



All successful projects have clearly identified needs, a goal that defines what will have been accomplished at the end of the project, objectives to achieve the goal, a work plan with the tasks to achieve the objectives and a project budget detailing the cost to complete each objective. The following provides general guidance on developing a project plan and guidance for completing a Financial Assistance Program (FAP) application. You should consult an urban forestry consulting firm for guidance and quotes for services, and we are available to provide general guidance. Financial assistance applications will be measured against this guidance.

➤ **General project planning guidance**

- Needs and opportunities
 - Addressing U&CF needs and opportunities is the focus of a project. Identify the challenges or problems, the place and, if applicable, the audience or demographics impacted.
 - Use studies, data and trends that identify, quantify and qualify the problem, challenge or opportunity. Local, published if available, and/or based on your investigation.
 - Examples:
 - The town values the benefits our tree canopy provides and wishes to conserve and enhance our tree canopy cover. However, we lack urban forestry inventory and assessment data to develop urban forestry and community goals and objectives to identify and prioritize where to plant trees to meet those goals and objectives.
 - The town's canopy cover assessment revealed the canopy cover in A, B and C neighborhoods is 7% below the town's 40% canopy cover, and there are opportunities to plant street and park trees.
- Project goal
 - A broad statement of what major U&CF practices and/or activities will be accomplished to address the needs and capitalize on the opportunities.
 - A goal links back to your needs statement. One sentence that uses words such as decreased, delivered, developed, established, improved, increased, produced and provided the major practices and/or activities that will be accomplished and how it addresses the needs statement.
 - Examples:
 - Obtain a professional tree canopy cover assessment of the town, findings report and tools to facilitate the development of urban and community forestry policy, tree-planting objectives and tree-planting plans.



- The residents of A, B and C neighborhoods are educated on the benefits of the urban forest to their community, engaged in their planting and care, and participated in the planting of 400 street and park trees.
- Project objectives
 - An objective is a statement that summarizes the accomplishment of project deliverables (practices/activities) and completion of a project phase/milestone. The completion of these deliverables must be completed before the next phase of a project can begin.
 - The collection and order of completion of the objectives illustrate how the goal is going to be achieved. Therefore, your objectives are listed in the order in which they are completed.
 - An objective is narrow, precise, tangible, concrete and measurable. An objective statement is a single sentence and ends with a completion by date.
 - When writing an objective use the S.M.A.R.T. method of writing your objectives; specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound.
 - An objective should be a single sentence and have a completion date.
 - State your objectives by summarizing the accomplishments of outcomes/deliverables, not process. Process is detailed in a work plan.
 - The outcomes/deliverables completed in the objective are complimentary and logical to complete together and mark the completion of a project phase/milestone.
 - Examples:
 - A contract for services to complete a tree canopy cover assessment is developed, advertised and secured by the end of the first quarter.
 - A professional tree canopy cover assessment, findings report, and inventory and assessment software tools are secured by the end of the second quarter.
 - Outreach and educational program plans and products to educate and engage the community are developed by the end of the first quarter.
 - The tree-planting site inventory, tree-planting and post-planting care plans are completed by the second quarter.
- Work plan



- The list of all project tasks required to accomplish each project objective, and its respective practices and activities, from the start of the project to the end.
 - Here is where you provide the process; details of how a deliverable (practice or activity) and objective will be completed that are not explained in your objective statement.
 - Tasks
 - Tasks are specific actions or processes that need to be taken to complete a project deliverable (practice/activity). They should be specific, and each task should explain what will occur and who will complete it.
 - Examples of task descriptions:
 - Develop tree canopy cover assessment request for proposal specifications.
 - Solicit bids from qualified urban forestry firms.
 - Review, award and execute a contract for tree canopy cover assessment services.
 - Develop an educational post-planting care instructions publication for landowners.
 - Order trees and tree-planting supplies.
 - Budget – an itemized list of all expenses required to complete each objective and the practices and activities of the objective.
 - Costs must be actual costs based on research.
- **Project planning guidance to submit an application**
- To submit an application, we do expect you will have completed a project planning process like what is illustrated above, but we have simplified the process. The following summarizes the differences and outcomes.
 - Project goal -- Each request for applications (RFA) defines what will be completed and therefore it serves as the project goal. You are not asked to provide a project goal.
 - Needs and opportunities statement – required. You need to do the research necessary to identify your most pressing needs, and choose the RFA package that will best help you address those needs.
 - Objectives and work plan – These project plan components are combined and simplified. A list of the deliverables, as defined by our NCFS U&CF FAP Glossary of Deliverables and Requirements document and the RFA, that



