

PROJECT CANOPY

TREE PLANTING GRANTS

2024 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION, AND FORESTRY'S MAINE FOREST SERVICE
USDA FOREST SERVICE – URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY FEDERAL ASSISTANCE LISTING (CFDA)
10:675



Mandatory Grant Workshop

February 28, 2024

1 PM

Application Deadline

May 15, 2024

11:59 PM

Project Canopy

Maine Forest Service

22 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

1-207-287-2791

PROJECT CANOPY

INTRODUCTION:

Project Canopy is seeking proposals from municipal governments, non-profit organizations, tribal organization and educational institutions that support community forestry planning and education projects in Maine communities. **The ultimate goal of this grant program is to support community efforts to develop and maintain long-term community forestry programs.**

Project Canopy estimates that approximately **\$125,000** will be available for this grant program. This amount is contingent on federal and state funding levels. Applicants are eligible to request up to **\$15,000** in federal funds under this program. The grant period is from June 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

There is a common application for all grant categories; applicants may apply for multiple categories but must submit a separate application for each denoting which grant category on the application. Project Canopy will host a pre-application grant workshop for ALL applicants on February 28, 2024, 1-3PM. Applicants must pre-register by providing notice to MFS through [MS Form](#) or calling 207-287-2791.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

The Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program is a national initiative designed to strengthen the connections between people and their environment. The USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program was authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL95-313) and revised by the 1990 Farm Bill (PL101-624) to promote natural resource management in populated areas and improve quality of life. Urban and Community Forestry Program goals of awareness, outreach and environmental equity, partnerships, and comprehensive natural resource management focus on achieving healthy sustainable forests, sustainable economic development, and information management.

Project Canopy has a vision that *every community will actively and wisely manage its community forestry resources in a sustainable manner, and that all Maine citizens become well informed as to the proper management of these resources and the benefits derived from them.* Project Canopy has identified four goals to support this vision. Projects proposed under this grant program must effectively contribute toward the following Project Canopy goals and USDA Forest Service national goals:

Project Canopy Goals:

1. Increase the number of managing community forestry programs.
2. Stimulate and heighten public awareness of what the community forest is, its role and benefits.
3. Create and maintain partnerships.
4. Promote comprehensive resource management of community forests and related natural resources.

USFS National Goals:

1. Sustain Our Nation's Forests and Grasslands
 - a. Strategic Objective A. Foster resilient, adaptive ecosystems to mitigate climate change
 - b. Strategic Objective B. Mitigate wildfire risk
 - c. Strategic Objective C. Conserve open space
2. Deliver Benefits to the Public
 - a. Strategic Objective D. Provide abundant clean water
 - b. Strategic Objective E. Strengthen communities
 - c. Strategic Objective F. Connect people to the outdoors
3. Apply Knowledge Globally
 - a. Strategic Objective G. Advance knowledge
 - b. Strategic Objective H. Transfer technology and applications
 - c. Strategic Objective I. Exchange natural resource expertise

The goal of this grant program is to support community efforts to develop and maintain long-term community forestry programs. Planting trees and caring for existing trees is an integral part of sustainable community forestry management. These grants provide an excellent opportunity for communities to increase tree cover, tree health, engage citizen volunteers, and build support for their community forestry program. Applicants are encouraged to contact Project Canopy staff to discuss project ideas. Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ **Improved community health and quality of life** – Plant trees in visible, contiguous locations where they make a direct, positive impact on the community. Tree planting projects improve air and water quality, reduce noise pollution, increase climate resilience, and beautify neighborhoods and travel corridors.
- ◆ **Buffer plantings** – Trees naturally filter air and water, limit storm runoff, and stabilize soil. Proper tree planting in urban areas can have a positive impact on water quality, climate resilience, aesthetics, and wildlife habitat.
- ◆ **Business district enhancement** – Trees planted in business districts can have a positive impact on the economy. Consumers are more willing to patronize business districts that have tree lined streets, shaded parking, and green spaces.
- ◆ **Replacement tree programs** – as existing street trees age and present risks or suffer from the ravages of invasive pests and diseases, trees can be replaced with grant program funding.
- ◆ **Community tree nursery/gravel bed tree nursery** - establishment of community tree nurseries allow for purchase and growth of seedlings before planting into streets and parks. Benefits include lower costs and greater diversity of planting stock, stronger and larger root systems, ease of transplanting bare-root trees and increased survivability of trees planted out in urban environments.
- ◆ **Low Impact Development/green infrastructure** - bioswales, raingardens and other forms of green infrastructure retain, reduce, and filter stormwater overflow resulting in reduced erosion, less flooding, and cleaner water. May reduce stormwater fees in certain where applicable.

