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WASHINGTON

# USDA Forest Service – Urban and Community Forestry Program NOFO

March 2023

# Webinar Roadmap – Urban and Community Forestry Program

- Background on UCF Program
- UCF success stories
- Funding under the Inflation Reduction Act
- Notice of Funding Opportunity - Preview
- Eligibility
- How to apply
- Milestones and resources



## About the Urban and Community Forestry Program

- The **USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program** is the only dedicated urban forest program in the federal government.
- The UCF Program assists State Forestry agencies and partner organizations in **addressing and applying nature-based solutions to chronic and emergent economic, social, and environmental challenges** in communities across the United States.



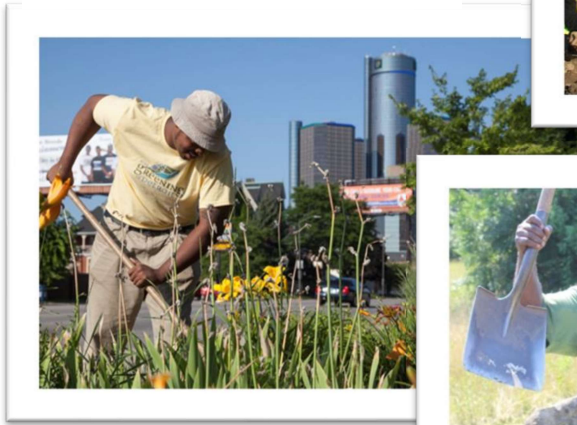
## About the Urban and Community Forestry Program

The UCF Program is designed to **direct funding to communities** experiencing low urban tree canopy, dead and hazardous tree conditions, extreme heat and severe flooding, and limited awareness of or access to green job workforce to help them:

- Become more **resilient to climate change**
- **Combat extreme heat** with the cooling effects of increased urban tree canopy
- Experience **improved forest health** conditions and **safer access to tree benefits**
- Attain broadened exposure and access to **environmental career pathways.**



## Success Story: Providing Education and Job Opportunities



- **The UCF Program supported Growing Tomorrow's Detroit**, a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life by planting trees.
- With the help of UCF funding, Growing Tomorrow's Detroit is creating **green spaces** and providing **youth education and job training**.
- **Progress**
  - Since 1989, **135,000+** trees planted
  - Since 1998, administered **Youth Green Corps Leadership**
  - Since 2010, provided adult workforce development training through **the Detroit Conservation Corps**



## Success Story: Breaking Barriers



- **Blackfoot Nation was designated** by the Arbor Day Foundation as **Tree City USA** (May 2022).
- It is the **first** Tribal nation to be recognized.
- **Built through partnership** with UCF, Arbor Day Foundation and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MTDNRC).
- **UCF funding supported expansion of Tree City USA to tribal communities:**
  - Working groups
  - Drafted ordinances and resolutions
  - Outreach & advocacy strategies
  - **Ceremonial tree planting & tree giveaway**



*Missoula, Montana*

## Success Story: Advancing Environmental Justice



- **UCF funding supported the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM) development of green space access in disadvantaged communities.**
- DFFM and partners conduct **bilingual outreach community events.**
- DFFM connects with schools and **supports Youth Tree leaders.**
- **Progress**
  - Planting of Native Species along greenways
  - Developing new tree planting ordinances
  - Tucson Mayor Regina Romero's **Million Trees Initiative by 2030**



*Tucson, Arizona*

## Success Story: Supporting Post-Disaster Recovery

- The UCF Program supported the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) and the Georgia Tree Council (GTC) in recovery efforts following Hurricane Michael. This included:
  - Utilizing two circuit-rider arborists to **provide assistance to communities**
  - Contracting with a geospatial firm to provide **detailed canopy and tree equity data analysis**
- The UCF Program provided grant funding **GTC** for tree planting and tree give-away projects
  - **Over \$69,000** was provided to **13 communities devastated by Hurricane Michael** to plant or distribute over **1,700 trees** to restore tree canopy.
- The UCF Program also assisted the city of Newnan, Georgia in their **recovery efforts following the March 2021 tornado.**
- Equity data analysis assisted in creating more effective replanting efforts.







## Funding through the Inflation Reduction Act

- USDA Forest Service is committed to **diversifying, leveraging, and increasing** funding for urban and community forestry.
- The Inflation Reduction Act dedicated **\$1.5 billion** to the UCF Program to remain available until September 30, 2031 “**for tree planting and related activities,**” with a priority for projects that benefit underserved populations and areas [IRA Section 23003(a)(2)].
- The first **Public Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)** to be announced in **early April 2023**.



