

2023 CHICAGO REGION EARMARK - Urban and Community Forestry Support in the Chicago Region Grant Program

Request for Proposals

Funding provided thanks to Congressman Sean Casten's Community Project
Funding support in 2021

Proposals Due: March 24th, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.



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For more information
please contact Colette Copic ccopic@mortonarb.org

Introduction & Allowable Costs

This request for proposals provides funding assistance to communities (public entities including, municipalities, park districts, counties, tribal governments, townships, forest preserves, and other units of government) in McHenry, Lake, Kane, DuPage, Cook, Will, and Kendall Counties to improve the urban forest. Schools, colleges, and HOAs are not eligible to receive funding assistance through this grant. **This grant project was made possible with increased resources thanks to Congressman Sean Casten's Community Project Funding support in 2021. The Morton Arboretum is the grant administrator.**

The total maximum allowable funding amount for any one organization is \$25,000. The minimum allowable funding amount is \$3,500. For all communities, a 25% local match is required. Match spending is the use of local resources towards the project total and is explained in detail in the "[eligible and allowable match](#)" section of this document. **An organization unable to achieve the required match should contact Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org to discuss waiving this requirement.**

Assistance is available for any Applicant needing assistance to complete a proposal. Assistance can be provided by contacting Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org. All requests for assistance must be received by March 10, 2023.

Allowable Costs

Program areas funded through this proposal must also include one or more of the following:

1. **Increasing tree canopy** (diverse tree planting and commitment to care for the trees post planting)
2. **Improving forest health** (pruning, dead tree removals, ash treatment, tree mulching, watering)
3. **Improving community forestry programs** (completion of a forest management plan or inventory with management summary; Increasing staff professionalism (through forestry training and/or certification or development of a forestry volunteer program)).

Applicant communities may complete the projects listed above by using a qualified contractor, in-house staff, and/or volunteers (lead by qualified staff). If using a qualified contractor, the Applicant shall use a competitive bid process to determine the best-qualified contractor for any contract over \$10,000 and in accordance with applicable laws, and the communities purchasing regulations and policies.

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 Morton Arboretum, through the Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) will assist communities in the 7-county Chicago metropolitan region to plant and care for trees to mitigate and improve resilience to climate change, improve community health, and address environmental inequities in under-served diverse communities.

The urban forest in the Chicago region is under threat from invasive species, development, climate change, lack of care – especially in communities with inequities, few or no tree related policies, and environmental impacts. Canopy cover ranges from 3% to 66% across the Chicago region and canopy is lower in under-resourced communities. The CRTI and the USDA Forest Service have collected data that allows for prioritization of communities with lower canopy, higher temperatures, increased flooding, poor air quality and highly vulnerable populations. CRTI will prioritize outreach and funding assistance to priority communities, based on this analysis.

This project will address goals of the State Forest Action Plan by planting broadly diverse tree species—reducing the potential for catastrophic loss; educate decision makers to strengthen policies and professionalism of the urban forest to improve urban forest care and resilience; assist decision makers to manage threats, e.g. removal of standing dead ash trees; focus on canopy expansion through improved care and planting of trees in areas of historic disinvestment; and will build a foundation of resources e.g. tree inventories, management plans, and improved policies that will support urban forest health beyond the end of this program.

All of the funding from this program will be used to help communities improve tree planting and care in their communities with prioritization of under-resourced communities. Under-resourced communities will be determined using the CRTI Priority Map located [here](#).

As needed, CRTI will work with elected officials, staff, and community members to increase awareness of the importance of a healthy urban forest tree canopy, learn community concerns and values, help them develop a project and project plan, apply for funding, and help them carry out their projects to successful completion. Individual or combined projects may include: increasing tree canopy; improving forest health; and improving community forestry programs.

