



Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency

2026 Request for Applications

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-259-5274. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. Minnesota DNR is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Grant Overview

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) welcomes applications from Tribal governments, local units of government, nonprofit organizations, and schools within Minnesota that will reduce the impacts of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) through tree management and maintenance, and education and engagement efforts, that enhance community forest health and resilience.

The following pages provide detailed information about Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency eligibility, available funding, application, and award process. Please review all the information before developing and submitting an application.

Funding

A total of \$1,703,800 is available to fund projects that manage and/or reduce the impacts of EAB through forestry activities on public non-State lands and residential land for low-income residents. Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). There is no minimum to the dollar amount applicants can request. The maximum amount that will be funded per applicant is \$150,000.

No matching funds are required and match as part of your application is not recommended. If match is provided, it cannot come from other grants or monies from the State of Minnesota.

Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit organizations with 501(c) status, schools, and local units of government within Minnesota, including cities, counties, regional authorities, joint powers boards, towns, soil and water conservation districts, and Tribal governments. Parks and recreation boards in cities of the first class are also eligible to apply.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities may take place on lands permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership, and on private, low-income unprotected lands; all private low-income unprotected lands work will adhere to the “Residential Tree Care Requirements”.

The following activities are eligible for grant funding:

- Conducting community forestry work on non-State public land, or on residential land for low-income residents (work on residential land must be conducted by companies or organizations with an [International Society of Arboriculture \(ISA\) Certified Arborist](#) on staff, [Tree Care Industry Association \(TCIA\)](#) accreditation, or equivalent qualification).
- Conducting a tree inventory.
- Developing an Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan or a plan that includes an EAB component. Local units of government must adopt a management plan if they do not have one in place already. *Incorporation of environmental justice components into management plans is encouraged.*
- Removing and replacing ash or high-risk unsafe trees.
- Planting trees for diversity.
- Constructing and maintaining gravel beds.
- Chemically treating of ash trees with an injectable non-neonicotinoid insecticide (i.e., emamectin benzoate) in communities within or up to 10 miles outside of generally infested areas (refer to the [EAB Generally Infested Areas Buffered by 10 Miles](#) map for more information).
- Maintaining existing canopy, including needed pruning or watering establishment.
- Educating and engaging residents.
- Developing, purchasing, or printing educational and outreach materials to engage residents in urban and community

forestry.

The following activities are eligible technical assistance components of the grant:

- You will not have to budget (pay) for technical assistance through either of the following programs; if applying for assistance with tree plantings, you will need to purchase the trees for planting either through grant funds or through other means. The technical assistance programs below are supported through the LCCMR grant package separate from the competitive grant program and are provided for free to grant recipients. *Note that snacks for volunteers are an ineligible expense and must be budgeted through non-grant funds.*
 - Operational Assistance through Tree Trust: Tree Trust is uniquely suited to assist communities with the design, planning and management of community volunteer tree plantings. Tree Trust is able to supply the tools, technical assistance to support and empower your community's volunteers in creating a greener future.
 - Educational Assistance through the University of Minnesota's Tree Steward volunteer program: The Tree Steward Program is a community-based program where city/county staff or representatives will request Tree Steward training for community members to turn them into knowledgeable volunteers. This education allows the residents to get involved with caring for their community's urban and community forests as advanced volunteer stewards. Tree Steward volunteers can be trained in a wide array of topics related to trees based on the needs within your community. This education can include, but is not limited to, the following topics:
 - Properly planting trees and leading others at planting events
 - Properly pruning young trees to improve the overall health and structure
 - Pruning suckers and sprouts from young and mature trees to ensure safety and proper sightlines for the public
 - Watering devices available for use and the benefits of utilizing watering devices for young and newly planted trees
 - Installation of watering devices on public trees
 - Identification of common tree diseases and pests
 - How to identify trees of concern
 - How to report trees of concern to your community so action can be taken

