Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Grants

2024 Application Guide

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 3, 2024

WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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URBAN FORESTRY INFLATION REDUCTION ACT GRANTS APPLICATION GUIDE

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PURPOSE

Urban forests are important assets that provide countless benefits to local communities. Nonetheless, trees and the benefits they provide are not equitably distributed in Wisconsin or elsewhere. Because of this discrepancy, the federal government has made funds available through the Inflation Reduction Act to positively impact local urban tree canopies and the benefits they provide within disadvantaged communities*. The Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry program is administering $4 million of these monies through the USDA Forest Service to subaward to eligible entities across Wisconsin.

The Urban Forestry Inflation Reduction Act (UF IRA) Grants are thus designed to fund projects that improve tree canopy and local conditions for people within disadvantaged communities. Potential projects can directly conserve, protect, expand or improve urban forests (e.g., planting, hazard tree removal, pest control). They can also be capacity-building endeavors (e.g., management plans, inventories, public education). **The grants are intended to support new projects**; the grants are not intended to subsidize current, ongoing operations or replace existing funds.

The urban forest is made up of tree-lined streets, private landscapes, schoolyards, parks, parking lots, cemeteries, vacant lots, utility rights-of-way and anywhere else trees can grow in or around developed spaces. Urban forestry is considered to be tree management, operations, and education within cities, villages, and other areas of concentrated development.

2024 DNR INFLATION REDUCTION ACT PRIORITIES & GOALS

Applications will be ranked based on anticipated project outcomes - the impact the project will have on the people and trees within disadvantaged communities. Successful projects should result in one or more of the following:
- Increased and equitable access to urban tree canopy and associated human health, environmental and economic benefits within disadvantaged communities.
- Broadened community engagement in disadvantaged communities for local urban forest planning, activities or project implementation.
- Improved resilience to climate change, pests and storm events through best management and maintenance practices within disadvantaged communities.
- Increased canopy cover and/or urban forest diversity within disadvantaged communities.

Furthermore, describing the area's need will be important in your application. It won't be enough to simply say it's a disadvantaged area, as that already applies to every eligible project.

∗ This document refers to Disadvantaged Communities (or DACs) because this is the terminology used by the federal government. However, it could be considered deficit-based language, when many of these areas are some of our most culturally diverse, vibrant communities in Wisconsin. It's important to recognize the strength, resilience, and assets all communities contribute to Wisconsin's culture, economic systems, landscape, and vitality.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. A total of $4 million will be subawarded to eligible applicants. The DNR intends to award all of these funds in this round of funding. Another round of IRA-funded grants is not anticipated.

2. Eligible applicants are Wisconsin cities, villages, towns, counties, or tribal governments, and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations performing projects in Wisconsin. Partnerships with other eligible applicants are encouraged, as are partnerships with non-eligible entities such as businesses, schools, school districts, state agencies and individuals.

3. Eligible projects must benefit disadvantaged communities (DACs). Work must be done within the geographic footprint of the identified DACs and applications should articulate how the benefits are focused on those areas and the people within them. A map of all DACs is available here. Additionally, a list of cities, towns and villages containing DACs within their boundaries is available online. Exceptions to projects occurring exclusively within DACs are noted under Eligible Projects / Activities, but the project benefits **must** be focused on those areas. See **Appendix G** for more information on how DACs are geographically determined.

4. For the Urban Forestry IRA grant program, no match, also known as local share, is required.

5. Up to 50% of grant funds can be provided up-front for any successful applicant (see Payment Options, pg. 9). Projects may submit a quarterly or an annual reimbursement request. Upon completion, the grant recipient shall request remaining reimbursement of eligible costs.

6. The minimum total project cost is $1,000. Grant requests must be between $1,000 and $500,000. There is no maximum project size; however, a grant award, and therefore reimbursement, is limited to $500,000.

7. Proposals will be ranked by a core team of DNR Urban Forestry staff. Other appropriate program staff may be included as available. Ranking criteria are available on pg. 15 of this document.

8. **The DNR's urban forestry coordinators are available to assist you with your grant application.** Coordinators cannot write your grant application, but they can help you define your project, provide samples of applications from other grant opportunities, and review your application prior to submission. For contact information see **Appendix A**.

9. Answers to commonly asked questions are found on pg. 14. The administrative rules governing the program are at http://docs.legis.wi.gov/code/admin_code/nr/001/47/V/50. The department will be implementing the Inflation Reduction Act grant funding through emergency rule. The emergency rule language in Board Order FR-06-23(E) has been approved by the Natural Resources Board and the Governor, and will be posted to the Wisconsin State Legislature website once in effect. We anticipate an effective date of approximately April 8, 2024. This application guide, our application, and other correspondence about the Urban Forestry IRA grant program reflect the terms of the emergency rule. See **Appendix H** for more about the emergency rule.

