



Department of
Agriculture

Forestry



Community Tree Planting Program

Grant Information

Tennessee Department of Agriculture | Division of Forestry | April 5, 2023



Community Tree Planting Program

Grant Information for

Cities | Towns | Counties
Community
Organizations
Non-Profit Organizations

CLOSING DATE FOR PROPOSALS: JUNE 2, 2023

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This grant is funded through the Tennessee Agriculture Enhancement Program

Grant Overview

- All grant contracts will start on **November 1, 2023**, and end on **April 30, 2024**.
- Riparian tree planting on public or private land is available for funding with TAEP funds.
- Tree labels for an arboretum or outdoor classroom can be purchased using TAEP funds.
- Title VI training is required for all awarded projects. [Click here](#)
- As an effort to fund more projects **if proposals exceed available funds**, maximum grant funds on Irrigation Devices will be \$15/device and \$150 for Signage.
- Eligible expenses to be reimbursed are the **cost** and **shipping** of trees, **contracted planting, mulch, irrigation devices, tree labels** and **signage** for **FY 2024**. Any other expenses not covered under the grant, cannot be used for match.
- Tree species with a maturing height between 20-40 feet are allowed under TAEP but can only consist of 25% of the total submitted project. Projects with a higher percentage will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- **Private Non-Profit** land with public access can be planted using TAEP funds.
- Certain species of trees will not be funded. See species list on page 9.
- Upon completion of the tree planting, and submission of reimbursable costs, all sites will be visited and inspected by a TN Division of Forestry employee or an approved inspector to affirm tree numbers, species, location, and proper planting. **TREE INSPECTIONS WILL BE DONE IN THE MARCH-MAY TIME FRAME WITH LEAF-ON**, inspections will not be done in the “dormant” stage and must be performed during “leaf-on”.

General Information

Introduction

The TAEP (Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program) grant fund for community tree planting is provided by the 2008 State Legislature to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. The community tree planting component of TAEP will be administered by the Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry.

Goal and Objective

The goal of TAEP community tree planting grant is to increase the tree resource base in cities and towns across the state of Tennessee. It is **NOT** to provide beautification. Trees are work horses for our communities, providing energy savings through shading, storm water mitigation, rain interception, and air quality improvement through filtration and absorption. These are direct cost saving benefits to communities. Beautification should not be used as an objective for

a TAEP tree planting project. It is recommended that a “blanket” statement for Goals and Objectives include one or more of the following: **Urban trees provide a multitude of benefits including but not limited to: cooler temperatures, cleaner air, reduced flooding and erosion, help improve human health, and provide food and shelter for wildlife.**

Definition of Tree and Shrub

Tree - a woody plant with a single trunk, or multiple trunks capable of growing to a height of 15 feet or more.

Shrub - a woody plant with a multiple stem growing to a height of up to 15 feet.

TAEP grants are for the planting of trees that will mature at a height of at least 20 feet or more.

Any tree with a mature height below 20 feet is NOT eligible for funding.

Eligible Grantees

Grants may be awarded to:

- Cities and towns
- Other local units of government
- Approved non-profit organizations such as neighborhood associations, civic groups, and community volunteer tree groups
- Elementary, secondary educational and higher learning institutions

Available Funds

Eligible applicants may apply for grants up to **\$20,000**.

Minimum amount requested must be **\$500**.

Technical Assistance

Potential grantees are encouraged to seek assistance in developing their grant proposals.

Sources of assistance include Division of Forestry personnel, arborists, nurserymen, horticulturists, consulting urban foresters, landscape architects and other specialists in related fields. If the project is going to involve a specialist, please include a letter from him/her to prove they are aware of their commitment.

Eligible Expenses

The following are eligible expenses for grant and match.

- Cost of trees
- Mulch
- Shipping
- Contracted labor to plant trees
- Acknowledgement sign
- Irrigation devices
- Tree labels

ANY ITEMS PURCHASED OR INVOICED OUTSIDE OF THE CONTRACT DATES WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED.

Tree Labels

With the growth of the arboretum program administered by the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (TUFC), the urban staff is accepting grant proposals for the purchase of tree labels for an arboretum or outdoor classroom.

