



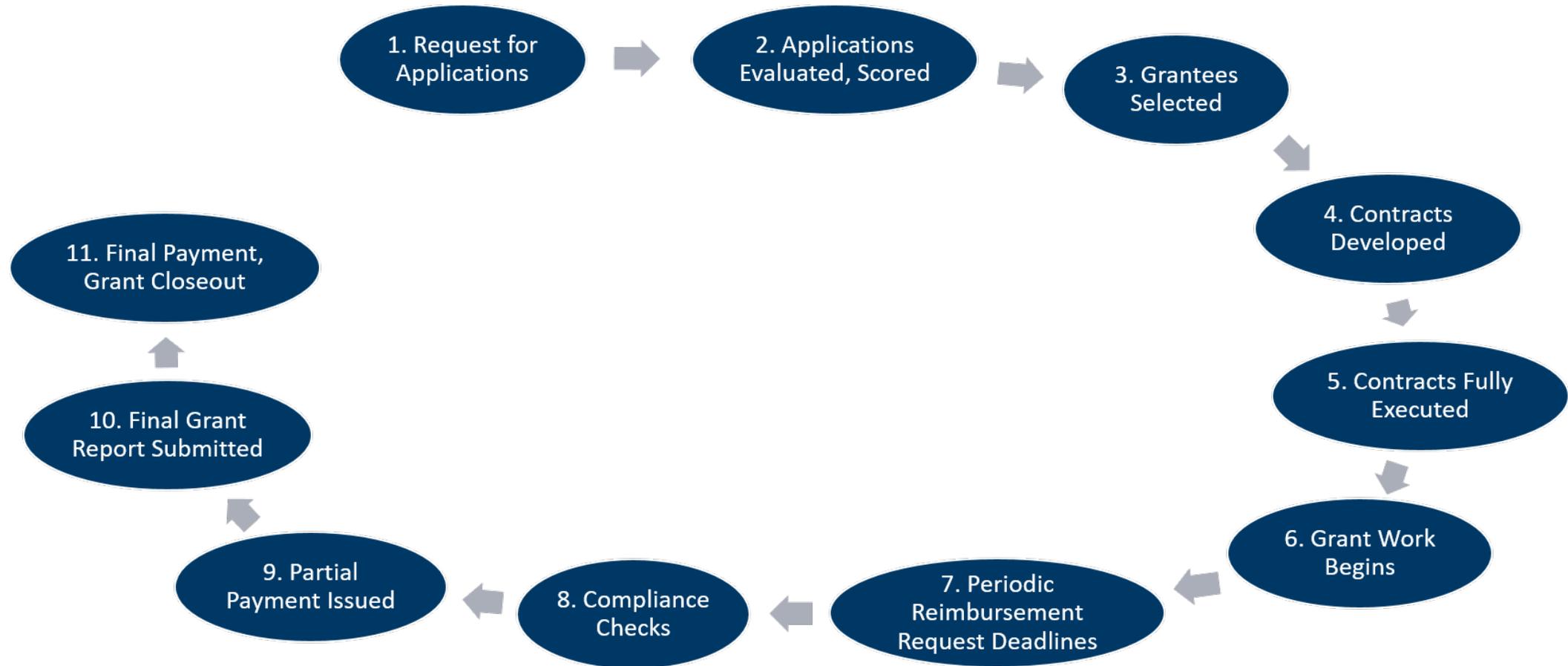
2023 ReLeaf Community Forestry and Shade Tree Bonding Grant Programs

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DNR Urban & Community Forestry Assistance

- We provide grants to local units of government (LUGs) for community forest management
- Eligible activities depend on funding
 - Inventories, EAB Management Plans, Tree Removals, Tree Plantings, Chemical Treatment
 - Where is our funding used?
- Grants are competitive, which means that applications are evaluated according to set criteria

Grant Life Cycle



2023 Shade Tree Program Bonding Grants

Grant Overview

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources welcomes applications from local units of government and tribal governments within Minnesota that use strategic actions to replace trees lost to forest pests, disease, or storm; or to establish a more diverse community forest better able to withstand disease and forest pests.

2023 Shade Tree Program Bonding Grants

Grant Overview

The DNR has a total of \$10,063,000 available in bond dollars (\$8,400,000 in general obligation bonding and \$1,663,000 general fund bonding) to fund projects managing forest pest and disease through community forestry activities on public or tribal lands. No minimum dollar amount is required. 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.