Eligible Project Expenses

Eligible project expenses are those incurred through project activities directly related and necessary to achieve the outcomes described in the project application and that meet the conditions of the grant contract. Grant funds can be used for, but may not be limited to:

- Professional contracts for technical assistance, resident education and engagement, or project implementation by individuals or organization not a part of a local government unit (including tree inventories, EAB management plans, tree removals and replanting, chemical treatment with injectable non-neonicotinoid insecticide, and tree planting).
- Project-related materials may include, but are not limited to, tree stock, mulch, watering bags, staking materials, tree wrap or guards, shovels, printing, chemical for injectable non-neonicotinoid insecticide treatment (such as emamectin benzoate).
- Equipment purchases of \$4,999 or less that are used to complete the project. Multiple pieces of equipment, tools, or project supplies can be purchased with grant funds, but no one tool can have a unit cost of \$5,000 or more, even if that cost is split across grant and match funds.
- Equipment rental.

Ineligible Project Activities and Expenses

Ineligible project expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Costs incurred prior to the start date of the fully executed grant agreement.
- Purchase of trees listed on the [Minnesota Noxious Weed List](#), or the DNR's [Invasive Terrestrial Plants List](#), including Amur cork tree, Amur maple, autumn olive, black locust, buckthorn, Norway maple, Russian olive, Siberian elm, and tree of heaven.
- Purchase of balled and burlapped trees larger than 2.5" caliper, containerized trees larger than #20, or bareroot trees greater than 2" or less than ¾" caliper diameter.
- Purchase of tree species in a genus that already makes up 10% or more of the community's or in a family that makes up 20% or more of the trees.
- Purchase of plants other than trees, such as shrubs, living ground covers, sod, grass seed, and flowers.
- Purchase of land or easements.
- Major soil purchases, grade changes or construction.
- Work on state land.
- Capital expenditures (items with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more), such as buildings, motor vehicles, trails, or other permanent structures.
- Purchase of meals or snacks for volunteers.
- Experimental practices not approved by DNR.

Questions about additional eligible or ineligible expenses can be directed to ucf.dnr@state.mn.us.

Project Evaluation

Projects will be evaluated on serving underserved populations as identified in the rubric.

Examples of underserved populations include, but are not limited to, individuals living in areas with high exposure to negative environmental conditions, who are low-income, persons with disabilities, individuals with less than a high school education, those with limited English proficiency, populations experiencing low life expectancy, older adults, veterans, and persons of color. Negative environmental conditions may include high air pollution (Particulate Matter 2.5), and low tree canopy coverage (less than 30%). The applicant must provide a detailed description of the underserved populations served by the proposed project and the measurable benefits to those populations as outlined in the rubric.

For resources to help identify underserved populations in your communities, please refer to the [Underserved Communities Resource List](#).

The commitment to underserved communities aligns with the State of Minnesota's policy of ensuring fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant making. [The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities, or both. Competitive Grant Review establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities, or both.

In addition to criteria listed above, applications will be reviewed and scored based on the overall strength of the proposal. This evaluation serves three purposes:

- To help ensure the quality of the projects receiving taxpayer dollars
- To distinguish among high-scoring projects if funding is insufficient to support all that meet application requirements
- To rank remaining projects if funding allows

Grant Requirements

- Applicants must comply with all Federal and State laws and regulations related to the completion of projects, as stated in the grant agreement.
- Application must show the applicants ability to provide photo documentation of the project's progress at appropriate phases, and illustrations, diagrams, charts, graphs, and maps to show results. All trees removed, planted, or maintained must be mapped and submitted.
- Applicants must publicly post and promote grant project information and purpose.

Application Requirements

Applicants must meet the following application requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity:

GENERAL

- Applications must be completed in full to be considered. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - A detailed project description, including goals, objectives, project area and a timeline.
 - Map documentation showing the location(s) of where work will happen.
 - A budget outlining project costs, including labor, materials, and equipment.
 - A letter of support from any identified partner organization(s) that acknowledges and agrees to the specific role(s) and activities attributed to the partner organization in the grant application.
 - Any other documentation relevant to the proposed project.
- Applications must demonstrate the applicant's ability to implement the project, meet all grant objectives, and submit a final report by June 1, 2029.

