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## Division of Forestry, Community and Urban Forestry Program

### 2021 Community & Urban Forestry Assistance Grant Application Instructions

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This grant program is made possible by funds awarded by the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area. We encourage 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 to this grant program.

#### IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU APPLY:

- If you received a CUFA grant in 2020 you are **NOT** eligible to apply in 2021.
- All grant funds must be matched by the applicant and funds will be dispensed on a reimbursable basis.
- All application materials are to be submitted in digital format and emailed to [tlcoleman@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:tlcoleman@dnr.IN.gov). Faxed or hardcopy applications will not be accepted.
- Application deadline is **Friday Aug. 13, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. ET.**
- Awards will be announced via email in Autumn 2021. Activities funded by these grants will begin upon notification of award and conclude by June 30, 2023.
- 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:

Indiana DNR Division of Forestry CUF  
402 W Washington St W296  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Phone: 317-234-6568  
E-mail: [tlcoleman@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:tlcoleman@dnr.IN.gov)



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## The Grant Program

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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 (DNR), Division of Forestry Community & Urban Forestry Program (CUF), and the United States Forest Service (USFS) Northeastern Area sponsor this Community and Urban Forestry Assistance (CUFA) Grant Program.

The CUFA grant funds six specific project types as listed below in priority order from highest to lowest. Your overall project may include one or more type but note that each type has funding limitations as outlined below. Make your requests for project funds from a minimum of \$1,000 to a maximum of \$25,000. Your total grant request cannot exceed \$25,000.

- **Tree Inventory or Urban Tree Canopy Assessment (\$1,000 - \$20,000):** Grant funds used for the development and implementation or the expansion of a community tree inventory. This inventory is intended to be used as a dynamic tool for continuous urban forestry management. The inventory will conform to the minimum standards outlined in Addendum B.
- **Management/Response Plan (\$1,000 - \$8,000):** The community may use this grant to cover expenses related to the creation or update of an urban forestry management or response plan. **Our office highly recommends pairing this project type with new or updated tree inventories.** It also is used to fund the development or the review and update of tree ordinances.
- **Education/Training (\$1,000 - \$5,000):** 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 and management of community forests and the management of urban forestry programs.
- **New Tree Planting (\$1,000 - \$10,000):** New trees may be planted to fulfill management plan goals and/or to replace trees lost to disease or other factors. Projects must address ecosystem improvements achieved through the tree planting. Projects are also encouraged to address inequities in access to municipal green infrastructure. **Note that at least 90% of the project trees must be species native to Indiana. 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. Only landscape-grade trees can be purchased with grant funds.
- **Community Education/Awareness Events (\$1,000 - \$5,000):** Promotion of the understanding and value of urban forestry and urban forests in your community. An example would be an Arbor Day celebration. Allowable expenses are speaker fees, urban forest tours, etc. Grant funds may **NOT** be used to purchase T-shirts, promotional prizes, or food for events; however, conservation seedling giveaway purchases can be used as match.

- **Other Activities (\$1,000 - \$15,000):** You may fund activities or other projects specific to urban forestry and/or arboriculture in your community. One example is the development and implementation of a community website/webpage specific to urban forestry.

***\*Note\****

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

In completing your CUFA application, you should consider your community's goals in carrying out these projects. Your goals may include:

- Enhance residents' quality of life in your city, village, town, township, or county.
- Establish, strengthen, and support a community urban forestry program.
- Promote urban forestry benefits through the proper selection, planting, and care of trees.
- Establish a comprehensive tree inventory to enable local data-driven decision-making.
- Promote risk management by properly assessing trees and developing mitigation plans.
- Restore diminished community tree canopy.
- 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.
- Diversify the urban forest for long-term resilience and resistance to future pests.
- Ensure that urban forests provide your community a variety of ecosystem services such as clean air, improved watershed health, reduced erosion and stormwater runoff, and reduced urban heat island effects.
- Address historic urban forestry policy or management inequities which have been borne unevenly by groups or areas within your community.
- Address and adapt urban forest accessibility to changing community demographics.
- Promote the Indiana nursery industry through the local purchase of high-quality trees.
- Support Indiana arboriculture and landscape industries through management planning and tree removal, installation, and education.
- 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.*

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## National & State Grant Guidelines

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When your community or organization is awarded a CUFA 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 CUFA 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, and applicable Federal and State regulations.
2. Tree planting projects must include a work plan 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.

