available for any Applicant needing assistance to complete a proposal. Assistance can be provided by contacting Zach Wirtz at** **zwirtz@mortonarb.org****. All requests for assistance must be received by** **September 31, 2021.**

Project categories funded through this proposal can be funded as an individual project or in combination. They include:

1. Completion of a full or partial tree inventory
2. Development of an urban/community forest management plan based on an existing tree inventory less than four years old; and/or
3. Tree planting on public property.

### Allowable Costs

### Applicant communities may complete one or a combination of the projects listed above by using qualified ‘in-house’ staff, volunteers (lead by qualified staff) and/or a Contractor. If using a qualified Contractor, the Applicant shall use a completive bid process to determine the best qualified Contractor. No work shall start on the project until the Applicant is awarded funding. All work shall be completed within the specified grant time period.

# Grant Program Goals

### The purpose of Illinois’s Urban and Community Forestry program is to assist communities and other units of local government in the development or expansion of local urban and community forestry programs.

Funding from this proposal will assist communities and other units of local government to address goals of the Urban Forestry Volunteer Coordination and Technical Assistance Program (UFVCTAP) of the U.S. Forest Service:

1. Advance, inventory, monitor, and assess information across all lands.
2. Encourage recovery of damaged or deteriorated landscapes to healthier and resilient conditions.
3. Support the creation and maintenance of jobs and economic opportunities for local communities and Tribes to sustainably maintain trees, and produce and use forest products.

The goal of this program is to improve the health and function of the urban forest to support healthy ecosystems and improved quality of life through:

1. Preservation and protection of trees.
2. An improved understanding of what forest composition and structure exists to support improved management and health.
3. Improved management and care of the urban forest for the short and long term.
4. Increased health and growth of the urban forest.

Funding categories covered by this grant may be accomplished individually or in combination. They include:

1. Completion of a full or partial tree inventory accompanied by a management plan and identification of a tracking format or program;
2. Development of an urban/community forest management plan based on an existing tree inventory less than four years old; and/or
3. Tree planting on public property.

# General Criteria

1. The maximum allowable funding amount per eligible organization is $15,000. The minimum grant request is $3,500.
2. The deadline for receipt of proposals is **Monday, November 1, 2021 at 5:00 p.m**.
3. Organizations eligible for funding shall be units of government other than federal or state. These include:
	1. Municipalities, townships, and county governments
	2. Tribal governments
	3. Forest preserves and/or conservation districts
	4. Park districts
4. All applications shall be submitted electronically to Zach Wirtz by email at zwirtz@mortonarb.org
5. Technical Assistance is available to help you develop a proposal. Please contact Zach Wirtz at zwirtz@mortonarb.org no later than **Friday**, **September 31, 2021**.
6. All Applicants will be notified of their status via email by **late December, 2021.**
7. The funding period is approximately 19 months. All work for this grant must be completed All work related to this grant, except for the final report, must be completed by **Friday, July 1, 2023**. Final reporting and reimbursement must be submitted, by **Tuesday**, **August 1, 2023.**
8. All aspects of all categories of this proposal shall meet or exceed the most current American National Safety Institute (ANSI), International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), and/or other nationally recognized specifications and/or standards.

### Ordinance requirement:

### Prior to reimbursement of funding, all awarded municipal governments must have a tree protection/ preservation ordinance that meets or exceeds criteria listed on pages [8 and 9.](#_bookmark5) A tree protection/preservation ordinance is not required to apply.

* 1. Awarded Park District and Forest Preserve Districts shall submit board approved policies that stipulate natural resource protection with specific urban and community forest management guidance similar to some of the criteria listed on pages 8 and 9. Please contact Zach Wirtz at zwirtz@mortonarb.org for details on this requirement.
	2. The Morton Arboretum can provide technical assistance to complete this requirement at no cost to the Applicant – whether awarded or not. Awarded Applicants wishing to receive assistance shall notify, in writing, Zach Wirtz no later than January 1, 2022.
1. No part of the grant can be used to pay for land or to purchase equipment.
2. Application must include a statement of leveraged benefits, as defined on page [14.](#_bookmark8)
3. Funding will be awarded based on score, need, and alignment with the grant’s program goals. Preference will be given to communities that did not receive a community grant in the FFY20 cycle. Incomplete applications will not be scored.

