



## **Biden-Harris Administration announces historic funding to expand access to trees and green spaces in disadvantaged urban communities**

*More than \$1 billion from President Biden's Investing in America Agenda will increase urban tree cover, boost equitable access to nature, and tackle the climate crisis*

Newark, N.J., April 12, 2023 – Today the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing the availability of \$1 billion in grants to increase equitable access to trees and green spaces in urban and community forests where more than 84% of Americans live, work and play. The announcement is part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda and the Administration's work to build a clean energy economy, advance environmental justice and create economic opportunity in communities across the country.

The funding announced today is part of a \$1.5 billion investment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program from President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act. The grant funding is available to community-based organizations, tribes, municipal and state governments, nonprofit partners, universities, and other eligible entities as they work to increase tree cover in urban spaces and boost equitable access to nature while bolstering resilience to extreme heat, storm-induced flooding, and other climate impacts. This historic level of investment will enable the Forest Service to support projects to improve public health, increase access to nature, and deliver real economic and ecological benefits to cities, towns and tribal communities across the country.

"This program is yet another way that the Biden-Harris Administration is investing in America and ensuring that all people, regardless of ZIP code or neighborhood, have equitable access to the benefits that trees and green spaces provide," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Whether it's reducing heat stress or creating jobs in tree-planting and maintenance, this grant funding will support local communities and partners who are working on the ground to advance environmental justice by mitigating the impact of climate change on communities who lack tree cover in urban spaces while giving kids more safe spaces to play outdoors."

Along with the open grant funding opportunity, the USDA Forest Service is providing up to \$250 million to states and territories to further local efforts to support urban communities through equitable access to trees and the benefits they provide. The funding for state and territory forestry agencies will be administered as subgrants to reach disadvantaged communities, as determined by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. A detailed breakdown of funding awards by state and territory is available



at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf/fy23-state-allocations>.

The Urban and Community Forestry Program is part of President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, which aims to ensure that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved and lack access to trees and nature. USDA is also a partner on the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Promoting Equitable Access to Nature in Nature-Deprived Communities, which seeks to reduce the number of people without access to nature in their communities.

"Research shows that trees and green spaces improve physical and mental health outcomes and create new economic opportunities," said USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment Dr. Homer Wilkes. "They also enhance community green spaces and support lasting community relationships and engagements. These funds will enable us to bring these benefits to disadvantaged communities across the nation, and to support new partnerships with a diverse array of organizations."

To celebrate the opening of this application process, Under Secretary Wilkes joined White House Senior Advisor for Clean Energy Innovation and Implementation John Podesta and U.S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), for a tree planting ceremony and stakeholder roundtable at Lincoln Park in Newark, N.J. The visit is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America tour, where senior Administration officials and members of the Cabinet are traveling across the country to highlight the impact of President Biden's historic legislative achievements, including the Inflation Reduction Act.

"This historic investment in urban forestry, part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda, isn't just about increasing access to nature and tackling the climate crisis," said John Podesta, Senior Advisor to the President for Clean Energy Innovation and Implementation. "It's about cleaning up the air we breathe, keeping city streets cool during sweltering summers, and creating safer, healthier neighborhoods for our kids."

"Since my days as Mayor of Newark, I have seen the transformative impact that planting trees can have for urban communities," said Sen. Booker. "Studies have shown that trees save families money in heating and cooling costs, reduce air and water pollution, decrease the risk of respiratory illnesses like asthma, reduce flooding, and protect people from extreme heat. The Inflation Reduction Act's \$1.5 billion allocation to the Urban and Community Forestry Program will help us plant more trees across our communities, with a focus on overlooked and disadvantaged areas. This historic investment will help us tackle the most pernicious effects of climate change, move us closer to remedying environmental injustices in our communities, and pay dividends for generations to come."

The Inflation Reduction Act makes the nation's largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis. Through this grant funding opportunity, the agency will invest in proposals that extend beyond planting new trees, such as proposals for maintaining and managing urban forests, increasing community engagement in local urban forest planning, and improving community and urban forest resilience to climate change, extreme heat, forest pests and diseases, and extreme weather events.

"Investing in our urban forests is investing in the health and wellness of our communities," said Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. "Trees provide numerous benefits, like improving air quality, reducing stormwater runoff, providing shade, creating safe outdoor spaces for recreation, and stimulating other kinds of investments. Equitable access to these benefits is key, as everyone deserves the opportunity to live in a healthy and sustainable environment."

The Forest Service is holding a series of webinars to assist potential applicants in applying for grant funding. An initial webinar was held on March 29, 2023, with additional webinars scheduled later in April. These information-sharing webinars will be advertised and posted on [the Forest Service website](#). The final funding amount will depend on the total funding requested from proposals and their potential impact on disadvantaged communities. The open application period extends from April 12, 2023 to June 1, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. EDT.

For information on how to apply for federal Urban and Community Forestry grants, visit the Forest Service [website](#), or [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) using the opportunity number USDA-FS-2023-UCF-IRA-01. For more information on funding to states and territories, visit the state allocations [webpage](#). To learn how to apply for state or territory-administered subgrants, contact local state forestry agencies.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).