



America the Beautiful Grant Program

I am pleased to provide you with information concerning the America the Beautiful (ATB) Grant Program, which provides funding for urban forestry projects. The ATB Grants are made possible through the USDA Forest Service's program on Urban and Community Forestry. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Forestry, is responsible for the administration of the ATB program and for the distribution of these funds to municipalities and non-profit organizations. This year, there will be \$56,269 in funding available through ATB Grants.

Please find the enclosed information package and grant application. The deadline for submitting an America the Beautiful Grant application is September 30, 2009. Approved projects must be completed by December 15, 2010.

ATB Grants can be applied to a wide range of urban forestry projects. Projects must be reflective of the needs of the community and should demonstrate the community's commitment to urban forestry. Particular note will be taken of the steps that the community is proposing to make towards the implementation of a full urban forest management plan.

In reviewing an application from a community, the Division of Forestry will consider whether the proposed project is apt to improve the health and condition of the urban forest and whether it is apt to increase the extent of the urban tree canopy cover. These advances may be accomplished directly (e.g., through tree planting) or indirectly (e.g., through education and outreach). The Division will also consider the role a proposal might play in advancing the public's understanding of the urban forest. Projects that emphasize the role of trees in improving environmental quality will be favored over those that simply emphasize the aesthetic properties of trees.

Urban forestry is much more than just planting trees. The number of tree planting projects approved by the Division will be limited to no more than one half of the available funds for the total Grant Program. Past experience suggests that the competition for grants focusing on the planting of trees will be high.

To help focus the efforts of communities with regards to urban forestry, the Division of Forestry has defined five categories of ATB grants. When submitting an application, an applicant is required to select one of these five categories as reflective of the proposal. Further details on these categories are contained within this document. The five categories are:

- Inner City Urban Forestry
- Municipal Urban Forestry Planning and Maintenance
- Management of Urban Forest Woodlands
- Planting or Maintenance of Legacy Trees
- Other, General Urban Forestry Projects

CT DEP is committed to reducing the spread of non-native, invasive plants. As such, the ATB Grant Program will not provide funding for the planting of tree or shrub species that have been determined to be non-native and invasive. A list of such species has been included on page 6 of the application package.

Please mail completed application to: America the Beautiful Attn: Chris Donnelly
Connecticut DEP, Division of Forestry
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

We look forward to your active participation in improving Connecticut's urban and community forests.

Sincerely,

Christopher Martin
State Forester
Division of Forestry
(860) 424-3630
July 23, 2009

Overview of the 2009 America the Beautiful Grants

Altogether, CT DEP Forestry has \$56,269 in currently available grant funding for urban forestry projects. These projects must be completed by the end of 2010. All of this money is sub-granted funding from the USDA Forest Service to the Division of Forestry in support of Connecticut's urban forestry efforts.

Incorporated non-profit organizations, municipalities and other units of local government are eligible for these grants, providing they possess a valid Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN).

Grant requests under the America the Beautiful (ATB) grant program may be for any amount up to \$8,000. In reviewing grant applications, CT DEP Forestry's primary interests are in the choice of projects that advance urban forestry in the state and that make for the best overall use of this funding. Larger grants will not be favored over smaller grants, or vice versa. Applicants are encouraged to keep this in mind when submitting their applications.

The ATB grants are reimbursement grants. In other words, payment for the granted activity will occur after the grant project has been completed and only be for expenditures made by the grant recipient in accordance with the grant agreement. Proof that payments have been made must be submitted before reimbursement will occur.

In addition, it is a requirement for reimbursement that all expenditures are to be matched 50:50. This match may be financial or it may be in-kind contributions from grant partners. Time donated to the project by volunteers and/or additional expenditures for goods or services may be used to meet this requirement of matching contributions. Grant recipients will not be allowed to use funding from other federal sources as a match for this grant.

To be considered, a copy of the grant application must be received by **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday September 30, 2009**. Grant applications may be submitted electronically or by fax. Grant applications must be no more than five pages in length. In addition, the application must include the Application Form that is at the end of this document. Successful applicants will be notified by November 4, 2009. Projects must be concluded by December 15, 2010.

Application Procedure

All applicants must submit the attached one-page “Application Form”. In addition, all applicants must provide a short (no more than 5 page) summary of their project. This summary should include the following:

- Legal name of applicant
- Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN)
- Contact name, address, phone number, fax number and e-mail address (as applicable)
- Project Title
- Project Cost
- Requested Grant Amount
- Project Duration
- Purpose and objectives of the project.
- A detailed narrative of how the project will be accomplished, not to exceed one page. This narrative should include a description of:
 - ✓ activities proposed
 - ✓ participants in the project
 - ✓ equipment needed (including publications to be used)
 - ✓ project administration
 - ✓ timetables
 - ✓ anticipated end result

Please be clear as to who has responsibility for what result, and what aspects of the anticipated activities will fall within the purview of the grant.

