CSFS IRA UCF Grant - Supplemental Information

Table of Contents

Grant Reimbursement Requirements

Applicants should understand that this is a reimbursement grant only. Applicants must have funds up front to spend on their project to then be reimbursed for them. Partnerships are highly encouraged to be able to share resources to facilitate participation.

No payments can be made from the Project Sponsor directly to a private landowner. Project Sponsors may pay vendors directly for services provided to the private landowner (for example, tree removal or the purchase of a tree). The Project Sponsor is responsible for ensuring and certifying that the work was completed.

All projects are expected to comply with local bidding ordinances and requirements (ordinances or requirements of the governmental unit or sponsoring authority responsible for the project). However, it is not the intent of the CSFS that the lowest bid be automatically accepted, but rather that the lowest *responsible* bid is accepted. Bids shall be carefully evaluated considering nursery standards, arboriculture standards, project specifications and plant material requirements. All contracting must follow local, state and federal law as applicable.

Projects must conform to laws and authorities in the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act (Section 9. [16 U.S.C.2105] Urban and Community Forestry Assistance. Costs must conform to 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

To be eligible to apply for this grant, the grantee must be willing to accept full liability for any associated risk or danger related to the project. The grantee will sign documents to hold the CSFS harmless, along with its employees, for any liability from resulting outcomes of the project. Therefore, all work on private property must be fully vetted by the applicant prior to receiving acceptance of project.

Who Can Apply

Entities eligible to apply for funding under this Request for Applications include the following:

- Units of local government: counties, municipalities, cities, towns and townships.
- Federally and State Recognized Tribes and Tribal organizations as defined in 25 USC 5304 (l) and operating within Colorado.
- Non-profit organizations.
- Public educational institutions.

Eligible applicants may apply for funding for projects on the following lands:

- Non-federal lands.
- Public and private lands.
  - Private lands include industrial, residential, retail, multi-family, HOA green space, easements, drainage corridors, etc.
- Lands held in trust for Native American Tribes and individuals (hereinafter Trust lands).
  - Lands owned or administered by the federal government are not eligible for this funding opportunity.

Organizations that have previously received any grant from the CSFS must be current on their reporting requirements per their signed grant agreement(s) before receiving a new award.

If an applicant's community has already received IRA funds and their project is inside city limits, they are NOT eligible to receive this grant. These communities include Aurora, Colorado Springs, Denver, Monte Vista, Glenwood Springs, Greeley, Westminster and Wheat Ridge.

The CSFS does not discriminate against any person or organization because of race, color, religion, disability, sex, age or national origin.

Allowable and Non-Allowable Expenses

Allowable Expenses

- Supply purchase can only include consumable items.
  - Supply can include hoses, shovels, staking, tree protection, mulch, chainsaws, printing costs for educational materials, outreach expenses (website creation, flyers, marketing) or an item under $5,000 in value (for one item or parts to create an item) such as a water tank.
  - Drip-irrigation for the watering of trees.
    - Irrigation may not be used to water shrubs or grass.
    - Cannot be used to cover sprinkler irrigation costs.
  - Each part / supply item cannot exceed $5,000.
    - For example, applicants can budget up to $5,000 on irrigation pipe and $5,000 on irrigation pumps, but they must be listed as separate line items in the budget.
  - Any item whose value is over $5,000 is automatically owned by the USDA Forest Service and requires annual reporting on said item.
  - Labor costs should be separated from supply items costs.
  - All supply costs must be responsible and appropriate based on the project details.

- o For any questions about irrigation costs, contact the CSFS prior to application submission.
- Cost of trees.
- Contracting costs for tree planting, tree care, tree removal, tree inspection, tree pruning, inventory or management plan development.
- Equipment rental to perform project objectives, but not over $5,000 per unit rental.
- Salary/benefits for staff, including seasonals and interns, who are directly performing project work to carry out project activities.
- Minor pavement removals (example: expanding the size of a tree pit).
- Other expenses pre-approved in writing by the CSFS to ensure federal program compliance.
- Grant recipient administrative costs will not exceed 10% of the award.