PRE-AWARD RISK ASSESSMENT

- Applicants who request \$50,000 or more in grant funds must complete and submit the Pre-Award Risk Assessment Questionnaire along with their application. The questionnaire must be completed in full and all required supporting financial documentation submitted to be considered. This requirement does not apply to Tribal governments.

PAST GRANT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

- Applicants who have completed one or more grant projects with the DNR Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) program will need to address their past grant performance in the application. Applicants should request **their most recent UCF Grant Closeout form** from ucf.dnr@state.mn.us. If you are unsure if your organization has previously held a grant contract with the UCF program, please reach out to ucf.dnr@state.mn.us and staff will confirm your past grant status and provide the closeout form, if applicable.
- Past grant performance, when applicable, will be a consideration when awarding grant funding. This means that a project could score well based on the strength of the application, but receive additional grant conditions, reduced funding, or even no funding due to past grant performance issues for which there is no evidence of corrective actions being taken or insufficient actions being taken to address previous issues.
- If an applicant was a previous grant recipient but no UCF Grant Closeout form is available, or if the applicant has never received a grant under the UCF program, this section of the application can be left blank. There will be no penalty within this scored section for those where no UCF Grant Closeout form is available, or if the applicant has never received a grant under the UCF program.

Additional Requirements

INVENTORY, MANAGEMENT PLANS, EDUCATION

- Tree inventory projects must submit obtained data to the DNR in a shapefile format.
- By the end of the grant period local units of government must have an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Management Plan or a Plan that includes an EAB component in place. Existing plans must be adopted or re-adopted after June 1, 2019 and submitted to DNR as part of the application packet. Local units of government that do not have a management plan in place must budget for the cost of obtaining one through this grant program.
- Any education provided through this program must be conducted by an ISA Certified Arborist, TCIA accreditation or equivalent qualification, or must qualify for ISA continuing education units. Education through Tree Trust and/or the University of Minnesota Tree Steward's Program is also acceptable.
- Management plans are encouraged to incorporate wood utilization when removals are occurring.
- Management plans are encouraged to incorporate consideration for underserved populations as they are defined in the grant evaluation section of this document. This may include prioritizing planting in areas of low canopy cover, focusing education and outreach in these areas, etc.

TREE REMOVALS AND PLANTING

- Planting trees can take place without removal.
- Tree removals from boulevards and parks, must be replaced at least one-for-one (i.e., at least one tree planted for every tree removed), and trees must be replanted at the same location of the removal whenever possible and feasible, or received approval from a DNR grant administrator in advance of planting..
- Tree removals conducted in park woodlands:
 - For the purposes of this grant, park woodlands are defined as publicly owned spaces that, beyond trail creation or access, are not regularly mowed.
 - Removals in woodlands need to be mitigating a public safety concern or to address degraded ecosystems.
 - Removals must meet a minimum of one tree planted for five trees removed.
- Tree planting projects must follow the best practices set in [A Pocket Guide to Planting Trees](#).
- Tree planting projects must identify the tree species to be planted; site location(s); and number, and type/size of planting stock:
 - Trees planted must be a climate-adapted species to Minnesota.
 - The species identified for planting must increase the diversity of the community's tree canopy and advance the goal of working toward the 20-10-5 guidelines, meaning a community has no more than 20% of their trees within a single family, no more than 10% of their trees within a single genus, and no more than 5% of their trees within a single species. Communities should use the [Rapid Assessment Community Tree Viewer](#) to access community tree survey data, and may provide their own data if collected post 2020.
 - Tribal governments may receive exemption from the 20-10-5 diversity requirement for species of cultural significance. Schools and nonprofits serving Indigenous communities may also receive exemption for species of cultural significance with proper justification. Please note in your application species included for cultural relevance.
 - Tree species listed on the [Minnesota Noxious Weed list](#) or the [DNR's Invasive Terrestrial Plants List](#) are not eligible for grant expenses, including Amur cork tree, Amur maple, autumn olive, black locust, buckthorn, Norway maple, Russian olive, Siberian elm, and tree of heaven.
 - Species list for trees to be planted must be submitted to and approved by DNR prior to planting.
 - Species list and numbers can be amended following the submission of tree

inventory/survey data.

