
Division of Forestry, Community and Urban Forestry Program
2024 Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Grant Application
Instructions

This grant program is made possible by funds awarded by the USDA Forest Service from the Inflation Reduction Act. We encourage underserved/disadvantaged communities throughout Indiana to advance their urban forestry goals through application to this program. This package contains the forms, instructions, and examples you will need to apply successfully.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU APPLY:

- This funding opportunity is only available for work that takes place in underserved or disadvantaged areas. To determine your community's eligibility, please see the "Grant Program" section.
- Applicants that have not yet received IRA Funding will be prioritized over those that have.
- There is **no match requirement** for this grant opportunity.
- All funds will be dispensed on a reimbursable basis.
- All application materials are to be submitted in digital format and emailed to Urbanforestry@dnr.IN.gov. Faxed or hardcopy applications will not be accepted.
- Application deadline is **July 12, 2024**
- Awards will be announced via email by **August 30, 2024**. Activities funded by these grants will begin upon notification of award and conclude by **December 31, 2027**.
- These application materials comprise a legal record of the conditions of the grant you're applying for. Keep a copy for reference and guidance.

Questions? Contact us at:

IDNR Division of Forestry CUF
Phone: 317-234-4386
E-mail: JRoos@dnr.IN.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Grant Program

Our quality of life is enhanced by effective state programs that foster cooperative efforts to plan for, plant, protect, and maintain community trees, forests, and related natural resources. To that end, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Forestry Community & Urban Forestry Program (CUF), and the United States Forest Service (USFS) sponsor this Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Grant Program.

This funding opportunity is only available for communities that have census tracts identified as underserved/ disadvantaged. You can see if your community has been identified as underserved or disadvantaged by referencing the map here: [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool](#). Census tracts are graded based off the following factors: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, water and wastewater and workforce development. Your entire community does **NOT** have to be identified as disadvantaged/underserved to be eligible for this funding. However, “on-the-ground work” (tree planting, maintenance, tree trimming and removals) must only take place within disadvantaged and underserved census tracts. Any project that includes inventories and/or management plans **must be** paired with “on-the-ground work” in the disadvantaged census tracts.

This grant seeks to invest in the long-term growth and development of community forestry programs in order to support:

- Increased and more equitable access to urban tree canopy and the health, environmental, and economic benefits associated with increased canopy
- Broadened community engagement in local urban forest planning
- Improved resilience to climate change, pests, and storm events through best management and maintenance practices

Projects that demonstrate the highest need for this kind of investment will be prioritized. Additionally, **applicants that have not yet received IRA funding will be prioritized over those that have.**

The specific project types funded by the IRA grant are listed below. Your overall project may include one or more type. Your requests for project funds must be for a minimum of **\$20,000** to a maximum of **\$250,000**. The overall level of funds available is **\$2 Million**.

- **Tree Inventory or Urban Tree Canopy Assessment:** Grant funds used for the development and implementation or the expansion of a community tree inventory or urban tree canopy assessment. Inventories and assessments that cover the entire community are eligible, but the focus must be on the disadvantaged or underserved areas. The inventory will conform to the minimum standards outlined in Addendum B. **This project type must be paired with a tree planting project.**
- **Management/Response Plan:** The community may use this grant to cover expenses related to the creation or update of an urban forestry management or response plan. It can also be used to fund the development or the review and update of tree ordinances. Management plans that cover the entire community are eligible, but the focus must be on the disadvantaged or underserved areas. **This project type must be paired with a tree planting project.**

