



WILTON SIMPSON
COMMISSIONER

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Administration

**NOTICE OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING
OPPORTUNITY REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

CFR 200

Funding Opportunity Number 23-DG-11083112-500

I. Overview

Recipient: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

Funding Opportunity Title: Urban and Community Forestry-Inflation Reduction Act Grant

Announcement Type: Request for Federal Financial Assistance Applications

Funding Opportunity Number: 23-DG-11083112-500

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.727

Federal Agency Name: USDA Forest Service

The information requested is pursuant to 2 CFR and the federal awarding agency statutory authority.

II. Federal Financial Assistance Funding Opportunity Description

The purpose of Florida's Urban and Community Forestry-Inflation Reduction Act (UCF-IRA) grant program is to provide financial assistance to local governments, Native American tribal governments, volunteer groups, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions to initiate or enhance local urban and community forestry programs and improve the urban environment within the state of Florida. This will be accomplished by providing funding to generate and maintain healthy urban forests in disadvantaged communities. The state of Florida anticipates an allocation of \$365,000 for fiscal year 2024.

The primary purpose of the Urban and Community Forestry-Inflation Reduction Act grant program is to promote better urban forest management and to provide resources necessary for the retention and expansion of community tree canopy throughout the State of Florida. Trees are a vital component of urban infrastructure, but trees must be properly managed to maximize the benefits they provide to the community. By properly managing their urban forest, communities can increase property values, tourism appeal, and the physical and mental health of residents, while reducing storm water runoff, energy consumption, and air and water pollution. Community forest management also helps to identify public safety hazards to residents and structures and is a useful tool in storm preparation. Local community leaders and the public should learn more about how their urban trees benefit their community, from an economic, social, and environmental standpoint. They also should learn about proper species selection, planting, and care for trees to minimize future maintenance problems and how to utilize green infrastructure to reduce storm water runoff.

This funding opportunity is from the Inflation Reduction Act, through the USDA Forest Service with the following priorities:

- **Nature-Deprived Communities MOU** – USDA has signed 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 parks and nature in their communities. The **America the Beautiful Initiative** supports the prioritization of locally led conservation and park projects in communities that disproportionately lack access to nature and its benefits.
- **Justice40** – USDA Forest Service Urban & community Forestry Program is a covered program under the Agency's **Justice40 Initiative established through Executive Order 13985**. To advance the mission of Justice40, proposals that deliver 40% of the benefits of IRA investments through established partnerships with local organizations working to support disadvantaged communities will receive priority consideration.

While all these benefits are produced at similar levels by trees, regardless of location, many neighborhoods are historically disadvantaged and have reduced tree canopy now, so these benefits are not being shared equally. The aim of this grant program is to reduce this discrepancy and encourage the proper management of urban forests in these disadvantaged communities to ensure that the benefits of urban trees are reaching all communities.

The maximum grant allocation is \$75,000 for each category and each applicant. Practices may be implemented on county or municipal owned lands, including parks or natural areas, as well as highway and street rights-of-way not maintained by the Federal government. Funds will be allocated to regions with priority given to fiscally distressed communities.

FDACS, Florida Forest Service (FFS) is requesting proposals for grants to:

- Conduct tree planting projects in neighborhoods identified as disadvantaged by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) found at <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>.
- Conduct maintenance operations for public trees in areas that are identified as disadvantaged by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool (including, but not limited to, pruning to reduce hazards, removal of hazardous trees, or improving site conditions to enhance tree longevity).
- Eligible projects include those emphasizing urban wood utilization, urban food forests, workforce development and extreme heat mitigation.

There are 2 categories for this funding opportunity:

1. Tree Planting
2. Tree Maintenance

Disadvantaged communities tree planting

- These projects will conduct tree planting initiatives in areas identified as disadvantaged based on the CEJST tool referenced above. All plantings in this category will be required to follow the planting requirements listed later in this section.
- As part of the scope of work, applicants must include a significant component of community engagement. Examples include surveys to guide species selections, volunteer planting or maintenance days, or door-to-door communication approaches that enable community members near the planting project to be engaged throughout the process. In addition, part of this community engagement should include sharing with residents how the applicant plans to maintain the newly planted trees to best provide benefit to the community. Language access should be considered as part of this community engagement to ensure equal access for residents to participate in projects funded by this grant.
- Additional points will be awarded to applicants showing significant partner engagement between the applicant and other local entities to produce greater community support. Only one entity should apply for each project.
- A portion (no more than 30%) of grant funds awarded could be utilized to improve site conditions to better support the growth of new trees to maturity. One example would be removing sidewalk to reduce conflict between roots and pavement.
- Eligible projects in this category include urban wood utilization, urban food forest creation, workforce development and extreme heat mitigation.