- Tree stock must meet [ANSI Z-60.2](#) and can be:
 - ¾-2 inch caliper bareroot,
 - a container class size #20 or smaller, or
 - balled and burlapped trees smaller than 2.5" caliper ([MNDOT Certified Landscape Specialist](#) training required by planting organization in order for B&B trees to be eligible).
 - Flexibility is possible in instances where desired stock is unavailable.
 - DNR recommends trees be purchased with a one-year warranty.
- All trees removed and planted must be mapped and submitted as shapefiles, with the planted trees identified by species. If your community does not have access to shapefile-generating software, please contact the DNR at ucf.dnr@state.mn.us to discuss options for addressing this requirement.
- Projects that incorporate tree planting must submit a 3-year establishment plan with application.

RESIDENTIAL TREE CARE

- Removals conducted on residential property must be offered a tree replacement of one tree planted for each tree removed. Property owners must decline trees planted in order to not meet the one-to-one replanting requirement.
- Work on residential land can only be conducted on a property in service to low-income residents. The definition of low-income must be defined and reasonably justified by the applicant and submitted to the DNR.
- Work conducted on residential property will either be completed by residents (tree planting only), or by tree care companies holding liability insurance and with an [International Society of Arboriculture \(ISA\) Certified Arborist](#) on staff, or [Tree Care Industry Association \(TCIA\)](#) accreditation, or equivalent certification.
- A link to, or paper copy of, the Forest Service's Tree Owner's Manual ([English](#) / [Spanish](#)) must be provided to residents receiving maintenance work or a newly planted tree. If a resident's primary language is Hmong, Somali or Spanish, additional resources including the Pocket Guide to Planting Trees ([English/Hmong/Somali/Spanish](#)) and the DNR's Tree Care Door Hanger will be available as supplemental educational materials.
- For activities on residential land, a formal agreement between the resident and the grant recipient is required. Each residential agreement must contain the following language:
 - *The State of Minnesota is released from any liability associated with work completed on private property.*
 - *Access is granted by the landowner for all planned activities within the agreement; this may include, but is not limited to: planting, follow-up maintenance, monitoring, or other on-site work. Access for state employees must be granted to complete monitoring of work conducted.*
 - *I will plant and care for my tree(s) according to the Tree Owner's Manual for as long as it is within my right to do so.*

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Considerations

Minnesota Department of Agriculture considers **May 1 – September 30** to be the flight season for EAB. This means that EAB adult beetles are emerging from infested wood or trees and flying in search of new hosts during this time. The best management practice is to not remove ash trees when EAB are actively flying (May-September), to avoid the risk of EAB emerging from this material in transit or at a processing location.

EAB infestations are difficult to identify in the early stages of the infestation. EAB infestation areas grow via human-assisted movement and through natural dispersion. For these reasons, when new EAB infestations are discovered, quarantines are enacted on a large scale with the assumption that the infestation is spread beyond what is observed. However, while the quarantine necessarily covers a large area where EAB may be present, the distribution of EAB is likely not uniform throughout the quarantine and may be in areas outside these boundaries.

These guidelines ideally should be followed 100 percent of the time when working with ash trees throughout the state of Minnesota. *However, once a community is considered to be “generally infested” with EAB (the point at which EAB-infested ash are so numerous that year-round removal of hazardous trees is necessary to mitigate risk to public), conducting ash tree removals during the emerald ash borer flight season may be necessary to avoid risk to public safety and property.* EAB status map can be viewed [here](#).

