

Urban & Community Forestry Program

Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) Grant

Request for Proposals

Announcement Date: March 16, 2017

Due Date: May 16, 2017



State of New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
Forest Service

I. Purpose

Pursuant to the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act, NJSA 13:1L-17.4(c), one purpose of the New Jersey Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry program (NJUCF) is to provide grants to local governments and shade tree commissions to assist in the implementation of an approved comprehensive Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) to the extent monies are appropriated or otherwise made available. The Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) grant was established to provide this financial assistance.

CSIP grants are awarded on a competitive basis to encourage projects that strongly link the use of CSIP practices to achieve community forestry management goals defined in the CFMP. There are fifteen (15) CSIP practices identified in the CFMP guidelines (www.communityforestry.nj.gov) :

- Training
- Community Forestry Ordinance Establishment
- Public Education & Awareness
- Arbor Day
- Tree Inventory
- Hazard Tree Assessment
- Storm Damage Assessment
- Tree Maintenance and Removals
- Insect and Disease Management
- Wildfire Protection
- Tree Planting
- Tree Recycling
- Sidewalk Maintenance Program
- Storm Water Management
- Other practices that may not fit easily into one of these categories, but can be justified as valid community forestry practice.

II. Source of Funding & Statutory Citations

Grant funding comes from the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forest Preservation License Plate Fund (N.J.S.A. 39.3-27.81), and the No Net Loss Compensatory Reforestation program (N.J.S.A. 13:1L-14.2(c)).

III. Eligibility (Applicants & Projects)

Only municipal and county governments and their shade tree commissions, tree committees, tree boards, or tree councils are eligible to apply for a CSIP grant.

Only projects carried out on public property owned or maintained by a municipal or county government are eligible for CSIP grant funding. Reforestation and Tree Planting projects that take place on Board of Education (BOE) lands are allowed, but the applicant must have formal agreement with the BOE in place which details the long-term maintenance requirements and responsibilities.

Applicants must be accredited (Approved Status) by the NJUCF according to the current program guidelines (www.communityforestry.nj.gov). Accreditation means that the applicant has:

- A current, approved Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP).
- Two (2) CORE trained representatives - one (1) municipal employee and one (1) volunteer.
- Satisfied the annual Continuing Education Unit (CEU) requirement - a total of eight (8) CEUs between at least two (2) individuals each calendar year. This requirement does not apply to applicants who are in the initial year of CFMP implementation.
- Submitted an Annual Accomplishment Report by February 15 for the previous calendar year.

Applicants cannot have an open CSIP grant from the NJUCF.

Applicants cannot have an open No Net Loss (NNL) grant from the NJUCF.

Only projects that link to one of the two (2) grant categories detailed below in this Request for Proposals (RFP) and that specifically refer to CSIP practices addressed in the applicant's current, approved CFMP are eligible for funding consideration.

IV. Grant Categories & Funding Allocations

Two (2) grant categories are available for over \$1.8 million in 2017 CSIP funding:

1. Resiliency Planning

Grants up to \$10,000 may be awarded for resiliency planning. These projects can entail, but are not limited to:

- Tree inventories;
- Risk tree assessments;
- Storm assessments;
- Insect and disease management projects such as emerald ash borer¹ survey, risk assessment and mitigation planning, or;
- Any combination of these activities.

The intent of these grants is for communities to understand their urban and community forest composition and structure, and to amend existing management plans based on that knowledge to better inform management decisions.

2. Reforestation & Tree Planting

Grants up to \$30,000 may be awarded for reforestation and tree planting. These grants are for small scale reforestation and tree planting projects of up to one-hundred (100) 2"-2.5" caliper balled and burlapped (B&B) trees. Planting shall take place within one (1) year of the start of the work period. Reforestation and planting projects must be based on an existing inventory

¹ Emerald Ash Borer Sample Management Plan and Community Resources
<http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/eabcommunities.html>

and the CFMP. All projects may use a portion of the grant funds to support the development of a reforestation/tree planting and maintenance plan in accordance with the CSIP Grant Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan 2017 guidelines (www.communityforestry.nj.gov), the most recent tree care industry standards ([ANSI Z60.1](#) and [A300](#)), and forestry best management practices (http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/forest/nj_bmp_manual1995.pdf). Up to seven percent (7%) of the total grant amount may be used for professional services including the design of the reforestation /tree planting and maintenance plan and supervision of the tree planting contract and work.