Tree Maintenance

- These projects can include any maintenance activity necessary to reduce risk and enhance longevity of public trees in an area identified as disadvantaged by the CEJST tool.
- Examples include pruning hazardous branches overhanging a public right of way, adding lightning protection to mature trees of large canopy size, or removing hazardous trees currently posing a threat to the public.
- These funds cannot be used for tree work on private property. The only exception would be to allow for pruning of a private tree that overhangs a public area (such as a private tree with hazardous branches overhanging a road). These trees can be pruned only to the extent of reducing hazards in the public area adjacent while still allowing for proper pruning cuts.
- Projects in this category include urban wood utilization and workforce development.

Tree Planting Requirements

1. Trees/palms (including those planted as part of the local match) must be at least Florida Grade #1 or equivalent (Florida Division of Plant Industry, Grades and Standards).
2. Trees may not exceed a 4-inch caliper. Palms may not be taller than 16 feet, clear trunk.
3. Minimum tree size is 1½ inch caliper, in at least a 15-gallon container.
4. At least three tree species native or naturalized to the area and suitable for the site and objective must be planted. No species may represent over 25% of the total number of trees planted during the project.
5. Up to ten percent (10%) of the grant award may be used for the purchase and/or installation of irrigation equipment or an irrigation system, or for supplemental watering during the 60-day grow-in period.
6. Trees listed on the Exotic Pest Plant Council's MOST RECENT list of Florida's Invasive Species may not be planted as any part of this grant program. The list may be found at www.floridainvasivespecies.org
7. Maximum allowable cost per individual tree or palm is \$500, which can be split between grant and match for purchasing and planting.
8. Written approval is required (as part of the proposal) from the Florida Department of Transportation for planting and maintenance on any state right-of-way.
9. Eligible multi-stemmed tree species include only those listed on the Right Tree/Right Place posters produced by the Florida Urban Forestry Council, unless FFS permission is granted for another species.
10. A maximum of \$15 per tree may be spent on planting materials during the 60 day grow-in period only.
11. Purchasing and planting of shrubs and ground covers in conjunction with tree planting may only serve as a matching cost, and as such cannot be reimbursed.

12. Proposals must include the following information:

- a. Site location map.
 - b. Minimum of three, color photographs of planting site.
 - c. Detailed planting plan (site plan) showing the location of the trees/palms, existing structures, and site limitations such as underground utilities and overhead wires.
 - d. Written approval from the Florida Department of Transportation for planting and maintenance on the State right-of-way (if applicable).
 - e. Three (3)-year maintenance plan to be carried out by the grant recipient at their expense. Maintenance costs incurred after certification by the Florida Forest Service (FFS) are ineligible for reimbursement.
 - f. Resolution by the managing agency of the property (if different from the applicant) which states they concur with the grant proposal and maintenance plan.
13. Required (60-day) "grow-in period" prior to Certification of Acceptance by the Department and processing of final reimbursement. The proposal should state how the trees will be watered and cared for during the grow-in period.
 14. Tree Plantings must follow established procedures for handling, placement, and maintenance. Refer to <http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody> for additional guidance.
 15. After tree planting is completed, the required iTree Design project report must be submitted prior to the processing of the final reimbursement. This tool estimates

the future reduction in storm water runoff and increase in water quality over the life of the planted trees. The report should include assessments for years 5, 15, and 25. iTree Design is an easy to use and free program that can be found at <https://design.itreetools.org/>

16. All proposals must include a screenshot of the CEJST tool indicating that the area in which the project is taking place is recognized as disadvantaged. All work must be completed in census tracts designated as disadvantaged by the CEJST tool. Applicants must provide census tract information for any tract in which work is to be completed.
17. Maximum of thirty percent (30%) of grant funds may be utilized to improve site conditions for long term growth of newly planted trees. Eligible improvements include (but are not limited to) removing sidewalk or other pavement, installing permeable pavement, or reducing conflicts with other existing infrastructure.

Tree Maintenance Requirements:

1. All work must be conducted under the supervision of an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certified arborist, preferably on the staff of the managing agency, but if the agency is using a contractor to conduct maintenance, the certified arborist could be on the staff of the selected contractor.
2. Any trees to be removed with this funding must be rated as high risk according to a tree risk assessment conducted by an ISA certified arborist with the tree risk assessment qualification (TRAQ).
3. Proposals must include a site map showing areas in which maintenance will be conducted and what maintenance will be done on each tree receiving work in the selected area.
4. Proposals must include color photographs of each site in which maintenance will be conducted with a caption indicating what maintenance actions are to be taken.
5. All proposals must include a screenshot of the CEJST tool indicating the area in which the project is taking place is recognized as disadvantaged.
6. Written approval is required (as part of the proposal) from the Florida Department of Transportation for maintenance on any state right-of-way.
7. All work conducted must follow ANSI A300 and Z133 standards for best management practices found on the International Society of Arboriculture's website at www.isa-arbor.com
8. Reimbursement requests will require photographic documentation of the completed work to indicate compliance with best management practices for pruning.

