DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants

2025 Request for Applications

Grant Overview

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) welcomes applications from local units of government and nonprofit organizations within Minnesota that will encourage and promote the inventory, planting, assessment, maintenance, improvement, protection, utilization, and restoration of trees and forest resources to enhance community forest ecosystem health and sustainability as well as to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and promote energy conservation.

Eligible Applicants

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

Eligible Activities

The following activities are eligible for grant funding:

- Community forestry work conducted 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)
- Work conducted by staff or contractors
- Tree inventories
- Developing a management plan, which can include but is not limited to a forestry-related climate adaption plan, all lands management plan, or emerald ash borer management plan. *Incorporation of environmental justice components and wood utilization components into management plans is encouraged.*
- Tree and stump removal and tree replacement
- Tree planting for diversity
- Chemical treatment of ash trees with an injectable non-neonicotinoid insecticide (e.g. emamectin benzoate) if it provides long-term impact or seed funds an intended long-term program in communities up to 10 miles outside of generally infested areas across Minnesota (please see online guidance for more information)
- Gravel bed construction and maintenance
- Developing a tree ordinance
- Tree cabling, if a long-term evaluation plan is included
- Maintenance pruning
- Development, purchase, or printing of materials used to educate, engage, and conduct outreach to residents about urban and community forestry
- Urban and community forestry or arboriculture education and outreach
- Professional certifications and/or training related to the proposed project
- Wood utilization
- Additional plant healthcare treatments, as approved

Grant Priority

Consistent with legislative direction, priority for ReLeaf grant awards will be given to projects located in a census block group with a supplemental demographic index score in the 70th percentile or higher as identified using the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool methodology provided in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's environmental justice screen technical documentation dated July 31, 2024. Please click here to view the Priority Area map.

The supplemental demographic index is a combination of five socioeconomic factors averaged together for

each Census block group. The supplemental demographic index can provide an additional perspective on potential community vulnerability. The formula is as follows: supplemental demographic index = (% low-income + % persons with disabilities + % less than high school education + % limited English speaking + low life expectancy) / 5.

These priorities align 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.

Project Evaluation

Applications will be rated by a tiered structure to meet statutory priority. The priority is evaluated and carries a unique weight to identify at what level the applicant meets the statutory priority.

Applications will be sorted into one of three tiers based on the criteria outlined. To be funded, the application must be complete, meet Minimum Required Project score of 70, and a Minimum Past Grant Performance score of 3 (or have no Grant Closeout Form with the Urban & Community Forestry UCF program). Applications must meet all requirements to receive funding (see "Application Requirements" section below), they will be funded based on their eligible request and amount of available funding.

In addition to assessing how well a proposed project aligns with the stated priorities, applications will be reviewed and scored based on the overall strength of the proposal. This evaluation serves the following purposes:

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

Please review the tiers outlined in the "Application evaluation scoresheet" to determine how your application may be scored.

Funding

A total of $7,198,200 is available in general fund dollars to fund projects managing forest pest and disease, through community forestry activities on non-state public lands and residential land for low-income residents. There is no minimum to the dollar amount applicants can request. The maximum amount that will be funded is $500,000.

No matching funds are required and **submitting 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.

Grant Requirements
- Applicant 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 public trees removed and planted must be mapped and submitted.
- Applicant 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:
  - A detailed project description, including goals, objectives, and a timeline.
  - A budget outlining project costs, including labor, materials, and equipment.
  - A letter of support from any identified partner organization(s).
- Applications must show the ability to implement the project, meet all grant objectives, and submit a final report by June 30, 2027.

PRE-AWARD RISK ASSESSMENT

- Applicants who request $50,000 or more in grant funds must complete and submit the Pre-Award Risk Assessment Questionnaire (not applicable for Tribal governments).
- If required, the questionnaire must be completed in full and all supporting financial documentation must be submitted to be considered.

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, which can be requested from ucf.dnr@state.mn.us. If you are unsure if your organization has previously held a grant contract with 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 event no funding due to past grant performance issues for which there is no evidence of corrective actions being taken.
- 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, the section can be left blank. There will be no penalty 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.
- Local units of government must adopt an urban and community forest management plan through this grant process if the community does not yet have one in place. The management plan must be adopted or re-adopted after June 30, 2017, and must be submitted to DNR.
- 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.
- Management plans are encouraged to incorporate wood utilization when removals are occurring.
- Management plans are encouraged to incorporate priority for environmental justice communities as defined in the priority project section of this document. This may include prioritizing plantings 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 manicured 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.