## Awarded Applicants shall publish in an organization publication or website the source of the funding for this project (United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service through direction of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources).

# Financial Information

1. This award requires a 50:50 match based on reimbursable costs and/or in-kind service. Applicants are encouraged to overmatch. For example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Requested Funding Amount | Local Match | Total Project Cost |
| $12,000 | $14,000 | $26,000 |

### An organization unable to achieve a 50:50 match should contact Zach Wirtz at zwirtz@mortonarb.org to discuss other arrangements.

1. Only non-federal money may be used for the match.
2. The labor cost of the Applicant using its qualified employees to implement grant activities can be reimbursed. (Volunteer time may be included in the in-kind match but will not be reimbursed with grant funds.) Supporting documentation must be included for reimbursement. Approved documentation includes time cards, man-power records or other paperwork.
	1. An hourly proration for the share of fringe benefit costs paid by the Applicant may be included in the labor cost.
	2. The skills and/or qualifications of individuals completing the work, including Contractors, shall meet nationally recognized standards and certifications.
	3. Applicant will submit records for employee hours, and shall include the base rate of pay for the employee(s).
3. All Contractors and suppliers completing grant projects must meet nationally recognized training and certification requirements, and evidence is required for reimbursement.

# Eligible and Allowable Match

Applicants cannot request more than $15,000 and the match requirement is 1 to 1. For every dollar funded, a dollar of match is required. Match may be cash contribution toward the project or in-kind contribution.

Supporting documentation for the Applicant’s match must be included with reimbursement. Approved documentation includes: invoices, cleared checks, timecards, and/or other paperwork. Allowable costs for match shall not start before award execution or after July 1, 2023. Eligible match is as follows:

1. Direct cash match for contracted services related to an inventory, management planning, or tree planting that is funded with grant dollars.
2. Volunteer labor may be counted at the at the lowest rate of any paid employee working on the project.
3. Tree pruning, planting, care, maintenance, or removal directly related to activities undertaken with grant funding including:
	1. Materials or supplies e.g. trees or mulch.
	2. Site preparation and modifications for projects as described above.
	3. Labor and material costs for tree maintenance up to July 1, 2023. \*
	4. Treeremoval and stump grinding in preparation for such work. \*

**\*Maintenance, management, or removal of trees, not associated with planting funded by this grant, may be used as match only in conjunction with a new or updated inventory and/or management plan and only if work is conducted after said inventory and/or management plan has been completed. Trees to be removed must present significant harm / hazard to the community.**

1. Directly related administrative costs, including time spent by staff, officials, volunteers, and others who develop or approve bid documents, contracts, and/or other related tasks.
2. A Contractor and/or qualified staff and/or volunteers may be used to complete a new or expand an existing inventory. Staff, contractors or volunteers shall have the requisite professional experience to complete the work. Verification of this training and skills is required. All work completed through this grant shall meet the nationally recognized requirements and standards. All data collected must be submitted as one compiled inventory (new and old data) to receive reimbursement.
3. Additional inventory features including software subscriptions.