Shade Tree Program: Eligible Applicants

Local units of government and tribal governments within Minnesota are eligible to apply, including:

- Cities
- Counties
- Regional authorities
- Joint powers boards
- Towns
- Parks and recreation boards in cities of the first class
- Tribal governments (eligible for \$1.663 million in general fund bonding)

Shade Tree Program: Eligible Applicants

Priority will be given to:

- Projects that serve a community (or communities) with population less than 20,000.
- Projects removing and replacing ash trees that pose significant public safety concerns
- Projects that benefit underserved populations and areas of concern for environmental justice (communities with higher populations of low-income residents, or people of color, including tribal communities, or both)
- Communities who have staff, who plan to certify their staff during the grant period, or who will contract with companies with staff with professional tree care credentials

Shade Tree Program: Eligible Project Expenses

Grant funds can be used for tree removal and tree planting projects:

- Professional contracts for technical assistance or project implementation by individuals or organizations not a part of the local government unit
- Site preparation and planting, including mulch, watering bags, staking materials, and tree wrap or guards
- Equipment purchases less than \$5,000 that are used to complete the project
- Purchasing of trees for diversity

Shade Tree Program: Ineligible Project Expenses

Grant funds cannot be used for:

- Staff time for local government unit employees
- Purchase of trees listed on the Minnesota Noxious Weed List, or the DNR's Invasive Terrestrial Plants list
- Capital expenditures (items with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more), such as buildings, motor vehicles, or other permanent structures
- Purchase of balled and burlapped trees, 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 whose family makes up 20% or more of the public trees
- Purchase of chemicals for insecticide treatment
- Gravel bed construction
- Materials and staff time used to educate, engage, and conduct outreach to citizens

Shade Tree Program: Review Process and Timeline

A UCF Grants Steering Committee, made up of DNR Forestry staff and select stakeholders, will recommend projects and award amounts. The steering committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. DNR will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for final award decisions. *The award decisions of DNR are final and not subject to appeal.*

RFA posted on the DNR website.....	July 31, 2023
Application Questions due	Sept. 22, 2023
Applications due.....	Oct. 2, 2023
Application Grant Review Process.....	five weeks
Project Selection; Grant Agreement Negotiations Begin	Nov. 6, 2023
Work Plans Approved, Contracts Executed, Grant Work Begins.....	Feb. 2, 2024

Shade Tree Program: Reimbursement

All funds will be awarded on a reimbursement basis. Up to 90% is reimbursed each reimbursement period, with the final 10% retained until the project is completed. The Reimbursement Request Form and required reports must be received by: July 1, 2024; January 1, 2025; July 1, 2025; January 1, 2026; July 1, 2026; January 1, 2027; June 30, 2027.

Project Completion

Projects must be completed by December 31, 2027 and final grant reports must be submitted, by January 15, 2028.

Tracking Bond Financed Property

This grant requires a declaration be recorded against real estate that is purchased or improved with state bond proceeds. The recorded declaration proclaims a property as “Restricted Property,” which states that the property is subject to the grant agreement and prevents the property from being sold, mortgaged, encumbered, or otherwise disposed of without the approval of the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget for 125% of the useful life of the Restricted Property.

The useful life for this grant is 30 years, meaning 125% of the useful life of any Restricted Property is 37.5 years.

Tracking Bond Financed Property

- When trees are planted in parks or public-owned properties, a General Obligation Bond Financed Property Declaration or General Fund Bond Financed Property Declaration must be recorded on the legal description with the County Recorder.
- When trees are planted in tribal lands, a General Fund Financed Property Declaration will need to be recorded in the real estate records at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

If the grant project involves more than one park or public-owned property, one declaration can be recorded with multiple legal descriptions. Consider recording the declaration *after* trees have been planted in parks or on public-owned properties, instead of beforehand, since removing a declaration from a legal description requires a written release from the commissioners of Management and Budget and Department of Natural Resources.

Tracking Bond Financed Property

For projects or portions of projects that lie within roads, highways or utility or transit corridors, easements or rights-of-way, a declaration waiver request may be submitted and if approved by Minnesota Management and Budget, a certification may be used in lieu of a Declaration, in which the grantee acknowledges that the property purchased and/or improved is still state bond financed property and thus subject to certain statutory requirements will suffice in lieu of a declaration.

Certifications and Declarations must be filed with the appropriate authority (i.e., County Recorder or Bureau of Indian Affairs) **before** requesting reimbursement from DNR. Any declaration waiver requests must be approved by Minnesota Management and Budget prior to DNR staff approving reimbursement.

