

**N.C. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program
2025-1 Request for Applications
Inflation Reduction Act**



Inflation Reduction Act – Urban and Community Forestry

For your information, the following is a summary of the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act program and priorities.

The Inflation Reduction Act, Subtitle D, Sec. 23003 (a). State and Private Forestry Conservation Programs Appropriations purpose is to provide support for tree planting and related activities under the existing authorities in the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL 95-313), Section 9. Funding will be made available through competitive subawards to nature-deprived populations and disadvantaged communities for activities such as urban wood utilization, urban food forests, extreme heat mitigation and workforce development.

The USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program is a covered program under the Agency's [Justice40 Initiative](#) established through Executive Order 13985. To advance the mission of Justice40, proposals that deliver 40% of the benefits of IRA investments through established partnerships with local organizations working to support disadvantaged communities will receive priority consideration.

The USDA has signed the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Promoting Equitable Access to Nature in Nature-Deprived Communities, which seeks to reduce the number of people without access to parks and nature in their communities. The [America the Beautiful Initiative](#) supports the prioritization of locally led conservation and park projects in communities that disproportionately lack access to nature and its benefits.

Request for Applications

Applications will be accepted for USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act funding assistance. Funding helps eligible organizations complete urban and community forestry projects in urban areas located in disadvantaged census tracts as defined by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#) Version 1, Nov. 22, 2022.

- Application period
 - Opens Jan. 15, 2025, and closes Feb. 12, 2025, at 5 p.m.
- Eligible Organizations
 - Local governments
 - 501(c)(3) organizations
 - Public schools, colleges and universities
 - Tribal governments
- Requirements and Match Waiver
 - All prerequisites detailed on our Financial Assistance Program webpage and in the FAP Eligible Practices and Activities fact sheet apply.
 - Projects must include outreach product(s) and event(s) developed by a communications professional that fulfils the following objectives.
 - Educates and engages the public in the project.
 - Inform the residents in advance of practices and activities that are scheduled for completion in their neighborhood.
 - Final Report – A professionally published two-to-four-page infographic-style report summarizing and illustrating the project need, goal, objectives and accomplishments.
 - Projects must provide full benefit to disadvantaged communities as defined by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#) Version 1, Nov. 22, 2022. The work must exclusively impact

**N.C. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program
2025-1 Request for Applications
Inflation Reduction Act**



residents of or be located within one or more of these CEJST disadvantaged census tracts within a municipality.

- Match requirement is waived. Applicants and grantees are required to provide the CEJST track number(s) identifying the location of the project and a written explanation of how the project will impact the disadvantaged community(s).
- Eighty percent of the project cost must deliver urban and community forestry programming benefits to the disadvantaged census tracts targeted in the project. Twenty percent of the project cost is available for administrative costs to facilitate delivery of these program benefits.
- All products, publications or signage created with funding from this program would be required to include language acknowledging the contribution of the USDA Forest Service IRA U&CF program.
- Eligible Practice and Activity Categories
 - CEJST Tree Maintenance and Planting Project – Completion of a complete tree inventory, maintenance practice plan, outreach program, tree maintenance, tree planting plan and tree planting (See fact sheet for more information).
 - Education and training -- Development and delivery of educational and training products, events and programs. Attend training and acquire a U&CF professional credential.
 - Inventories and assessments -- Resource inventories, assessments, program reviews and surveys.
 - Outreach - Development and delivery of outreach products and events to inform and engage the community in urban and community forestry.
 - Ordinances -- Development of local ordinances defining local government's role in managing the urban forest.
 - Plans -- Urban and community forestry plans that guide a community's management at the community wide scale.
 - Tree maintenance -- Develop and completion of a tree removal and/or pruning project.
 - Tree planting -- Development and completion of a tree planting project.
- Financial Assistance
 - No cost/match share. Grant funds the entire cost of the project.
 - Community forestry project -- \$2,200,000 available for assistance.
 - Urban forestry project -- \$2,200,000 available for assistance.
 - Term – up to three years.
 - Maximum project cost -- \$300,000 per application.
- Award, Grant Contracts and Schedules
 - See NCFS U&CF Financial Assistance webpage. for awarding information.
 - Applicants should plan for a project start date of July 1, 2025.
 - Conditional award notices will be issued by March 31, 2025. Awardees will enter a grant contract with the N.C. Forest Service.
 - Working with the N.C. Forest Service, conditional awardees must complete the work necessary to complete the grant contract and be issued a final award by May 31, 2025.
 - CEJST Tree Maintenance and Planting Project
 - Conditional awardees are receiving a conditional award for all three project phases irrelevant of the number of phases they are applying for at this RFA.
 - The awardee will complete the work, pay for the completion of the work and submit a reimbursement request to the N.C. Forest Service for approval and payment.
 - Reporting

