

# PROJECT CANOPY

## 2024 INFLATION REDUCTION ACT URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANTS

### GRANT OVERVIEW & APPLICATION GUIDELINES

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION, AND FORESTRY'S MAINE FOREST SERVICE  
USDA FOREST SERVICE – URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY FEDERAL ASSISTANCE LISTING (CFDA)

10:675

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT – URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY FEDERAL ASSISTANCE LISTING  
(CFDA) 10.727



Mandatory Pre-Application Grant Workshop  
**February 28, 2024**  
**1 PM**

Application Deadline  
**May 15, 2024**  
**11:59 pm**

Project Canopy  
Maine Forest Service  
22 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333  
1-207-287-2791

# PROJECT CANOPY

## OVERVIEW:

Project Canopy, a program of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Maine Forest Service is seeking proposals from municipal governments, non-profit organizations (501(c)(3)), and educational institutions in need of financial support for the increase of urban and community tree canopy, tree maintenance, and management projects in disadvantaged Maine communities.

Urban & Community Forestry grants will support a broad range of activities including urban and community tree canopy establishment and protection, urban wood utilization, urban food forests, local capacity building through workforce development, climate mitigation through tree planting, community tree nursery establishment, and building understanding to care for and manage community trees.

This work aligns with and supports the Biden-Harris Administration's [Justice40](#) Initiative by strategically identifying, reaching, and assisting disadvantaged communities in our state. With special funds through the USDA Forest Service's National Urban & Community Forestry Program and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, these grants advance work within disadvantaged communities to support more resilient urban and community forests. Learn more about [state allocations](#) and the Inflation Reduction Act's impact on urban forestry nationwide.

The amount of grant dollars available to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Maine Forest Service (MFS) for this grant program is approximately **\$750,000**. Applicants are eligible to submit proposals from **\$25,000 to \$200,000**. The grant period is from June 1, 2024, to June 30, 2026.

There is a common application for all grant categories; applicants may apply for multiple categories but must submit a separate application for each denoting which grant category on the application. Project Canopy will host a pre-application grant workshop for ALL applicants on February 28, 2024, 1-3PM. Applicants must pre-register by providing notice to MFS through [MS Form](#) or calling 207-287-2791.

## ELIGIBLE GRANTEES:

Local municipal units of government, educational institutions, tribal organizations and non-profit entities may be awarded grants for proposals that meet program guidelines.

Eligibility for funding will be determined in accordance with criteria approved by the USDA Forest Service's National Urban & Community Forestry Program. Projects must take place in or must directly serve disadvantaged communities, which for the purpose of this grant program are defined as census tracts included in one or more of the following datasets:

- The federal Council on Environmental Quality's [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool](#)
- The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's [Opportunity Zones](#) dataset
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency's [National Risk Index](#) (Relatively Moderate or higher)

Refer to Project Canopy's 2024 Urban and Community Forestry IRA grant eligibility map for guidance.

## AVAILABLE FUNDS

The amount of grant dollars available to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Maine Forest Service (MFS) for this grant program is approximately **\$750,000**. Applicants are eligible to submit proposals from **\$25,000 to \$200,000**. The grant period is from June 1, 2024, to June 30, 2026. Funds will be distributed through a competitive grant review and selection process.

Funding for this program is made possible by the USDA Forest Service and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. USDA Forest Service – Urban & Community Forestry Federal Assistance Listing (CFDA) 10:675, and; Inflation Reduction Act – Urban & Community Forestry Federal Assistance listing (CFDA) 10.727.

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

The Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program is a national initiative designed to strengthen the connections between people and their environment. The USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program was authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL95-313) and revised by the 1990 Farm Bill (PL101-624) to promote natural resource management in populated areas and improve quality of life. Urban and Community Forestry Program goals of awareness, outreach and environmental equity, partnerships, and comprehensive natural resource management focus on achieving healthy sustainable forests, sustainable economic development, and information management.

Project Canopy has a vision that *every community will actively and wisely manage its community forestry resources in a sustainable manner, and that all Maine citizens become well informed as to the proper management of these resources and the benefits derived from them*. Project Canopy has identified four goals to support this vision. Projects proposed under this grant program must effectively contribute toward the following Project Canopy goals and USDA Forest Service national goals:

### Project Canopy Goals:

1. Increase the number of managing community forestry programs.
2. Stimulate and heighten public awareness of what the community forest is, its role and benefits.
3. Create and maintain partnerships.
4. Promote comprehensive resource management of community forests and related natural resources.