Following these guidelines will provide the lowest degree of risk for movement of EAB.

Application Details and Instructions

When filling out the application, ensure all sections are completed and the application is submitted by the deadline. Pay close attention to the requested information and respond to all questions. Detailed responses and completeness are strongly encouraged: if funded, the application responses will become a grantee’s work plan. Make sure enough information is provided, especially in the timeline and budget sections, to serve as a complete work plan. Grantees will need to meet the objectives stated in their work plans by the end of the grant program. Clearly demonstrate in the application how the proposed project serves underserved populations as defined by the Request for Applications and how it aligns with eligibility requirements (including project activities and costs). Be sure that the application does not request funding for any ineligible project expenses.

A complete application will consist of the following:

Required Information:

1. Name of Organization
2. Organization Type
3. Project Coordinator Information (name, title, email, phone)
4. Organizational Information (SWIFT ID, address, city/state/zip, county)
5. Total Grant Amount Requested (maximum of \$150,000)
6. Annual Forestry Operating Budget
7. Authorized Signer(s) (name and email)
8. Conflict of Interest Signer(s) (name and email)
9. Proposed Project Components (e.g., planting, removal, education, etc.)
10. Planned Activities (e.g., number trees to be removed, number of trees to be planted, etc.)
11. Additional Technical Assistance and Brief Description, *if applicable* (see RFA for more information)
12. If awarded, does your organization need a pdf copy of the grant contract for council or board review and approval before the state issues a DocuSign agreement for signature? Yes/No

Required Documents:

1. Application form ([PDF, format unchanged](#))
2. Budget ([Excel, format unchanged, additional lines added as needed](#))
3. 3-Year Tree Establishment Plan for newly-planted trees, *if planting trees* ([PDF, format unchanged](#))
4. Species and Stock List from which trees will be planted, *if planting trees* (any format acceptable; contact ucf.dnr@state.mn.us with questions about species eligibility)
5. Maps of work locations, *if conducting direct tree work (e.g. removal, planting, maintenance) on public non-state land*
6. Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan or a Plan with an EAB component, *local units of government only*
 - a. Local units of government **must** have adopted a Plan on or after May 1, 2019, and submit it with their application or plan to adopt a management plan through this grant process by incorporating the cost in their budget.
7. Pre-Award Risk Assessment Questionnaire and associated financial documents, *if applicant is requesting \$50,000 or more in grant funds. Tribal governments are exempt from this requirement.* ([PDF, format unchanged](#))
8. Letter(s) of Support, *if collaborating with an outside organization* (any format acceptable). A letter of support from any identified partner organization(s) should acknowledge and agree to the specific role(s) and activities attributed to the partner organization in the grant application.

9. Most Recent UCF Grant Closeout Form, *if applicable* (email ucf.dnr@state.mn.us to request)

Once you have gathered all of the above required documentation and information, submit your application through the [2026 Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency Application Portal](#).

Data Privacy and Trade Secret Notice

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. Applicants may decline to complete the application without any legal consequence. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant; incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applications are private or non-public until opened. Once the applications are opened, the name and address of the applicant and the amount requested is public. All other data in an application is private or non-public data until all agreements are fully executed. After DNR has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data in an application is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. § 13.37. A statement by a grantee that the application is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the application (Minn. Stat. § 13.599, subd. 3).

Application Submission Instructions

After reading through the Request for Applications, complete all parts of the application. Grant applicants are required to submit applications through the [2026 Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency Application Portal](#). Applications must be received by September 14, 2026, to be considered for funding. The applicant is responsible for ensuring their submission is complete and received by DNR by the deadline; applications received after the deadline will not be eligible for consideration. DNR is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems causing an application to be received late.

Review Process and Timeline

All applicants must meet the minimum requirements identified in this Request for Applications to obtain funding.