General Criteria

1. The maximum allowable funding amount per eligible organization is \$25,000. The minimum grant request is \$3,500.
 2. For all communities, a 25% local match is required. **An organization unable to achieve the required match should contact Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org to discuss waiving this requirement.**
 3. The deadline for completed applications is March 24th, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.
 4. Organizations eligible for funding shall be units of government other than federal or state. These include:
 - a. Municipalities, townships, and county governments, Tribal governments
 - b. Forest preserves and/or conservation districts
 - c. Park districts
- Non-eligible entities include not-for-profits, schools, libraries, and other groups.
5. All applications shall be submitted electronically to Colette Copic by email at ccopic@mortonarb.org by March 24, 2023
 6. **Technical Assistance is available to help you write the grant application and/or develop a proposal. Please contact Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org no later than March 10, 2023.**
 7. All Applicants will be notified of their status via email by early April 2023.
 8. The funding period is approximately 29 months. All work related to this grant, except for the final report, must be completed by **August 1, 2025**. Final reporting and reimbursement must be submitted by **September 1, 2025**.
 9. All aspects of all categories of this proposal shall meet or exceed the most current American National Standards Institute (ANSI), International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), and/or other nationally recognized specifications and/or standards.
 10. No part of the grant funding can be used to pay for land or to purchase equipment (Equipment is any item that costs over \$5,000 that has a useful life of over 1 year. Equipment is considered more permanent and longer lasting than supplies, which are used up quickly).
 11. Funding will be awarded based on score, need, and alignment with the grant's program goals. Preference will be given to communities as identified on the CRTI prioritization mapping (vulnerable populations, air quality, flooding, heat and canopy cover). A section of your application score will reflect your community's priority rank.
 12. Incomplete applications will not be scored.
 13. **Awarded Applicants shall publish in an organization announcement, publication, newsletter or website, recognizing the source of the funding for this project.**

Financial Information

1. The minimum award for this grant is \$3,500, and the maximum is \$25,000.
2. This award requires that 25% of the project total consist of local match spending, based on reimbursable costs and/or in-kind service. Match is further defined in the “Eligible and Allowable Match” section. For example:

| Requested Funding Amount (75%) | Local Match (25%) | Total Project Cost (100%) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| \$11,250 | \$3,750 | \$15,000 |

3. **An organization unable to achieve the required match should contact Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org to discuss waiving this requirement.**
4. Only non-federal and non-state money may be used for the match.
5. The Applicant’s labor cost, 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.
 - a. An hourly proration for the share of fringe benefit costs paid by the Applicant may be included in the labor cost.
 - b. The skills and/or qualifications of individuals completing the work, including Contractors, shall meet nationally recognized standards and certifications.
 - c. The Applicant will submit records for employee hours, and shall include the base rate of pay for the employee(s).
6. All Contractors and suppliers completing grant projects must meet nationally recognized training and certification requirements, and evidence is required for reimbursement.
7. Please refer to the “Match Information for the 2023 Chicago Region State Spending Earmark Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program” sheet for match amount calculators and more information.

Eligible and Allowable Match

Match spending for a grant can be understood as *splitting the bill for your project with the funder*. Your project will cost a specific dollar amount, and a portion of the total will be made up of the Requested Funding Amount, and a portion will be Local Match. For this grant, match can be accomplished in two ways:

Direct Cash Match where you pay for part of a service like a tree inventory, and the grant pays for part of the service, and

In-Kind Match where you put your community’s existing resources to work. This includes using staff time to work on the grant, in-house maintenance on trees after a new inventory or management plan, volunteer efforts, and other activities.

Match may be a direct cash contribution toward the project or an in-kind contribution.

Supporting documentation for the Applicant's match spending must be included with reimbursement. Approved documentation includes: paid invoices, cleared checks, timecards, and/or other paperwork.

Allowable costs for the match shall not start before award execution and cannot extend beyond August 1, 2025. Eligible match is as follows:

1. Direct cash match for contracted services related to inventory, management planning, tree planting, tree maintenance, tree removal, and/or staff training that is funded with grant dollars.
2. Volunteer labor hours which must be counted at or below industry standard rate for the work being completed.
3. Tree pruning, planting, care, maintenance, or removal directly related to activities undertaken with grant funding including:
 - a. Materials or supplies e.g. trees or mulch.
 - b. Site preparation and modifications including tree removal and stump grinding in preparation for tree planting projects*.
 - c. Labor and material costs for tree maintenance based on a new inventory/management plan.*
 - d. Treatment or Removal of EAB Infested ash trees or removal of dead ash trees throughout the community*
 - a. ***Any trees to be removed using grant funding or for match must present significant harm/hazard to the community and documentation of such must be provided.** Invasive exotic trees and shrubs shall also constitute harm and may be removed. These include:
 - i. European buckthorn (common buckthorn) - *Rhamnus cathartica*
 - ii. Amur honeysuckle - *Lonicera maackii*
 - iii. Morrow's honeysuckle - *Lonicera morrowii*
 - iv. Callery pear (Bradford pear) - *Pyrus calleryana*
 - v. Tree-of-heaven - *Ailanthus altissima*
 - vi. Autumn olive - *Elaeagnus umbellata*
 - vii. Mimosa - *Albizia julibrissin*
 - viii. Norway maple - *Acer platanoides*
4. Directly related administrative costs, including time spent by staff, officials, volunteers, and others who develop or approve bid documents, contracts, supervise contractors, conduct site visits, determine planting locations, and/or other related tasks.

Eligible Program Areas

There are three eligible program areas that grant funding can be spent on. They are detailed below.

Increasing tree canopy

Including: diverse tree planting and commitment to care for the trees post planting

Tree Planting, on properties 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. These projects must include specific consideration for increasing tree species and age diversity. A commitment to care for newly planted trees is required as described below.

Tree Planting Requirements

1. Trees may be planted on public or private property.
2. Trees planted shall be between 1" and 2" caliper measured at 6" above the root flare.
3. Tree planting projects must be planned and executed to promote the long-term survival of the trees.
4. 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.
5. Shrubs (species that do not grow beyond 10 feet in height) are not eligible for reimbursement.
6. An International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist must approve the accompanying tree planting plan for all trees planted on public property that are funded through this proposal or with match. (See below.) If you do not have a certified arborist on staff or know of one a list can be found on the [Illinois Arborist Association](#) website.
7. The Applicant must attest to properly caring for trees purchased through this program by including a maintenance plan. The plan must identify who and frequency for watering and mulching trees over the **required three years post-planting period**. (A copy of the proposed maintenance plan must accompany the application. A Tree Maintenance Agreement and Partner Commitment Agreement is required and is attached to the Application packet.) Trees must be planted according to the ANSI, ISA, and/or other nationally recognized planting specifications.
8. All trees purchased through this proposal shall be from nurseries that are licensed by the [Illinois Nursery Inspection Program](#). Trees must be purchased from entities which are compliant with all applicable state and federal regulations including spongy (gypsy) moth compliance agreements, pesticide licensure, etc.
9. All trees must have the **burlap, rope, and wire basket removed (or be a low-profile basket) at time of planting and must be planted in accordance with the ANSI A300 Standard**. A copy of the ANSI A300 standard will be provided to every awarded governmental entity (also see Appendix C for a planting standard example).
10. Immediately after planting, all trees shall receive a 2 to 3-inch layer of hardwood mulch over

the root ball. Mulch shall not touch the bark of the tree.

11. Tree planting shall take place in the spring or fall of 2023 2024, or 2025.
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. Newly planted trees must be digitally inventoried, or recorded, at planting. Communities may use a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, or their own inventory software of choice. Information that must be collected includes:
 - A photo of each planted tree
 - GPS coordinates
 - Tree species
 - Tree size (DBH)
 - Tree condition

The Arboretum may periodically conduct site visits to ensure the accuracy of this digital inventory.

Improving Forest Health

Including: pruning, dead tree removals, ash treatment, tree mulching, watering

Applicants may propose a project that improves the health of individual trees within their urban forest. This includes maintenance, such as pruning, removal of standing dead trees and high risk/hazard trees, removal of invasive species, treatment of ash trees not already infested with EAB, mulching of trees, and watering of trees planted within the last 2 years.