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).

More details about these national performance measures can be found in the document Updated CARS Definition – May 6, 2020.pdf on the CUF Grants website.

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

1. Projects must be on **public lands** or in public rights-of-way.
2. All projects require a **1-to-1 match**. This match must be shown in the application.
3. 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.
4. An applicant may submit only one application. Only one application per community will be awarded. Stronger applications outline cooperation with non-profits and government entities within your community to expand the scope of your project.

5. 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 Coordinator in advance of any actions.**

***\*Note\****

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

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## Local Match

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Your application must include a detailed budget listing project costs and the sources of the project funding. “Match” is an important part of this budget since grant funds must be equally matched or exceeded by the Subgrantee. Match can be all cash, all in-kind donations, or a mix of both. Note that any match helps expand the scope of a grant project. The proposed match must be directly related to the project and must occur during the grant period. Since this is a federally funded grant, you can use state or local funds for your match, but you cannot use other federal funding sources for match.

Here is a list of commonly used match sources and our guidelines for using them:

- **Budget Line Items:** Funds appropriated in your organization’s budget for your project.
- **Training Registration Fees:** Funds paid for staff and/or volunteers to attend education events on UF skills related to your project activities. Note: registration fees ONLY, you cannot claim attendee time at education events.
- **Private Cash Donations:** Donations of cash must be used on project expenses with full documentation of both source and expenditures. An example might be a civic organization underwriting the purchase of additional trees. The Project Coordinator will keep records that show a clear movement of funds from donation to purchase with copies of donation checks, their deposit in the organization’s bank, purchase receipts or invoices, and proof of payments to the nursery.
- **Donated Materials:** Their values should be documented with a receipt or a quote on company letterhead from a local vendor who supplies those materials.
- **Donated Services:** Professional services like ash tree removal, stump grinding to gain planting space, tree planting, the use of equipment to record data, civil engineering, landscape architecture, etc., will be priced by the donating professionals and documented on their company letterhead, invoices, or receipts.
- **Equipment Usage:** To determine the value if it is not provided, obtain a scale of hourly rental rates on letterhead from a local rental company that rents similar equipment. Municipal equipment is valued at the rate used internally by the donating department or agency. Vehicles and equipment previously purchased with federal money **CANNOT** be used as part of the match.
- **Discounts:** Consultant fee discounts (i.e., a 5-year database subscription for the cost of 1), nursery discounts, etc., will be recorded on receipts and invoices documenting the project.
- **Mileage:** Mileage logs must be kept for all vehicles used as part of the match and valued at the business mileage rate accepted by the IRS. The CUF office will provide the most current value since the State of Indiana business mileage rate may change over the duration of your grant. Find current

mileage rates at: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-standard-mileage-rates-for-2020>. Statute sets the volunteer mileage rate at 14 cents per mile.

One of your largest sources of match, however, is in-kind labor, both volunteer and professional. Please use the following guidelines in estimating the match in your proposed budget:

- **Staff Time:** When your organization's employees work on the project (as the Project Coordinator, for example), their in-kind labor should be calculated at the employee's wage rate x hours.
- **Administrative:** Project Coordinators must take particular care to document their administrative costs separately from other project activities since the value of those hours used as match cannot exceed 10% of the total grant amount. Common administrative activities include grant reporting, purchasing, compiling volunteer hours, any clerical functions, etc.
- **Skilled Labor:** Like project administrative staff, this should be valued at the donor's established wage rate, or the current average wage rate for that trade. To qualify as skilled labor the donor must practice or have been employed in that specific profession or trade (bobcat operator, arborist, etc.). All donated labor used on a project must be documented as the work is done.
- **Fringe:** The value of benefits paid to the employee may also be included in calculating match if it is known (usually determined by the employer as a percentage of salary).
- **Volunteer Labor (Adult):**
  - Calculate the labor of adults who serve on urban forestry non-profits, tree boards, or commissions at \$20.00 per hour.
  - Volunteers who serve or offer advice in a professional capacity have their labor calculated at the wage rate which they normally receive in their professions.
  - Unskilled labor donated by the public should be valued at the wage rate for that job. A beginning volunteer wage rate for jobs for adults involved in the unskilled aspects of urban forestry is: \$13.00 per hour (Bureau of Labor Statistics/forestry work).
- **Volunteer Labor (Youth):**
  - Ages 13-18: \$7.25 per hour (Indiana minimum wage rate).
  - Ages 7-12: \$4.00 per hour.