ELIGIBLE GRANTEES:

Local municipal units of government, educational institutions, and non-profit entities, may be awarded grants for proposals that meet program guidelines.

COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT:

This is a 50/50 (Project Canopy/local) match program based on reimbursable costs. The maximum amount of federal funds awarded may not exceed 50% of the project cost and shall be no more than **\$15,000** per community application. Applicants must match federal funds, dollar for dollar, in the form of cash, services or in-kind contributions that meet program standards and guidelines. Applicants must match federal cost-share funds with nonfederal funds and/or contributions. The applicant may use current reasonable rates, i.e. the value of a professional consultant's time based upon his/her standard hourly rate of pay, when estimating the value of non-cash donations and in-kind services, e.g. volunteer time.

ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS:

Eligible Reimbursable Costs:

The only costs eligible for reimbursement are those associated with one or more of the following:

- Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants.
- Purchase of essential supplies and materials.
- Purchase and planting of trees, along with maintenance during the grant period. Three-year maintenance with a 90% survival rate is expected on all plantings, however, **maintenance costs outside of the grant period are ineligible.**
- Costs associated with site preparation and soil amendments.

Eligible Non-reimbursable Costs (Applicant's Share or Match):

The following costs are not reimbursable, **BUT** are allowed to meet the community's **minimum cost-sharing requirements of 50%** of the total project cost.

- Cash or in-kind donations and services.
- Salaries, fringe, and overhead costs.
- Volunteer labor, machinery and equipment.

Ineligible Costs (And **NOT** allowed as part of the community's cost-share):

This cost-share program is for projects and/or activities not currently funded. It is not intended to be a substitute for existing funding levels. The focus of the program is to support new initiatives that would not otherwise occur during the funding cycle.

- Purchase of machinery or equipment.
- Construction of any kind, e.g. sidewalks or roads.
- Purchase of land or land charges.
- Purchase of plant material classified as invasive species by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry including Norway maples (*Acer platanoides*) (all cultivars) and callery ('Bradford') pear (*Pyrus calleryana*). <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/horticulture/invasiveplants.shtml#List>

- Purchase and planting of ash species (*Fraxinus* sp.)– due to likelihood of eventual spread of the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*).
- Normal, community wide periodic maintenance of utility (telephone, electric, and cable) lines unless it is site specific and necessary to the project.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

To be considered for funding, applicants must meet the following requirements:

Training:

Attend the grant information workshop held via web conference. **Attendance is required.** The grant workshop will cover topics including grant writing, project development, sustainable community forestry management, and grant administration. [Please register](#) through the web link (preferable) or by contacting the Maine Forest Service at 207-287-2791 or forestinfo@maine.gov to let us know you will be attending. All grant workshops are conditional on registration.

*Please note: The workshop is a distance learning workshop offered on the internet. Please contact us for more information.

SAM (UID):

Grant recipients must have a [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) Unique Entity Identification (UEID) – note to applicants the entity registration process can take several weeks to establish. MFS urges any interested entities to initiate the SAM registration by March 1, 2024. For entities already registered with SAM.gov who need to convert from the DUNS number to UEID this process should be initiated on a similar timeline.

Application Form:

- Complete the online application form.
- Submit the complete application package, as prompted at the end of the online form, to: PROJECTCANOPYGRANTS.DACF@maine.gov
- Project Canopy recommends that applicants obtain quotes for the cost of trees from nurseries and include the quotes with the application.
- The application must be signed by the designated and official representative.

Narrative: (1-3 pages)

Applicants are required to submit a narrative with their application containing the following information:

- A brief history of your community downtown tree program including mission and goals for the next several years.
- A description of the project, including what you expect to be developed, produced, performed and/or implemented; a clear and measurable work plan for the project; and a timeline for completion of the process.
- A description of how your project will effectively contribute to Project Canopy and USDA Forest Service goals.
- A description of how this project will enhance your community's capacity for long-term and sustainable urban and community forestry management.

Three-Year Maintenance Plan:

A three-year maintenance plan must be included in your application. The plan should identify individuals and resources responsible for tree maintenance over a three-year period. **Only tree maintenance costs during the grant period are eligible for reimbursement or may be used as match.**

Project Map/Planting Locations:

Include a map of the project area, clearly delineating planting locations. Trees must be planted on public property or on property with free public access that is visible from, or contiguous to, transportation corridors.

Letters of Support:

Applications that include a broad range of participants will be favored. Applicants are required to include letters of support from partners that include specific commitments and contributions to the project, e.g. amount of volunteer labor committed, estimated services provided, donated equipment or labor, and not just a general statement of support. **For applicants that are not a municipality, a letter of support from a sponsoring municipality is strongly recommended.**

Community Capacity Checklist:

Please complete the community capacity checklist and submit it with your application.