### USFS IRA funding priorities:

1. Conditions are significantly improved for communities (people or places) as prioritized in Justice40, Congressional, State Forest Action Plan and Ten-Year National Urban and Community Forestry Plan.
2. Increased equitable access to urban tree canopy and associated human health, environmental and economic (workforce) benefits in disadvantaged communities.
3. Broadened community engagement in local urban forest planning.
4. Improved resilience to climate change, pests, storm/extreme heat events through best management and maintenance practices.

## USFS Goals:

1. Sustain Our Nation's Forests and Grasslands
  - a. Strategic Objective A. Foster resilient, adaptive ecosystems to mitigate climate change
  - b. Strategic Objective B. Mitigate wildfire risk
  - c. Strategic Objective C. Conserve open space
2. Deliver Benefits to the Public
  - a. Strategic Objective D. Provide abundant clean water
  - b. Strategic Objective E. Strengthen communities
  - c. Strategic Objective F. Connect people to the outdoors
3. Apply Knowledge Globally
  - a. Strategic Objective G. Advance knowledge
  - b. Strategic Objective H. Transfer technology and applications
  - c. Strategic Objective I. Exchange natural resource expertise

## PROJECT ELIGIBILITY:

**The goal of this grant program is to support community efforts to develop and maintain long-term community forestry programs.** Projects should create and foster more resilient urban and community forests by increasing and maintaining a healthy urban tree canopy and access to nature. Projects must take place in or must directly serve at least one disadvantage community, as defined. Planting trees and caring for existing trees is an integral part of sustainable community forestry management. These grants provide an excellent opportunity for communities to increase tree cover, tree health, engage citizen volunteers, and build support for their community forestry program. Applicants are encouraged to contact Project Canopy staff to discuss project ideas. Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ **Urban and community tree canopy expansion, establishment, and protection** – (e.g., tree planting, community nursery development)
- ◆ **Urban tree maintenance**
- ◆ **Urban wood utilization programming**
- ◆ **Urban and community food forests**
- ◆ **Climate resiliency planning, implementation, and demonstration planting**
- ◆ **Urban forestry workforce development**
- ◆ **Enhanced capacity for urban tree care and management**
- ◆ **All activities supported by Project Canopy Assistance funding.**

## ELIGIBLE PROJECT GUIDELINES

Below are general guidelines for the eligible project components.

### URBAN TREE CANOPY EXPANSION, ESTABLISHMENT AND PROTECTION

- Projects should consider the health, maintenance of, and access to the overall tree canopy within a specific disadvantaged community or multiple disadvantaged communities.
- For all tree planting activities, guidelines are consistent with those in the Project Canopy Assistance Program.
- The estimated total number of trees that will be planted must be included in the project application. All applications must provide a draft species list and a maintenance plan for all planted trees, including provisions for replacing trees that have not survived.
- All tree planting activities associated with a project must adhere to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 Standards for Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Management.
- Funds can be used to purchase and/or plant trees. Planting stock should be at least 1 ½ inches in caliper and no larger than 3 ½ inches. Balled and burlapped or bare root stock is the preferred stocking material;
- Refer to the [Tree Owner's Manual](#) for site assessment and tree selection guidance.
- Trees can be planted on public ways and places as defined in M.S.R.S. Title 12 §8702, Title 23 §951, and Title 20-A §3281 such as public rights-of-way, parks and greenbelts, and areas around public buildings, or at public educational institutions.
- Tree planting on private property can occur when property owners are willing to support community-wide tree programs by providing permission for the municipality or organization to plant and, potentially, maintain trees on private property bordering public ways and places, provided the guidelines below are met:
  - A sample written agreement must be included with the application. Examples of existing agreements can be found on the Project Canopy website. This agreement must address:
    - Responsibilities of both the property owner and the municipality,
    - Tree care and survival, and
    - Duration for which the agreement will exist.
  - The written agreement sample or template must be approved by both Project Canopy staff and the program's Regional UCF Program Coordinator with the USDA Forest Service prior to the project's initiation.

