



**CHICAGO
REGION
TREES
INITIATIVE**

Our Trees.
Our Communities.
Our Future.

ChicagoRTI.org

Tree Ambassadors Grant

The Tree Ambassadors Program (TAP) was started as a means to gain resident support to increase tree canopy in priority areas, tree advocacy and engagement in support of trees. It is made possible by the City of Chicago, the Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) and community based organizations. The Tree Ambassadors Grant provides funding and training for participating community groups to build capacity within their networks to support trees. The requirements of the grant are designed to achieve these goals in each of the partnering communities.

The partnering organization will:

- **Build community advocacy for tree planting, care, and preservation.**
- **Participate in training for tree advocacy.**
- **Participate in training and pass the City of Chicago requirements to utilize the City of Chicago, online, 311 Tree Request system.**
- **Identify tree planting locations.**
- **Participate in workshop content training.**
- **Provide community workshops that teach the value and benefits of trees.**
- **Participate in inventory training.**
- **Complete quarterly and annual reporting requirements consisting of fillable pdfs, zoom calls, and written reports.**



Funding Available: \$3,500, to \$20,000

If you are interested in becoming a participant of the Tree Ambassador Program please reach out to Melinda Escobar at mescobar@mortonarb.org.



Tree Ambassador Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. **My community has received the Tree Ambassadors Grant. What should I do next?**
 - a. Attend a Tree Ambassador training with CRTI and invite interested community leaders/members to join the Tree Ambassadors training as well.
2. **How much money do we get?**
 - a. This information is located in Exhibit B in your signed contract.
3. **When do we get reimbursed?**
 - a. Upon submitting invoices, and your quarterly report, you will receive the reimbursements quarterly, unless agreed upon otherwise.
4. **What do we have to do to be reimbursed? (What are the outcomes we have to meet?)**

Please refer to the *Scope of Work* in your contract for specific deliverables. They typically include:

 - a. Report progress on the goal of requesting and locating trees on City of Chicago parkway property within priority census tracts (assigned to your organization). This includes getting community member commitment to steward the trees.
 - b. Hold required workshops and report progress. Report progress on participation in training for the City of Chicago 311 tree request system, workshop content training, advocacy training and inventory training.
 - c. Report progress on inventorying newly planted trees.
 - d. Participate in quarterly check ins and biannual evaluations discussing accomplishments of funding requirements and lessons learned.
 - e. Submit a mid project report and a final report at project completion.
5. **What is and is not reimbursable?**

Reimbursable Expenses (not all are listed)	Non-reimbursable Expenses
Payroll of a new position (ex. grant administrator)	Food
Paying individuals per hour (ex. stipend, gift card, check)	Equipment over \$5000
Paying for participation of existing staff time	Indirect/ Overhead Costs (example: accountant fees and building fees)
Individual materials/items less than \$5000 (ex. iPad, projector, shovels)	
Equipment rental and meeting space rental	
Infrastructure (ex. office equipment, projectors, printing, logowear, beanies, subscription services, gas, uber)	

6. **When does the project start and end?**
 - a. Please refer to the *Time of Completion* section of your contract (first page).
7. **Do I need special training to do this?**
 - a. Yes, an initial Tree Ambassador training is required as well as advocacy, workshop content, and inventory training.
8. **How many people from my organization are needed?**
 - a. Two project leads are needed for the project. Additional support from staff, community leaders and residents is highly encouraged.
9. **How many people do we have to train or engage? How many times do we need to engage them? What does engagement for this program look like?**
 - a. Train or engage a minimum number of individuals. (Specifics are in your *Scope of Work*)

- b. The Tree Ambassador Program engagement is focused in and around tree planting care and advocacy. A few examples of engagement include:
- Leading an in-person presentation or walk about the importance and benefits of trees, highlighting good and bad signs of tree care, tree identification, wildlife identification.
 - Host a field day working in a garden, or pruning, mulching, or watering trees.
 - Invite community members to an existing Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) tree planting.
 - Explore iNaturalist, Nature's Notebook, or other app or web-based tools to learn about plants and animals in your community.
 - Host a viewing of an environmental film - make it a potluck.
 - Plan a scavenger hunt or geocaching activity to find unique plants.
 - Celebrate your community's natural and cultural heritage. What are you proud of? How is it enriched or tied to your green spaces?
 - Plan an asset mapping workshop to identify resources and opportunities for collaboration to enrich your community. For example, how many public green spaces are within walking distance in your community?

CRTI staff can provide ample resources to support your Tree Ambassador Program engagement.

10. Who is running the program?

- a. The CRTI, based out of The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL is running the program in partnership with the City of Chicago.

11. Who do I have to report to?

- a. Melinda Escobar, CRTI Tree Ambassador Specialist, mescobar@mortonarb.org.

12. What resources or help is available to me?

- a. Tree Ambassador Program Partner Trainings
b. Other TAP partners such as fellow ambassadors
c. Resources on Our Roots webpage ([link here](#))
d. CRTI staff support

13. Is there standard marketing that we could hand out to community members?

Yes, please go to the [City of Chicago Our Roots website](#) or the [CRTI website](#).

14. Who will provide these resources?

- a. CRTI and the City of Chicago Our Roots program

15. When do I have to report?

- a. Written reports are required quarterly: 3/15, 6/15, 9/15, 12/15 unless otherwise stated
b. Virtual Zoom meeting reports are held biannually in July and January
c. Mid project report: 2 page written report
d. A final project report: 2 page written report

16. What do I have to report?

- a. Templates for the quarterly check ins, biannual evaluations, a mid project report, and final project report are provided in the Tree Ambassador Program partner handbook.

17. I would like to get more involved in tree care in my community. What programs are out there?

- a. Openlands TreeKeeper Program is an ever-growing community of tree ambassadors that care for the Urban Forest in Chicagoland. Through the TreeKeeper Course, tree lovers of all ages and backgrounds gain accessible training and education about trees and their care. After completing the program, TreeKeepers are certified to care for, protect, and plant trees with Openlands. Through the TreeKeepers community, TreeKeepers can volunteer for and lead tree planting events, participate in or organize their own pruning days, and take part in continuing education and advocacy programs. Check out <https://openlands.org/what-we-do/trees/treekeepers/> to learn more and sign up!