1. All tree care/maintenance work must be completed in accordance with the ANSI A300 and Z133 standards. A copy of the ANSI A300 standard will be provided to every awarded governmental entity.
2. A plan for proposed maintenance activities must be submitted with the grant application, including number of trees to be pruned/removed, and cost estimates.
3. Trees on both public and private property are eligible.
4. Any tree removed with grant funding or as a match activity must:
 - a. Present a significant harm or hazard to the communities, as documented by an ISA Certified Arborist, OR
 - b. Be an invasive exotic tree or shrub species, including:
 - i. European buckthorn (common buckthorn) - *Rhamnus cathartica*
 - ii. Amur honeysuckle - *Lonicera maackii*
 - iii. Morrow's honeysuckle - *Lonicera morrowii*
 - iv. Callery pear (Bradford pear) - *Pyrus calleryana*
 - v. Tree-of-heaven - *Ailanthus altissima*
 - vi. Autumn olive - *Elaeagnus umbellata*
 - vii. Mimosa - *Albizia julibrissin*
 - viii. Norway maple - *Acer platanoides*

5. Work may be completed by qualified in-house staff or by a qualified contractor. Proof of qualifications to complete tree work, such as arborist certification, is required upon selecting a contractor.

Improving Community Forestry Programs

Including: completion of a forest management plan or inventory with management summary, increasing staff professionalism (through forestry training and/or certification or development of a forestry volunteer program).

Applicants may propose a project that improves their community's urban forest programs, including but not limited to, conducting tree inventories with accompanying action plans, writing of urban and community forestry management plans, increasing staff professionalism, and enhancing volunteer efforts such as formation of a tree board.

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 3 years are eligible for funding for an inventory. Inventories must cover between 15%-100% of the community's public tree population. An inventory action plan or urban forest management plan that addresses some part of the inventory results must accompany the inventory.

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. Additional services, beyond the deliverables listed below, are not a reimbursable cost but may be used as match, e.g. software subscription fees, etc.

Tree Inventory Deliverables

1. Required Individual Tree Data Fields
 - a. GPS Coordinates
 - b. Street Address and Relative Location
 - c. Land use (i.e., residential, business zone, natural area, park, etc.)
 - d. Growing space (i.e., parkway, park, etc.)
 - e. Species
 - f. DBH

- g. Single or multi-stem designation
 - h. Condition rating and risk assessment (such as TRAQ, Davey 10 point, etc.)
 - i. Defects (roots, wounds, rot, deadwood, etc.)
 - ii. Maintenance Recommendation
 - i. General comments or notes
2. Optional Deliverables
 - a. Plantable spaces
 - b. Additional inventory features including software subscriptions that run concurrent to the grant term. All costs for subscriptions must be paid by the end of the work period.
 3. At a minimum, the inventory shall be delivered as a digital spreadsheet, such as Excel.
 4. Training and education
 - a. 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.
 - b. Immediately after the inventory is complete, the contractor should provide a minimum of 3 hours of technical assistance to ensure that the community understands how to use the inventory effectively.
 - c. Following the initial 3 hours, the contractor should provide an additional minimum of 3 hours of assistance, as needed.
 5. The Applicant shall provide a dated copy of inventory summary and Urban Forest Management Plan to The Morton Arboretum before reimbursement of grant expenditures. 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 Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org for more information about how inventory data is used by the Arboretum or to waive Morton Arboretum's request.)
 6. 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. A management plan's scope may cover the entire community, or appropriate subsections of a community, such as an Ash Tree Preservation / Replacement plan, risk abatement plan, cyclical pruning plan, community tree planting plan, etc. Urban Forest Management Plans are further described in Appendix A of this document.

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

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.

Management Plan Deliverables:

1. Plan goals and format
 - a. This plan shall be developed to outline the future standards, specifications, and goals for management of the community's trees and forests over the next 5 to 7 years.
 - b. This plan shall include prioritized action items for a 5 to 7 year period to ensure the Applicant can effectively and efficiently manage their trees.
 - c. This plan shall be delivered in a document format that can be easily edited and updated, e.g. Microsoft Word or another similar program.
2. Plan components may include some of the following, as needed and appropriate, for each community. **at least one component from item (a) is REQUIRED.**
 - a. Recommended and prioritized urban forest management action items, based on an inventory. One component from this list is required.
 - i. 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, DuPage, and McHenry by the Chicago Region Trees Initiative)
 - ii. Prioritized planting locations, including replacements and new plantings.
 - iii. A cyclical pruning schedule and map
 - iv. Prioritized hazard abatement informed by inventory data
 - v. A list of preferred species, prohibited species, and species to be planted in limited quantities
 - vi. How the urban forest inventory will be used to inform decisions and how it will be updated.
 - vii. A strategy for improving forest age and species structure.
 - b. Short and long-term urban forest goals 2023 – 2030.
 - i. Long-term goals such as:
 1. Urban forest management goals and risk mitigation
 2. Canopy cover goals
 3. Climate change response
 - ii. 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
 - c. Specifications for planting, pruning, removals, and protection