## Public Notice of Funding Opportunity – Preview

- Funding will be distributed through the UCF Program in the form of **competitive grants, cooperative agreements, and technical assistance.**
- The funding opportunity is open to **proposals spanning a broad range of costs** from eligible entities working at a community, regional, and national scale.
  - Minimum funding amount for projects is **\$100,000.**
  - Maximum Federal funding limit is **\$50,000,000.** All funding agreements will be for a period of 5 years.
- All federal grant **funds are to be matched at least equally** (dollar for dollar) with non-federal match
  - **Match-waivers are available** for proposals that deliver 100% of the funding/program benefits to disadvantaged communities.



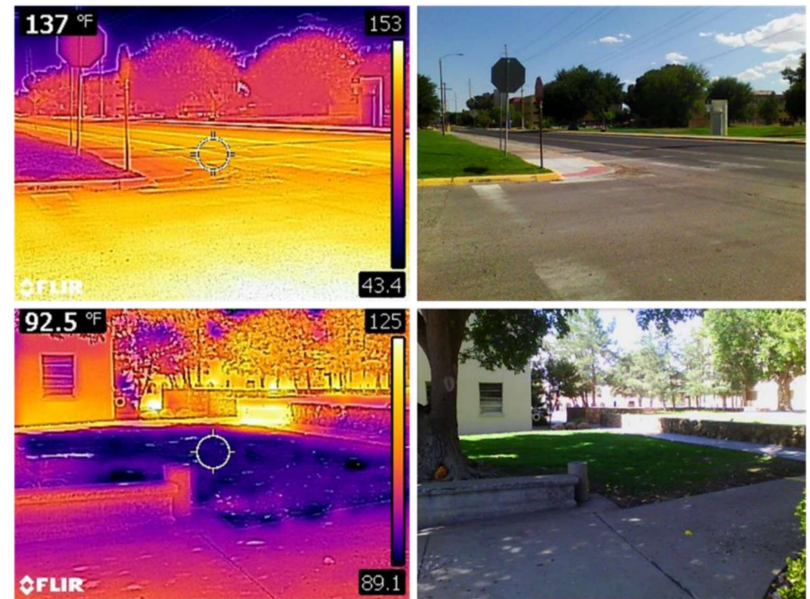
## Who is eligible to apply for funding?

- **State government entity**
- **Local government entity**
- **Agency or governmental entity of the District of Columbia**
- **Agency or governmental entity of an insular area**
  - Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Federal States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, Virgin Islands
- **Federally Recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations/villages, and Tribal organizations**
- **Nonprofit organizations**
- **Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education**
- **Community-based organizations**



# The Urban Community Forestry Program and Justice40

- The UCF Program is a **covered program under USDA's Justice40 Initiative** established through Executive Order 13985.
- A minimum of **40% of UCF Program investments will directly benefit disadvantaged communities** through:
  - Increased access to nature and associated public health benefits
  - Newly planted trees that provide shade and reduce extreme heat conditions at the neighborhood level



## Proposal Selection Criteria

- Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
  - **Alignment** with Justice40, Congressional, State Forest Action Plan, and Ten-Year National Urban and Community Forestry Plan priorities
  - **Technical merit**
  - **Capability and capacity** to carry out the proposed work within the grant period
  - **Measurable results or outcomes**
  - **Budget and cost-effectiveness**
- Additional information about these selection criteria, as well as what information is required for applications, can be found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.



# How to Apply for Funding

- Proposals will be submitted through a **web-based application portal**.
- Applicant materials can be found by going to **Grants.gov** and searching for grant opportunity number **USDA-FS-2023-UCF-IRA 01**.
- **Technical assistance will be available for applicants**, including in the form of:
  - Pre-Award Guide
  - Application Checklist
  - Grants.gov Navigation Guide
  - Recorded Webinars
- USDA Forest Service will also award funding to **Dedicated Pass-Through Funders** to ease administrative barriers, award funds quickly, and extend outreach and engagement activities to recruit most locally in disadvantaged communities.



# Key Milestones and Resources

## Timeline

- UCF IRA Public Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) – **early April 2023**
- Funding Opportunity Closes – **end of May 2023**
- FY 2023 Awards Announcement – **Summer 2023**

## For More Information

- Once announced, the NOFO with application instructions can be found on the UCF website:  
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf>
- Stay tuned for additional “café style” webinars that will walk through specific application details.

## Contact Information

- For questions about the Notice of Funding Opportunity, contact the following shared inbox:  
[SM.FS.UCF\\_IRA@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.UCF_IRA@usda.gov)





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