NOT Allowed Projects and Expenses

- Research: Basic research, as defined in 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 422.1, is "Systematic study directed toward fuller knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind." **Note:** Technical transfer, education and outreach activities associated with applying research can be included in the application.
- Construction and capital improvements. Examples of construction include facilities, infrastructure, roads, new buildings, culverts and boardwalks.
- Land acquisition (conservation easement and fee simple) projects.
- Small business start-up funding.
- Capital equipment purchases. Equipment rental should be considered as an alternative.
  - o Capital equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit.
- Non-tree plant material – trees must reach a mature height of at least 20 feet.
- Funds may not be used to meet ordinary operational expenses.
- Funds may not be used to purchase food or beverages.

Allowable Project Types

Tree Planting

1. Utilize at least the first 6 months of your project to locate high-quality planting stock. If assistance is needed with locating and tagging trees, contact the CSFS.

2. All plants installed in the project shall follow the specifications detailed in the American Standard Nursery Stock ANSI Z60. 1, including height, caliper and volume measurements as applicable.

3. It is suggested that all plant material planted on public property be guaranteed for at least one year from the planting date.

4. Plant lists will be submitted to the CSFS for approval and no plant substitutions shall be allowed without the permission and approval of the CSFS.

5. Plant material can be obtained from more than one plant contractor.

6. The size of plant material allowed is as follows:

- o Size is measured at 6 inches above the ground and is called trunk caliper.
- o Deciduous Trees Specifications (container): ½-inch to 2-inch trunk caliper.
  - Estimate of 5-gallon to 15-gallon container size.
- o Evergreen Trees Specifications: 3 to 6 feet tall.
- o Field grown tree specifications (balled and burlap [B&B]):
  - A root ball of at least 24 inches in diameter is required for a 2-inch caliper trunk.
  - For every ½ inch increase in caliper, the ball size must increase by 4 inches, up to 42 inches.
  - Trees may not be larger than 4 inches in trunk caliper.
  - B&B trees require an additional maintenance plan to ensure an adequate year-round water schedule.
  - Root ball requirements are based on the 2014 American Standard for Nursery Stock.
- o Bare root trees can be used but only with CSFS approval of project specifications.
- o See Project Design, Planting and Care Requirements for details on planting guidelines.

7. Ineligible species:
   - o Because of the threat of emerald ash borer, ash species including green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), white ash (*F. americana*), black ash (*F. nigra*) and blue ash (*F. quadrangulata*) shall not be planted in the project.

8. No more than 5% of one particular species is allowed. No more than 10% of one particular genus is allowed and no more than 15% of one family is allowed in the planting plant.
   - o Planting plans should consider existing species and genus composition of adjacent properties.
   - o If the tree requires any supplemental nutrients over its life due to site conditions, it will not be approved (for example, planting maple trees that would require chelated iron to prevent chlorosis).

9. The CSFS retains the right to reject overused or other problematic species or cultivars proposed for use in the grant project.

10. All newly planted trees should be maintained with supplemental water if available precipitation does not support their overall health. Mulch should be maintained for the first three years. Reasonable costs for drip irrigation, watering bags and water tanks are allowable costs and should be employed.

11. All planting projects must include the purchase of a soil moisture sensor/tester such as a hygrometer to ensure trees have adequate moisture.

12. The Project Sponsor must agree to ongoing project maintenance for at least five years from the end of the grant.

13. No tree giveaway programs are permitted without immediate inspection after planting by an experienced tree planter (2 years or more of experience).

14. If planning to plant trees on private property, the grantee must ensure landowners are aware of and give permission/access for work on their property and include a statement that releases the CSFS from any liability associated with work completed.

Removal of Hazard or At-Risk Trees

1. Any work completed on hazard or at-risk trees must be done by a company with $1,000,000 in liability insurance with the organization who is hiring them as a certificate holder on the insurance. The company must also have proof of active workers comp insurance for all employees. **Insurance documents must be provided to the CSFS grant administrator prior to work being completed.**

2. It is preferred that the company have individuals holding International Society Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist certification on staff.

3. All trees being removed must have photos provided to the CSFS grant administrator for approval prior to removal.

4. Ash trees may be removed under the program in communities within 50 miles of confirmed EAB locations. It is suggested that EAB removals are spread out over time to reduce the impact of tree removal on tree canopy.

5. Replacement trees must be planted in the area or nearby area where the tree was removed.
   o If trees are dead, replacement is not required but it is encouraged. If removal trees are alive or ash trees, then a 1:1 replacement is necessary.