Tree quantities above refer to 2”-2.5” caliper B&B trees as a reference. Applicants are free to develop reforestation and tree planting projects with tree material (container trees, saplings, seedlings) and reforestation activities that ensure the growth and establishment of trees that best suit the needs of their communities and their reforestation and tree planting goals.

All reforestation/tree planting and maintenance plans are subject to NJUCF approval (see Section VIII (2) below for details). Reforestation/tree planting and maintenance plans must receive NJUCF approval within six (6) months of the start of the work period, as defined in Section V.

Proposals will be fully funded to the extent possible. NJUCF reserves the right to reallocate the number and amount of grant awards based on the quantity and/or quality of proposals received.

V. Grant Requirements

All CSIP grant recipients must comply with the general terms and conditions as defined in the grant agreement including, but not limited to:

- Grantees agree to comply with all applicable federal, state, and municipal laws, rules, regulations and written policies.
- All projects must be completed within the defined work period. If a project will not be completed during the work period the grantee may request an extension consistent with procedures defined in the grant agreement.
 - The work period commences on the date of the grant award letter, and ends on:
 - Resiliency Planning: two (2) years from the start of the work period.
 - Reforestation and Tree Planting: three (3) years from start of the work period.
- Applicants are only reimbursed for expenses incurred.
- The salaries or wages of an employee of the grantee are not eligible for reimbursement from grant funding, even though the employee may be engaged in work that is necessary for grant preparation or for the oversight or conduct of grant implementation (that work may count as grantee match defined below in this RFP). Only the cost of services provided by the vendor or contractor that the grantee hires to carry out the work plan may be reimbursed. This includes the cost of the services of both the contractor’s forestry professional and any contractor support

staff aiding the professional in the conduct of the work. The contractor's forestry professional should be a NJ Certified Tree Expert, an ISA Certified Arborist, a NJ Approved Forester, or other professional who abides by the current arboricultural industry standards and forestry best management practices.

- Payment will be made upon submission of a properly executed state invoice form and all invoices, bills and other documents necessary to justify the payment.
- Funding cannot be used to reimburse for expenses incurred outside of the work period as defined in the grant agreement.
- Reforestation and tree planting grants will only support the natural or intentional stocking of trees. No reimbursement will be made for the planting of shrubs or herbaceous plants.
- All invoices must be paid in full to be considered for reimbursement; advanced payments will not be made.
- Grantees will use their own procurement procedures that reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, and applicable state requirements shall be incorporated into any subcontracts under the agreement.
- All grantees must maintain records that adequately identify the source and application of funds provided for projects. Accounting records must be supported by such source documentation as cancelled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, contract and sub-grant award documents, etc.
- All grantees are required to comply with all financial and performance reporting requirements, including interim and final financial and performance reports.
- All grantees are required to maintain accreditation (Approved Status) in accordance with the NJUCF guidelines (www.communityforestry.nj.gov) throughout the entire grant work period. Accreditation (Approved Status) means that the applicant has:
 - A current, approved Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP);
 - Two (2) CORE trained representatives - one (1) municipal employee and one (1) volunteer;
 - Satisfied the annual Continuing Education Unit (CEU) requirement - a total of eight (8) CEUs between at least two (2) individuals each calendar year. This requirement does not apply to applicants who are in the initial year of CFMP implementation;
 - Submitted an Annual Accomplishment Report by February 15 for the previous calendar year.
- The release of the final payment of the grant will be contingent upon attaining 100% establishment.
- All reforestation and tree planting projects must comply with the following terms and conditions:

- All reforestation and tree planting grantees must submit a reforestation/tree planting and maintenance plan to NJUCF for approval within six (6) months of the start of the work period.
- All reforestation and tree planting grantees must comply with CSIP Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan guidelines (www.communityforestry.nj.gov) . Please note that these guidelines were recently revised.
- No reforestation and tree planting work shall begin until the plan is approved.
- All reforestation and tree planting grantees must conduct the work (reforestation, planting and maintenance) according to the specifications detailed in the approved plans.
- A minimum of three (3) inspections may be conducted by NJUCF to ensure compliance and tree establishment.
- All trees planted under this grant must be guaranteed for a two (2) year establishment period.