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## Monitoring and Accountability

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Grant recipients shall document and report all expenditures and accomplishments. Projects will be reviewed by DNR 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. The CUF program has transitioned from paper to digital recordkeeping and Subgrantees will largely communicate with our office digitally and via telephone. **Project Applicants and Coordinators MUST then be able to communicate online in a timely manner with CUF staff via email at minimum.** It is

strongly 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 June 30, 2023).
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 before selection. You will 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” and “match money.”
6. Document all grant/match 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 or match:
  - A. Food
  - B. Shrubs or other ornamental plants
  - C. T-shirts or promotional prizes
  - D. Invasive species removal
  - E. Vehicles and equipment purchased with federal money
  - F. Labor from federally funded employees
  - G. Tools or equipment that exceed \$150 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 to the guidelines found in Addendum A and inspected by CUF staff for compliance with those guidelines.
9. All **tree inventories** and **management plans** must be compiled, presented, and published in accordance to the guidelines found in Addendum B.

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## Grant Review, Evaluation, and Award

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Grant applications will be evaluated and rated by an independent review committee comprised of urban

forestry and DNR 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 in Fall 2021 as to the status of their applications.

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## Grant Period

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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 June 30, 2023.** 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.

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## Grant Payments

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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.*** Documentation of an equal or greater match must accompany each claim for reimbursement. 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. Subgrantees must submit all final documentation and request final payment no later than Aug. 1, 2023.*

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## Grant Application Checklist

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Follow the steps below to complete your grant application.

1. **Read the Entire Grant Application Packet:** There is no secret to writing a CUFA grant. Understanding and incorporating the goals we have outlined in the guidelines into your *Narrative*, however, is the key to writing a successful grant. Look carefully at the samples we provide to craft your *Budget* and *Timeline*. Check your math. Look up the species on your tree lists to make sure they are appropriate for your project and that your *Work Plan* reflects that. Above all, stay organized and you will be able to do it.
2. **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.**

3. **Narrative:** Your Narrative should address each of the questions listed in the Word file **fo-CUFA\_App4\_2021\_Narrative\_Questions.docx**. We recommend that you type in your answer immediately following each question. Keep each response concise - the entire narrative should not exceed 4 pages in 12 point font. 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. Due to space limitations we require that all your submitted materials are formatted to 8 ½" x 11" or 11" x 17" page sizes. **Save and submit in Word.**
4. **Budget:** Prepare a detailed itemized budget that describes your anticipated grant expenditures and your match for each part of the project. Please use the format shown in the **Budget Example** tab in the Excel workbook **fo-CUFA\_App5\_2021\_Examples\_Templates.xlsx**. 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. (NOTE: all Excel files created for your application can be combined and submitted in the same workbook.)**
5. **Timeline:** Provide a detailed project timeline including project execution items, accomplishment reporting, and a project end date. All project work must be completed by June 30, 2023. 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).**
6. **Work Plan:** This item is required for tree planting projects ONLY. We recommend that this chart is best formatted in an Excel spreadsheet and should include at minimum: location of proposed plantings, description, width/size of planting space, any possible overhead or underground site conflicts, and species. **Save and submit in Excel (see note above).** If you also have site plans or maps for your project, please submit them formatted to 8 ½" x 11" or 11" x 17" page sizes.
7. **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.**

8. **Not-for-Profit Documentation:** Not-for-profit applicants must include proof of 501(c)3 status. **Save and submit in PDF or JPG.**
9. **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 strongly recommend Bidder registration at the time of application if your Project Applicant does not already have it set up.** Include a copy of your Bidder registration confirmation that includes a Bidder ID number. **Save and submit in PDF or JPG.**
10. **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.**
11. **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.**

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## Submitting Your Grant Application

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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 [tcoleman@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:tcoleman@dnr.IN.gov) with the subject line composed of:

[name of your community/organization] 2021 CUFA Grant Application

The closing date for grant applications is Friday, Aug. 13, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. ET. Late applications will not be accepted.