6. A planting plan must be provided to the CSFS grant administrator once removal locations are determined.

7. Tree removals must follow federal law regarding migratory birds and endangered species. It is highly recommended removals are avoided between April 1 and July 31 unless the tree is deemed hazardous.

Tree Pruning

1. All contractors providing pruning and removal work must follow ANSI A300 standards, ANSI Z133 Safety Standard.

2. Contractors should have an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist staff member on-site during pruning activities.
   o If no contractors within a reasonable distance can meet this criterion, the alternative is that an ISA Certified Arborist contractor should be brought in as a consultant to support the contractor.

3. Any work completed on hazard or at-risk trees must be done by a company with $1,000,000 in liability insurance with the organization who is hiring them as a certificate holder on the insurance. The company must also have proof of active workers comp insurance for all employees.

4. Insurance documents must be provided to the CSFS grant administrator prior to work being completed.

5. Pruning should be performed with a clear objective of safety and tree health. Pruning should improve the structure of the tree (young tree training), and for mature trees removing dead, diseased or compromised branches.

Inventory and Management Plan Development

1. An expansion of the canopy or more detailed study can be done in areas adjacent to the DI areas.
   o It will be important that the applicant shows that these data will help grow and improve the community's existing programming.
   o It is encouraged that any projects with inventory or management plan focus also include projects on community planting in the DI areas.

2. Inventory and management plans can be funded if these activities feature robust engagement, participation and leadership from DI areas.
   o Management plan goals and benefits must include a focus on disadvantaged communities.
   o Management plans may address the entire community and are not limited to the DI areas identified on the CEJST map.
   o Data must be collected using Colorado Tree View, or a similar tree inventory software product. The final product must be uploaded to Colorado Tree View prior to any final reimbursement of the grant. This product is free to use and is an online tree inventory platform whose costs are covered by the CSFS.

Career Development / Urban Wood Utilization

1. Provide for urban forestry crews to establish and maintain urban forests in DI areas into the future.

2. Support youth employment opportunities within DI areas.
   o This includes workforce development and training for the creation and maintenance of green jobs and economic opportunities for planning, planting and sustainably maintaining trees and forests, including training, and retaining urban arborists and producing and using urban forest products.

3. Develop paid on-the-job training opportunities, including pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, to expand workforce development pathways for green careers in urban and community forestry for at-risk or DI communities.

4. Work across jurisdictional boundaries, leveraging ideas and resources to increase capacity to provide equitable access to benefits across the larger landscape and at a more significant geographic scale.

Federal and State Regulations

Grantees must comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws, policies and procedures, including obtaining all permits and approvals necessary to proceed with proposed grant activities. Successful applicants must also comply with all regulations pertaining to Federal Grants. It will be the applicant's responsibility to develop, document, administer and manage the grant in accordance with all applicable Federal and State laws, including the Federal Government Single Audit Act and all relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars. Awardees will be subject to the OMB requirements and guidance in subparts A through F of 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200 as adopted and supplemented by USDA in 2 CFR part 400.

If applicants need assistance obtaining any of these documents from the Code of Federal Regulations in electronic or printed form, contact the CSFS for assistance.

All records for awarded grants must be maintained for five years following final payment or longer if required by law. An audit requirement for all Federal grantees is provided in the Code of Federal Regulations: 2 CFR 200.

Grantees must accept that the CSFS shall be responsible to the fullest extent allowed under the law for its own negligence, and the negligence of its employees and authorized volunteers acting within the scope of their actual authority. It is expressly understood and agreed that nothing contained in the grant provisions shall be construed as an express or implied waiver by the CSFS of its governmental and sovereign immunities, as an express or implied acceptance by the CSFS of liabilities arising as a result of actions which lie in tort or could lie in tort in excess of the liabilities allowable under the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, C.R.S. 24-10-101 et seq., as a pledge of the full faith and credit of the State of Colorado, or as the assumption of any of the parties of a debt, contract or liability of each other in violation of Article XI, Section 1 of the Constitution of Colorado. As an institution of the State of Colorado, the CSFS is not authorized to indemnify any party, public or private, as against the claims and demands of third parties and any such indemnification provision in the grant shall be null and void. The CSFS is liable for breach of contract in the same manner as any private party would be under Colorado law under the same or similar circumstances.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration

All grant recipients are required to register with the federal government System for Award Management (SAM) before receiving an award. Please allow at least two weeks to apply or renew this registration. Please note DUNS numbers are no longer used. All information is now in the SAM system. There is no cost associated with receiving a SAM number.