VI. Proposal Requirements

- The CSIP Grant Proposal Application must be filled out in its entirety, and must be placed at the beginning of the application package. Applications with an incomplete or missing CSIP Grant Proposal Application will be deemed ineligible.
- Only one proposal may be submitted by a local government unit. That proposal may only address one grant category defined in this RFP although it may address more than one CSIP practice.
- The grant request cannot exceed the funding allocations described in this RFP.
- All proposals must be accompanied by resumes and consultant qualifications as defined in Section VIII and IX of this RFP.
- All proposals must be accompanied by letters of support as defined in Section VIII and IX of this RFP.
- All proposals must identify a project manager that will have primary responsibility for coordinating project work, communicating with NJUCF, and reporting on implementation and performance.
- Matching funds are required, and can be met through in-kind volunteer contributions and cash from local, state, federal or other entities.

VII. Reporting and Accountability

Funded projects must comply with accounting, progress, and accomplishment reporting requirements defined in the grant agreement. At a minimum, all grants will require:

- Interim reports due annually beginning one (1) year after the start of the work period of the agreement until the end of the work period.
- A final report at the end of the work period.

VIII. CSIP Grant Proposal Requirements and Ranking Criteria

A Project Overview is required as part of a complete grant proposal application, but will not be scored and used as part of the selection criteria.

1. Community Forestry Management Plan (CFMP) Implementation (35 points)

Scoring will be based on the degree to which the project's work in the chosen grant category directly supports the goals and objectives in the current, approved CFMP and addresses one or more of the CSIP practices identified in the CFMP. There should be a direct link between the project, CFMP goals, objectives, statement of plan implementation, and CSIP practices.

- Demonstrate a focus on a specific goal or goals in the CFMP that will be addressed and how the proposed project will bring the community toward realizing that goal.
- Identify the objective(s) from the plan that will be carried out through the proposed project and how the proposed project is a step taken toward achieving the identified objective(s).
- Address how the proposed project coincides with the CFMP's Statement of Plan Implementation. Explain how the proposed project is a priority action item as identified in the plan.
- Clearly articulate the CSIP practices that the proposed project will address and how they relate to the goal(s), objective(s), and implementation plan addressed through this project.
- Describe how the proposed project benefits the community. Indicate whether the local government is a New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA) eligible municipality.

2. Workplan (25 points)

For the relevant grant category, proposed projects should be presented with a clear and articulate plan for what the work is and how the work will be carried out as described below.

A. Resiliency Planning

- Describe the project location and existing conditions of the urban and community forest. If the forest condition is unknown, state that and describe the need to carry out this work and

to acquire this information. Describe how this information will be applied to the CFMP and to urban and community forest management. If the forest condition is known, describe the need to carry out this work and to acquire new information. In both cases, describe how this information will be applied to the CFMP and to urban and community forest management.

- Explain the methods to be employed (e.g. inventory – sample, complete, partial; windshield survey; tree risk assessment to update current inventory; rapid count and measurement of ash trees). For tree inventories, see Appendix 1 for a list of available software programs and basics on the types of inventories and their uses.
- Identify the deliverable that will be produced as a result of this grant (e.g. tree inventory report, amended management plan, risk assessment report, risk mitigation plan).
- Identify the municipal staff, shade tree commission volunteers, contractors, consultants and/or contracted nongovernmental organization or partners who will be responsible for the project implementation. This includes the people that will be managing the grant itself as well as the people that will be carrying out the proposed project. Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each of the project partners.
- Provide resumes and consultant qualifications for all parties as identified above who are involved in implementing the grant. If a consultant or contractor is not yet identified, provide the qualifications that will be required of these parties.
- Include letters of support from project partners clearly identifying their role in the project.
- Provide a project timeline either narratively or via a diagram that clearly illustrates when project tasks and milestones are going to be carried out within the defined work period for this grant category: two (2) years from the effective date of the grant agreement.

Significant project milestones must be indicated. Milestones can include, but may not be limited to: issuing an RFP for work, awarding a contract, start/end of work, and submitting required grant reports (see Section VII).

B. Reforestation & Tree Planting

- This workplan should be developed in consultation with the current CSIP Tree Planting Plan and Maintenance Guidelines (www.communityforestry.nj.gov). All plans must be approved by NJUCF prior to commencement of work.
- Describe the project location and existing conditions of the urban and community forest. Explain how the need for tree planting has been identified (e.g. a community tree inventory identifies tree planting opportunities; a new park is being developed; open space has been acquired).
- State whether the local government is a No Net Loss impacted community (see Section IX below).