- i. Specifications from ANSI, ISA, and/or other nationally recognized standards for tree care (pruning, planting, etc.)
 - ii. Establishing a pruning and maintenance cycle so that care is regularly scheduled.
 - iii. Protection and standards for trees in construction zones
 - d. Required and recommended certifications, qualifications, and training for staff, contracted labor, and consulting.
 - i. Formulating these requirements so as to mitigate and manage risk, including climate impacts.
 - e. Material equipment, and budget considerations
 - i. Short- and long-term budget projections and needs.
 - ii. A plan for acquisition and replacement of equipment and resources.
 - f. A program for education and outreach of residents
 - i. Engaging private landowners and managers within the organization's boundaries.
 - ii. Developing a marketing strategy for engaging residents so they are familiar with urban forestry in their community.
- 3. Training and education
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.

The Community shall provide proof that the management plan was completed and submit a copy of the document to The Morton Arboretum

Staff Improvement and Volunteer Development

1. Staff may be hired, or existing staff may be trained to undertake urban forestry enhancement activities for the community.* Allowable expenses include:
 - a. Personnel and fringe funding for community Arborist position if one does not already exist.
 - b. ISA Credentialing – courses and exam fees for ISA Certified Arborist, Municipal Specialist, Tree Risk Assessment Qualification, or Certified Tree Worker.
 - c. Staff Education – Tree Keepers courses, SMA Municipal Forestry Institute, iTree Academy, Contractor training for staff, etc.
 - d. Staff time to complete and pass training
 - e. Proof of successful training completion must be submitted with your reimbursement packet.

2. A contractor may be hired to serve in the role of community forester to undertake urban forestry enhancement activities for the community.*.
***Before grant reimbursement, a summary report must be submitted detailing how this person contributed to establishing or implementing goals and objectives for the communities urban and community forestry program.**
3. Volunteer development
 - a. Development of volunteer protocols and activities (e.g. volunteer pruning, volunteer tree inventory training).
 - b. Development of a Tree Board or other advisory group.

Update or Create a Tree Protection / Preservation Ordinance

The creation or update of a tree protection/preservation ordinance that is approved by a municipality’s, county’s, or township’s governing body (e.g. city council) may be undertaken as part of this grant. The chart below contains The Morton Arboretum and CRTI’s basic recommendations for a tree protection ordinance. Communities are highly encouraged to incorporate all of these components, but are allowed to choose any subset of these for their ordinance. **NOTE: The Morton Arboretum provides ordinance revision assistance free of charge to communities.** Park Districts and Forest Preserve Districts may submit board-approved policies that stipulate natural resource protection with specific urban and community forest management guidance similar to these criteria. All of the ordinance components shall apply to your municipality’s/ community’s public trees that are managed by the awardee.

| | | |
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| 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. |

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| 6. | Tree Planting and Maintenance Standards | Clear specifications standards referencing the most current American National Standard 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: a) tree production (nursery source production standards) b) tree planting c) tree care d) tree pruning |
| 7. | Requirements for contracted tree maintenance | Requirements for contracted tree maintenance including skill and insurance requirements |
| 8. | Establishment of a Tree Board <i>(Mandatory only if selected as a voluntary bonus, see page 18)</i> | Formation and qualifications, responsibilities, and terms for a Tree Board or other advisory group responsible for trees. |
| 9. | Permits | Tree permit requirements, penalties, 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 | Variance |
| 16. | Severability | Statement of severability (this may exist in a related Code) |

It is recommended that the tree protection/preservation ordinance also include:

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| 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 Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org.)