IMPORTANT DATES

February 26, 2024 – Opening of Inflation Reduction Act application period. Check out our [webpage](#).

Approximately April 8, 2024: Emergency rule governing the Urban Forestry IRA grant program goes into effect.

June 3, 2024: Grant **APPLICATION DEADLINE**. **All** application materials, **including the authorizing resolution,** must be emailed or postmarked (if hard copies) no later than 11:59 p.m., **June 3, 2024.** An application checklist with submission instructions is included on pg. 16 for your convenience.

July 2024: Applicants will be notified of funding status.

August 2024: Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement.

September 3, 2024: Grant award in effect for project period of 3 years. The grant agreement will specify the effective dates for reimbursable project costs.

September 30, 2027: IRA Urban Forestry Grant expiration date.

December 30, 2027: Deadline to submit final reimbursement request for Urban Forestry IRA grants. Reimbursement request packet, with all supporting documentation and appropriate signatures, must be sent by e-mail or mail by 11:59 p.m. Late submittal could result in loss of grant funding.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES

Projects must relate to urban forestry, which for the purposes of this grant program is considered to be tree management, operations, and education within cities, villages, and other areas of concentrated development. Furthermore, **projects must benefit disadvantaged communities**. Examples of eligible project activities include, but are not limited to:

1. **Extreme heat mitigation** – develop ways to reduce the impact of high heat through urban forestry.
2. **Proactive maintenance** – apply funds to young or mature tree pruning, tree or soil protection measures, or hazard tree removal.
3. **Site preparation** – prepare sites for tree planting, such as soil decompaction, soil amendments, or tree removal and stump grinding (though see note under ineligible projects below).
4. **Tree planting and establishment** – efforts are encouraged on public or private property. See **Appendix F** for guidance on tree work on private property.
5. **Urban food forests** – plant or maintain trees that produce food for the community.
6. **Urban wood utilization**
7. **Planning** – develop a plan, tree inventory, ordinance, or other resource for long-term management and capacity building.
8. **Training** – send staff and/or other project participants to training (e.g., to the Wisconsin [Community Tree Management Institute](#)) or develop your own training programs.
9. **Education, information and outreach** – for materials, services or staff time for providing information to the public about trees, their maintenance and their benefits.
10. **Workforce development** – develop or partner with programs that connect community members to educational and occupational opportunities related to urban forestry.

Activities 1-6 must take place within identified disadvantaged communities. Activities 7-8 have to take place in jurisdictions with disadvantaged communities (see **Appendix F** for more information). Activities 9-10 could take place outside of identified disadvantaged communities if the beneficiaries or participants are drawn from those locations.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES

Projects that are ineligible include, but are not limited to:

1. Projects not related to urban forestry.
2. Projects not benefiting disadvantaged communities.
3. Construction projects: trails, fences, shelters, buildings, site grading unrelated to planting, etc.
4. Stump removal projects – stump removal is ineligible as a stand-alone project, however stump removal is eligible as a component of a tree planting or removal project.
5. Land or boundary surveys or title search.
6. Appraisals, sale or exchange of real property.

PROJECT COSTS

Project costs must be incurred between the start and end date shown on the project agreement.

Eligible Costs

Reasonable and necessary project costs which are consistent with the approved project scope and incurred during the project period are eligible for grant funding. Eligible costs may include, but are not limited to:

1. Salaries and fringe benefit costs of personnel engaged in the project. Direct costs shall be supported by time sheets, vouchers or similar documentation reflecting specific assignment to the project.
   a. Actual fringe benefits may not exceed the DOA rate at the time labor expense is incurred. The current rate, until June 30, 2025, is **47.60%** of the direct labor costs claimed. Grantee will be notified upon change of the maximum fringe rate.

2. The cost of necessary supplies and equipment. Equipment costing more than $5,000 per unit is not eligible. To be fully eligible under the grant, purchased equipment shall be used exclusively for project-related purposes over its useful life. Nonexclusive equipment use may be charged as project costs only for that portion of depreciation specifically related to use in project activities.
   a. Equipment use rates may not exceed the rates established annually by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and published in chapter 2 of the [2024 Highway Maintenance Manual](). Grantee will be notified annually of revised equipment rates.

3. The costs of leased equipment and facilities, leased specifically for this project, and only for the length of the project.

4. The contract costs of qualified vendors to perform project activities. Applicants are encouraged to receive vendor estimates before they submit their application. Because the grant is funded with federal dollars, it is subject to the [Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 200](). Any grantee must follow the regulations in [2 CFR 200.318 through 200.327]() which includes guidance on procurement, competition, and methods of procurement .

Ineligible Costs

Costs not directly associated with or necessary to implement the project as determined by the department are ineligible for grant funding. Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:

1. Fines and penalties due to violations of, or failure to comply with, federal, state or local laws or regulations.

2. Ordinary operating expenses of a grant recipient that are not directly related to the project, such as salaries and expenses of a mayor or city council members.