Application submission Instructions:

The complete application package submission must be sent to PROJECTCANOPYGRANTS.DACF@maine.gov by 11:59 May 15, 2024.

ADDITIONALLY: Submit grant application overview information in the common application Microsoft Form. All grant overview information is extracted from the application forms, the common application serves as a notification of submission and provides necessary information for recordkeeping.

FUNDING REVIEW AND CRITERIA:

Proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis. Project proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation team made up of individuals from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry’s Maine Forest Service and Project Canopy partners. The evaluation team will make recommendations on applications to the State Forester, who will make final determinations. The grant review criteria are:

Project contributes to the goals of Project Canopy and the USFS	10 Points
Project helps support and build a sustainable community forestry program	10 Points
Project need and value to the community are evident	10 Points
Project helps increase urban forest resilience to climate change and other environmental impacts.	5 Points
New community (has not received funding from MFS/Project Canopy)	5 Points
Project has a realistic budget and timeline	5 Points
Community partnerships are evident and described in letters of support	5 Points
Community has a state approved comprehensive plan	5 Points
Application is complete, legible, and clearly presented	5 Points

IF AWARDED A GRANT:

Each grantee is required to sign an agreement for performance containing the required Federal General Assurances. The grant period is from June 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

Successful applicants cannot commence work or incur any expenses against the grant until an agreement between Project Canopy and the authorized agency/organization has been signed. Expenses incurred outside the agreement period shall be deemed ineligible for reimbursement.

TIME TABLE:

- 2/2024:** Grant announcement
- 2/28/2024:** Grant workshop – Web based, 1PM
- 3/12/2024** [Grant office hour](#)
- 3/26/2024** [Grant office hour](#)
- 4/9/2024** [Grant office hour](#)
- 4/23/2024** [Grant office hour](#)
- 5/15/2024:** Applications are due to MFS no later than 11:59 PM
- 6/1/2024:** Successful applicants will be notified by the MFS of conditional project approval.

Successful applicants must spend allocated federal funds between **June 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025**. Applicants must complete final project reporting procedures, furnish documentation of project completion, and submit expenses to the MFS within 30 days following completion. Unless prior approval has been granted, grantees will be ineligible for reimbursement if completed grant documentation is not furnished to MFS by **July 31, 2025**.

PAYMENT PROCESS:

Funds will be awarded on a reimbursement basis only. This means that all expenses have been paid in full and the project is complete before filing for grant payment. Funds awarded under the grant are available once satisfactory work has been completed, within the contract period as described in the original scope of work, and after verification of expenditures and match. Grantees must file a request for reimbursement and send records of expenditures and match to the MFS, within 30 days following completion of the project, but in no case later than July 31, 2025. Payment shall be made to the authorized local government unit, educational institution, or non-profit organization. Grantees can normally expect payment within 60 days of receipt of expenditure documentation.

At the conclusion of the project, recipients will be required to submit a final report. Final reports must include relevant data and outputs including but not limited to the number, species, and size of trees planted; any forest management plans or inventories created; and the number of community members or volunteers engaged. MFS will provide training to instruct recipients on the data collection process and expectations for final reports. All final reports and associated data products will be publicized by MFS.

All records and receipts associated with the project must be maintained and available for inspection by the Maine Forest Service and State and Federal auditors for three (3) years after the grant period.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Technical assistance is available to all grant applicants from the Maine Forest Service. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from MFS personnel. Questions concerning the application process and/or project development, should be directed to Jan Santerre, Project Canopy Coordinator at (207) 287-4987; or your local District Forester (listed below).

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION MAINE FOREST SERVICE DISTRICT FORESTERS

Oliver Markewicz, MFS, 2281 Alfred Road, Lyman, Maine 04002	(207) 441-3712
Allyssa Gregory, MFS, 536 Waldoboro Road, Jefferson, Maine 04348	(207) 441-2895
Jared Gregory, MFS, 536 Waldoboro Road, Jefferson, ME 04348	(207)215-5318
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Lauren Ouellette, MFS, 2 Forestry Road, Island Falls, ME, 04747	(207) 441-3817
Michael Jensen, MFS, P.O. Box 130, Jonesboro, Maine 04648	(207) 441-4924
Shane Duigan, MFS, 356 Shaker Rd., Gray, ME, 04039	(207) 592-1251
Julie Davenport, MFS, PO Box 416, Norridgewock, Maine 04976	(207) 592-2238
Jim Ferrante, MFS, PO Box 1107, Greenville, Maine 04441	(207) 441-4308
Michael Richard, MFS, 131 Bethel Road, West Paris, Maine 04289	(207) 441-3276
Randy Lagasse, MFS, 45 Radar Road, Ashland, Maine 04732	(207) 557-1086

[FIND YOUR DISTRICT FORESTER](#)