Scoring Criteria

The steering committee will be reviewing each eligible application on a 100-point scale. Applicants are encouraged to score their own applications using the evaluation score sheet before submitting the application. Applications to the Shade Tree Program Bonding Grants will be evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria and points:

- 1. Project serves community, or communities, with population less than 20,000 (5 points)**
- 2. Project Overview and Need (20 points)**
 - Application is clear and complete
 - Community has a readiness to take on a project of the proposed scope and size
 - Project focuses on significant public safety concerns

Scoring Criteria (cont'd)

3. Project Timeline (15 points)

- Timeline provides specific dates for all activities
- Timeline is easy to read and comprehend
- Timeline follows best management practice for all pest and disease management including not removing ash trees when EAB are actively flying

4. Project Budget and Budget Explanation (20 points)

- Budget explanation provides specific dollar amounts for anticipated use
- Budget totals equal amount requested
- Financially realistic and cost effective

Scoring Criteria (cont'd)

5. Project Impacts on Priority Populations (20 points)

- Planning and collaboration clearly serves and includes areas of concern for environmental justice
- Applicant demonstrates actionable items for these communities; impacts on diverse populations are clear and tangible

6. Communications (10 points)

- Communication strategies directly related to project accomplishments, activities, or both, and multiple forms of communication are listed with potential to reach the public

7. Key Personnel (10 points)

- 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

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants

Grant Overview

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources welcomes applications from local units of government, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations within Minnesota that will encourage and promote the inventory, planting, assessment, maintenance, improvement, protection, 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.

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants

Grant Overview

The DNR has \$6,883,200 available in general fund dollars to fund projects managing forest pest and disease (with priority given to EAB) through community forestry activities on 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.

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants: Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations with 501(c) status, tribal governments, and local units of government within Minnesota, including cities, counties, regional authorities, joint powers boards, and towns. Parks and recreation boards in cities of the first class are also eligible to apply.

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants: Eligible Applicants

Priority will be given to:

- Projects that serve communities with populations less than 20,000.
- Organizations who have staff, who plan to certify their staff during the grant period, or who will contract with companies with staff with professional tree care credentials.
- Projects that prioritize emerald ash borer, especially removing and replacing ash trees that pose significant safety concerns.
- Projects that benefit underserved populations and areas of concern for environmental justice
- Projects that maintain or increase tree canopy cover.

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants: Eligible Project Expenses

- Community forestry work conducted on public land, or on residential land for low-income residents
- Professional contracts for technical assistance or project implementation
- Staff time for grant recipients
- Site preparation and planting, including trees, mulch, watering bags, staking materials, and tree wrap or guards
- Equipment purchases less than \$5,000 that are used to complete the project; equipment rentals
- Gravel bed construction
- Purchasing of trees for diversity
- Tree inventories; management plans
- Tree and stump removal and tree replacement
- Chemical treatment of ash trees with injectable emamectin benzoate
- Developing a tree ordinance
- Tree cabling, if a long-term evaluation plan is included; maintenance pruning
- Urban and community forestry or arboriculture education and outreach (materials, staff time)
- Professional certifications and/or training related to the proposed project
- Additional plant healthcare treatments, as approved

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants: Ineligible Project Expenses

Grant funds cannot be used for:

- Costs incurred prior to the start date on the fully executed grant agreement
- The purchase of trees listed on the Minnesota Noxious Weed List, or the DNR's Invasive Terrestrial Plants List
- Purchase of balled and burlapped trees, 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 whose family makes up 20% or more of the public trees
- Purchasing of plants such as shrubs, living ground covers, sod, grass seed, and flowers
- Purchasing 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, or other permanent structures
- Experimental practices not approved by DNR

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants: Review Process and Timeline

A UCF Grants Steering Committee, made up of DNR Forestry staff and select stakeholders, will recommend projects and award amounts. The steering committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. DNR will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for final award decisions. *The award decisions of DNR are final and not subject to appeal.*

RFA posted on the DNR website.....	July 31, 2023
Application Questions due	Sept. 4, 2023
Applications due.....	Sept. 18, 2023
Application Grant Review Process.....	four weeks
Project Selection; Grant Agreement Negotiations Begin	Oct. 16, 2023
Work Plans Approved, Contracts Executed, Grant Work Begins.....	Jan. 1, 2024

ReLeaf Community Forestry Grants: Reimbursement

All funds will be awarded on a reimbursement basis. Following reimbursement request submissions (provided that work has been completed without issue), grant funds will be reimbursed up to 90%, with the final 10% retained until the project is completed. If and when requesting reimbursement, the reimbursement request form and required reports must be received by:

1. June 3, 2024
2. December 2, 2024
3. June 2, 2025
4. December 1, 2025
5. June 1, 2026
6. December 1, 2026
7. June 30, 2027

Project Completion: All project work must be completed, and the final request for reimbursement (along with final reports) must be submitted by June 30, 2027.