Planting Locations

The intent of TAEP grant funds is to increase tree canopy on public land but trees can be planted elsewhere. TAEP funds can be used to plant on Private Non-Profit lands that has public access. Special consideration is also given toward private property that is frequently used for community events. Riparian areas are also acceptable planting locations for TAEP funds. A map must be provided for all planting sites demonstrating where all trees will be planted.

Riparian Buffer

A riparian buffer is the transitional area between land and water that contains a mix of trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. This vegetated strip of land “buffers” a waterway from human impacts. The function of a riparian buffer is to stabilize the banks of a waterway, create habitat, filter stormwater pollutants, and provide flood storage.

As an effort to mitigate stormwater, improve terrestrial and aquatic life, stabilize the banks of waterways, and improve water quality, the urban staff is accepting grant proposals to plant trees in riparian buffers on public and private lands. A riparian buffer consists of an area within a 35-foot zone extending out from the bank of a waterway. Eligible grantees remain cities & towns, Non-Profits, and institutions of higher learning. Individual landowners do not qualify for this program, however, HOA’s and other community organizations may apply for planting projects on private lands along waterways.

The Tennessee Urban Riparian Buffer Program began with a federal grant from the USDA Forest Service to reclaim and protect eight defined watersheds within Davidson County. Over a three-year span almost 28,000 trees were planted with nearly 2,800 volunteers within 30,451 feet of buffer along waterways. At the conclusion of the project the Tennessee Urban Riparian Buffer Handbook was produced. An online copy is available at: <http://bit.ly/TURBhandbook>.

(CASH 50-50 MATCH) Requirements

TAEP community tree planting grants require a match equal to the grant (Cash 50-50 match).

Match will be allowed for trees, shipping, purchased mulch, contracted planting, acknowledgement signs, and irrigation devices only. Grantees can use volunteer labor or city crews to plant, but the value or cost can NOT be included as match. Here are some examples.

Example #1		Example #2		Example #3	
Cost of Trees	\$5000	Cost of Trees	\$5000	Cost of Trees	\$5000
		Cost to contract plant	\$3000	*Cost for city crews to plant	\$3000
Reimbursement	\$2500	Reimbursement	\$4000	Reimbursement	\$2500

Example #4		Example #5	
Cost of Trees	\$5000	Cost of Trees	\$5000
Mulch	\$500	*Value of donated mulch	\$200
Shipping	\$500	Shipping	\$400
Cost to contract plant	\$3000	* Value of Volunteer Planting time	\$2000
Reimbursement	\$4500	Reimbursement	\$2700

****Unallowable Expense***

A one-year guarantee is NOT eligible for reimbursement. If the project includes a one-year guarantee, the costs for tree replacement, watering, or other maintenance are not an allowable cost.

ANY ITEMS PURCHASED OR INVOICED OUTSIDE OF THE CONTRACT DATES WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED.

Review

Proposals will be reviewed and ranked by the Division of Forestry's Urban Forestry Staff and representatives from the TN Urban Forestry Council. Projects to be funded will be recommended to the State Forester for final approval.

Proposals will be rated on:

- General project merit and completeness of the application.
- Financial documents, such as a completed budget and accuracy of the math.
- Technical aspects of the application, including the planting map, appropriate species, soil considerations, maintenance and watering plan, and planting specifications.
- Frequency of previous grant awards

Reporting Requirements

- Complete Title VI Pre-Award Survey and submit with application.
- Complete a W-9 Form and submit with your application.
- Complete the Supplier Direct Deposit Form and mail to the address on the form.
DO NOT INCLUDE WITH YOUR APPLICATION.
- **A final report on the planting project is due when Grantee submits request for reimbursement.**

Grant recipients are subject to periodic and post - completion inspections, reviews, and audits by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry and the Tennessee Comptroller's Office.

ALL PLANTINGS WILL BE INSPECTED TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIES, LOCATION AND PROPER PLANTING TECHNIQUE.

Reimbursement

ANY ITEMS PURCHASED OR INVOICED OUTSIDE OF THE CONTRACT DATES WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED.