- Tree removals conducted in park woodlands:
  - o For the purposes of this grant, park woodlands are defined as publicly owned spaces that, beyond trail creation or access, are not regularly mowed.
  - o Removals in woodlands need to be mitigating a public safety concern or to address degraded ecosystems.
  - o 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:
  - o The species identified for planting must increase the diversity of the community's tree canopy and advanced 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 without a completed tree survey may contact the DNR at ucf.dnr@state.mn.us to receive available community tree survey data.
  - o Tree species listed on the Minnesota 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.
  - o Species list for trees to be planted must be submitted to and approved by DNR prior to planting.
  - o Species list and numbers can be amended following the submission of tree inventory/survey data.
  - o Tree stock must meet ANSI Z-60.1 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 in unavailable.
    - DNR recommends trees be purchased with a one-year warranty.
- All trees removed and planted on public land 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, you may purchase it as part of this grant, or please contact 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.
- Tree removal projects must report how wood material was managed.

RESIDENTIAL TREE CARE
- Removals conducted on residential property must be offered a tree replacement of one tree planted for each tree removed. Property owner 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.
- For activities on residential land, a formal agreement between the resident and the ReLeaf 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 agreement; this may include, but is not limited to: planting, follow-up maintenance, monitoring, or other on-site work.*
  - *I will plant and care for my tree according to the Tree Owner's Manual for as long as it is within my right to do so.*

WOOD UTILIZATION
- Wood utilization projects must report on how many board feet or cords of wood are utilized.

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

Eligible Project Expenses

Eligible project expenses are those incurred through eligible 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 or project implementation. Eligible activities, under such contracts included but may not be limited to outreach, public tree inventories, management plans, treatment, and tree removal and replanting.
- Time spent on the project by staff of the grant recipients.
- Project-related materials may include tree stock, mulch, watering bags, staking materials, tree wrap or guards, shovels, printing, etc.
- 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 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" caliper diameter.
- Purchase of tree species that already make up 10% or more of the community's public trees, or in a family that makes up 20% or more of the public trees.
- Purchase of plants other than trees, such as living ground covers, sod, grass seed, and flowers.
- Purchase of land or easements.
- Major soil purchases, grade changes or construction.
- Capital expenditures (items with a unit cost of $5,000 or more), such as buildings, motor vehicles, trails, or other permanent structures.
- Experimental practices not approved by DNR.

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

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 does or does not meet the grant priority 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:

1. Application form ([PDF, format unchanged](#))
2. Budget ([Excel, format unchanged, additional lines added as needed)](#)
3. Application identifies locations of grant project work. Submission must show whether work will take place within the Priority Areas; examples may include:
   - Application states:
     - that project work is taking place community-wide based on your organization's geographic purview; or
     - that work will only take place within areas identified by the supplemental demographic index; or
     - that no project work will take place within the supplemental demographic index.
   - Maps are provided, showing project area (ex. printing screenshot of [Priority Area map](#), outlining project area, scanning, and submitting with application;)
4. 3-Year Tree Establishment Plan for newly-planted trees, *if planting trees* ([PDF, format unchanged](#))
5. 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)
6. Local units of government, submit a management Plan, if already completed (local units of government **must** have adopted on or after June 30, 2017, and submitted with their application or plan to adopt a management plan through this grant process- if your community does not have a management plan in place, budget for the cost of obtaining one during this grant program)
7. Letter(s) of support, *if collaborating with an outside organization* (any format acceptable)
8. 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](#))

9. List of Authorized Signer(s), *including name(s), title(s), and email address(es).* (Any format acceptable)

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 this 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 the applications 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, which can be found online. Grant applicants are required to submit applications by email to ucf.dnr@state.mn.us. Applications must be received electronically by November 11, 2025**,** to be considered for funding. The applicant is responsible for ensuring their submission is 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, recommend projects and award amounts to the DNR. DNR will review the UCF Grants Steering Committee recommendations and is responsible for final award decisions. Final grant awards are contingent upon a pre-award financial 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.*

Process	Timeline
RFA posted on the DNR website	August 13, 2025
Questions from applicants on application process due	October 28, 2025
Applications due	November 11, 2025
Project Selection Recommendations; Financial and Capacity Review;	November 12, 2025-February 6, 2026
Grant Agreement Negotiations, Work Plans Approved, Contracts Executed, Grant Work Begins	February 9, 2026 - May 29, 2026

DNR expects to contact selected grantees by February 6, 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, the 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 October 28, 2025 to be included on the website.

Liability and Project Implementation

DNR is not liable for any 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 fully executed by May 29, 2026. 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. Reimbursement may be submitted semi-annually by the following deadlines:
1. June 15, 2026
2. December 15, 2026
3. June 30, 2027 Final Report Due

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.
- Photo documentation of project progress at appropriate phases, and illustration, diagrams, charts, graphs, and maps to show results.
- Shapefiles of 1) all trees removed (including stumps ground), treated, maintained, and planted on public land, with the trees identified by species, and 2) all work on residential land aggregated by census track. (Note: Grantees without access to shapefile-generating software can notify DNR staff at ucf.dnr@state.mn.us, who will work with the grantee to assist in this requirement.)

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 contract, 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.

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.

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 30, 2027**.