3. Costs for which payment has been or will be received under another federal or state financial assistance program.

4. Costs incurred in a contract which creates a real or apparent conflict of interest. An apparent conflict of interest arises when an official or employee of a grant recipient participates in the selection, awarding or administration of a contract supported by this project and the official or employee, or his or her spouse or partner, has an ownership interest in the firm selected for the contract or receives a contract, gratuity or favor from the award of the contract.

5. Costs incurred before or after the project period.

6. Undocumented or improperly documented project costs.

7. Equipment purchases that exceed $5,000 per unit.

8. Payment for land or land exchanges.

9. Donated labor, equipment, supplies, facilities, or services are not eligible for reimbursement.

PROJECT REVENUE

If a grant project includes holding an educational workshop, workshop registration fees may be used to pay for other project costs. Any other revenue generated by the project during the grant period, for example sales of a grant funded video or tree planting costs paid by residents, are considered project revenue and must be subtracted from the total project cost.

AWARD AND EXECUTION OF GRANT AGREEMENT

Project ranking will be based on answers given to the application questions and the associated cost estimate worksheets. Grant agreements will be awarded to the highest ranked proposals. Following the ranking, each applicant will be notified of their funding status.

Projects meriting funding consideration, but not at the requested amount, may be offered reduced awards. Applicants should consider the scalability of their projects, including the possibility to scale downward.

The agreement must be signed by the successful grant recipient and **returned within ten working days** after receiving the agreement.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

No matching funds are required by any grant recipient.

All recipients may request an advance of no more than 50 percent of the grant upon the awarding of the grant. To request an advance payment, recipient shall submit a cost estimate and a brief statement of need to support the request. **Within 30 days of receiving an advance, recipient shall provide the Department documentation showing full expenditure of the advance**.

All grantees with IRA-funded projects may submit to the department a quarterly or annual reimbursement request, supported by financial documentation. Payment will be made only to the grant recipient (see **Appendix E** for reimbursement schedule and report due dates).

A final reimbursement request should be made as soon as possible after project completion, but **no later than 90 days after the grant expiration date**. Reimbursement is contingent on DNR approval of the completed project and expenses. Payment will normally be made within 60 days of receipt of completed grant payment request forms and supporting financial documentation. Payment will be made only to the grant recipient.

HOW TO SUBMIT A BETTER PROPOSAL

Here are some tips to help your proposal rank higher, receive sufficient grant funds and avoid delays in awarding of agreements.

Improving your project

- **Plan ahead** - Spend time thinking about and planning for your project long before filling out the application. Pre-planning is reflected in better project proposals.

- **Build community partnerships** and start as soon as possible. Including active community participants in the planning will ultimately make a more impactful project.

- **Get input from others** that will be involved in the project or communities who have done similar projects. If your project will entail the use of a consultant, consider issuing a request for proposals (RFP) and tentatively select the consultant prior to submitting your application.

- **Contact your urban forestry coordinator** for advice and assistance. They can review your project with you, provide assistance on how to complete the application, and make recommendations on how to improve it. Don't wait until the last minute!

- **Understand your area of interest** – Because these funds are intended to benefit disadvantaged communities, being able to describe the conditions in the area and the need for the urban forestry project will be important.

Improving your cost estimates

- Because grant awards are based on the applicant's cost estimate, careful cost estimating will assure that you have enough funds to complete the project and can possibly reduce your out-of-pocket costs.

- **Get estimates from vendors and consultants before you apply**.

- **Round up to the nearest dollar** in the individual component sections.

- **Double-check your math**. To make the application more user friendly, built-in calculations have been added to the electronically fillable form. Be sure the total project and grant amounts shown at the bottom of the cost estimate worksheet match the figures on pg. 1 of the grant application form.

- **Make sure the cost estimate worksheet includes all anticipated project costs**. Review your responses to all the questions. Have you mentioned any project components or aspects that are not included on the cost estimate worksheet?

- **Consider scalability**. This grant opportunity offers a wide award range. Are there "modular" elements of your project that can be removed if less money than desired is awarded? Or is the project able to be downscaled?

Improving your application

- **Plan ahead**. Start the process to obtain a resolution from your governing body right away. Their process could be lengthy, and the resolution is required when you submit the application.

- **Understand and describe the impacted population(s).** Use available economic, social and environmental data (see **Appendix G** for more information on disadvantaged communities) to help illustrate your project's potential impact. Though don't be afraid to also use personal or anecdotal stories. **Describing the area's need will be critical in your application. It won't be enough to simply say it's a disadvantaged area, as that already applies to every eligible project.**

- **Make sure the person who completes the application is familiar with the proposed project** and able to articulate it well.