- Explain the methods to be employed (e.g. contract plantings, street trees, parks, protected area reforestation).
- Identify the municipal staff, shade tree commission volunteers, contractors, consultants and/or contracted nongovernmental organization or partners who will be responsible for the project implementation. This includes the people that will be managing the grant itself as well as the people that will be carrying out the proposed project. Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each of the project partners.
- Provide resumes and consultant qualifications for all parties involved in implementing the grant as identified above.
- Include letters of support from project partners clearly identifying their role in the project.
- Provide a project timeline either narratively or via a diagram that clearly illustrates when project tasks and milestones are going to be carried out within the defined work period for this grant category. The project timeline should be developed in consultation with the CSIP Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan Guidelines (www.communityforestry.nj.gov) for establishing milestones for plan submission and approval as well as inspections.
- Significant project milestones must be indicated. Milestones can include, but may not be limited to: issuing an RFP for work, awarding a contract, start/end of work, submission of reforestation/tree planting and maintenance plan for approval by NJUCF (within 6 months from the effective date of the grant), initial tree planting inspection by NJUCF (refer to the tree planting and maintenance plan guidelines for the inspection procedures), Year-1 tree planting inspection by NJUCF, final tree planting inspection, and required grant report submission deadlines (see Section VII).

3. Community Capacity (20 points)

Describe the local government’s unique strengths and past demonstrated commitment to managing the community forest resource. Evidence of sustained participation in Tree City USA, successful completion of grant funded tree planting programs and studies, certification in the Sustainable Jersey program, evidence of long term partnerships with tree-focused groups including statewide or regional nonprofits, universities or state associations and an active and engaged shade tree commission or committee should be clearly described.

Provide supporting documentation of Tree City USA certification and/or Sustainable Jersey certification.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation (10 points)

Demonstrate how the project links to and promotes progress on specific objectives included in the CFMP in relation to specific CSIP practices. Identify specific, significant, and measurable on-the-

ground outcomes. Describe the project's monitoring and evaluation plan. Specific monitoring and evaluation submission elements include:

- Goals and objectives consistent with the CFMP
- Specific CSIP practices
- Measurable outcomes
- An explanation of the monitoring and evaluation plan

5. Budget (10 points)

Complete the budget table in the grant proposal application.

- A. Grant /CSIP Request - only provide the amount requested through the CSIP grant. Note that grantee employee salary and wages are not eligible for CSIP funding.
- B. Match – a fifty percent (50%) cash or in-kind match of the total grant amount is required for this round of CSIP grants. Matching funding sources may be federal, state, the local government itself, private foundations or non-profits, volunteers, or other. Enter the value contributed by each source in the appropriate budget column.

Volunteer in-kind contributions are encouraged. The current independent sector volunteer rate for NJ² may be applied to volunteer hours including shade tree commission or committee members contributing to the implementation of the project or management of the grant. It is important to account for all volunteer time contributed to the execution of the project. The salary rate for all municipal employee work implementing the project and managing the grant can be applied as cash match by the local government. Documentation for all volunteer and employees hours will be required with all financial reporting.

- C. Total Project Cost – values should be the sum of CSIP requested funds plus the required matching funds (50% of the grant request) stated for each line item (Total Project Cost = CSIP Request + Match).
- D. Total – total values should be the sum of all the values in each column for each funding source. The sum of the Total Project Cost column should reflect the total amount for the entire project.
- E. Budget Narrative -
- Describe how the grant funds will be spent.
 - Describe source of matching funds.
 - Explain how the project will supplement the applicant's existing local and community forestry budget to achieve holistic, sustainable and effective community forestry projects.

² <http://www.independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time>, click on the full dataset for all states, scroll to NJ for the state's designated volunteer rate for each calendar year.

IX. Project Submission and Selection

All the information required for submitting proposals for the 2017 CSIP grant is available in the documents on the NJUCF website at www.communityforestry.nj.gov.

All proposals are due by 5:00pm, Tuesday, May 16, 2017.

Applicants must complete the fillable PDF grant proposal application form in its entirety.

Proposals can be submitted electronically to communityforestry@dep.nj.gov, or via traditional post to:

NJ Forest Service
Urban and Community Forestry Program – 2017 CSIP Grant
Mail Code 501-04
PO Box 420
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

Electronic submissions are preferred. Larger electronic submissions may be attached as .zip files or sent in multiple emails.