- **Education/Training:** The community may use this grant to cover the costs of educating and training tree advisory groups, municipal staff, and local officials in the proper care of trees and how best to serve disadvantaged or underserved areas in the management of community forests and the management of urban forestry programs.
- **Community Engagement & New Tree Planting:**
 - Any tree planting project **MUST** include community engagement. If you already have a community engagement plan/program, please include it in your application. All grant recipients will work closely with the CUF team to develop a community engagement strategy that is unique to your community and its needs. The specifics of this strategy will develop as your project does, but keep this requirement in mind as you complete this application.
 - Tree plantings may be used to fulfill management plan goals, address ecosystem improvements and/or address inequities in access to green infrastructure. **Note that 100% of the project trees must be species native to Indiana (exceptions can be made for establishments of urban food forest). Additionally, this grant cannot be used for the purchase of trees in the Acer genus (maples). Exceptions shall be made if a current inventory and management plan demonstrates your Acer population is less than 10% of the overall tree community. In that case, no more than 10% of the total grant project trees are to be of the genus Acer.** All trees will be planted to the standards in Addendum A to receive reimbursement. You may plant trees on private property, **but no more than 50% of the projects planted trees should be on private property.** If you plan to plant trees on private property, you must lay out in your grant application how you plan to maintain those trees on private property and how you will obtain permission from the property owners. If you will be planting trees on private property you **MUST** include education/training for the private property owners/residents. All tree planting projects **MUST** include a maintenance plan with the grant application. If you do not indicate in your application how you will care for and maintain the newly planted trees your application will be ineligible and you will not be considered for funding.
- **Other Activities:** You may fund activities or other projects specific to urban forestry and/or arboriculture in your community. Examples include urban wood utilization, establishment of urban food forests, workforce development, tree trimming, hazard tree removals, invasive species removal (please contact our office for guidance regarding invasives) and development and implementation of a community website specific to urban forestry. **If your project includes tree removals, it must be paired with planting two trees for every one tree that is removed. Any trees that will be pruned or removed must present a significant and present harm to the community. In order to receive reimbursement for tree removals or pruning, a report signed by an ISA Certified Arborist is REQUIRED.**

****Note****

This list is not all-inclusive. Discuss your ideas with the CUF Director for suitability.

As part of your grant application, you should consider your community's goals in carrying out these projects. Your goals may include:

- To enhance residents' quality of life in your city, village, town, township, or county.
- To establish, strengthen, and support a community urban forestry program.
- To promote urban forestry benefits through the proper selection, planting, and care of trees.
- To establish a comprehensive tree inventory to enable local, data-driven decision-making.
- To promote risk management by properly assessing trees and developing mitigation plans.
- To restore diminished community tree canopy.
- To preemptively reduce your community's ash or other susceptible tree populations to avoid inevitable future economic burdens borne by local government budgets in the aftermath of a pest invasion.
- To diversify the urban forest for long-term resilience and resistance to future pests.
- To ensure that your urban forest provides a variety of ecosystem services to your community. These include cleaner air, improved watershed health, reduced erosion, stormwater runoff, and reduced urban heat island effects.
- To address historic inequities in urban forestry policy and management which have been borne unevenly by certain groups or areas within your community.
- To adapt urban forest accessibility to changing community demographics.
- To promote the Indiana nursery industry through the local purchase of high-quality, native trees.
- To support Indiana arboriculture and landscape industries through management, planning, and tree removal, installation, and education.
- To enhance the built environment through increased property values, reduced energy demands, and enhanced aesthetics that offer year-round enjoyment and get people outdoors.

****Note****

Your proposed project should align with one or more of these listed goals and be clearly articulated in the application Narrative along with any goals not listed here.

National & State Grant Guidelines

When your community or organization is awarded a grant through DNR, it then becomes a Subgrantee of the USFS and the State of Indiana. Both entities require that you fulfill certain conditions, benchmarks, and/or deliverables throughout the course of your grant. Failure to do so will result in withholding of grant reimbursements.

Please review and ensure that your organization will be able to accomplish the following requirements through your proposed project:

1. Subgrantees will comply with USFS Urban Community Forestry Program (UCF) direction, appropriate Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars (2 CFR Part 200 subparts A through F; 2 CFR 200.330 through .332), and applicable Federal and State regulations.
2. Tree planting projects must include a work plan, map and a maintenance plan approved by the State Urban Forester or his or her designee. Other UCF projects must have a work plan and a defined product or measurable outcome.
3. Plant materials used in tree planting must, at a minimum, meet the American Standard for Nursery Stock, and tree protection and maintenance must meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. All tree plantings must pass inspection by CUF personnel to fulfill this requirement.
4. Subgrantees will acknowledge the U.S. Forest Service and Inflation Reduction Act as a funding source, including any future signage requirements.