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, local governments, state governments, and Native American tribal governments.

Only digital applications are being accepted for this notice of federal financial assistance. Only one application is allowed per applicant. **Applicants submitting an electronic application do not need to mail a hard copy.**

The scope of work must be performed within the State of Florida.

IV. Key Dates

Action Item	Timeframe	Location
Notice of Federal Financial Assistance Funding Opportunity Advertisement	From 02/08/2024 To 04/18/2024	Posted electronically via: Grant Opportunities · FDACS
Submission of Questions	From 02/08/2024 To 03/18/2024	All questions must be submitted electronically to: Grants@FDACS.gov
Responses to Questions Posted	From 02/08/2024 To 03/29/2024	Posted electronically via: Grant Opportunities · FDACS
Application Submission Deadline	04/18/2024 4:00 PM EST.	UCF IRA Grant Submission
Evaluation of Applications	From 05/01/2024 To 06/14/2024	Review and evaluation of applications begin.
Award Notice	06/28/2024	Applicants will receive a notice of award from FDACS on official letterhead.
Subrecipient Agreement End Date	Anticipated 12/31/25	

V. Submission Dates, Times, and Location

The submission deadline is April 18, 2024. Applicants may upload a complete Word application packet to [UCF IRA Grant Submission](#). Digital application packets must be fully uploaded by the submission deadline. Applicants submitting an electronic application do not need to mail a hard copy.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure its submittal at the proper place and time indicated in this notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity notice. No extensions. No exceptions.

VI. Statutes and Regulations

The Urban Community Forestry (UCF) Program is authorized by Section 9, Urban and Community Forestry Assistance, of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 as amended [16 U.S.C. 2105]. This law authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture "to provide financial, technical, and related assistance to State Foresters or equivalent State officials for the purpose of encouraging States to provide information and technical assistance to units of local government and others that will encourage cooperative efforts to plan urban forestry programs and to plant, protect, maintain, and utilize wood from, trees in open spaces, greenbelts, roadside screens, parks, woodlands, curb areas, and residential developments in urban areas." The law also states, "In providing such assistance the Secretary is authorized to cooperate with interested members of the public including nonprofit private organizations. The Secretary is also authorized to

cooperate directly with units of local government and others in implementing this section whenever the Secretary and the affected State Forester or equivalent State official agree that direct cooperation would better achieve the purposes of this section."

VII. Award Information

Total amount of funding available	365,000.00
Anticipated number of awards	15
Maximum grant award to a single applicant	\$75,000.00
Minimum grant award to a single applicant	\$5,000.00
Period of Performance	7/1/2024-12/31/2025

VIII. Definitions

Applicant: Entity that applies for federal financial assistance under this notice of funding opportunity.

Application Packet: Complete written response of the applicant to the notice of federal financial assistant funding opportunity including properly completed forms, supporting documents and attachments.

Business hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern standard time on business days.

Business days: Monday through Friday, excluding federal and state holidays.

Calendar days: All days, including weekends and holidays.

Commissioner: Commissioner of Agriculture for the State of Florida.

Hazardous branches: Dead, dying, diseased, or broken branches posing a threat to the public.

Hazardous tree: Any tree recognized as having a high-risk rating after being inspected by an ISA certified arborist with the Tree Risk Assessment Qualification.

FDACS: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, an agency of the State of Florida.

Grant Manager: An employee of FDACS, who is designated to be responsible for the monitoring and management of the subrecipient agreement.

Local Government: A county government, a municipality (an incorporated city, town, or village), a school board district or an independent special district.

Non-profit Organization: An organization which has filed an application with Florida's Secretary of State for nonprofit corporate status pursuant to Section 617, Florida Statutes, and has been issued a federal employer identification number by the Internal Revenue Service.

Subrecipient Agreement: Formal agreement that will be awarded to the successful applicant under this notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity.

IX. Cost Sharing (Matching) Requirements

There is no match or cost sharing required for this funding opportunity. Administrative costs cannot exceed twenty percent (20%) of total project costs.

X. Funding Source and/or Restrictions

FDACS reserves the right to award, or not award, subrecipient agreement(s) based on the availability of federal funds.