Funds are reimbursed after completion and Inspection of the project AND all invoices are submitted, not at the time a contract is signed. To receive reimbursement, a grantee must submit:

- Detailed invoice as outlined in the standard state contract (invoice template will be provided)
- Detailed invoice(s) of tree purchases, planting costs if planting was contracted, shipping, mulch, irrigation devices, tree labels, and signage. All invoices must be shown as **“PAID”**
- Summary expense form (will be provided)
- Invoices & work must be dated within the contract dates

A grantee will be reimbursed 50% of the cost of purchasing trees, shipping, mulch, irrigation devices, contracted labor, tree labels, and acknowledgment sign.

Title VI Compliance

A Title VI Pre-Award Survey found in the Title VI Packet must be completed and submitted with your application.

Species of Trees Not Funded

- Green & White Ash- Emerald Ash Borer
- Leyland Cypress- Seiridium canker
- Hemlock- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid
- American Elm- Threat of Dutch Elm Disease (resistant varieties can be used)
- “Princeton” Elm- susceptible to “Elm Yellows” disease
- Silver Maple- undesirable urban species
- Bradford Pear- highly invasive and an undesirable urban species
- Pin Oak- susceptible to Bacterial leaf scorch

Project Application Details

Urban TAEP Grant contracts are for tree planting in cities, towns and communities across Tennessee. The goal of the program is to bolster local tree planting efforts to increase the urban tree resource canopy.

For successful tree planting projects, attention must be paid to the planting site. Applications should describe the conditions of the site and the soil where the trees will be planted. As an example, consider most mall trees or most parking lot trees, these trees are typically planted in soils so compacted; they never grow to their full potential and often fail to survive more than 15 years. If the project under consideration has these or similar conditions, a plan for site modification should be included.

Acknowledgement and Citizen Overview

Include a brief narrative about how the project will be acknowledged; TREES PLANTED USING A GRANT FROM THE DEPT OF AGRICULTURE DIVISION OF FORESTRY WILL PROVIDE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SIGNAGE/ONLINE POST STATING: **“This tree planting project was completed by (your local community name) in collaboration with funding by the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program as provided by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry.”** Alternatively, a map and/or a photo with a description of the TAEP planting project including the acknowledgment statement may be posted online or in public buildings. The sign and/or the online posting may be removed after 3 years.

Citizen Oversight - To help ensure that State tax dollars are spent effectively and efficiently, each grantee will appoint a committee of at least 3 citizens from the community. These committee members may be existing local tree boards. Individuals who have a direct interest in purchasing or planting trees cannot serve on this local committee. All projects must provide a letter from any person/organization who is expected to assist in completing the project. This letter acknowledges that the individual/organization has been contacted and is aware of his/her anticipated participation in the project.

Provide a list of names for the Citizen Oversight Committee and a “Letter of Support”. This committee ensures that citizens are aware of and engaged in the program. If a city administrator/program manager leaves during the grant period, someone else needs to make sure the project is complete, and invoices are turned in on a timely manner.

Grantees are required to follow the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry’s tree planting guidelines and practices. A shortened version is attached to the back of this information packet.

Grantees are required to use Tennessee grown trees. Evidence of trees grown in-state can be provided by submitting an invoice of an in-state nursery at the time of grant reimbursement. Trees must also meet the minimum ANSI Z-60.1- 2014 American Standard for Nursery Stock.

All plantings must be watered for one growing season during dry periods. Watering during years 2 & 3 must be planned for as well. Who will undertake the watering must be identified. All applications proposing to use trees larger than 2” caliper must explain why larger stock is needed. “Because the plan calls for them” is not a justification.

In addition, the application must include all the items in the checklist.

Submitting an Application

Application must be **SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY** via Forestry.Nashville@tn.gov **by 4:30 p.m. EDT on Friday, June 02, 2023**. Faxed materials will **NOT** be accepted.

For assistance, please call or email Diane Warwick at 865-617-8829 or Diane.Warwick@tn.gov.