ReLeaf Scoring Criteria

The steering committee will be reviewing each eligible application on a 100-point scale. Applicants are encouraged to score their own applications using the evaluation score sheet before submitting the application. Applications to the Shade Tree Program Bonding Grants will be evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria and points:

- 1. Project serves community, or communities, with population less than 20,000 (9 points)**
- 2. Project Overview and Need (30 points)**
 - Application is clear and complete
 - Community has a readiness to take on a project of the proposed scope and size
 - EAB prioritized, especially removing and replacing ash that pose significant safety concerns
 - Project prioritizes the preservation and increase of canopy cover, and/or maintenance

ReLeaf Scoring Criteria (cont'd)

3. Project Timeline (15 points)

- Timeline provides specific dates for all activities
- Timeline is easy to read and comprehend
- Timeline follows best management practice for EAB infestations
- Timeline accounts for grant program reporting and end dates

4. Project Budget and Budget Explanation (10 points)

- Budget explanation provides specific dollar amounts for anticipated use
- Budget totals equal amount requested
- Financially realistic and cost effective
- Project seeks to replant more trees than removed

ReLeaf Scoring Criteria (cont'd)

5. Project Impacts on Priority Populations (20 points)

- Planning and collaboration clearly serves and includes areas of concern for environmental justice
- Communities in areas of concern are engaged and input is incorporated prior to project implementation and through the project
- Applicant demonstrates actionable items for these communities; impacts on diverse populations are clear and tangible

6. Communications (8 points)

- Communication strategies directly related to project accomplishments, activities, or both, and multiple forms of communication are listed with potential to reach the public
- EAB-related messaging included designed to slow the spread

ReLeaf Scoring Criteria (cont'd)

7. Key Personnel (8 points)

- Key personnel are listed with corresponding project roles
- 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

Effective Grant Writing

- The care and attention you put into your application gives it the best chance of scoring highly, and receiving funding, so:
 - ✓ Spell check
 - ✓ Ask a coworker to review / edit
 - ✓ Brush up on match funding
 - ✓ Do the math twice (and then again)
 - ✓ ASK! If there is something confusing or unclear, please ask – I am here to help

Effective Grant Writing: Understanding Match Funding

- What is match funding?

Some financial assistance requires recipients to demonstrate a contribution to total project costs. These are match funds. If not required, providing match funds is generally viewed as advantageous.

- Match funds, once part of a project, must be reported on

- Kinds of Match Funding

- In-Kind Contributions
- Cash Contributions

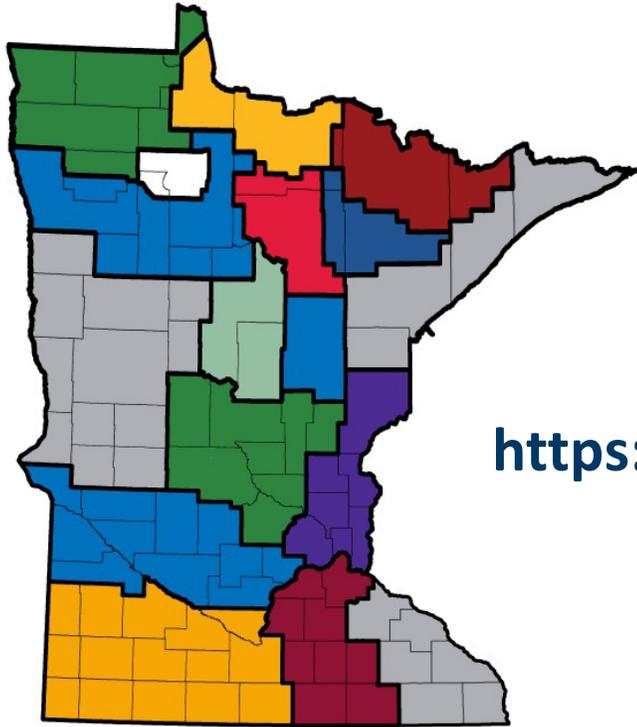
Reach out to your regional DNR Forester for Assistance!

DNR forester contact map for woodland assistance

We are Here to Help

DNR foresters answer questions about your woods and help you find the right programs to meet your woodland goals. We can help you get a Woodland Stewardship Plan and provide technical help to implement a project in your woods. We can assist with timber sales or connect you with consulting foresters or other professionals for help. Contact a DNR forester in your area.

Click on map where your woodland property is located to display the DNR forester contact information.



<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/woodlands/cfm-map.html>

Thank You!

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