FDACS' obligation to pay under this subrecipient agreement is contingent upon funding by the federal agency.

Funding is available for project work initiated and completed during the award period.

Funding is subject to the amount of spending authority allocated by the Florida Legislature.

The allowability of costs shall be in accordance with the federal financial assistance cost principles applicable to the subrecipient.

XI. Cost of Preparation

FDACS is not liable for any costs incurred by the applicant in response to the notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity.

XII. Public Records

Article 1, section 24, Florida Constitution, guarantees every person access to all public records, and Section 119.011, Florida Statutes, provides a broad definition of public record. As such, all responses to a federal financial assistance funding opportunity are public records unless exempt by law. Any applicant claiming that its response contains information that is exempt from the public records law shall clearly segregate and mark that information and provide the specific statutory citation for such exemption.

XIII. Request Application Packet

The application packet is available online at <http://forms.doacs.state.fl.us/02032.docx>
If you are unable download the application packet, a written request for the application packet should be submitted via email to Grants@fdacs.gov

XIV. General Instructions for Application Packet

Carefully review all materials and prepare the responses accordingly.

The application packet must be complete and provide all the required information by the submission deadline to be considered. Application packets that fail to provide all the required forms and signatures will be considered non-responsive and consequently will be removed from the evaluation process.

For all corporate applicants, proof of corporate status must be provided with the application.

For nonprofit applicants, documentation that verifies the official nonprofit status of an organization in accordance with Chapter 617, Florida Statutes, must be provided with the application.

Please ensure that all attachments reflect the applicant's name and funding opportunity number.

Only digital applications are being accepted for this notice of federal financial assistance. Pages on digital submissions must be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. Applicants may upload a complete digital Word application packet to [UCF- IRA Grant Submission](#).

Digital application packets must be fully uploaded by the submission deadline. Applicants submitting an electronic application do not need to mail a hard copy.

XV. Application Package Components

FDACS forms must be used. Substitute forms will not be reviewed. Do not alter the pages unless the page indicates that it can be modified. Applications that do not include all required pages will be removed from the evaluation process.

A complete application package consists of the following pages (*update as applicable*):

- *Coversheet /Application for Federal Financial Assistance Subaward*
- *Key Contact Information*
- *Project Narrative*
- *Scope of Work*
- *Budget Plan Narrative*
- *Budget Plan*
- *Key Person/Staff*
- *Performance Site/Locations*
- *Assurances Subrecipient Award*
- *Certification Regarding Lobbying*
- *Certification Regarding Debarments, Suspension, Ineligibility*
- *Certification Statement*

XVI. Clarifications/Revisions

Before award, FDACS reserves the right to seek clarifications or request any information deemed necessary for proper evaluation of submissions from all applicants deemed eligible for the subrecipient agreement. Failure to provide requested information may result in rejection of the application.

XVII. Rejection of Applications

FDACS reserves the right to reject any and all applications or waive any minor irregularities when to do so would be in the best interest of the State of Florida, and to reject the proposal of an applicant whom FDACS determines is not able to perform the scope of work. Minor irregularities are those which will not have a significant or adverse effect on overall completion or performance.

XVIII. System for Award Management (SAM) Registration

The applicant must be registered in the System of Award Management (SAM) <https://sam.gov/SAM/>. The applicant will be required to maintain a registration for the duration of the award. Applicants who have an active exclusion may not be eligible for award.

XIX. Late Applications

Applications, hard copy or digital, received by FDACS after the application submission deadline will be rejected as untimely.

XX. Evaluation Criteria

The UCF subcommittee shall develop a prioritized list of all proposals which the UCF Grant Coordinator has determined to be complete.

The UCF Subcommittee shall evaluate each proposal based upon how well the proposal meets the purpose of the grant program. Maximum possible points: 100 points. A minimum score of 60 points is required to be considered eligible for funding.

- a. Demonstrated Ability - 20 Points Maximum
The highest score will be given to proposals that demonstrate the applicant is fully capable of meeting the requirements of this project specified under section IV.
- b. Demonstrated Need - 20 Points Maximum
The highest score will be given to proposals that best demonstrate that their project will fulfill a need in their community for the category they are applying under. Applicants should demonstrate that their project will generate significant value for the community.
- c. Technical Strength – 20 Points Maximum.
The highest score will be given to proposals which indicate the final product will be of the highest quality possible with the highest resolution imagery being utilized for assessment.
- d. Cost Effectiveness - 20 Points Maximum
The highest score will be given to proposals that will clearly maximize results with the efficient use of grant dollars, clearly describe how funds will be expended, and adhere to the cost parameters listed in this RFA.
- e. Community Engagement- 10 Points Maximum
The highest score will be given to proposals that demonstrate the applicant will best be able to engage the community receiving assistance through project efforts. This engagement should be considered at multiple points during the project's duration.
- f. Completeness of Proposal - 10 Points Maximum
The highest score will be given to proposals which are complete, include all the required attachments, and provide a detailed explanation of the proposal.