A community must also show that it has or is moving toward accomplishing the following national performance measures in its CUFA grant proposal:

1. **Professional Staff:** Individuals who have one or more of the following credentials, and who the community directly employs or retains through a written agreement to advise and/or assist in the comprehensive development or management of their urban and community forestry program (not just a project or for one aspect like tree removal):
 - A. Degree in urban forestry or a closely related field (e.g., forestry, horticulture, arboriculture, etc.); or
 - B. International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, American Society of Consulting Arborists Registered Arborist, Society of American Foresters Certified Forester, or equivalent State or professional credential; and/or
 - C. At least 3 years of experience practicing arboriculture or urban forestry according to industry standards and urban forestry best management practices.
2. **Advocacy/Advisory Organization:** The community has one or more local citizens groups that serve as catalysts for active local urban forest resource management within the community.
 - A. **Advisory Groups:** Organizations that are formalized or chartered (i.e., organizations established by the local government) to advise (during the reporting year) on the establishment, conservation, protection, and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests.

- B. **Advocacy Groups:** Non-governmental organizations active in the community that advocate or act for the establishment, conservation, protection, and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests during the year.
3. **Ordinance:** Local, community-wide laws that identify who has the responsibility for oversight of urban and community forestry activities and that direct the use of best management practices for establishment, conservation, protection, and/or maintenance of urban and community trees and forests. At a minimum, ordinance clauses must address public trees.
 4. **Management Plan** A detailed document or set of documents that identify and prioritize action items based on professionally-based, relevant inventories and/or resource assessments, that outline the future management of the community's trees and forests. At a minimum, the plan must address public trees. The plan must be **current and actively used within the past five years** by the community to guide management decisions and/or resource allocation and updated as needed to incorporate new information.

A plan for trees in a portion of the community, as long as it includes a written explanation of why there is a focus on that area (i.e., the importance of that space to the community) and action items regarding the establishment, protection, conservation, and maintenance of public trees.

Management plans for forested tracts may be counted if they meet the above and the forest meets all the following criteria:

- A. located in or near a town/municipal/community population center, business district, or residential area,
- B. primarily managed for benefits of the residents and to keep the land forested, and
- C. owned by the local government (i.e., in public ownership).

Subgrantees will also agree to meet these State of Indiana requirements:

1. To be eligible for a grant, applicants must be a:
 - A. **Municipality:** As defined under IC 369-1-2 a municipality is a city, town, township, county, school corporation, library district, local housing authority, fire protection district, public transportation corporation, local building authority, local hospital authority or corporation, local airport authority, special service district, or other separate local government entities that may sue or be sued. It does not include special taxing districts.
 - B. **Non-profit 501(c)3:** Organization as defined under IC 23-7-1.1. Non-profit organizations must include documentation of their not-for-profit status.
2. An applicant may submit only one application. Only one application per applicant will be awarded. Multiple applicants (i.e. a non-profit and a government agency) within the same community could be awarded separately, but the strongest applications outline broad cooperation among the non-profits and government entities within your community to expand the scope of your project.
3. From time to time, you may need to adjust the terms of your grant project. **You must have all changes approved in writing by the CUF Director in advance of any actions.**

Note

Proposed projects must align with all guidelines that apply to them.

Monitoring and Accountability

Grant recipients shall document and report all expenditures and accomplishments. Projects will be reviewed by IDNR personnel upon completion. The purpose of the review is to verify financial expenditures and ensure that they are properly documented. The following guidelines will assist you in correctly planning your project costs.