A UCF Grants Steering Committee, made up of staff from the DNR Division of Forestry and select stakeholders, will evaluate applications received by the application deadline, and recommend projects and award amounts to the DNR. DNR will review the UCF Grants Steering Committee recommendations and is responsible for final award decisions. DNR can determine to not award or reduce awards based on grantee capacity including grantee operating budgets and staffing capacity, amount of unexpended open grants with DNR UCF, and other capacity concerns as outlined in the pre-award financial risk assessment supplemental questionnaire. Performance on currently open grants will also factor into capacity concerns and final grant award amount decisions. Final grant awards are contingent upon a pre-award financial review to ensure there are no concerns that cannot successfully be mitigated upon negotiation with the State. *The award decisions of DNR are final and not subject to appeal.*

The timeline below from “Application grant process, project selection, financial and capacity review” through “Contracts executed, grant work begins” is pending based on application submissions.

Process	Timeline
RFA posted on the DNR website	August 3, 2026
Questions from applicants on application process due	August 31, 2026
Applications due	September 14, 2026
Application grant review process, project selection, financial and capacity review	September 15, 2026 – November 12, 2026
Grant notifications	November 13, 2026
Grant agreement negotiations begin	November 13, 2026 – February 3, 2027
Work plans approved, contract signing and execution	February 3, 2027 – March 3, 2027
Contracts executed, grant work begins	March 3, 2027
All grant work completed, final reimbursement request submitted	June 1, 2029

DNR expects to contact selected grantees by November 13, 2026. If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures after the grant contract is fully executed, and the grant has reached its effective date.

Awards are not publicly announced until all grant agreements are fully executed.

Required financial and grantee capacity review

To protect the interest of the State and to ensure the effective and timely completion of publicly funded grant projects, agencies must ensure that entities that receive grants are financially and operationally capable of performing all duties required of the grant. The [OGM 08-06](#) policy establishes minimum requirements for granting agencies conducting pre-award risk assessment and financial review of potential grantees. As required by *Minn. Stat. §16B.981/Chapter 62 - MN Laws, Article 7, Section 11*, a pre-award risk assessment must be conducted for grant awards of \$50,000 or more. This policy does not apply to Tribal governments.

All grantees as defined in *Minn. Stat. §16B.981 Subd. 1 (c)* applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial and capacity review prior to final grant award of \$50,000 and higher. Such applicants must include the Pre-Award Risk Assessment Questionnaire and associated financial documents with their application.

Review of the Pre-Award Risk Assessment Questionnaire and associated financial documents may result in a request for more information for the purpose of satisfying any DNR concerns. When requesting additional information from a potential grantee, DNR will give the potential grantee 15 calendar days to respond or to work with the DNR to develop a risk mitigation plan to satisfy the concerns.

Questions:

Submit questions to ucf.dnr@state.mn.us. Answers will be posted weekly [online](#). Questions must be submitted no later than August 31, 2026 to be included on the website. Any questions asked after August 31, 2026 will not be addressed. Applicants seeking information after this date will be directed to the grant FAQs.

Liability and Project Implementation

DNR is not liable for costs incurred by any organization or individual for work performed in the preparation and production of an application, nor for any work performed prior to the execution of the grant contract. Project work and expenses that are eligible for reimbursement with grant funds CANNOT be started or incurred until the grant contract is fully executed. Grant agreements for awarded projects are expected to be finalized by March 3, 2027. A fully executed grant agreement is one where all necessary signatures have been obtained.

Reimbursement and Reporting

All grant funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis only. Advanced payment will not be available through this grant program. Reimbursement requests may be submitted semi-annually by the following deadlines:

1. May 1, 2027
2. November 1, 2027
3. May 1, 2028
4. November 1, 2028
5. June 1, 2029 (Final Report and reimbursement request)

The following information must be submitted to be deemed a complete reimbursement request:

- An Accomplishment Report describing the grant accomplishments/deliverables and their impacts since the last reimbursement request.
- A Partial Payment Form along with detailed invoices and proof of payment for grant-funded purchases.
- Attachments or photo documentation of project progress at appropriate phases, and communications examples, illustrations, diagrams, charts, graphs, and maps to show results.
- Shapefiles of all trees removed (including stumps ground), treated, maintained, and planted, with the planted trees identified by species (Note: Grantees without access to shapefile-generating software can notify DNR staff who will work with the grantee to assist in this requirement.)
- Any other documentation requested to demonstrate that work was sufficiently completed.