Proposal Scoring

Your proposal will be evaluated and ranked by a 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 |
|---|------------------------|
| <p>Project Overview-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Applicant identifies which program area(s) your project addresses ● The Applicant indicates a clear scope of the project that includes key numeric deliverables (e.g., number of trees planted, number of staff trained) ● The Applicant identifies who will be involved in the project ● The Applicant provides a short narrative on the long term impact for this project and describes how this project will contribute to the community’s canopy and/or contribute to a vibrant and healthy urban forest over the long term. | 10 |
| <p>Purpose and Need-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Applicant describes the connection between project activities and priorities of applicable strategic plans, or urban forest goals. ● The application demonstrates attention to equity and environmental justice, supported by information such as the CRTI Priority Map, The Climate and Econ Screening Tool, Tree Equity Score, Social Vulnerability Index, Opportunity Zone status, or other equity indicators, and describes how your project will specifically address these needs. ● The application clearly describes the community’s unique challenges (e.g. canopy loss, staff capacity and training, etc.) and identifies reasons why this grant is needed to address these specific challenges. | 20 |

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| <p>Scope of Work-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The applicant shows capability and clear plans for carrying out the project and maintaining long-term project benefits. ● The applicant and/or partners show adequate expertise to address technical elements of the project or will seek out contractors with adequate expertise. If applicable, the Applicant describes the role, training, and qualifications of any partners and/or potential volunteers. ● Projects that involve community participation will be awarded higher scores. Support letters are required from any entity providing in-kind donations / match for the project. Support letters from peer organizations may be attached and should describe that entity’s commitment to and role in this project. ● The project is designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change and other ecosystem stressors. | <p>15</p> |
| <p>Leveraged Benefits-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The application shows clear intention that the project will benefit your forestry program or community for the long term. ● Projects that can describe how this grant would expand your urban forestry efforts (not just supplement) will receive higher scores. | <p>20</p> |
| <p>Budget Details-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The budget indicated in this table is balanced and the match is present and realistic. ● The Applicant provides a clear explanation on how they arrived at project cost (e.g., quotes, previous projects). ● The Applicant describes all local match, both in-kind and direct, including contracted services, personnel salary and fringe, material purchases, volunteer efforts, community organization support and/or community contributions. ● The Applicant details any “other” expenses listed in the budget matrix. | <p>15</p> |
| <p>Sharing Knowledge and Outcomes-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applicant identifies strategies for outreach to the community about this grant’s outcomes. ● The project includes efforts to share knowledge, tools, or innovations that have practical application beyond the grant period. | <p>10</p> |
| <p>Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Applicant’s timeline is clear and realistic ● Major milestones and required approvals are detailed ● Match activity timing is considered and clear | <p>10</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Total Possible Points | 100 |
|------------------------------|-----|

| Bonus Points | Highest Possible Score |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 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 commits to become a Tree City USA if not presently one or commits to receiving a Tree City USA Growth Award if presently a Tree City USA community (requires a signed letter from Mayor or be submitted with the application). | 2 |
| Bonus: if Applicant adds a commitment to form a tree board or other advisory group as part of this grants required deliverables. See Appendix B for a description of applicable options to fulfill this requirement (requires a signed letter from the Mayor or chief executive to be submitted with the application). | 2 |
| Total Possible Bonus Points | 6 |

Award and Execution of Agreement

1. All completed proposals shall be submitted electronically, including all attachments, to Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org by **March 24th, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.** Any Applicant requiring assistance either to complete the application or to submit it electronically shall contact Colette Copic at ccopic@mortonarb.org no later than March 10th, 2023.
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 **early April, 2023** 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 UPFRONT AND SUBMITTING FOR REIMBURSEMENT AT THE COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT.**
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 15 business days from receipt. Failure to return a signed agreement by the due date may cause the funding award to be revoked.**
6. Once executed by The Morton Arboretum, the Agreement will be sent via email to the Applicant. Once received, the Applicant may begin work as outlined in the approved proposal.

NO WORK SHALL BE STARTED PRIOR TO THE APPROVAL AND EXECUTION OF THE AGREEMENT, INCLUDING MATCH COSTS.