1. **Project Applicants and Coordinators MUST be able to communicate online in a timely manner with CUF staff via email at minimum.** It is advised that you, or someone on your grant management team, secure access to and know how to use a personal computer or tablet with standard office software programs (Microsoft Excel and Word, Adobe PDF Reader, a web browser like Chrome), a scanner, and a printer.
2. All project expenditures and payments must occur during the project period (award notification date through 12/31/2027).
3. For each budget item expense over \$3,000, Subgrantees must solicit a minimum of three quotes/bids before selecting a contractor and MUST submit that information to CUF for approval prior to selection. You'll then document the quotes/bids in writing and list the contractor, address, phone number, and the dollar amount. Contractors declining to submit a bid must provide that information to you in writing so that you can document a good-will effort to solicit bids. If the lowest quote/bid is not chosen (which is allowable), you must explain why when submitting to CUF.
4. Reimbursement requests and final expenditures must conform to those proposed in your application. Any budget changes must receive written approval from CUF staff before funds are spent.
5. Save copies of invoices, receipts, credit card statements, purchase orders, claim vouchers, and/or cancelled checks (front and back) to document all expenditures of "grant money".
6. Document all grant labor activities as the work is done using the spreadsheets, forms, and reports provided by the CUF office on its website at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/programs/community-and-urban-forestry/grants/>
7. The following uses of grant money or donations are **INELIGIBLE** as grant expenditures:
 - A. Food
 - B. Shrubs or other ornamental plants
 - C. T-shirts or promotional prizes
 - D. Vehicles
 - E. Labor from federally funded employees
 - F. Tools or equipment that exceed \$500 each in value and are not likely to be used up during your

project (this rule does not apply to software developed specifically for urban forestry purposes).

8. All **tree plantings** will be implemented in accordance with the guidelines found in Addendum A and inspected by CUF staff for compliance with those guidelines.
9. All **tree inventories, management plans, and urban tree canopy assessments** must be compiled, presented, and published in accordance with the guidelines found in Addendum B.

Grant Review, Evaluation, and Award

Grant applications will be evaluated and rated by an independent review committee comprised of urban forestry and IDNR Forestry professionals. Proposals will be evaluated on how well they meet the criteria outlined in this document.

All applications are then ranked after they have been evaluated. The projects, in order from highest to lowest rank, will be allocated funding. Final grant amounts may be adjusted at the discretion of CUF staff and the review committee. Applicants will be notified by **August 30, 2024** as to the status of their applications.

Scoring Guide:

Criteria	Good	Average	Poor
Applicant Information	<p><u>7-10 Points</u></p> <p>Applicant includes all required materials. Applicant designates different people in the roles of Applicant and Project Coordinator. Materials clearly shows who will be responsible for what.</p> <p>Detailed contact information.</p> <p>All contacts have email addresses.</p> <p>Application dollar amounts match the separate budget.</p>	<p><u>4-6 Points</u></p> <p>Applicant includes all required materials.</p> <p>Same person listed as Applicant and Project Coordinator.</p> <p>One email address listed.</p>	<p><u>0-3 Points</u></p> <p>Same person listed as Applicant and Project Coordinator.</p> <p>No responsibilities outlined.</p> <p>Missing contact information.</p> <p>No email addresses listed.</p> <p>Missing dollar amounts or do not match budget.</p>
Narrative	<p><u>21-30 Points</u></p> <p>Great detail in terms of personnel, responsibilities, project activities and outcomes.</p> <p>Good job of telling the story of the project.</p> <p>Inspires confidence that the Applicant & Project Coordinator will bring this project to a successful conclusion.</p> <p>All narrative questions answered.</p> <p>Thoroughly describes how this opportunity will benefit the disadvantaged and underserved areas.</p>	<p><u>11-20 Points</u></p> <p>List the personnel, responsibilities, project activities and outcomes.</p> <p>Applicant & Project Coordinator have adequate knowledge and experience.</p>	<p><u>0-10 Points</u></p> <p>Lack of detail for personnel, responsibilities, project activities and outcomes.</p> <p>Missing answers to narrative questions.</p> <p>Lack of detail on how this opportunity will benefit the disadvantaged and underserved areas.</p>
Project Type	<p><u>7-10 Points</u></p> <p>Clearly defined in the application and narrative.</p> <p>Good example of its project type.</p>	<p><u>4-6 Points</u></p> <p>Defines the project type in the application and narrative.</p> <p>Accurate example of its project type.</p>	<p><u>0-3 Points</u></p> <p>Project type is not clearly defined.</p> <p>Missing information and poor example of its project type.</p>