Grant recipients will need a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from the SAM process, a Taxpayer ID Number (TIN) and financial information to set up an Electronic Funds Transfer

Required Documents

Application – The Colorado IRA UCF grant application is available as a PDF and Google Form. They are the same application. **Submit either the PDF or the Google Form,** found on the CSFS IRA Grant webpage.

Detailed Budget Form – This form details how the requested grant funds will be used to support the project (maximum of 2 extra pages). Applicants must [use the budget form provided by the CSFS](#). This form asks for financial details about how requested grant funds will be used by the applicant. The funds must be used toward the approved project unless otherwise mitigating circumstances require a change to the grant and would require authorization by the CSFS.

Signature Form – This form contains a checklist of the documents to submit along with the application. Applicants should ensure they have all of these documents, then sign the form.

- For applicants using the PDF application, the form is included at the end of the PDF application.
- For applicants using Google Form application, the form must be downloaded from the Colorado IRA UCF grants webpage. Applicants should download, fill out and sign the Signature Form, then upload the completed form as an attachment.

Letter(s) of Support – Applicants should provide letters from groups near or within DI areas, such as a neighborhood group, church group, school, proclamation from council declaring support for project in DI area, etc.

Letter(s) of Partnership – Applicants should provide letters from project partners, such as cooperative nonprofits, city/state/federal agencies, members of the DI community explaining how they are contributing or supporting the project, etc.

Map of Disproportionately Impact (DI) Area – Applicants should provide a map of the DI area addressed by the project from the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) or [Colorado Tree View](#).

Map of Project Area – Applicants should provide a map of the proposed project or activity area. This is required for all applicants unless they are only applying for staffing funds.

Grant Applications Review and Ranking

The grant review policy promotes a process whereby each grant application submitted is independently evaluated on its own strengths and merits. Funds are awarded through a competitive application process. Grant applications are received, reviewed, scored and ranked by representatives of partner agencies and cooperators that are geographically representative across Colorado with expertise in urban forestry. Members will review applications from different parts of the state than they are located in. If conflicts of interest exist, the following Recusal Procedures will be followed:

- **Recusal Procedures:** Members with a conflict of interest for specific applicants will be asked to recuse themselves from discussions and ranking those grant applications. Recusal includes leaving the room during discussions and refraining from influencing council votes through dialogue.
- **Conflict of Interest:** A conflict of interest exists if a review member, or member of their family, is a director, principal officer, key employee or member of a committee with delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest. A person has a financial interest if the individual has, directly or indirectly, any actual or potential ownership, investment or compensation arrangement with the grant applicant.

- Grant reviewers must complete an Inflation Reduction Act Grant Application Evaluation Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form, which will be on file at the State Forester's Office.

Scoring Criteria

Applications meeting the minimum requirements will then be evaluated and scored based on how the proposed project meets the following criteria:

Urban Forest Conditions and Access (10 points)

- Explain how this project will improve the conditions of, and access to, urban forests for disadvantaged communities.

Project Need and Justification (10 points)

- Clearly state the need and benefits for project.
- Describe the community and/or neighborhood(s) where the project will take place.
- Describe how the project will positively and directly impact the trees and green spaces and the residents of the community and/or neighborhood(s).
- State how the project aligns with improving the tree canopy in disadvantaged areas.

Project Outcomes (10 points)

- Clearly describe your anticipated outcomes for the project.
- Show how the outcomes are the measurable results of your actions (i.e., how many, how much).

Project Implementation (10 points)

- Clearly describe how your project will be implemented within a disproportionately impacted area(s).
- Include sufficient detail about your project's activities.
- Include a description of who is responsible for completing the work.
- Describe if your project coordinator is internal staff or a contractor (internal staff is preferred - not required).
- If your project is a planting project, describe how you will recruit and engage Tree Steward(s) from the disproportionately impacted area(s) as a volunteer participant(s) in the project.