Evaluator scores for each eligible application will be totaled, then averaged. Funding will be awarded to applications according to the average score received. FDACS reserves the right to recommend partial funding of applications.

XXI. Evaluator(s)

FDACS' evaluator(s) will consist of three (3) or five (5) individuals who FDACS has determined to have experience and knowledge in the program areas. The evaluator(s) could be municipal/county arborists or county foresters, non-profit organization representatives, city municipal staff (Parks and Recreation, etc.), and/or FFS personnel. The evaluator(s) will conduct a fair, impartial, and comprehensive evaluation of applications received in response to this notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity.

XXII. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

The evaluation and selection process are expected to be no longer than 45 days after the submission deadline.

XXIII. Award Notice

Upon the completion of FDACS' evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

FDACS reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final award amount and scope of work prior to award.

The successful applicants will have thirty (30) days to fully execute the FDACS Subrecipient Agreement. Failure by the subrecipient to sign and return the Subrecipient Agreement, within 30 days upon receipt of the agreement, shall constitute forfeiture of the award.

Although it is the intent of FDACS to expedite the subrecipient grant award process as much as possible, applicants should be aware that execution of a Subrecipient Agreement could be delayed for some time until federal funding is received. Projects should be scheduled accordingly. No costs to be charged against the subrecipient award or counted as match can be incurred before the Subrecipient Agreement is executed.

THIS IS NOT A COMPETITIVE SOLICITATION SUBJECT TO THE NOTICE OR CHALLENGE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 120.57(1) AND 120.57(3), FLORIDA STATUTES.

XXIV. Programmatic, Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The applicant shall be in compliance with all laws, rules, and regulations applicable to the federal funds provided by the federal financial assistance funding opportunity.

The applicant shall maintain an accounting system and a set of accounting records which allow for the identification of revenues and expenditures related to this funding opportunity.

XXV. Acknowledgment of Funding

The subrecipient shall have an acknowledgement of the USDA Forest Service support placed on any publication written or published or audiovisual produced with grant support and, if feasible, on any publication reporting the results of, or describing, a grant-supported activity, or audiovisuals produced with grant support. This requirement does not apply to

audiovisuals produced as research instruments or for documenting experimentations or findings and not intended for presentation or distribution to the public.

XXVI. Performance Report

The applicant will submit mandatory detailed quarterly reports in a timely basis using the format and content shown on FDACS's performance progress report. Reports are due on March 31st, June 30th, September 30th, and December 31st. Reports must be received within ten (10) days of the due date or will be considered delinquent. The performance progress report is downloadable at <http://forms.fdacs.gov/02018.pdf>

XXVII. Reimbursement Requests

All reimbursement requests must be submitted using FDACS' standard payment request packet, unless otherwise noted in the special conditions of the subrecipient agreement and provide supporting documentation for each cost. The subrecipient shall submit the payment request packet to the recipient's grant manager not more often than monthly, but not less often than quarterly. To be eligible for reimbursement, costs shall be allowable, necessary, and reasonable, and must be submitted by budget category consistent with the budget plan submitted with applicant's application. The payment request packet is downloadable from [02019.pdf \(state.fl.us\)](#)

Bills for any authorized travel expenses shall be submitted and paid in accordance with the rates specified in Section 112.061, Florida Statutes, governing payments by the State for travel expenses. Any travel expenses must be specified in the budget plan and scope of work.

The FDACS agreement with the federal agency is a cost reimbursement format; therefore, no advance payments will be provided.

Any work performed on the project and/or any expenditure made prior to a fully executed subrecipient agreement and written authorization from FDACS is ineligible for reimbursement.

XXVIII. Disclaimer

The receipt of applications in response to the notice of federal financial assistance funding opportunity does not imply or guarantee that any one or all qualified applicants will result in a subrecipient agreement with FDACS.

XXIX. Questions

Applicants shall address all questions regarding this federal financial assistance funding opportunity notice to the purchasing office. All questions submitted shall be published and answered in a manner that all applicants will be able to view. Each applicant is responsible for monitoring the FDACS – [Grant](#) Opportunities page at [Grant Opportunities · FDACS](#) for updates and notifications regarding this funding opportunity.

All questions shall be directed to Grants@fdacs.gov

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status.