- Upon approval, a written agreement must be signed by both a municipal or organizational representative and the property owner for each property on which a tree or multiple trees will be planted; copies of these agreements must be submitted with the final project report.
- Funds can also be used to support the growing environment of a tree or group of trees, including those grown in a municipal or community tree nursery, for long-term success. This includes activities to increase available soil volume, irrigate trees, and for tree protection.
- Applications that allow for trees to act as green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff are encouraged.
- Strategically planting trees to maximize their long-term benefits is encouraged. For example, planting trees to conserve energy for cooling, improve or expand recreational space, enhance community resilience, or increase business patronage will receive special consideration. Refer to the US Forest Service's [Vibrant Cities Lab](#) for resources and ideas.
- Strategically planting trees to increase equitable distribution of tree canopy cover across a community is encouraged. Learn more about [Tree Equity](#) here.

#### **TREE MAINTENANCE**

- Funds can be used for the maintenance of trees in public ways and places or at public educational institutions. If hiring a professional arborist, refer to the International Society of Arboriculture's Certified Arborist database.
- All tree maintenance activities associated with a project must adhere to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 Standards for Tree, Shrub, and Other Woody Plant Management.
- Tree maintenance should focus on a prescriptive approach to long-term tree health and structural improvements. This could include structural pruning/training of young trees, crown cleaning and corrective pruning of mature trees, deep root feeding, cabling/bracing, and soil compaction mitigation.
- Funds can be used for supplies to maintain and care for trees, including hand and pole pruners, pruning saws, mulch, watering bags or tanks, and staking materials.

#### **URBAN WOOD UTILIZATION**

Project funds may be used to establish a local wood utilization program for trees removed from public ways and places or from other municipally managed lands. Projects to distribute wood as firewood are eligible and applicants are also encouraged to consider ways to utilize the wood for furniture, flooring, outdoor art installations, recreation equipment, or any other use. For more information visit the [Urban Wood Network](#) website.

## URBAN FOOD FORESTS

Project funds may be used to support the establishment, maintenance, or expansion of food forests, community orchards, or community garden sites with the planting and care of fruit and nut trees.

## EXTREME HEAT MITIGATION AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Project funds may be used to support local and regional environmental, municipal, or transportation planning efforts that integrate trees and urban and community forests. Funds may be used towards implementation of a broad range of strategies to enhance resilience to climate change and extreme heat incidences.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Project funds may be used to develop, enhance, or support new and existing workforce development programs that serve disadvantaged communities and incorporate urban and community forestry. Activities may include youth engagement, educational activities or initiatives, and apprenticeships. Eligible entities should also explore complementary programming through the [Maine Conservation Corps Community Tree Stewards](#).

## INCREASING CAPACITY TO CARE FOR AND MANAGE COMMUNITY TREES

Project funds may be used for staff training or personnel costs related to maintaining and enhancing urban forest canopy. Applicants are encouraged to consider training needs or support for their appointed tree warden, road crews, public works staff, and/or parks department staff. Applicants may also request funds to support work with regional groups and neighboring municipalities.

## COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT:

Projects funded through the Inflation Reduction Act Urban and Community Forestry grant program require no local matching funds.

## ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS:

### Eligible Reimbursable Costs:

The only costs eligible for reimbursement are those associated with one or more of the following:

- Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants.
- Purchase of essential supplies and materials.
- Purchase and planting of trees, along with maintenance during the grant period. Three-year maintenance with a 90% survival rate is expected on all plantings, however, **maintenance costs outside of the grant period are ineligible.**
- Costs associated with site preparation and soil amendments.
- Salaries, fringe, and overhead costs. Administrative costs may not exceed 20% of the total award.

### Eligible Non-reimbursable Costs

The following costs are not reimbursable BUT are allowed and encouraged as part of the community contribution.

- Cash or in-kind donations and services.
- Volunteer labor, machinery, and equipment.
- Administrative costs in excess of 20% of the award total.

### Ineligible Costs:

This cost-share program is for projects and/or activities not currently funded. It is not intended to be a substitute for existing funding levels. The focus of the program is to support new initiatives that would not otherwise occur during the funding cycle.

- Purchase of machinery or equipment over \$5,000.
- Construction of any kind, e.g. sidewalks or roads.
- Purchase of land or land charges.
- Purchase of plant material classified as invasive species by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry including Norway maples (*Acer platanoides*) (all cultivars) and callery ('Bradford') pear (*Pyrus calleryana*). <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/horticulture/invasiveplants.shtml#List>
- Purchase and planting of ash species (*Fraxinus* sp.)– due to likelihood of eventual spread of the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*).
- Normal, community wide periodic maintenance of utility (telephone, electric, and cable) lines unless it is site specific and necessary to the project.