7. Applicants are required to report quarterly on project progress. 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.
8. Applicants will be required to submit a final report with their reimbursement report which will include a budget form and match documentation worksheets.
9. All work related to this grant, except for the final report, must be completed by **August 1st, 2025.**
10. **Final report and reimbursement materials must be received by September 1st, 2025.**

Payment

Reimbursement and payment procedures:

1. The Applicant is responsible for all expenses and will receive reimbursement at the end of the grant period.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

Appendix A: Urban Forest Management Plan Description

Intent: Developing, using, and periodically updating a management plan demonstrates a community's commitment to the comprehensive management of its community tree and forest resources.

Definition:

- a) A detailed document or set of documents that identify and prioritize action items based on professionally-based, relevant inventories and/or resource assessments, that outline the future management of the community's trees and forests. At a minimum, the plan must address public trees. The plan must be actively used by the community to guide management decisions and/or resource allocation and updated as needed to incorporate new information.
- b) A plan for trees in a portion of the community, as long as it includes a written explanation of why there is a focus on that area (i.e., the importance of that space to the community) and action items regarding the establishment, protection, conservation, and maintenance of public trees.
- c) Management plans for forested tracts may be counted if they meet the above and the forest meets all the following criteria:
 - i. located in or near a town/municipal/community population center, business district, or residential area,
 - ii. primarily managed for the benefit of the residents and to keep the land forested, and iii. owned by the local government (i.e., in public ownership).

Examples: (Examples include but are not limited to items on this list. Anything counted must meet the definition above.)

- An Urban Forest Master Plan, based on satellite imagery/GIS or other inventories and assessments, that sets goals for tree canopy cover, recommends areas for reforestation, recommends areas for preservation, promotes community education and outreach efforts, recommends tree maintenance policies for town/city/county properties and provides action items for the management of trees and forests (such as establishment, protection, and maintenance).
- A Public Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan based on an inventory of trees and open spaces in street rights-of-way and parklands. These plans include information such as a prioritized list of tree pruning and removals, a prioritized list of replacements and new tree plantings, a recommended yearly budget, and a recommended list of tree species for replanting.
- A community's comprehensive Land Use Plan that incorporates specific management recommendations for the community's trees and forest resources.
- A Tree Risk Reduction and Replanting Plan based on an inventory of community trees.
- A tree inventory with recommended action items for managing public trees and forests (i.e., establishment, conservation, protection, and maintenance) that is actively being used.
- Other plans, such as those below, as long as they address the required elements in the definition: Urban Canopy Master Plan; Open Space Plan; Long-Term Tree Planting Plan that addresses planting and care; Pest, Storm, or Disaster Preparedness Plan that addresses trees; Town Forest Management Plan; Urban Forest Management Plan for a downtown business district; Community Wildfire Protection Plan; Community Development Plan that has an urban forest management component

Appendix B: Tree Board / Advisory Group Description

Intent: Many local UCF programs began through the efforts of local community groups, and these groups often serve as a catalyst to encourage active local urban forest resource management for the long term. This performance element aims to ensure that community residents and program stakeholders are informed, educated, and engaged in the development and implementation of a sound community forestry program at the local level.