- **Answer each question clearly, succinctly, and completely.** Make sure your responses fully address all parts of every question asked. Have someone unfamiliar with your project read over your proposal. Do your responses give them a good understanding of what your project is about? Avoid leaving questions unanswered or simply saying yes or no.

- **Avoid irrelevant information**. Answers should be specific to the proposed project. Unless specifically asked, don't include information beyond the scope of the project.

- **Follow application instructions**. Have you submitted everything required for a complete application?

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

While entering data in the Urban Forestry Grants Application, use the tab key to navigate from field to field. Click N/A for any question that does not apply to your project.

1. **Complete Section I**, Enter your organization name, organization type, county, Authorized Representative and, if applicable, Project Manager.

2. **Complete Section II**, Eligibility.

   - Does the project take place within an eligible disadvantaged community ([see map](#))? If so, please specify where, including Census tract or block group ID number(s). These numbers can be found by clicking your area of interest(s) on the map. If the project area includes many contiguous Census tracts or block groups, you only need to identify the ID number of one of them, but note that the project also includes surrounding disadvantaged communities.

     o If the project area is across non-contiguous areas, include all Census tract or block group numbers, or include a map showing the disadvantaged areas and the project locations.

   - There are certain activities in which work is not performed within disadvantaged communities, but benefits residents from those locations. If the project or work is not located in an above-defined area, but is an eligible activity, please describe how members of disadvantaged communities will participate or benefit. Please include Census tract or block group ID numbers (see above). If not applicable, write N/A.

3. **Complete Section III**, starting with the Project Overview (title and description). Add components (activities) as needed. Most of the open-ended questions in this section have a 2,000-character limit.

   - Provide a project summary and an overall project timeline. Provide an overview that includes basics of who is doing what, where, when, how and why.

   - How will your project benefit disadvantaged populations? Refer to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, EJScreen , and/or other available resources to describe the disadvantaged community and tell your story. The DNR's [eligibility map](#) includes information from CEJST and EJScreen.

   - Provide a description that ties the component to a priority from pg. 3 of this guide.

   - Select all land ownership options affected by the project.

   - List partners that will be actively involved in the delivery of the proposed project activities. Consultants and contractors are not considered partners, unless they are donating time. For each partner listed on the application, provide a signed Letter of Collaboration. The Letter of Collaboration should include descriptions of intent and capacity to fulfill intended roles and responsibilities and be signed by the partnering organization.

4. **Complete Section IV**, elaborate how the grant project is in alignment with IRA goals (pg. 3). Answers should tie your project to one or more of these priorities. Most of the open-ended questions in this section have a 2,000-character limit.

- What specific tree canopy or urban forestry issue(s) does this work plan to address? What are the intended results of this work (consider environmental **and** equity related outcomes)?
- How will you engage with community organizations, residents and/or stakeholders to involve them in the decision making and implementation of your project?
- Who will be responsible for the long-term maintenance of any trees planted through your project (e.g., residents, city, your organization)? How will you support the ongoing maintenance of these trees (e.g., financial support, doing the maintenance yourself, providing training to residents/community groups)? If planting on private property, how will you ensure trees will be maintained? (See **Appendix F** for more information).
- How will you evaluate success of your project?
- Succinctly describe activities you and/or your partners have undertaken similar to those in your proposal.
- Describe additional information about your project you feel would be beneficial for the application ranking team to know.
- List staff with relevant experience or expertise who will contribute to this project.

5. **Complete Section V**., Grant Experience

- Have you completed or are you currently completing, similar grant funded projects? If yes, provide a brief description of the project including the year, grant dollar and project results.
- Which of the following best describes your accounting system: Manual, Automated or Combination.
- Does the accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of funds separately for each grant?

6. **Complete Section VI**., Cost Estimate Worksheet(s)

- Create a Cost Estimate Worksheet to correspond to each component selected in **Section III**. This should include estimated applicant costs for labor, equipment, supplies or other cash expenditures.
- Totals from these pages automatically total the project cost/grant request.

7. **Complete Section VII**, Certification and Submission.

- Indicate which attachments will be included with your application.
    - ☐ Additional supporting documents, like maps or species lists
    - ☐ Authorizing Resolution (all applicants)
    - ☐ By-laws and articles of incorporation (501(c)(3) applicants only)
    - ☐ Letters of Collaboration (if applicable)
- Save your application file – change the name to reflect your organization and the application year.
- Print and review. Edit and save again as needed.
- All applications should be submitted electronically. To mail application, see pg. 16.