Grant Performance

If awarded, grant performance will be reviewed on timeliness, budget management, reporting and documentation, meeting outcomes and deliverables, responsiveness and communication, and acknowledgement and reflection on grant performance. This information may be considered for future grant application 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 minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant
- 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

Exhibit A: Application evaluation score sheet

Selection Criteria and Weight

The steering committee will be reviewing each eligible application 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 before submitting the application. While not required, this step may help applicants meet the criteria that grant reviewers will be scoring.

PROJECT PRIORITY SCORING (maximum score is 6)				
Application projects for the MN ReLeaf grant will be evaluated and prioritized according to the following criteria: *- Projects located in a census block group with a supplemental demographic index score in the 70th percentile or higher within the state of Minnesota.* *- Justification of Priority Area focus methodology.*				
Criterion	**Meets Priority (High) – 3 points**	**Meets Priority (Medium) – 2 points**	**Meets Priority (Low) – 1 point**	**Does Not Meet Priority (Very Low) – 0 points**
Project in Priority Area (SDI ≥70%). Project occurs fully or mostly in a census block group at or above the 70th percentile SDI. Includes map.	100% of the grant project work is within the Priority Area.	50%, or more, of the grant project work is within the Priority Area.	49%, or less, of the grant project work is within the Priority Area.	Applicant is not conducting any work within the Priority Area.
Justification of Priority Area Focus. Justification of calculation through assumptions or data.	Justification is **clear, logical, and data-informed**. Applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of how each eligible activity ties to the Priority Areas, using quantitative or spatial data (e.g., GIS maps, cost estimates, time allocations, or tree inventory stats). Includes realistic assumptions	Justification is **generally sound** but lacks detailed evidence. Applicant explains activities in Priority Areas but provides only partial quantification or assumptions.	Justification is **vague or inconsistent**. Little explanation of how the percent was determined or activities are not clearly tied to Priority Areas.	Justification is **missing, illogical, or unsupported**. No attempt to explain how the number was calculated or claimed percentage seems inflated/unrealistic.

Priority Tiered Review Rubric

To be funded, the application must meet Minimum Required Project score of 70 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" section), applicants will be funded based on their eligible request and amount of available funding.

Priority Score = Project in Priority Area Score + Justification of Priority Area Focus			
	Priority Score	Minimum Required Project Score (Out of 100)	Minimum Past Grant Performance Score (Out of 5), if applicable
Tier A – 1st Scored	5-6	70	3
Tier B – 2nd Scored	3-4	70	3
Tier C – 3rd Scored	0-2	70	3

PROJECT APPLICATION SCORING (maximum score is 100)	
Application projects for the MN ReLeaf Grants will be evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria and points:	**Points**
1. **Project Overview and Need** - Application is clear, complete, descriptive and clearly meets all minimum requirements and additional requirements. - Community has a readiness to take on a project of the proposed scope and size. - Application details the projects impact and shows high need for project and state grant funding. - Application incorporates the preservation and increase of canopy cover, and/or maintenance, especially within Priority Areas.	30
2. **Project Timeline** - Timeline provides specific dates for all activities. - Timeline is easy to read and comprehend. - Timeline follows best management practice. - Timeline accounts for grant reporting and end dates. - Timeline is realistic given the extent of the proposed project activities and the resources available and requested to accomplish the project.	20
3. **Project Budget and Budget Explanation** - Budget explanation is detailed and provides specific dollar amounts for anticipated use. - Budget totals equal amount requested. - Financially realistic and cost effective. - Project budget uses grant funds only for eligible expenses. - Project seeks to maintain tree canopy or replant more trees than removed.	10
4. **Community Engagement and Impact** - Planning and collaboration clearly serves and includes residents within the project area. - Affected/benefitted communities are engaged and input is incorporated prior to project implementation and throughout the project. - Potential environmental impacts to residents have been addressed and shows an appropriate approach to mitigate negative impacts. - Application demonstrates awareness to potential barriers to participation by some community members and addresses with actionable items for these communities (examples include program focal areas, outreach in multiple languages, inclusion throughout the project), impacts on priority populations are clear and tangible. - Project focuses on Priority Areas, and or within populations that comprise Priority Areas (communities with higher populations of low-income residents, persons with disabilities, less than high school education, limited English speaking, and low life expectancy).	15

5. Communications - Communication strategies are directly related to project accomplishments, activities, or both, and multiple forms of communication are listed with potential to reach the public. - Tree care-related messaging includes EAB information designed to slow the spread, the importance of trees in communities, and/or pruning and maintenance.	10
6. Key Personnel - Key personnel are listed with corresponding project roles and showcase the expertise and capacity to complete proposed grant work. - All components that require a certification are met and listed (e.g. for residential work, planting Balled & Burlappe, etc.). - All certifications and education degrees are listed for staff or contractors. - A high scoring community 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.	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 • 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**