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

To be considered for funding, applicants must meet the following requirements:

### Training:

Attend the grant information workshop held via web conference. **Attendance is required.** Grant workshops will cover topics including grant writing, project development, sustainable community forestry management, and grant administration. [Please register](#) through the web link (preferable) or by contacting the Maine Forest Service at 207-287-2791 or [forestinfo@maine.gov](mailto:forestinfo@maine.gov) to let us know you will be attending.

\*Please note: The workshop is a distance learning workshop offered on the internet. Please contact us for more information.

### SAM (UEID):

Grant recipients must have a [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) Unique Entity Identification (UEID) – note to applicants the entity registration process can take several weeks to establish. MFS urges any interested entities to initiate the SAM registration by March 1, 2024. For entities already registered with SAM.gov who need to convert from the DUNS number to UEID this process should be initiated on a similar timeline.



### **Application Form:**

- Complete the online application form.
- Submit the complete application package, as prompted at the end of the online form, to:  
PROJECTCANOPYGRANTS.DACF@maine.gov
- Project Canopy recommends that applicants obtain quotes for the cost of trees from nurseries and include the quotes with the application.
- The application must be signed by the designated and official representative.

### **Narrative: (1-3 pages)**

Applicants are required to submit a narrative with their application containing the following information:

- A brief history of your community tree program including mission and goals for the next several years.
- A description of the project, including what you expect to be developed, produced, performed and/or implemented; a clear and measurable work plan for the project; and a timeline for completion of the process.
- A description of how your project will effectively contribute to Project Canopy and USDA Forest Service goals.
- A description of how this project will enhance your community's capacity for long-term and sustainable urban and community forestry management.

### **Three-Year Maintenance Plan:**

A three-year maintenance plan must be included in your application. The plan should identify individuals and resources responsible for tree maintenance over a three-year period. **Only tree maintenance costs during the grant period are eligible for reimbursement or may be used as match.**

### **Project Map/Planting Locations:**

Include a map of the project area, clearly delineating planting locations. Trees must be planted on public property or on property with free public access that is visible from, or contiguous to, transportation corridors.

### **Letters of Support:**

Applications that include a broad range of participants will be favored. Applicants are required to include letters of support from partners that include specific commitments and contributions to the project, e.g. amount of volunteer labor committed, estimated services provided, donated equipment or labor, and not just a general statement of support. **For applicants that are not a municipality, a letter of support from a sponsoring municipality is strongly recommended.**

### **Community Capacity Checklist:**

Please complete the community capacity checklist and submit it with your application.

**Disadvantaged communities Statement:**

The USDA Forest Service’s Urban & Community Forestry Program awarded funds to state agencies to create sub-grants that support disadvantaged communities through equitable access to trees and the benefits they provide. The funding was made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act. Project must take place in or directly serve “dis-advantage communities”, which for the purposes of this grant category are census tracts included in one or more of the following datasets:

- The federal Council on Environmental Quality’s [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool](#)
- The US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s [Opportunity Zones](#) dataset
- The US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s dataset for [low to moderate income](#) areas

Describe how your project will benefit a disadvantaged community or communities. Limit 4,000 characters.

**Application submission Instructions:**

The complete application package submission must be sent to [PROJECTCANOPYGRANTS.DACF@maine.gov](mailto:PROJECTCANOPYGRANTS.DACF@maine.gov) by 11:59 May 15, 2024.

ADDITIONALLY: Submit grant application overview information in the common application Microsoft Form. All grant overview information is extracted from the application forms, the common application serves as a notification of submission and provides necessary information for recordkeeping.

**FUNDING REVIEW AND CRITERIA:**

Proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis. Project proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation team made up of individuals from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry’s Maine Forest Service and Project Canopy partners. The evaluation team will make recommendations on applications to the State Forester, who will make final determinations. The grant review criteria are:

Project contributes to the goals of Project Canopy and the USFS	10 Points
Project helps support and build a sustainable community forestry program	10 Points
Project need and value to the community are evident	10 Points
Project helps increase urban forest resilience to climate change and other environmental impacts.	5 Points
New community (has not received funding from MFS/Project Canopy)	5 Points
Project has a realistic budget and timeline	5 Points
Community partnerships are evident and described in letters of support	5 Points
Application is complete, legible, and clearly presented	5 Points

**IF AWARDED A GRANT:**

Each grantee is required to sign an agreement for performance containing the required Federal General Assurances. The grant period is from June 1, 2024, to June 30, 2026.