Outcomes Expected & Measurable Results	<p><u>16-20 Points</u></p> <p>Strong project activities with clearly articulated results.</p> <p>All outcomes and results are clearly defined, described, and justified.</p>	<p><u>7-15 Points</u></p> <p>Outcomes and results make sense in the overall context of the project.</p>	<p><u>0-6 Points</u></p> <p>Outcomes and results are poorly described with a weak association to the project goals.</p> <p>Outcomes and results do not add to the overall project and have no clear relevance.</p>
Statement of Need	<p><u>16-20 Points</u></p> <p>Specific description of meaningful commitment to support/engage disadvantaged & underserved communities.</p> <p>Clearly describes evidence or data of how the project will benefit disadvantaged & underserved areas.</p> <p>Clearly describes the areas that are disadvantaged & underserved and how they identified those areas.</p>	<p><u>7-15 Points</u></p> <p>Describes how they will support/engage disadvantaged & underserved communities.</p> <p>Describes how the project will benefit disadvantaged & underserved areas.</p> <p>Describes the areas that are disadvantaged & underserved.</p>	<p><u>0-6 Points</u></p> <p>No commitment to supporting/engaging or benefitting disadvantaged & underserved areas.</p>
Budget & Timeline	<p><u>7-10 Points</u></p> <p>All budget items are clearly described, justified and are allowable.</p> <p>Math is correct.</p> <p>Budget figures match what is shown on the application form and the spreadsheet.</p> <p>Timeline fits within parameters of the grant.</p> <p>Timeline items are realistic.</p>	<p><u>4-6 Points</u></p> <p>All budget items are justified and allowable.</p> <p>Math is correct.</p> <p>Budget figures match what is shown on the application form and the spreadsheet.</p> <p>Timeline fits within parameters of the grant.</p> <p>Timeline items are realistic.</p>	<p><u>0-3 Points</u></p> <p>Budget lists items that are not justified or allowable.</p> <p>Math is not correct.</p> <p>Costs are too high with no justification.</p> <p>Timeline has missing items.</p> <p>Timeline exceeds grant deadline.</p> <p>Unrealistic expectations on timeline.</p>
Public Comment Forms	<p><u>7-10 Points</u></p> <p>Applicant exceeds the minimum amount of Public Comment Forms.</p> <p>Comment Forms come from a diverse background of local community interests.</p>	<p><u>4-6 Points</u></p> <p>Applicant meets the minimum amount of Public Comment Forms.</p>	<p><u>0-3 Points</u></p> <p>Applicant did not meet the minimum amount of Public Comment Forms.</p> <p>Applicant submitted duplicated or prepared responses.</p>
Partnerships/Other Considerations	<p><u>16-20 Points</u></p> <p>Key partnerships with jurisdiction in the project area are included with clear indication of roles and involvement.</p> <p>All partnerships are listed, and their roles are clearly defined.</p> <p>Clear indication of meaningful engagement with disadvantaged & underserved areas, with attention to equity and environmental justice.</p>	<p><u>7-15 Points</u></p> <p>All partnerships are listed, including those with jurisdiction in the project area.</p> <p>Some engagement or attempts to engage with disadvantaged & underserved areas.</p>	<p><u>0-6 Points</u></p> <p>Partnerships were not listed and if they were their roles were not listed.</p> <p>No attempt to engage with disadvantaged or underserved areas.</p>

Grant Period

The official start date of the grant project will be the date you are informed of your award via email. **Your project must be completed by 12/31/27.** Expenses incurred prior to the start date or after the deadline for completion are not eligible for inclusion in the project and will not be reimbursed with grant funds.

Grant Payments

Grant money will be received by the Subgrantee **as reimbursements ONLY**. This means that *the Subgrantee must make expenditures and then submit proof of payment for reimbursement as outlined in the 'Monitoring and Accountability' section above*. Reimbursement requests may be made on a periodic basis to the CUF office if the reimbursement request is at least \$500. The first request for reimbursement payment may be submitted after the Subgrantee and all parties have signed the state Grant Agreement. All payments will be made via bank transfer.

Note

The final 20% of the grant award will be held back from reimbursement until the project has been completed, inspected, and the necessary documentation has been submitted and reviewed.

Grant Application Checklist

Follow the steps below to complete your grant application.