Following the submission of invoices and accomplishment reports, a compliance check will be conducted by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources staff. Staff will do a site evaluation ensuring that tree species submitted on maps are correctly identified and planted in accordance with the standards set in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources [Pocket Guide to Planting Trees](#).

All complete reimbursement requests received by the deadlines will be reviewed by DNR staff. Provided that the grantee is in compliance with all terms of the Request for Application and grant contracts, verified project activities and eligible expenses will be reimbursed up to 90%, with 10% retained until the project is completed.

Accommodations may be offered in select circumstances, and in accordance with Office of Grants Management policies, at the discretion of the agency. Please reach out to DNR staff at ucf.dnr@state.mn.us for more information on requesting accommodations.

If two successive updates are missed, DNR staff will contact grantee requesting a grant progress update and explanation of why grant reporting has been late. If a report is not received within 60 days of the request, DNR will assume work is not being conducted and begin steps to close-out the grant contract and reallocate funds. This may result in a grant agreement being closed out early, and DNR staff noting in the grant closeout report the lack of performance and contract compliance by the grantee.

If within two successive updates necessary progress has not been made in accomplishing work within the grant contract, DNR staff may request a meeting to discuss why progress is not being made and may begin steps to close-out the grant contract and reallocate funds. This may result in a grant agreement being closed out early, and DNR staff noting in the grant closeout report the lack of performance and contract compliance by the grantee.

Project Completion

All project work must be completed, and the final request for reimbursement (along with the final report) must be submitted by **June 1, 2029**.

Grant Performance

If awarded, grant performance will be reviewed on timeliness, budget management, reporting and documentation, compliance check performance, meeting outcomes and deliverables, responsiveness and communication, and acknowledgement and reflection on grant performance. This information may be considered during future grant applications and award processes.

Other Considerations

DNR reserves the right to:

- Contact awarded applicants about applications for other UCF grants.
- Post funded applications and reports, including images and maps, to the DNR website.
- Consider existing open grants for performance and community need for additional funding.
- Reject any or all proposals received.
- Waive or modify irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant.
- Reduce award amounts or not award applicants based on grant performance, applicant organization capacity, and other components of the pre-award risk assessment process.
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFA requirements and with appropriate notice to potential applicants, to best serve the interests of the state of Minnesota.
- Amend program specifications after the RFA release, with appropriate notice to potential applicants.
- Require a good faith effort on the part of the grantee to work with DNR after project completion to develop or implement project as proposed and contracted.
- Withhold any payments or cancel contracts when contract conditions are not met.

Application evaluation scoresheet

Selection Criteria and Weight

The steering committee will be reviewing each application according to the scoring process outlined below. Applications are reviewed on a 100-point scale, and past grant performance on a 5-point scale. Scores will be used to develop final recommendations. Applicants are encouraged to score their own applications using the evaluation score sheet below before submitting the application. While not required, this step may help applicants meet the criteria that grant reviewers will be evaluating their project with.

To be funded, the application must meet Minimum Required Project score of 60, or greater, and either no Past Grant Performance Score (e.g. no Grant Closeout Form was available) or a Minimum Past Grant Performance score of 3, or greater. Applications must meet all requirements for funding (see “Application Requirements”), applicants will be funded based on their eligible request, application score, and amount of available funding.