- We are now accepting electronic signatures for grant applications, and we prefer that you use the "Submit by E-mail" button. If you have Microsoft Outlook, Yahoo or Gmail you can use the "Submit by E-mail" button.
  - Once satisfied with the completeness of your application, save the latest version. Then click the "Submit by E-mail" button.
  - If you do not have a default e-mail application set up on your computer, you may get the following message. If you use a Yahoo for your e-mail, click Use Webmail, select the appropriate option,
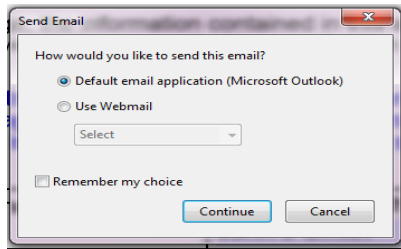
  - Enter your e-mail address and click OK.
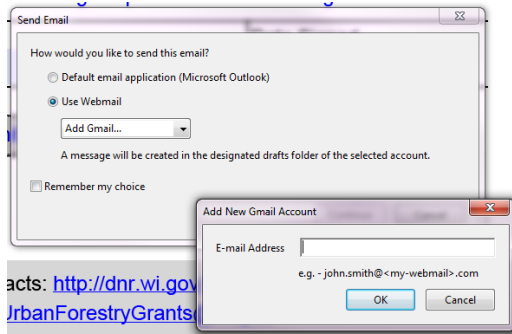
  - An e-mail message will appear and you will have the ability to enter text, or include attachments as needed, before sending.
- If you do not use Microsoft Outlook, Yahoo or Gmail, please send the application as an attached file to DNRUrbanForestryGrants@wi.gov.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following is a list of common questions and answers about the UF IRA Grant Program.

Q. **Who can receive a grant?**
A. Wisconsin cities, villages, towns, counties, tribal governments, and 501(c)(3) organizations performing projects in Wisconsin. Individuals, businesses, schools, school districts and state agencies are not eligible to apply.

Q. **How are disadvantaged communities identified?**
A. These are areas that are experiencing higher economic, social or environmental burdens relative to the rest of the state. This grant opportunity uses the following geographies to determine these areas:
- All Census tracts identified as disadvantaged in the **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool**
- All Census Block Groups at or above the 90th percentile in any index in **EJScreen**

Q. **What if my project benefits populations within the above-described disadvantaged communities, but does not take place within those tract or block group borders?**
A. Work related to tree planting, removal or maintenance must take place within those borders. Other projects may still be eligible, provided you clearly articulate how the project will benefit those populations. See page 6 and Appendix F for more information.

Q. **Do I need approval to apply for a grant?**
A. Yes. A resolution from your governing body authorizing you to apply for and manage an Urban Forestry IRA grant on its behalf is required. 501(c)(3) organizations must also include a copy of their bylaws and articles of incorporation.

Q. **What can grant funds be used for?**
A. Funds can be used to hire a consultant, contractor or seasonal employee to perform project tasks; purchase materials or services; or reimburse your agency for expenses or staff time spent on the project. No matching funds are required.

Q. **How big are the grants?**
A. Grants range in size from $1,000 to $500,000.

Q. **What kind of local match is required?**
A. No matching funds are required.

Q. **How likely is it that I will get a grant?**

A. This depends on the quality of your proposal and on the number of grant applications received.

Q. **We are a small, rural community. How can we compete against large urban communities?**
A. Grants are awarded according to expected outcomes, not how big a program is. Be sure to articulate how the expected outcomes impact local trees and disadvantaged communities, which exist in many parts of the state.

Q. **May we include indirect charges in the project cost estimate?**
A. No. Indirect charges are not eligible project costs.

Q. **I need help completing this application. Can someone review it before I submit it? Who do I call?**
A. Call your urban forestry coordinator. They may be able to provide constructive input.

Q. **Are a computer and urban forestry software eligible costs for an inventory project?**
A. A portion of equipment cost is eligible. Urban forestry software specific to the project is fully eligible for the grant period.

Q. **Can I claim staff time on this project?**
A. Paid working hours spent on the project by employees of the grant recipient are eligible project costs and as such considered reimbursable.

Q. **Will my proposal be impacted if a department in my community received a grant last year?**
A. No. Projects are ranked according to the alignment of expected outcomes with current funding priorities.

Q. **When are grant applications due?**
A. They must be emailed to DNRUrbanForestryGrants@wi.gov or postmarked by 11:59 p.m., June 3, 2024.

Q. **When will I be notified of the status of my application?**
A. The notification timeline is subject to change depending on the volume of applications and other factors. We anticipate that applicants will be notified in July. Successful applicants will be sent a grant agreement shortly thereafter.

Q. **When can I start my project?**
A. Grants will be effective September 3, 2024.

URBAN FORESTRY IRA GRANTS APPLICATION RANKING CRITERIA

Alignment with IRA Grant Goals
The project results in a long-term positive impact on the urban forest canopy.
The project positively impacts disadvantaged populations who could most benefit from urban forestry.
Community partners are engaged with the planning and/or implementation of the project.

Additional Applicant Information
Participating organizations, staff or volunteers demonstrate their capacity to oversee project and accomplish project goals.