**N.C. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program
2025-1 Request for Applications
Inflation Reduction Act**



- Awardees will be required to maintain and submit documentation proving project expenses, provide interim progress reports, deliverable accomplishment and a final report in accordance with respective federal ([Code of Federal Regulations](#)), state and N.C. Forest Service policies and procedures. Reporting instructions and documents can be found at NCFS U&CF Resources and Specifications webpage under Financial Assistance.
 - Awardee will be required to submit interim progress reports and a professionally published two-to four-page infographic-style final report.
- Project Development
- Applicants may plan for a project start date of July 1, 2025.
 - We are accepting applications, not proposals to complete a project. Projects must be ready for implementation.
 - Your budget should include an estimate from at least one vendor for all goods and services to be purchased.
 - Visit and review the NCFS U&CF Financial Assistance and U&CF Resources & Specifications webpages for more information, guidance and planning tools.
 - Complete the project planning process as instructed utilizing the following documents found on the U&CF Resources and Specifications webpage.
 - FAP Guidance and Instructions for U&CF Project and Application Development
 - FAP Eligible Practices and Activities fact sheet
 - FAP Objective Building Tool
 - FAP Project Planner document.
 - RFA Work Plan
 - RFA Budget Form-No Cost Share
 - Projects longer than one year
 - Design your project to be completed in 12-month phases. Complete an RFA Work Plan and RFA Budget Form-No Cost Share for each phase.
 - Submit an application for each phase, linking them together by answering yes to the question provided in the application.
 - **CEJST Tree Maintenance and Planting Projects**
 - The FAP CEJST Maint and Planting Project Objectives spreadsheet has a list of the project objectives and practices and activities that need to be completed for each of the three project phases.
 - Plan and apply for the number of project phases you have the capacity to complete in one year and provide accurate budget information.
 - Small projects may be completed in one year, but most projects will require multiple years due to the large scope of work to be completed (number of trees) and the need for accurate budget information.
 - Complete an RFA Work Plan and RFA Budget Form using the FAP CEJST Maint and Planting Project Objectives spreadsheet deliverables list and the Objective #s based on the number of years you will be selecting to complete the project.
 - **Note: This RFA will be offered in January and July each year.** Take the time necessary to develop a well-planned project with a clear project need, goal, objectives, work plan and budget. Incomplete applications will be rejected. If you are not ready now, apply at the next RFA offering.

**N.C. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program
2025-1 Request for Applications
Inflation Reduction Act**



- Informational and training webinars and workshops will be held periodically. Select **Subscribe** in the **Follow Us** section at the bottom of any N.C. Forest Service webpage to receive U&CF news and training opportunities.
- N.C. Forest Service U&CF staff and N.C. Forest Service county staff are only available for project development guidance outside of the application period.
- **Application Instructions**
 - The application is electronic.
 - Projects longer than one year.
 - Submit an application for each phase, linking them together by answering yes to the question in provided the application.
 - The information you developed in your project planning process will be used to complete your application. You will need the following documents to complete your application.
 - A copy of the application. This shows the questions you will be asked and all the information you will need to complete the application.
 - Completed FAP Project Planner document.
 - Completed RFA Work Plan(s). This document must also be emailed as instructed in the application before the close of the application deadline.
 - Completed RFA Budget Form-No Cost Share(s). This document must also be emailed as instructed in the application before the close of the application deadline.
 - CEJST Tract Map(s) – PDF file of each of the CEJST tracts your project will be serving with project areas, if project area is restricted to a specific area within the tract, noted on the map.
 - Supporting Documents
 - Letters from municipal and neighborhood organization(s) project team members acknowledging their support of the project and explaining their role.
 - Copies of documents noted for submittal in the application.
- **Application Links**

Apply for Inflation Reduction Act U&CF Projects by [Clicking Here](#)

Apply for IRA CEJST Tree Maintenance and Planting Project by [Clicking Here](#)