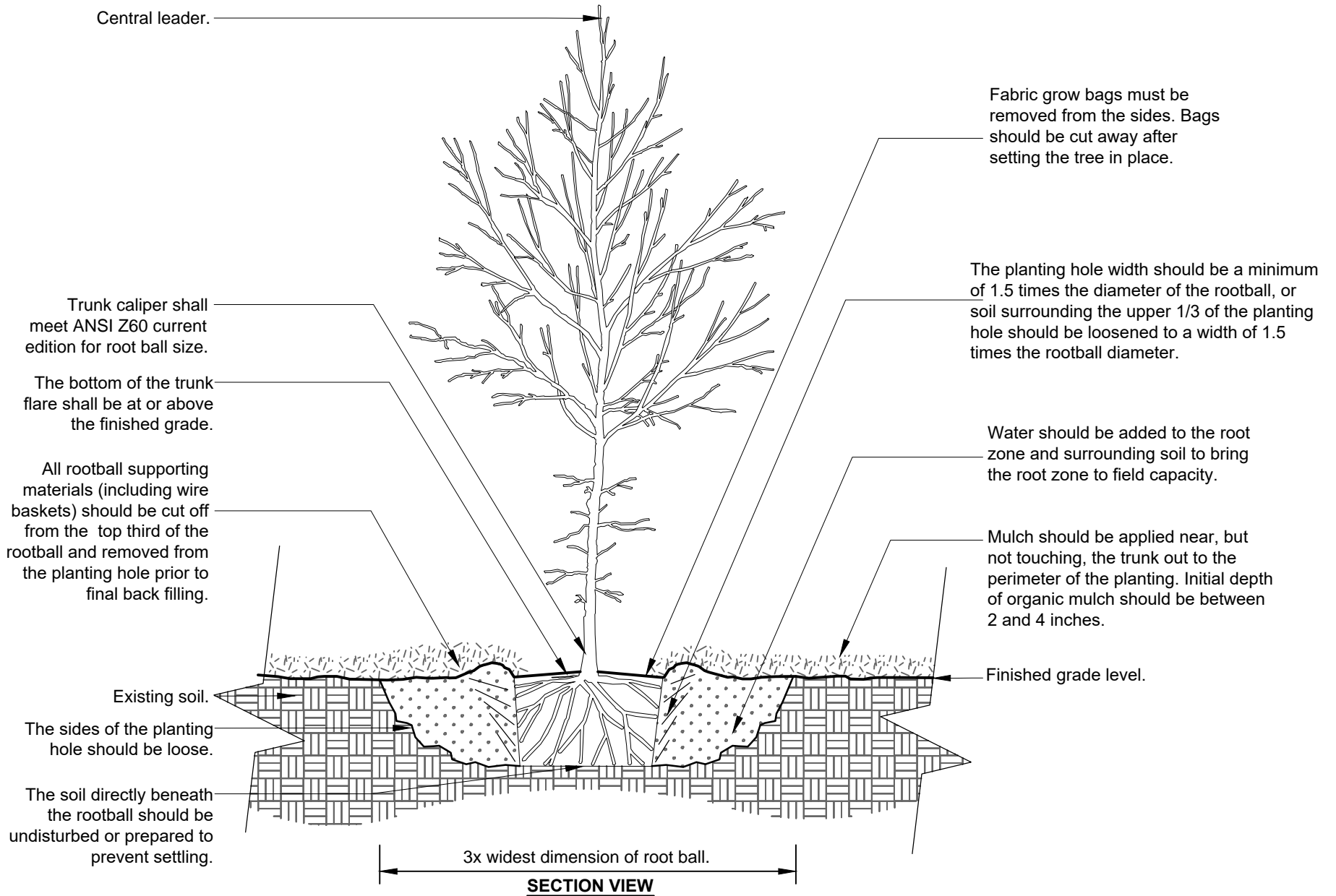
Definition:

- a) **Advisory Groups:** Organizations that are formalized or chartered (i.e., organizations established by the local government) to advise (during the reporting year) on the establishment, conservation, protection, and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests.
- b) **Advocacy Groups:** Non-governmental organizations active in the community that advocate or act for the establishment, conservation, protection, and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests during the year.

Examples: (Examples include but are not limited to items on this list. Anything counted must meet the definition above.):

- A board of community members appointed by local elected officials to advise policymakers on tree ordinances, policies, and management.
- A volunteer group such as “City ReLeaf” that is active in advocating for tree planting, preservation, and management in communities.
- A local Conservation or Environmental Commission that has an urban forestry sub-group or has urban and community forestry included in the organization’s action plan or charter and organizes at least one tree- or urban forestry-related activity during the year.
- A non-profit organization that advocates for community trees in multiple communities, as long as citizens in each community are engaged in the organization’s urban and community forestry advocacy or activities during the reporting year.
- An advocacy group that focuses on a public park, greenway, or neighborhood if the group organized at least one tree- or urban forestry-related activity during the reporting year.

Appendix C - Example Tree Planting Standard



P-X

TREE w/ BERM (EXISTING SOIL NOT MODIFIED)

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