Other Considerations
The project improves public awareness, engagement, and support for urban forest management.
Project involves multiple partners.
Project serves as a model for others to implement.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

APPLICATION CHECK LIST
An application is **complete** when all applicable information has been provided:

- ☐ An Urban Forestry IRA Grants Application, form (currently being revised), **submitted by the Authorized Representative** (all applicants).
- ☐ A **signed** resolution (all applicants).
- ☐ Bylaws and articles of incorporation (501(c)(3) applicants only).
- ☐ Partner Letter(s) of Collaboration (if applicable)
- ☐ Maps, species lists and other additional documents are accepted but **not required.**

URBAN FORESTRY IRA GRANTS APPLICATION FORM
The Urban Forestry IRA Grants Application, form is a fillable, printable, and savable PDF form, with an electronic signature option. The application can be found on our [webpage](#).

RESOLUTION
A signed resolution must accompany your Urban Forestry IRA Grants Application and be received prior to the application deadline to be considered eligible for ranking. Resolutions may be mailed or faxed to the address below if not sent in an e-mail. A sample resolution is available as a Microsoft Word document [here](#).

WHERE TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Application, resolution & all other required documents electronic submittal (PREFERRED):

- Print – review, edit if needed, and file
- Type in your name
- Save – file name should represent organization name and UF grant year
- Use "Submit by e-mail" button (Outlook, Yahoo, Gmail) – you will be given the opportunity to edit the message and provide attachments in an e-mail addressed to: DNRUrbanForestryGrants@wi.gov
- The **Authorized Representative** must submit, or be included in the application submittal e-mail.
- If you don't use Microsoft Outlook, Yahoo or Gmail please submit all application materials as an attachment in the e-mail application you normally use to this e-mail address: DNRUrbanForestryGrants@wi.gov

If you are unable to submit your application, resolution & other required documents you may mail them to:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Urban Forestry Grants
518 West Somo Avenue
Tomahawk, WI 54487

Mailed application packages must be postmarked no later than 11:59 p.m. on June 3, 2024

Submissions, including resolutions, must be emailed or postmarked (if hard copies) by 11:59 p.m., June 3, 2024.

APPENDIX A: WI DNR URBAN FORESTRY CONTACTS

Southeast
Elton Rogers, Urban Forestry Coordinator
Department of Natural Resources
1027 W St Paul Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53233
Phone: (414) 294-8675
e-mail: elton.rogers@wisconsin.gov

East Central
Olivia Witthun, Urban Forestry Coordinator
Department of Natural Resources
1155 Pilgrim Road
Plymouth, WI 53073
Phone: (414) 750-8744
e-mail: olivia.witthun@wisconsin.gov

North Central
Patricia Lindquist, Urban Forestry Coordinator
Department of Natural Resources
225051 Rib Mountain Drive
Wausau, WI 54401
Phone: (715) 574-1314
e-mail: patricia.lindquist@wisconsin.gov

West
Abby Krause, Urban Forestry Coordinator
Department of Natural Resources
1300 West Clairemont
Eau Claire, WI 54701
Phone: (608) 556-5690
e-mail: abigail.krause@wisconsin.gov

Northeast
Retirement pending
See: dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/urbanforests/contact
Department of Natural Resources
2984 Shawano Avenue
Green Bay, WI 54313

South Central
Brian Wahl, Urban Forestry Coordinator
Department of Natural Resources
3911 Fish Hatchery Road
Fitchburg, WI 53711
Phone: (608) 225-7943
e-mail: brian.wahl@wisconsin.gov

Grant Coordination
Nicolle Spafford, Urban Forestry Grants Specialist
518 West Somo Avenue
Tomahawk, WI 54487
Phone: (715) 896-7099
e-mail: DNRUrbanForestryGrants@wisconsin.gov

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Applicant
The Wisconsin town, village, city, county, tribal government or 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that submits an application for an Urban Forestry IRA Grant.

Applicant Authorized Representative
The position authorized by the applicant(s) to submit a grant application, sign documents and take necessary actions to undertake, direct and complete the approved project. This is also the person to whom DNR will direct grant correspondence. See also "project manager".

Community
A community is a geographic area experiencing similar conditions. For this grant opportunity, communities are Census Tracts or Census Block Groups.

Department
The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Disadvantaged
A community experiencing higher economic, social or environmental burdens relative to the rest of the state. These areas are identified using the federal Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool and EJ Screen and are shown on the Wisconsin DNR website.

Fringe
May include employee insurance, retirement plans, social security contributions, worker compensation, etc.

Grant Recipient
The recipient of an Urban Forestry Grant.

Indirect charges or costs
Everyday operating expenses that are not specifically related to the project such as rental of office space, expenses for heat, telephone and computer use. These expenses are not eligible project costs.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)
The federal legislation (Public Law 117-169) that provided community and urban forestry funds to the Wisconsin DNR that are subawarded for this grant opportunity.