# Tree Protection / Preservation Ordinance Requirements:

Prior to reimbursement of funding, a tree protection/preservation ordinance shall be approved by a municipality’s governing body (e.g. city council) that shall meet all the requirements in the chart below. Awarded Park Districts and Forest Preserve Districts shall submit board approved policies that stipulate natural resource protection with specific urban and community forest management guidance similar to these criteria.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | Purpose | Statement of purpose for the tree protection/preservation ordinance. |
| 2. | Statement of Value | Clear statement of the value and service of the urban forest as infrastructure. |
| 3. | Definitions | Clear definitions of terms. |
| 4. | Applicability / scope of ordinance | Clear scope of protection, preservation, management, removals, care and pruning, selection, and planting requirements. |
| 5. | Authority / Enforcement | Identified individual and/or group responsible for making decisions about trees and enforcement of the ordinance. Includes skill requirements or certifications for individuals/organizations managing trees for the community. |
| 6. | Tree Planting and Maintenance Standards | Clear specifications standards referencing the most current American National Safety Institute, International Society of Arboriculture, National Association of Nurserymen and/or other nationally recognized organizations, or a reference to such in an accepted urban forest management plan for the following:1. tree production (nursery source production standards)
2. tree planting
3. tree care
4. tree pruning
5. species restrictions, e.g. under utilities, use of invasive species
 |
| 7. | Requirements for contracted tree maintenance | Requirements for contracted tree maintenance including skill and insurance requirements |
| 8. | Establishment of a Tree Board *(Mandatory only if selected as a voluntary bonus, see proposal scoring)* | Formation and qualifications, responsibilities, and terms for a Tree Board or other advisory group responsible for trees. |
| 9. | Permits | Tree permit requirements, penalties, and enforcement |
| 10. | Protection of trees during construction | Tree protection from construction impacts, and fee and penalty requirements. |
| 11. | Relocation or replacement | Relocation and/or replacement requirements, fees, and penalties for trees removed, damaged or killed. |
| 12. | Appeals | Procedure to follow for appealing a citation, and civil remedies |
| 13. | Penalties | Clear penalties for failure to comply with the provisions of the ordinance or reference to fee schedule |
| 14. | Species Lists | Restricted/Prohibited/Undesirable species lists and Desirable/Approved species lists or a reference to such lists in tree management plan |
| 15. | Exceptions | Exempted situations and variance |
| 16. | Severability | Statement of severability (this may exist in a related Code)  |
| **It is recommended but not required that the tree protection/preservation ordinance include:** |
| 1. | Tree risk assessment protocol and frequency |
| 2. | Education, outreach, and/or assistance to private property owners on tree planting, management and assessment. |
| 3. | Incentives or regulations for trees located on private property. |

 (\*The Morton Arboretum provides ordinance revision assistance free of charge to communities. Please contact Zach Wirtz at zwirtz@mortonarb.org.)

# Tree Inventory Requirements

A tree inventory is a database containing specific, standardized information recorded for individual trees in an identified area of the community. The inventory must inform management decisions and be regularly updated. The inventory may contain information about the immediate area surrounding a tree, as necessary for tree management and planning. Sample size must be statistically appropriate to provide accurate conclusions for management recommendations.

**Eligibility: only applicants whose inventory has not been updated in the last 4 years are eligible for funding for an inventory**

Qualified staff, volunteers or Contractors may complete the inventory. Inventory projects may include software or user interface if desired but commitment to pay ongoing user fees must be provided with the application.

## Tree Inventory Deliverables

1. Individual Tree Data Fields
	1. GPS Coordinates
	2. Street Address and Relative Location
	3. Land use (i.e., residential, business zone, natural area, park, etc.)
	4. Growing space (i.e., parkway, park, etc.)
	5. Species
	6. DBH
	7. Single or multi-stem designation
	8. Condition rating & risk assessment (such as TRAQ, Davey 10 point, etc.)
		1. Defects (Roots, wounds, rot, deadwood, etc.)
		2. Maintenance Recommendation
	9. General comments or notes
2. At a minimum, the inventory shall be delivered as a digital spreadsheet, such as Excel.
3. Training and education
	1. If a Contractor is used, before the project starts, the Contractor shall meet with the community to outline project goals and plans specific to the community.
	2. Immediately after the inventory is complete, the Contractor shall provide a minimum of 3 hours of technical assistance to ensure that the community understands how to use the inventory effectively.
	3. Following the initial 3 hours, the Contractor shall provide an additional minimum of 3 hours of assistance, as needed.
4. The Contractor shall provide a dated copy of an inventory summary to the IDNR. The Morton Arboretum requests a copy of the completed inventory to facilitate its development of outreach materials that assist communities in managing their trees. (Please contact Zach Wirtz at zwirtz@mortonarb.org for more information about how inventory data is used by the Arboretum or to waive this request.)
5. A Tree Inventory Maintenance Agreement must be signed (see application for details)