**Successful applicants cannot commence work or incur any expenses against the grant until an agreement between Project Canopy and the authorized agency/organization has been signed. Expenses incurred outside the agreement period shall be deemed ineligible for reimbursement.**

**TIME TABLE:**

- 2/2024:** Grant announcement
- 2/28/2024:** Grant workshop – Web based, 1PM
- 3/12/2024** [Grant office hour](#)
- 3/26/2024** [Grant office hour](#)
- 4/9/2024** [Grant office hour](#)
- 4/23/2024** [Grant office hour](#)
- 5/15/2024:** Applications are due to MFS no later than 11:59 PM
- 6/1/2024:** Successful applicants will be notified by the MFS of conditional project approval.

Successful applicants must spend allocated federal funds between **June 1, 2024, and June 30, 2026**. Applicants must complete final project reporting procedures, furnish documentation of project completion, and submit expenses to the MFS within 30 days following completion. Unless prior approval has been granted, grantees will be ineligible for reimbursement if completed grant documentation is not furnished to MFS by **July 31, 2026**.

**PAYMENT PROCESS:**

Funds will be awarded on a reimbursement basis only. This means that all expenses have been paid in full and the project is complete before filing for grant payment. Funds awarded under the grant are available once satisfactory work has been completed, within the contract period as described in the original scope of work, and after verification of expenditures. Grantees must file a request for reimbursement and send records of expenditures to the MFS, within 30 days following completion of the project, but in no case later than July 31, 2026. Payment shall be made to the authorized local government unit, educational institution, tribal organization or non-profit organization. Grantees can normally expect payment within 60 days of receipt of expenditure documentation.

Grantees may request reimbursement for expenses incurred on a quarterly basis:

September 30, December 30, March 30, June 30 of each calendar year the grant is open. Grantees may request final reimbursement on project completion, or June 30, 2026, whichever is first.

Recipients will be required to check-in with MFS **quarterly** (September 30, December 30, March 30, June 30 of each calendar year the grant is open) to provide project updates and identify any technical assistance needs from MFS. These check-ins may be conducted via e-mail, virtually or through in-person site visits by MFS to the project location. At the conclusion of the project, recipients will be required to submit a final report. Final reports must include relevant data and outputs including but not limited to the number, species, and size of trees planted; any forest management plans or inventories created; and the number of community members or volunteers engaged. MFS will provide training to instruct recipients on the data collection process and expectations for final reports. All final reports and associated data products will be publicized by MFS.

**All records and receipts associated with the project must be maintained and available for inspection by the Maine Forest Service and State and Federal auditors for three (3) years after the grant period.**

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Technical assistance is available to all grant applicants from the Maine Forest Service. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from MFS personnel. Questions concerning the application process and/or project development, should be directed to Jan Santerre, Project Canopy Coordinator at (207) 287-4987; or your local District Forester (listed below).

### DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION MAINE FOREST SERVICE DISTRICT FORESTERS

Oliver Markewicz, MFS, 2281 Alfred Road, Lyman, Maine 04002	(207) 441-3712
Allyssa Gregory, MFS, 536 Waldoboro Road, Jefferson, Maine 04348	(207) 441-2895
Jared Gregory, MFS, 536 Waldoboro Road, Jefferson, ME 04348	(207)215-5318
Kenny Ferguson, MFS, P.O. Box 415, Old Town, ME, 04468	(207) 215-0679
Lauren Ouellette, MFS, 2 Forestry Road, Island Falls, ME, 04747	(207) 441-3817
Michael Jensen, MFS, P.O. Box 130, Jonesboro, Maine 04648	(207) 441-4924
Shane Duigan, MFS, 356 Shaker Rd., Gray, ME, 04039	(207) 592-1251
Julie Davenport, MFS, PO Box 416, Norridgewock, Maine 04976	(207) 592-2238
Jim Ferrante, MFS, PO Box 1107, Greenville, Maine 04441	(207) 441-4308
Michael Richard, MFS, 131 Bethel Road, West Paris, Maine 04289	(207) 441-3276
Randy Lagasse, MFS, 45 Radar Road, Ashland, Maine 04732	(207) 557-1086

[FIND YOUR DISTRICT FORESTER](#)