PROJECT APPLICATION SCORING (maximum score is 100)	
<i>Application projects for the Protect Community Forests for Community Resiliency grants will be evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria and points:</i>	<i>Points</i>
1. Project Overview and Need - Response is clear, complete, descriptive, consistent with supplemental documentation (e.g., map), and clearly meets all minimum and additional requirements. (6 points) - Community has a readiness to take on a project of the proposed scope and size. (8 points) - Application details the projects impact and shows significant need for project and state grant funding. Evaluation is based on project’s impact and effectiveness. (8 points) - Project serves underserved populations and application identifies the underserved populations affected. Examples of underserved populations include, but are not limited to, individuals living in areas with high exposure to negative environmental conditions, who are low-income, persons with disabilities, individuals with less than a high school education, those with limited English proficiency, populations experiencing low life expectancy, older adults, veterans, and persons of color. (4 points) - Project seeks to maintain or expand tree canopy through planting, replacement planting, canopy preservation, proactive management or other eligible activities. (4 points)	30
2. Project Timeline - Timeline provides specific dates for all activities. (3 points) - Timeline is easy to read and comprehend. (3 points) - Timeline explicitly accounts for grant execution, reporting, and end dates. (3 points) - Timeline follows best management practices. (5 points) - Timeline is realistic given the extent of the proposed project activities and the resources available and requested to accomplish the project. (6 points)	20
3. Project Budget and Budget Explanation - Budget explanation is detailed and provides specific dollar amounts for anticipated use. (2 points) - Budget totals equal amount requested and match budget attachment. (3 points) - Financially realistic and cost effective. (3 points) - Project budget uses grant funds only for eligible expenses. (2 points)	10
4. Community Engagement and Impact - Planning and collaboration clearly serves and includes residents within the project area, with explicit consideration for underserved populations, as defined above and in the Project Evaluation section of this document. (3 points) - Application details actionable goals for resident engagement. (2 points)	

Protect Community Forests

- Application demonstrates how affected communities will be benefited and the ways in which input will be incorporated prior to and throughout the project. (3 points) - Environmental impacts have been addressed and show an appropriate approach to mitigate negative impacts (e.g., danger of dead ash, benefits of planting trees, stormwater mitigation). (3 points) - Application demonstrates awareness and attention to potential barriers to participation by some community members and addresses actionable items for these communities (examples include program focal areas, outreach in multiple languages, inclusion throughout the project). Mitigation strategies for engaging underserved populations, as defined in the Request for Applications, are clear and measurable. (4 points)	15
5. Communications - Communication strategies are directly related to project accomplishments, and activities. (3 points) - Communication methods are in multiple forms of communication are listed with potential to reach the public and/or the intended audience. (4 points) - Tree care-related messaging includes EAB information designed to slow the spread, the importance of trees in communities, and/or pruning and maintenance. (3 points)	10
6. Key Personnel - Key personnel are listed with corresponding project roles and showcase the expertise and capacity to complete proposed grant work. Letter(s) of support are submitted, if collaborating with outside organization(s). Letter identifies the specific role(s) the partner organization will play throughout the project (3 points) - All components that require a certification are met and listed (e.g. education of residents, residential work, planting Balled & Burlapped). (5 points) - All certifications and education degrees are listed for staff or contractors. (2 points) - A high scoring applicant will have staff or contractors with a degree in a related field, or a combination/multiple staff with ISA Certified Arborist, TCIA accreditations, or both and demonstrate the capacity to successfully complete the project in the grant period. (5 points)	15
Total	100

PAST GRANT PERFORMANCE SCORING (maximum score is 5)	
PAST DNR URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT RECIPIENTS ONLY The section on past grant performance within the Community Tree Planting Grant application will be evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria and points:	Points
1. Past Grant Performance - If addressed, most recent UCF Grant Closeout form is provided by applicant. - The most recent UCF Grant Closeout form is addressed. This may include addressing meeting timeliness, budget management, reporting and documentation, meeting outcomes and deliverables, responsiveness and communication. - Past performance issues and corrective actions are explained, if applicable. - Past performance of strong grant management practices is described, and continued implementation is explained, if applicable. - A high scoring applicant will provide insightful reflection on past performance, and provide specific examples of learning and corrective actions, or continued strong grant management practices.	5
Total	5