- A detailed summary of the project’s budget. In addition to anticipated expenditures, this budget should indicate how the amount requested in the grant will be matched, and whether this match will occur through additional funds and/or through in-kind services.¹
- A description of the benefits that will accrue from this project. These may be benefits to the grant applicant, other local entities, the community as a whole or the local urban forestry program.

If the project involves tree planting, the following should also be included:

- A site plan. This plan should not exceed 11 X 17 inches in size.
- A list of species to be planted. Species considered to be invasive may not be planted under this grant (please see the attached “CT DEP Invasive Species Policy”).
- A description of the specifications to be used in the tree planting. These specifications may be from publications such as the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Publication “Tree Planting” or the USDA Forest Service pamphlet “Planting Trees in Designed and Built Community Landscapes”. These publications are available on-line or upon request.
- A detailed 5-year maintenance plan for the trees to be planted, including reference to the group

¹ The grantee’s match of cost share funds must be with non-federal funds and/or non-federal in-kind contributions. When used for an Urban Forestry Education Grant project, matching funds or in-kind contributions cannot also be used as a match for any other federal cost-share project.

or department responsible for this maintenance. Maintenance plans should include descriptions of who will water these trees and who will be responsible for such activities as pruning them following establishment.

- A resolution of endorsement from the local government if a group other than the town or city has proposed plantings on municipally owned land.
- A letter of approval from the Connecticut Department of Transportation if planting is to be done within state right-of-ways.

In order to be given consideration, an application must be received by 4:00 p.m. on September 30, 2009.

With regards to whether specific activities or costs are allowable under a grant, CT DEP Forestry will follow US Forest Service guidelines. Generally, unless integral to the project, hardscape (benches, fences, etc.) and similar improvements to a site other than those directly associated with trees are not allowed. If there are questions on this issue, please contact CT DEP Forestry.

Review Process

A committee from the CT DEP - Division of Forestry will review each application. This committee will select those projects that best meet the goals and criteria of the program. If total requests for funds exceed available funding, applications will be ranked competitively. The committee will then use these rankings as the basis of its recommendations for funding. These recommendations will be presented to the State Forester for final approval.

Payment Process

The funds awarded under a grant will be paid when each of the following has been met²:

- the project has been completed,
- a final report has been received and approved by DEP, and
- the match to the grant, through additional expenditure, in-kind services or some combination of both, has been verified.

In the case of a tree-planting project, a representative of CT DEP Forestry must also inspect the planting before the project will be considered complete.

The final report is expected to include a brief summary of the project, a table of project expenditures and donated in-kind services, and copies of all invoices and checks associated with the project. Any additional descriptive materials will also be welcome. If a project is completed prior to December 15, 2010, requests for reimbursement on the grant may be submitted early.

² In cases of need, partial reimbursement prior to completion of the project may be made, but only after proof has been provided that expenditures have been made and that there have been contributions that match that expenditure. Arrangements for such partial reimbursements must be made prior to initiation of the grant.

Details Regarding the America the Beautiful Grants

The ATB grants are made available to municipalities and 501(c)3 non-profits, and are for the purpose of promoting the continued development of local urban forestry programs. Grants may be requested for any amount up to \$8,000. A total of \$56,269 is currently available for the ATB grant program.

CT DEP has established the following five categories of ATB grants:

- Inner City Urban Forestry Grant
- Municipal Urban Forestry Planning and Maintenance
- The Management of Urban Forest Woodlands
- The Planting or Maintenance of Legacy Trees
- Other, General Urban Forestry Projects

Descriptions of the Individual Categories

Inner City Urban Forestry Grant: The purpose of this category of the ATB Grant Program is to strengthen urban forestry in Connecticut's inner city communities. The specific targets for these grants are the older neighborhoods in Connecticut's cities. Grants may be used for tree planting, tree maintenance, urban forestry planning, educational programs that advance urban forestry or other, similar purposes. Favorable consideration will be given to applications that seek to enhance local involvement in urban forestry. At the conclusion of the Inner City Grant, there must be a definable accomplishment that has resulted from grant activities.

Municipal Urban Forestry Planning and Maintenance: The purpose of this grant category is to promote projects that will allow municipalities to better plan the management and maintenance of their urban forests and that will lead to direct increases in the maintenance of public trees in these municipalities. Projects such as inventories, the initiation or development of specific maintenance programs such as street tree pruning, the development of a comprehensive municipal forest plan or other, similar projects that enhance municipal capacity will be considered under this category. Projects that promote the use of trees as green infrastructure, such as in reducing stormwater runoff, air pollution reduction or the mitigation of the urban island effect, will also be considered in this category, as will those that make use of the US Forest Service i-Tree tools (please see www.itreetools.org). Non-profit organizations may apply through this category, but they must demonstrate that they have the cooperation of the municipality involved and that the project will directly benefit the municipality's tree management program.