All submissions must include the complete grant proposal application form and all supporting documentation. This includes:

- **Grant Proposal Application Form** – available at www.communityforestry.nj.gov
- **Resumes and consultant qualifications** – Provide resumes and documentation of qualification (e.g. copy of NJ Certified Tree Expert or ISA Certified Arborist credential) for all parties involved in implementing the grant.
- **Letters of Support** - Include letters of support from project partners clearly identifying their role in the project.
- **Proof of Certification** - Tree City USA, Sustainable Jersey

NJFS staff and the NJ Community Forestry Council will review, evaluate, and prioritize project proposals. A preliminary review will reject any ineligible or incomplete applications. This includes applications for communities that are not accredited (Approved Status) according to the NJUCF guidelines (see Section III of this RFP). Eligible and complete applications will be ranked and scored according to the criteria defined in this RFP.

Priority for reforestation and tree planting grants will be given to local governments that were directly impacted by a No Net Loss (NNL) reforestation project, and do not currently have an open NNL grant. This means that a State project subject to NNL requirements took place within the local government boundaries, and that the deforesting entity paid monetary compensation in-lieu of conducting reforestation. Local governments must be accredited (Approved Status) as defined in the community forestry guidelines (see Section III of this RFP). If a NNL impacted community is not currently

accredited (Approved Status), it may work to achieve accreditation (Approved Status) and apply for a CSIP tree planting grant in another round.

2017 NNL impacted communities:

- **Barnegat Township, Ocean County;**
- **Delanco Township, Burlington County;**
- **Lower Township, Cape May County;**
- **Parsippany-Troy Hills Township, Morris County**

X. Helpful Links:

NJ Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry

www.communityforestry.nj.gov

ANSI 300 (Parts 1-9). Available from the Tree Care Industry Association

https://tcia.org/TCIA/BUSINESS/ANSI_A300_Standards_/TCIA/BUSINESS/A300_Standards/A300_Standards.aspx?hkey=202ff566-4364-4686-b7c1-2a365af59669

ANSI Z60.1 – American Standard for Nursery Stock. 2014. American Nursery and Landscape Association.

http://americanhort.org/documents/ANSI_Nursery_Stock_Standards_AmericanHort_2014.pdf

Independent sector volunteer rate for NJ.

<http://www.independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time/>

Appendix 1: Tree Inventories: Introduction, Minimum Requirements, Software

For more information, contact:

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Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator

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Appendix 1

Tree Inventories: Introduction & Available Software

An urban forest inventory is a process that documents, evaluates, characterizes, and locates individual trees or groups of trees in an urbanized community. Some communities undertake an inventory for community safety and maintenance planning such as identifying and locating individual trees requiring pruning, watering, or removal. Sites for potential tree plantings and even condition of the sidewalks, utility lines and other community needs within the public right-of-way can be identified. An inventory is also used to assess and characterize large groups of trees such as the type of trees, their size, condition, and location (e.g., street trees) within a community.

An important objective of any community should be to maximize the benefits of trees and to minimize the costs in achieving these benefits. Documenting, assessing, characterizing, and locating individual trees or groups of trees in the community (i.e., an inventory) is one way of doing this. In addition, a tree inventory will assist communities in their efforts to manage their trees and provide a leveraging tool to increase budget. A tree inventory can increase a community's standing in the state because it demonstrates a commitment to understanding and caring for this valuable asset.

Things to consider in deciding to do an inventory are:

- How it will be used;
- What information needs to be collected, and;
- Who will use the inventory and collect the data?

Communities have a couple of options for conducting the inventory. A simple assessment of the number of trees and the type of tree in the right-of-way could be done by knowledgeable staff members and volunteers doing a windshield survey. A more complex survey determining the health and hazard of the trees would require the use of a certified arborist. As the amount of information desired from the tree inventory increases, then the level of expertise required for the professionals conducting the inventory will also increase.

Software programs should be used to manage inventory data. The price of urban tree inventory software is variable (free to \$10,000). A list of available software is at <https://www.na.fs.fed.us/urban/inforesources/inventory/TreeInventorySoftwareListJanuary2017.pdf>

Grant funded inventories must be submitted electronically as a final deliverable to NJUCF in Excel (.xls) or comma separated values (.csv) format.