



This assistance package is designed to help municipalities that have not met all the Tree City USA standards complete select urban forestry practices and community forestry activities that are foundational in the management of public trees and to achieve Tree City USA designation.

- Eligible organizations
  - Municipalities and tribal governments that do not meet the standards for Tree City USA recognition
- Application period
  - The application period opens Jan. 1, 2026, and closes March 1, 2026.
- Project practices/activities/deliverables – A qualified service provider will guide you in the completion of the following practices and activities. The N.C. Forest Service (NCFS) Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program will secure the service provider or assist you in securing a qualified service provider(s). Specifications and guidance documents for your review can be found on our [U&CF Resources and Specifications webpage](#) under the urban forestry section. The following are the practices/activities/deliverables that will be completed.
  - Sample tree inventory – a statistical sample inventory of public trees utilizing iTree protocols and the NCFS U&CF sample tree inventory specification.
  - Management plan – a management plan that includes analysis and outcomes as detailed in the NCFS U&CF management plan template focusing on public tree management.
  - Trees & Storms readiness plan – Using the NCFS U&CF Readiness BMP, develop a Trees & Storms readiness plan.
  - Public tree ordinance -- Review and update if necessary or develop.
  - Urban forestry standards & specifications – Review and update if necessary or develop.
  - Outreach -- Product(s) and/or event(s) that engage, educate and inform the public about the project.
  - Arbor Day celebration
  - Tree planting -- design and completion of a “small” tree planting project (10, two-to-three-inch caliper trees) to celebrate the project.
    - Use of the NCFS U&CF tree supply and planting specification or approved equivalent is required.
    - Tree species to be planted must be on the NCFS urban tree list.
    - Two years of post-planting monitoring and watering are required.
    - Practice plan – A plan detailing the location, tree species to be planted and post-planting care are required. Tree planting site and tree species selection must meet tree planting best management practices as defined



- by the NCFS U&CF Urban Forestation and Tree Planting webpage, specifications and guidance documents.
- Tree delivery supply, and planting inspections and reports completed by a qualified urban forestry professional are required.
- Supervision of the tree maintenance and/or tree planting work by an urban forestry professional is required.
- Final report - a professionally published two-to-eight-page infographic-style report summarizing and illustrating the project need, goal, objectives and accomplishments.
- Funding program options and requirements
  - A grant will be funded by one of the three funding programs. You will need to select one. Contact NCFS U&CF program staff for guidance, if needed.
  - Consolidated Program Grant (CPG)
    - There are no eligibility restrictions.
    - Cost share %
      - Reimbursement of 75% of eligible purchased goods and services.
    - Indirect administration – 15% de minimis/total purchased goods and services.
    - \$50,000 in assistance is available for award of all CPG funded RFAs.
  - Hurricane Helene Recovery (HHR)
    - Tribal government or a municipality located in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Henderson, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania or Yancey counties.
    - Cost share %
      - Reimbursement of 100% of eligible purchased goods and services.
    - Indirect administration – 15% de minimis/total purchased goods and services.
    - \$2.2 million in assistance is available for award of all HHR funded RFAs.
  - Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)
    - 100% of the Tribal government or municipality's incorporated lands fall within the boundaries of [NCFS U&CF Financial Assistance Program Inflation Reduction Act project areas](#).
    - Cost share %
      - Reimbursement of 100% of eligible purchased goods and services.
    - Indirect administration – 20% de minimis/total purchased goods and services.
    - \$5.6 million of assistance is available for award of all IRA funded RFAs.
- Award, grant contracts and schedules



- Award – See our [Financial Assistance Program webpage](#) for awarding information.
- Conditional award notices will be issued by March 31, 2026. Final awardees will enter into an agreement with the N.C. Forest Service and/or an NCFS U&CF service provider.
- Working with the NCFS U&CF program, conditional awardees must complete all work necessary to execute the agreement for a final award.
- Application
  - The application is an online electronic application.
  - A copy of the application for planning purposes is available on the [U&CF Resources and Specifications webpage](#) under the financial assistance section.
  - Prepare your application responses before opening the online application for completion. The application must be completed and submitted in one online session.
  - The following information will be required to complete the application.
    - The funding program selection.
    - A list of your project team members' names, titles and project roles.
    - The name of the NCFS county ranger who you have contacted and informed of your intent to submit this application.
    - Answers to all application questions.
  - Click the link below to begin when you are ready to apply.

**[Apply for Climb to Tree City USA package by clicking here](#)**