# Urban Forest Management Plan Requirements

Completion of a new or updated management plan is allowed as a project for this grant. It may accompany a tree inventory or be a proposal on its own – as long as it is based on an inventory that was updated no more than four years ago.

Qualified staff and/or a Contractor shall complete a management plan that is based on an up-to-date inventory and shall include the following services.

**Eligibility: only applicants whose management plans are older than 5 years old and/or not based on an inventory are eligible to receive funding for a management plan.**

## Management Plan Deliverables

1. Plan goals and format
	1. This plan shall be developed to outline the future standards, specifications and goals for management of the community’s trees and forests.
	2. This plan shall include prioritized action items to ensure the Applicant can effectively and efficiently manage their trees.
	3. This plan shall be delivered in a document format that can be easily edited and updated,

e.g. Microsoft Word or another similar program.

* 1. The Applicant’s governmental organization shall accept the plan prior to request for reimbursement.
1. Plan components may include some of the following, as needed and appropriate for each community. One component from item (a) is REQUIRED.
	1. Recommended and prioritized urban forest management action items, based on an inventory. One component from this list is required.
		1. A description of the organization’s urban forest canopy cover and composition.

(Canopy cover data can be provided to organizations in Will, Lake, Kane, Kendall, Cook, and McHenry by the Chicago Region Trees Initiative and can be found at Chicagorti.org/UTC.)

* + 1. Prioritized planting locations, including replacements and new plantings.
		2. A cyclical pruning schedule and map
		3. Prioritized hazard abatement informed by inventory data
		4. A list of preferred species, prohibited species, and species to be planted in limited capacity
		5. How the urban forest inventory will be used to inform decisions and how it will be updated.
		6. A strategy for improving forest age and species structure.
	1. Short and long-term urban forest goals 2021 – 2031.
		1. Long-term goals such as:
			1. Urban forest management goals and risk mitigation
			2. Canopy cover goals
			3. Climate change response
		2. Short-term goals (e.g. annual goals) such as:
			1. Tree pruning schedules
			2. A plan for replacement and removals
			3. A plan for hazard abatement
			4. Mitigation of pests and diseases
			5. Benchmarks to ensure progress towards long-term goals
	2. Specifications for planting, pruning, removals, and protection
		1. Specifications from ANSI, ISA, and/or other nationally recognized standards for tree care (pruning, planting, etc.)
		2. Establishing a pruning and maintenance cycle so that care is regularly scheduled.
		3. Protection and standards for trees in construction zones
	3. Required and recommended certifications, qualifications, and training for staff, contracted labor, and consulting.
		1. Formulating these requirements so as to mitigate and manage risk, including climate impacts.
	4. Material and budget considerations
		1. Short- and long-term budget projections and needs.
		2. A plan for acquisition and replacement of equipment and resources.
	5. A program for education and outreach of residents
		1. Engaging private landowners and managers within the organization’s boundaries.
		2. Developing a marketing strategy for engaging residents so they are familiar with urban forestry in their community.
			1. Training and education
				1. If a Contractor is used, before the project starts, the Contractor shall meet with the community to outline project goals and plans specific to the community.
				2. The Contractor shall provide a minimum of 3 hours, as needed, of outreach and education (that is separate from required inventory outreach) to ensure that the community is able to use the management plan effectively. These services shall expire on August, 2024.