Nonprofit
Includes organizations that meet the requirements of section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Project Agreement
A contract between the grant recipient and department setting forth the mutual obligations with regard to a portion or all of a specific project.

Project Manager
The person delegated by the applicant to oversee day-to-day implementation of the project.

Project Period
The period of time specified in the project agreement during which all work shall be accomplished. Projects up to 3 years in duration are permissible with this grant opportunity.

Third Party
Not employed by or belonging to the applicant.

Urban Forest Management Plan
A plan typically based on the results of a community tree inventory, delineating all aspects of community forestry field operations (planting, maintenance, removal) on a priority basis for a minimum of 5 years and includes estimated annual budgets for these activities.

Urban Forestry
For the purpose of the urban forestry grant program, is considered to be tree management, operations, and education within cities, villages and other areas of concentrated development.

APPENDIX C: COST ESTIMATE WORKSHEET INSTRUCTIONS

The cost estimate worksheets are used both in application ranking and to determine the grant amount for funded projects. **To the extent possible, the cost estimate worksheet should accurately reflect all anticipated project costs. As you estimate grant budget, consider timelines, resources and whether you can fully utilize these funds. There will be no option for a grant extension.** Over-estimating leads to underspent situations where the ability to use those dollars for urban forestry needs is lost. All project expenditures, activities, products or services should be included.

Review your responses to all application questions to make sure all project components and aspects are included on the cost estimate worksheet (see sample on pgs. 21 and 22). Use at least one sheet per project component to estimate the cost. The "Grant Calculations" sheet will auto-calculate the total project costs and your total grant request. While the electronic form (currently being revised) has some automatic calculations, be sure to double check **all** calculations.

Separately itemize costs **for each component** included in the project description (e.g., planning, proactive maintenance, tree planting). For each component, group anticipated costs according to the categories shown (e.g., labor, consultant services, equipment, etc.). Include a cost basis as necessary (e.g., supervisor – 28 hours @ $24). Estimated labor costs for the applicant's employees should estimate **actual** fringe benefits **up to the current DOA rate of 47.60%**.

To determine eligible costs for purchased equipment and supplies that are not listed in the 2024 Highway Maintenance Manual, see Eligible Cost of Equipment and Supplies on pg. 20.

Enter **estimated** project costs in the Estimated Cost column (**round up to the nearest dollar**).

ELIGIBLE COST OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Equipment that is purchased for more than $5,000 is not an eligible cost and cannot be charged to the project.

To calculate eligible equipment costs, determine the useful life of the item using the table below. If a "partial cost eligible" item will also be used for non-project work during the grant year (e.g., a computer used for everyday program activities), estimate what percent the item will be used for project activities during the grant 3-year period . Then divide the item's cost by its useful life and multiply by the percent use.

For example: The applicant's $1,200 computer will be used approximately 25 percent of the time for project work during the grant 3-year period. The computer has a useful life of four years. ($1,200) ÷ (4) x (.25) x 3 = $225. The eligible pro rata project cost is $225.

If an item is not listed below, check the [2024 Highway Maintenance Manual](#) or contact your urban forestry coordinator for guidance.

Full Cost Eligible	**Partial Cost Eligible**
	USEFUL LIFE
• cabling and bracing supplies	• aerial platform (tow-behind) .... 12 yrs
• climbing gear: ropes, saddles, carabineers, etc.	• air spade .... 10 yrs
• computer software	• A-V equipment: overhead and slide projector, etc. .... 10 yrs
• diagnostic tools and equipment: soil probes, increment borers, etc.	• brush chipper ....8 yrs
• diameter tape, pH meters, etc.	• chain saw ....3 yrs
• educational resources (urban forestry books, videos, etc.)	• compressor .... 10 yrs
• hand tools: pruners, loppers, pole saws, etc.	• computer hardware, including PDAs ......4 yrs digital camera, LCD projector, camcorder, etc. ....4 yrs
• lightning protection apparatus	• directional borer or tunneling device .....5 yrs display board ....5 yrs
• macro-infusion equipment: chemicals, tubing, t-caps, pumps	• Global Positioning System unit ....4 yrs
• planting supplies: stakes, straps, irrigation bags, mulch	• hydraulic pruner/pole lopper ....3 yrs
• nursery supplies: grow tubes, irrigation apparatus, fencing	• resistograph (decay detection probe) ....4 yrs
• safety equipment: hard hats, steel-toed boots, chaps, eye protection	• stump cutter/grinder .... 10 yrs
• signage and educational markers specific to urban forestry	• tree spade/planter .... 12 yrs
• sprayers (hand or backpack)	• trencher .... 10 yrs
	• tiller (walk-behind) ....8 yrs
	• water tank .... 12 yrs

SAMPLE COST ESTIMATE WORKSHEET

The City of Beautiful is applying for a grant to do an urban forestry inventory and management plan. They plan to buy a computer and inventory software and do the inventory with in-house staff and help from their volunteer tree board members. They intend to contract for the management plan.