The Management of Urban Forest Woodlands: Many urban woodlands, such as those found in public parks, suffer from extensive neglect and abuse. The purpose of this grant category is to assist municipalities and others in their ability to address the problems found all-too-commonly in these woodlands. In this category, projects such as urban woodland cleanup and restoration, control of invasive plants, and the protection of woodlands from abuses such as littering or vandalism will be considered. Projects that encourage the use of these lands in a manner compatible with their long-term health and maintenance as woodlands are welcome, provided there is an urban forestry benefit in this use (e.g., forestry education). Funds may be used for the development of a plan that will establish a maintenance and management program on these woodlands. However, grants cannot be used to fund revenue-producing activities, such as forest harvesting. The existence of an established management plan or the inclusion of a planning component in the proposed project will be viewed favorably in the review of grant applications for this category.

The Planting or Maintenance of Legacy Trees: The purpose of this category is to encourage the planting of new and the maintenance of existing large shade trees in our municipalities. Applications will only be considered for projects relating to trees that are on public property or for which a clear plan of responsibility regarding their establishment and care is included. Tree species to be planted must have the potential to grow into large shade trees. As one purpose of this grant category is to provide benefits across several generations, a description of how these trees will be maintained and managed over time must be included as a part of the grant application.

Other, General Urban Forestry Projects: Connecticut communities have a long tradition of making use of the America the Beautiful Grant Program for some very creative and highly beneficial local projects. Through this category, it is hoped that this tradition will continue. Projects under this category may include the planting of trees for public benefit; education of the public with regards to exotic pests or diseases that affect trees; the production of booklets, pamphlets or flyers; increases in municipality capacity through the purchase of inventory software or GIS and computer hardware; the hiring of professionals for urban forestry planning; and so on. Projects must comply with the general guidelines of the America the Beautiful program.

When applying for an ATB grant, it is important that the applicant identify into which of these five categories the grant application falls.

Final Notes

If the project results in a publication or a press release, this publication or press release should reference the role that USDA Forest Service funding and CT DEP assistance has played in the creation of this publication. Similarly, the USDA Forest Service and CT DEP should be mentioned on any markers emplaced in association with a project.

The Department of Environmental Protection is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer, providing programs and services in a fair and impartial manner. In conformance with the Americans with Disability Act, the DEP makes every effort to provide equally effective services for persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities needing auxiliary aids or services or who wish more information by voice or TTY/TDD may call (860) 424-3000.

Projects that discriminate with regards to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex or disability will not be funded through the Urban Forestry Grants program.

Contact Information

To learn more the Urban Forestry Grant program or the urban forestry program in the State of Connecticut, or to receive additional copies of the grant application form, please contact:

Chris Donnelly
Urban Forestry Coordinator
CT DEP Forestry
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 424-3178
chris.donnelly@ct.gov

Please also visit the CT DEP web site at: www.ct.gov/dep/ or www.ct.gov/dep/forestry to go directly to the forestry page.

CT DEP Invasive Species Policy

It is now the policy of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to discourage the planting of species that are non-native and invasive, so that the spread of these aggressive plants can be better controlled. Consistent with this policy, the Division of Forestry through the Urban Forestry Education Grants is not able to provide funding for the planting of those tree and shrub species which the Department has determined to be non-native, invasive plants. Included on the list of non-native, invasive tree species compiled by CT DEP are the following:

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
<i>Acer ginnala</i>	amur maple
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple (including varieties)
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore maple
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	tree-of-heaven
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	European buckthorn
<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>	princess tree / empress tree
<i>Populus alba</i>	white poplar
<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	buckthorn
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	black locust

In addition, there are several commonly planted shrubs on the invasive species list. Among the shrubs listed are Japanese barberry and several of the honeysuckles. A complete copy of this list and of DEP's policy concerning non-native, invasive exotics is available from the Department.

APPLICATION FORM
Urban Forestry Grants

This application form is to be returned with a written proposal of no more than 5 pages.

Under which of the Project Categories does this proposal fall? _____ (see page 5)

Project Title:		
Project Location (Municipality):		
Name of Applicant:	Federal ID #:	
Applicant's Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Contact Person:	Phone # and FAX #:	
Contact Person's Title:	e-mail:	
Brief Description of Project:		
Total Amount of the Project: <i>(Include Grant Request plus Match)</i>		
Grant Funds Requested:		
Local Cash Match to Be Provided:		
Value of In-Kind Match To Be Provided:		
Project Start Date:	Project Ending Date:	
Please give the names of additional groups (if any) to be involved:		

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Representative

Signature

Date

Upon approval of the grant application, grantees must sign a Personal Services Agreement.
Return completed applications to: CT DEP Division of Forestry, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106.
Completed applications must be received by 4:00 pm on Wednesday, September 30, 2009.