**The Community shall provide proof that the management plan was completed and submit a copy of the document to The Morton Arboretum. (Please email Zach Wirtz at** **zwirtz@mortonarb.org** **for more information.)**

# Tree Planting Requirements

Tree Planting, within the Applicant’s boundaries, may be completed as a project. Trees planted must meet minimum quality metrics, and be planted as described below. A Tree Planting List and Maintenance Agreement is required for all tree planting projects.

**Requirements:**

1. Trees planted shall be between 1” and 2” caliper measured at 6” above the root flare.
2. Tree planting projects must be planned and executed to promote the long-term survival of the trees.
3. Tree species selected must be a diverse selection appropriate to your community. A statement of diversity explaining how the selected species will improve tree diversity in your community is required as part of the tree planting plan.
4. Shrubs (species which do not grow beyond 10 feet in height) are not eligible for reimbursement.
5. An International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist must approve the accompanying tree planting plan for all trees funded through this proposal or with match. (See below.)
6. The Applicant must attest to properly caring for trees purchased through this program by including a maintenance plan. The plan must identify who will water and mulch trees over the **required three years post-planting period**. (A copy of the proposed maintenance plan must accompany the application.)
7. Trees must be planted according to the ANSI, ISA, and/or other nationally recognized planting specification.
8. All trees purchased through this proposal shall meet the ANSI American Standard for Nursery Stock (ANSI Z60).
9. All trees must have the **burlap, rope, and the wire basket removed (or be a low-profile basket) at time of planting.**
10. All trees shall receive a 3 to 4-inch layer of hardwood mulch over the root ball and not touching the bark of the tree.
11. Tree planting shall take place in the spring or fall of 2022 or spring of 2023.
12. Tree species to be planted must be specified in the grant application. Species selected and site conditions must be identified. Grant participants are encouraged to plant native species.
13. Trees must be purchased from U.S. Department of Agriculture Certified Nurseries.
14. A Tree Maintenance Agreement is required and is attached to the Application packet.
15. Newly planted trees associated with the grant must be inventoried in the CRTI ‘Canopy Counts’ online application by the Applicant at the time of planting and then verified and updated in the application annually for the duration of the maintenance plan agreement. This inventory will include an up-to-date photo of each planted tree as well as basic information such as GPS location, species, size, and condition. The Morton Arboretum may periodically conduct site visits to ensure the accuracy of this online inventory.

# Proposal Scoring

Your proposal will be evaluated and ranked by an independent scoring committee. The criteria listed below will be used to score each proposal. In the event of a tie, the following additional factors will be used to score proposals: Applicant need and leveraged benefits; Orderliness of the overall application.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria:** | **Highest Possible Score** |
| **Application:** Grant application is thoughtfully prepared, all questions are concisely answered, and follows the application form. Proposal is viable and work plan is clear. | 20 |
| **Budget:** Clearly identified costs and plan for match/ in-kind. | 15 |
| **Project time line:** A well-planned, feasible, and viable timeline that shows the Applicant understands the project. | 10 |
|  **Leveraged Benefits:** (Maximum 1,500 words) * Describe, as applicable:
	+ how the inventory will be updated regularly and used
	+ what kind of management plan will result from the inventory

AND/OR* + how the management plan will be used in basic operations.
	+ how the management plan will be updated.

AND/OR* + how the tree planting will benefit your community and how the trees will be selected and maintained to ensure this benefit
	+ number and size of trees proposed for planting
	+ how the trees will be maintained after the required maintenance period.
* Describe your organization’s commitment to the project.
* Describe local match, committed overmatch, volunteer efforts, financial or in-kind community organization support and/or community contributions.
* Please describe the role, training, and qualifications of any partners and/or potential volunteers.