Project Timeline (10 points)

- Clearly describe the project's timeline to ensure it is reasonable and specific.
- Provide a specific timeline with beginning and end dates that show the project is achievable in four years.
- Describe anticipated annual accomplishments or other milestones.

Project Collaboration (10 points)

- Identify the group's partners.

- Describe how each partner will contribute to the planning and implementation phases of the project.

Results and Evaluation Plan (10 points)

- Provide a clear plan for evaluating the project's effectiveness.
- Describe how you will assess your success throughout the project's timeline and when will you know if you need to change course, if at all?
- Describe how you will engage community members if communications are challenging or not meeting expectations and how you are going to find solutions.
- State how you will share your results and impacts with the community.

Capacity Building Plan (15 points)

- Document your plans for making this project's implementation sustainable long-term.
- State your long-term (5-7+ years) goals for the project.
- Describe how you will maintain the success of your work without additional federal and state financial support.

Budget Narrative (10 points)

- Describe in detail each line item listed in the budget.
- Clearly explain how specific project costs were estimated and calculated.
- Explain per-hour labor rates, and value staff time at their actual salary (not billable rate).
- State terms of any contracts known at the time of application.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I learn how to submit a good application for this grant program?
The CSFS has provided an online training "Enhancing the Urban Forest in Colorado" for all applicants. Applicants must complete the training before applying and indicate in their application that they have completed the training.

This training includes information on the following topics:

- Benefits of trees
- Myths about trees
- Planting standards (methods)
- Selecting species
- Sourcing stock
- Your role and responsibilities as a community forestry organizer, including common mistakes
- What you're committing to (inclusivity and equity, communications, community dynamics, people organizing, supporting stewardship)
- Grant FAQs

The CSFS also hosts virtual Question & Answer (Q&A) sessions for applicants. Please see links on the CSFS IRA webpage for access to the training and Q&A sessions.

The USDA Forest Service also has provided [Community Navigators](#) to help with Google Forms, grant budget, narrative assistance or anything else to support applicants, as described in the USFS Grant Navigator Help section of the Request for Applications.

What is CEJST, and how do I use it for this grant application?
The [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CJEST) identifies disproportionately impacted (DI) communities to ensure that the work to be performed through this grant is in an eligible disadvantaged area. Applicants can locate eligible DI communities by searching the [CEJST map](#) directly. They can enter their location in the search bar on the map to identify DI areas.

Applicants may also use [Colorado Tree View](#) (CO-TreeView) to identity DI communities that qualify for this grant. They can click on the canopy button in the top left corner to locate eligible DI areas (CEJST data are included in CO-TreeView).

What is the allowable overhead/administration rate?
Most grant funding is required to be spent on specific project implementation and not general organizational support or administrative costs. Grant recipients are allowed to use up to 10% of grant funding for general overhead expenses, such as administrative labor, accounting, etc. These expenses must be allocated to the project and documented as any other direct project expenses.

Can I get funding for a project that has already been funded or started? Can money spent on another previous component be used as match?
No, projects funded by other sources are not eligible. However, if the proposed project is a second phase or component of a previously funded project, applicants may apply for funds through this grant. Matching funds that have been used for another grant project cannot be re-used.

Will the grant funds be given out at the beginning of the grant cycle?
Not generally. Most funds will be given out as the project is implemented and monies are spent (it is a reimbursement-based grant). No money will be given out without a fully documented report and supporting paperwork.

What is the value of volunteer labor?
Volunteer time is valued at the 2024 Federal Volunteer Rate of $34.36 (children aged younger than 14 years can have their time valued at minimum wage). For use of consultants, forestry professionals, planners, etc., who donate their professional services, appropriate hourly rates may be documented in a letter from the individual or their organization.

When will I know if my application was funded? What is the next step?
Applicants will receive a confirmation email that their application was received. After grant proposals are reviewed, applicants will be notified if their project is funded by Sept. 1, 2024. A contract will be emailed to the applicant for approval/execution. Billable, funded work on the project cannot begin until an applicant receives a copy of the final executed grant agreement.

Can I apply for both levels of this grant? Can one organization submit multiple applications?
Yes, an organization may submit multiple, separate applications to both levels of this grant. The levels are $20,000 to $99,999 and $100,000 to $250,000. However, only one application will be awarded to a single organization per each grant cycle.