Timetable

April 5, 2023	Grant announcement will be sent to potential applicants
June 2, 2023	Application acceptance closes at 4:30 pm EDT. All Applications MUST BE RECEIVED electronically by this time.
June 9, 2023	Applications will be reviewed and ranked.
June 16, 2023	"Not accepted" letters will be mailed. Prospective Grantees will be contacted by Tennessee Division of Forestry Urban Forestry Staff.
July 10, 2023	Urban TAEP Grant Contracts will be written and electronically sent to Grantee.
September 1, 2023	Urban TAEP Grant Contracts, signed by grantee must be received by the Tennessee Division of Forestry no later than 5:00 pm EST (address of acceptance will be provided).
November 1, 2023	Beginning date of Urban TAEP Grant Contract.
March 30, 2024	Planting of bare root seedlings must be completed.
April 15, 2024	Planting of balled & bur lapped must be completed.
April 30, 2024	Ending date of Urban TAEP Grant Contract.
June 30, 2024	Last day to accept Urban TAEP Grant Contract Invoices for reimbursement. A final report on the planting project is due when Grantee submits request for reimbursement.

ANY ITEMS PURCHASED OR INVOICED OUTSIDE OF THE CONTRACT DATES WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED.

Tree Planting Guidelines

Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry

NOTE: TREES PLANTED USING A GRANT FROM THE DEPT OF AGRICULTURE DIVISION OF FORESTRY MUST FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES.

In order to have a healthy tree in the future; the tree must be planted properly. The following are guidelines to assist you in planting your tree properly. Prior to planting remember to move the tree by the root ball or the container. Never grab it by the trunk.

1. **Digging the Hole:** The planting hole should be at least twice the width of the rootball or container to encourage the roots to grow into the surrounding soil. The sides of the planting hole should be sloped. The depth of the hole should be the same as the distance from the root flare of the tree to the bottom of the container or ball. Most trees have the root ball below the top of the ball or soil in the container, so digging a hole the same depth of the ball or soil in the container often results in planting the tree too deep. One can check the root flare depth by digging down next to the trunk to find the flare.
2. **Tree Preparations:** For container trees, remove the container. Place the root "ball" in the hole. Cut the circling roots in the outer part of the ball with 4 to 6 cuts, or gently pull the roots out of the ball and plant them in trenches leading away from the planting hole. (A planting hole does not have to be round.) For B&B trees, place the ball in the hole, then remove the rope around the trunk, and then reach down in the hole and cut away as much burlap as possible. Also, use wire cutters to remove as much of the wire basket as possible. This should be done after the tree is in its final position and ready to be back filled.
3. **Backfill:** Use the same soil that was taken out of the hole. If the soil is very poor and appears to need topsoil, increase the hole size and sparingly mix in some local topsoil (avoid using potting soil, peat moss, and soil amendments). Remove stones and other debris. Fill the hole halfway with backfill, then water. Finish filling the hole with the backfill and water again. Make sure to work the soil around the ball firmly to eliminate any air pockets. Also, make sure the tree is vertical and properly supported, but do not pack the soil around the trunk.
4. **Mulch:** The area around the tree should be mulched with woodchips, bark chips, or pine mulch. The mulch should be 3 to 4 inches thick and cover the entire planting area and beyond. The mulch needs to be placed in a donut or tire shape around the trunk of the tree. The mulch must be kept away from the trunk of the tree to keep insects away and

prevent the trunk from being excessively wet. Mulch helps conserve soil moisture, reduces the competition from unwanted weeds, keeps lawn mowers and string trimmers from damaging the trunk, and moderates soil temperature extremes. **Do not use sawdust, black plastic, or grass clippings as mulch. Do not make mulch volcanos.**

5. **Trunk Wraps:** Research indicates there are no benefits from using trunk wraps and it may encourage damaging insects or diseases.
6. **Staking:** Staking is not necessary if the tree has a proper size rootball and has not been pruned too high. Stakes may help prevent lawnmowers and string trimmers from damaging the tree. If staking is needed for support, attach them so the tree has some sway. **NEVER** leave wires or straps on the tree for more than one growing season.
7. **Fertilizing:** Generally new trees do not need fertilizers. Using the wrong product could damage the already reduced root system. Fertilize the first year only if a specific problem develops.
8. **Pruning:** Prune only the branches that are dead, broken or severely deformed during the first growing season. Buds produce hormones that stimulate root growth, so keep the removal of buds to a minimum.
9. **Timing for Planting:** The best time of year to plant your tree is November through March.
10. **Tree Size:** Trees 2-inch caliper or less are recommended unless a larger size is justified. Smaller trees recover from transplant shock and commence with normal growth more quickly.