**Support letters** from peer organizations may be attached and should describe that entity’s commitment to and role in this project. | 25 |
| **Need:** Applicant demonstrates economic or programmatic need. | 20 |
| **Ordinance:** Applicant has never had a tree ordinance or can demonstrate a commitment to strengthen an existing ordinance e.g. incorporating a management plan or adding provisions for controls on private land | 10 |
| **Total Possible Points** | **100** |
| **Bonus:** if an Applicant encourages a peer community to apply and both apply, both will receive extra points. (As identified in both applications. Be sure to state this in your application.) | 2 |
|  **Bonus:** if an Applicant becomes a new Tree City USA if not presently one or a Tree City USA Growth recipient if presently a Tree City USA community.  |  2 |
|  **Bonus:** if Applicant adds a commitment to form a tree board or other advisory group as part of this grants required deliverables.  |  4 |

# Award and Execution of Agreement

1. All completed proposals shall be submitted electronically, including all attachments, to Zach Wirtz at zwirtz@mortonarb.org by **Monday, November 1, 2021, at 5:00 p.m**. Any Applicant requiring assistance either to complete the application or to submit it electronically shall contact Zach Wirtz at zwirtz@mortonarb.org no later than Friday, September 31, 2021.
2. Each proposal will be scored according to stated criteria by three separate, independent grant reviewers. The highest scoring proposals will be recommended for funding. Partial funding is possible.
3. Applicants will be notified by **late December, 2021** of funding status.
4. The Applicant must notify any applicable Contractor(s) to receive an estimate of cost. **THE AWARDED COMMUNITY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING ALL EXPENSES AND SUBMITTING FOR REIMBURSEMENT.**
5. Awarded Applicants will be provided an Award Agreement via email. This agreement must be executed by the Applicant’s Executive Authority and returned via email **no later than January 20, 2022**.

### Failure to return signed agreement by due date may cause funding award to be revoked.

1. Once executed by The Morton Arboretum, the Agreement will be sent via email to the Applicant. Once received by the Applicant, the Applicant may contact any awarded Contractor to begin work as outlined in the approved proposal.

### NO WORK SHOULD BE STARTED PRIOR TO THE APPROVAL AND EXECUTION OF THE AGREEMENT, INCLUDNG MATCH COSTS.

1. Applicants are required to report quarterly on project progress, including ordinance development, revision, and approval. Emailed reminders with reporting templates will be supplied quarterly. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in cancellation of the current grant, loss of all funding, and potential for disqualification from future grants.
2. Applicants will be required to submit a final report with their reimbursement report which will include a budget form and match documentation worksheets.
3. All work related to this grant, except for the final report, must be completed by **Friday, July 1, 2023**

## Final report and reimbursement materials must be received by Tuesday, August 1, 2023.

# Payment

Reimbursement and payment procedures:

* The Applicant is responsible for all expenses and will receive reimbursement at the end of the grant period.
* The Applicant can expect payment 45-60 days after The Morton Arboretum has received and approved the fully completed reimbursement report containing valid invoices and canceled checks.
* The Applicant shall review the reimbursement materials and all reporting requirements to ensure that all materials are ready for reimbursement by the grant deadline – including all payments and proof of payment.
* **Only one reimbursement payment will be made to the Applicant upon completion of all phases of the grant project(s).** Once payment is made the grant project is considered complete.
* To receive payment, the Applicant must provide a copy of the approved tree preservation/protection ordinance.
	+ All municipalities must have ordinances that meet all of the requirements outlined on pages 8 and 9.
	+ Awarded Park District and Forest Preserve Districts shall submit board approved policies that stipulate natural resource protection with specific urban and community forest management guidance similar to some of the criteria listed on pages 8 and 9.
	+ It is recommended that a copy of the proposed ordinance be provided to The Morton Arboretum at least 120 days prior to the August 1, 2022 deadline to assure that the ordinance **meets all requirements**.
	+ Assistance to complete this requirement is provided to all Applicants by The Morton Arboretum regardless of award. Please plan adequate time to complete this requirement.