will be worked and a narrative detailing how these deliverables will be worked by project quarter. An RFA will state if a work plan is required.

- Budget – Each RFA will specify if a project budget is required.
- Application guidance
 - Choose the RFA package that will best help you address your needs, and follow the instructions in the RFA.
 - You may be asked to select a funding program.
 - Depending on the RFA, you may be asked to provide the following. Here is guidance for completing the components.
 - Needs and opportunities statement
 - A short, clear factual paragraph detailing needs and opportunities.
 - The benefits urban forestry provides for a community are a given. All urban and community forestry projects will enhance these benefits so providing general statements about these benefits is unnecessary.
 - Published data or professionally based observations of urban forestry needs are required. Examples include the following.
 - Inventories and assessments
 - No or dated urban forest management data
 - Number of street miles, property acreage and estimated numbers of trees and planting spaces
 - Ordinances, policy, standards and specifications
 - Absence of or deficiencies and need
 - Plans
 - Absence of practice or management plans required to address the findings of an inventory or assessment.
 - Published community plans that call for the enhancement of urban forest management.
 - Tree maintenance
 - Tree maintenance needs identified in an inventory or professional observations.
 - Absence of systematic tree maintenance.
 - Actual or historical management information justifying need such as age class (over-mature or young) or high tree maintenance service request frequency.



- Tree planting
 - Tree-planting needs identified in an inventory, assessment or professional observations.
 - At risk population.
- Outreach
 - Outreach is required for all projects.
 - Absence of or deficient outreach program.
- Education and training
 - Published studies identifying need.
 - Community specific observations identifying need.
- Work plan by project quarter
 - List of deliverables that will be worked during the project quarter.
 - A narrative, in order of completion, detailing the work that will be completed on the deliverables and by whom.
 - Our recommended U&CF project task list by practice/activity provides a list of tasks that should be completed.
- Budget
 - Goods and service purchased.
 - Secure quotes for the goods and services to be purchased.
 - You may use the costs for goods and services your municipality may currently have on contract to provide.
 - If you do not have contract costs, you will need to solicit cost estimates from one goods and services provider to include in your budget.
 - RFA Budget Form
 - Be aware the budget worksheet is not write-protected. This allows you to edit the form as needed, but formulas can be corrupted in an editing process so be sure to confirm calculations are being performed correctly before printing and submitting.
 - Complete the budget form as instructed.
 - Your budget should demonstrate you have completed sufficient research and are sharing a budget that accurately estimates the cost to complete the project.
 - You may add a 10%-20% contingency into your unit costs to deal with unknowns.



- Enter your organization name, the RFA number (year and number), select the application you are applying for and select the funding program.
 - Complete the applicable budget sections.
 - Select the most appropriate budget item category to describe the expense. Definitions are on the “DropDownDefinitions” worksheet.
 - Description – Be sure to note the practice/activity/deliverable the expense is paying to complete and how the unit price structure is calculated.
 - # of units and unit cost
 - We expect you will have completed sufficient research to estimate the number of units and unit cost. How you estimated the units should have been noted in your needs and opportunities statement.
 - Indirect %
 - Accurate reporting is key to successfully completing a grant project and why we offer to pay for cost to complete this reporting.
 - Enter the indirect amount provided by the funding program if you choose to charge this expense.
- Print or save the form as an uneditable PDF to submit with your application.
 - We must have a copy of your budget form that cannot be edited to accept your application.
 - Be sure the form prints properly with the width of the form fitting on one page.