- * **Read the Entire Grant Application Packet:** Review the allowable projects and make sure they align with your proposal. Make sure your timeline and workplan fit within the timeframe of the grant. Double check your budget includes all projects.

What to include in your application. If you are missing any of the below forms from your application, your application will be considered not eligible:

1. **Application Form:** Complete the grant application form **55857 fill-in.pdf**. This form requires basic information about the Project, Applicant, Project Coordinator, and contact information. **We strongly recommend that you DO NOT name the same person to be both Project Applicant and Coordinator.** Think of the Applicant as the representative for your organization (Mayor, Council President, Nonprofit Chair, etc.) while the Coordinator is the person overseeing the project activities (Parks Employee, Tree Board Member, etc.). **Save and submit as a PDF.**
2. **Narrative:** Your Narrative must address **EVERY** question listed in the file **2024 IRA Grant Narrative Questions.docx**. Each narrative point for your desired project must be discussed in this section. If a question is not applicable, then answer N/A. But make sure to answer **ALL** questions that apply to your project! For example, if you intend to complete a tree inventory and tree planting, you will

have to complete both the inventory and tree planting questions. You may also include maps, photographs, graphics, etc. as appendices. Any application that does not address all questions will be considered **not eligible**.

3. **Budget:** Prepare a detailed itemized budget that describes your anticipated grant expenditures for each part of the project. Please use the excel spreadsheet titled “2024 IRA Budget & Timeline Templates”. Reviewers will deduct points for budgets with inaccurate arithmetic or overly broad budget items. If needed, please include a Budget Explanation for information not addressed in the project narrative: include any rate or price estimate explanations necessary to understand your budget clearly. Save and submit in Excel. **Administrative costs may not be more than 20% of your total budget.**
4. **Timeline:** Provide a detailed project timeline including project execution items, accomplishment reporting, and a project end date. All project work must be completed by 12/31/27. Any application with a timeline end date after the project close date will NOT be considered. The timeline should be included as a separate document and labeled. **Save and submit in Excel (see note above).**
5. **Work Plan & Map:** This item is **required** if your application includes tree plantings. We recommend that the work plan should include at minimum: general area of proposed plantings, species, size of tree, and maintenance plan.
6. **Public Comment Forms:** Include a minimum of six (6) Public Comment forms **55862 fill-in.pdf** from:
 - A. Three from agencies/organizations (local, state, and county governments, not-for-profit organizations, and universities/colleges).
 - B. Three from individuals or partners (corporate entities, local business, community residents/private landowners and nongovernmental organizations) who will benefit from your project.
 - C. **Save and submit in PDF.**
7. **Not-for-Profit Documentation:** Not-for-profit applicants must include proof of 501(c)3 status. **Save and submit in PDF or JPG.**
8. **Proof of Bidder Registration:** All Project Applicants must register as Bidders on the State of Indiana Supplier Portal at <https://www.in.gov/idoa/2464.htm>. Doing so sets up a formal relationship between your organization as Subgrantee and the state government to enable the two of us to fulfill contracts and financial transactions. **We require proof of Bidder registration at the time of application.** Include a copy of your Bidder registration confirmation that includes a Bidder ID number. **Save and submit in PDF or JPG.**
9. **Automated Direct Deposit Authorization:** Even if your organization already has direct deposit with the State, every new grant requires a confirmation of that financial information with a freshly completed agreement **form 47551.pdf**. **Save and submit in PDF.**
10. **W9:** Every Direct Deposit Authorization form must be accompanied by an IRS W-9 form, downloaded at <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-w-9>. **Save and submit in PDF.**

11. **Subrecipient Report:** This report is used to report basic information about your organization to the state of Indiana and the US Forest Service. This form must be completed and submitted with your grant application.

Submitting Your Grant Application

All required and supporting documents must be compiled and submitted in the following digital format types: Microsoft Word, and/or Excel, Adobe PDF, JPG images. **With the exception of your Budget, Timeline, and Work Plan in Excel, please DO NOT compile all your application documents into one file.**

Please email them to Urbanforestry@dnr.in.gov with the subject line composed of:

[name of your community/organization] 2024 IRA Grant Application

The closing date for grant applications is **July 12, 2024**. Late applications will not be accepted.