

Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Funding Opportunities

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is the Inflation Reduction Act and how is the Oregon Department of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Program involved?

- The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is a federal law that makes historic investments in clean energy and climate action. The IRA advances [the Justice40 Initiative](#), which commits to providing 40 percent of climate, clean energy, and infrastructure investment benefits to overburdened and underserved communities. “The Inflation Reduction Act recognizes the importance of conserving, connecting, and restoring the nation’s coasts, marshes, forests, and landscapes as a means to sequester carbon and deploy nature-based defenses to climate impacts. The law also prioritizes reducing the risks posed by catastrophic wildfires” ([Building a Clean Energy Economy: A Guidebook to the Inflation Reduction Act’s Investments in Clean Energy and Climate Action](#), pg. 145).
- The IRA provides up to \$1.5 billion to the United States Forest Service (USFS) for urban and community forestry investments to foster 1) increased and equitable access to urban tree canopy, 2) broadened community engagement in local urban forest planning, tree planting, and management activities, and 3) improved community and urban forest resilience. \$250 million was awarded directly to state urban and community forestry programs, and \$1.13 billion in additional funding was awarded through a competitive grant process (see <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf/2023-grant-funding> for more details).
- The Oregon Department of Forestry’s (ODF’s) Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program received \$26.6 million in IRA grant funding from the USFS to stand up two grant programs—\$10 million devoted specifically to Federally recognized Tribes and Tribal organizations, and \$12.5 million that will be available to all eligible entities in the state of Oregon—to promote urban and community forest investment and tree equity for overburdened and underserved communities. These programs will provide funding to eligible entities to advance:
 - UCF planning and monitoring
 - Nature-based education, recreation, and engagement
 - Network development and relationship building
 - Workforce diversification and development
 - Nursery capacity building and tree production
 - Tree planting and maintenance
 - Adaptive management and lesson sharing throughout the state of Oregon

2. What are the eligibility requirements for this grant opportunity?

- **Eligible entities:**
 - Federally recognized Tribes and Tribal organizations
 - Local government entities (e.g., city or county government, public school district, soil and water conservation district, etc.)
 - Public and state-controlled institutions of higher education (e.g., Oregon University System)
 - Non-profit and community-based organizations
 - *Note: Applications may be submitted by individual entities or coalitions of multiple entities.*
- **Ineligible entities:**
 - For-profit companies (*note: for-profit companies cannot be the primary applicant but can be contractual partners in an application*)
 - Individuals/Private citizens
 - State agencies
- **Geographic eligibility:**
 - 100 percent of the funding/program benefits must go to either 1) Federally recognized Tribes, or 2) disadvantaged communities, as defined by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CJEST\)](#), the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) IRA Mapping Tool](#), or other government-sponsored vulnerability tools which inform metrics that are applicable to the scope of work (*note: the USFS has final say in who qualifies as a disadvantaged community*). Please reach out to the UCF Program staff if you would like more information regarding geographic eligibility.
- **SAM.gov registration:**
 - All applicants must have an ***active registration*** and ***Unique Entity ID*** with [SAM.gov](#) and maintain an active registration throughout the life of the award. This is the U.S. governmentwide web-based system that supports all contracts, grants, and the electronic payment system. This requirement for registration may be found at [2 CFR 25.200](#).
 - We strongly encourage potential applicants to begin this process early, as it can take some time to complete.

3. What types of projects will be funded through this IRA grant opportunity?

- ODF's UCF Program will fund projects that contribute to the following program areas:
 1. UCF assessment, planning, and prioritization
 2. Culturally responsive UCF-centered education, engagement, recreation, and community-building initiatives
 3. Capacity building for an interdisciplinary and cross-sector UCF network
 4. Workforce diversification and professional development
 5. Tree production, planting, and maintenance
 6. UCF monitoring, adaptive management, and lesson sharing

- Examples of potential project activities:
 - Conducting a tree inventory of street and park trees in low-income neighborhoods with low tree canopy cover and poor air quality.
 - Developing an urban forest plan that seeks to increase urban forest equity based on an equity analysis of existing urban forest assets.
 - Implementing a community engagement program in low-income neighborhoods with low tree canopy cover to learn about the community’s perceived benefits and barriers to tree planting and maintenance.
 - Organizing and facilitating a workshop series or internship program for high school students from low-income communities to engage in environmental education and green sector career exploration.
 - Building staff capacity to conduct tree/forest assessment, tree planting, and maintenance on Federally recognized Tribal lands.

- Types of projects that are not eligible in this grant application process:
 - **Basic research** as defined in [2CFR 422.1](#): the “systematic study directed toward fuller knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind.” Note: Projects that include data collection, monitoring, and tracking associated with applying research to management decision-making are eligible activities.
 - **Equipment purchases.** Equipment rental should be considered as an alternative. Equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.
 - **Construction and capital improvements.** Examples of construction include facilities, infrastructure, roads, new buildings, culverts, and boardwalks.
 - **Land acquisition** (i.e., conservation easement and fee simple) projects.
 - **Cost-share, reimbursement, and other types of payment provided directly to private landowners.** However, Urban and Community Forestry funding may be used to perform work on private lands; for example, an eligible entity could pay for trees to be planted on private lands with permission of the landowner.
 - **Small business start-up** funding.
 - **Gift cards**
 - **Food**
 - **Childcare services**

- Contact ODF’s UCF Program staff if you are unsure whether your project is eligible.

- 4. What are the minimum and maximum dollar amounts for grant awards?**
 - The ODF UCF Program plans to accept grant proposals ranging from \$10,000 to \$1 million dollars.
 - The ODF UCF Program understands that great projects need varying amounts of funding support. As such, the ODF UCF Program hopes to fund projects with a range of budgetary needs by stratifying the application pool into small (~\$10,000 to \$25,000), medium (~\$25,000 to \$100,000), and large (~\$100,000 to \$1 million) projects.

- 5. When do applications open? When will the funding be awarded?**
 - The ODF UCF Program intends to issue a call for proposals (CFP) for the first round of applications which will open in June 2024.
 - The ODF UCF Program plans to award funding in fall 2024. The exact timeline will be released in the CFP.

- 6. Will there be more than one opportunity to apply for this funding?**
 - Yes. Multiple CFPs will be released between now and 2026. More details on the schedule for the next funding opportunities will be determined in the coming months.

- 7. What will the review process be like?**
 - We are currently developing the review process. Specific details regarding the review process will be outlined in the CFP.

- 8. Will my organization receive the money upfront, or will we be reimbursed?**
 - Generally, grants are funded via reimbursement, but there may be circumstances (e.g., tree purchasing) in which funds can be made available in advance.

- 9. Where can I receive support to apply for these grants?**
 - Free grant-writing consultations are available, courtesy of ODF. More information will be outlined in the CFP.
 - Help with SAM.gov registration is available through the Government Contract Assistance Program: <https://www.gcap.org/registration-assistance-duns-sam-dsbs-fbo>
 - Contact ODF's UCF Program staff for additional support.

- 10. Where can I find more information as it becomes available?**
 - Additional updates and information will be made available on the [ODF UCF webpage](#).
 - Full details on the application process will be available when the CFP is released in June 2024.
 - Please reach out to ODF's UCF Program staff (UCF.Program@odf.oregon.gov) with any additional questions.

Funding for this grant program was awarded to ODF by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service.

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