The inventory and management plan components are shown separately. For the inventory component, costs of personnel (wage plus fringe) are shown for supervision and crew. According to the Eligible Costs of Equipment and Supplies a computer's useful life is four years, which reduces the reimbursable amount for a 3-year grant. Because the City of Beautiful expects to use the computer only 25 percent of the time for project activities, eligible computer costs are further reduced by 75 percent. Use of a car for the project and the cost of software are shown. For the management plan component, supervision and the contract costs are shown.

Project Component: Management Plan	Estimated Cost
Labor & Services *(specify project tasks on lines below, as appropriate)*	
Applicant's Staff Labor: 48 hours x $24	$1,152.00
Fringe Benefits: Actual fringe benefits may not exceed the DOA rate. Fringe rate for 2024 is 47.60%	$548.35
Other:	
Equipment *(specify type of equipment and DOT class code on lines below, as appropriate)* See application guidelines for a list of commonly used equipment codes.	
Provided by Applicant:	
Cash Expenditures *(specify out of pocket payments as appropriate)*	
Hired Consultants/Contractors/Services	$12,000.00
Purchased Equipment *(not to exceed $5,000 /item)*:	
Rented or Contracted Equipment:	
Other Project Purchases:	
Estimated Total for THIS component.	$13,700.35

Project Component: Inventory	Estimated Cost
Labor & Services *(specify project tasks on lines below, as appropriate)*	
Applicant's Staff Labor: 320 hours @ $20 and 28 hours @ 24	$7,072.00
Fringe Benefits: Actual fringe benefits may not exceed the DOA rate. Fringe rate for 2024 is 47.60%	$3,366.27
Other:	
Equipment *(specify type of equipment and DOT class code on lines below, as appropriate)* See application guidelines for a list of commonly used equipment codes.	
Provided by Applicant: Automobile (DOT Class #114) 223 miles @$1.20/mile	$270.00
Cash Expenditures *(specify out of pocket payments as appropriate)*	
Hired Consultants/Contractors/Services	
Purchased Equipment *(not to exceed $5,000 /item)*: Computer ($1,200 ÷ 4) x .25 x 3-year grant	$225.00
Rented or Contracted Equipment:	
Other Project Purchases: Inventory Software	$2,400.00
Estimated Total for THIS component.	$13,333.27

CALCULATIONS	
Grant Calculation	**Estimated Cost**
Total Grant Request	**$27,033.62**

APPENDIX D: WORKING WITH CONSULTANTS ON URBAN FORESTRY GRANT PROJECTS

The Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry IRA Grant Program provides funds for projects that improve a community's ability to manage its trees. Potential grant projects that include urban forestry strategic and management plans, tree inventories, or staff training require a certain degree of technical proficiency and a considerable time investment. A community interested in undertaking such a project, but lacking the necessary time and/or expertise, might consider hiring an urban forestry consultant for all or part of the project. Although intended for use with Urban Forestry Grant projects, this guide generally applies to any urban forestry project where consultants are involved.

For grant projects involving consultant services, the following steps are recommended prior to project implementation:

1. Identify and flesh out project goals.

2. Issue request for proposals (RFP) for consulting services.

3. Select consultant.

4. Award contract contingent upon receiving the grant.

5. Apply for Urban Forestry IRA Grant (don't incur any project costs prior to signing grant agreement).

Consultants may also be used to write the urban forestry grant application for you, however, since this service will be provided before the grant is awarded, the cost of this service cannot be charged to the grant, should you be awarded one.

The Department of Natural Resources can assist communities in working with urban forestry consultants. DNR urban forestry coordinators can:

- Help identify projects and suggest appropriate areas for consultant involvement.

- Supply a list of available consultants. *

- Review and comment on RFPs and consultant service agreements/contracts. **

- Review and comment on a consultant's draft plans, management recommendations, inventory analyses, training outlines, etc.

The Department of Natural Resources cannot recommend particular consultants, enforce consultant contracts, or mediate disputes. Consult your attorney for additional requirements and procedures regarding contractual services.
**The Department of Natural Resources cannot provide legal advice. Consult your attorney for additional requirements and procedures regarding contractual services.*

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The purpose of a Request for Proposals (RFP) is to elicit bids/proposals from suitable candidates. The RFP should be brief, but must describe the project in sufficient detail that bidders have a good understanding of the project and can respond with precise proposals and realistic cost estimates.

The RFP should include:

A. **Description of project**

   Nature and Purpose — What is the project about? Why are you doing it? How do you plan to use the completed product(s)? Are there unique aspects?

   Components — What are the various parts of the project? What products is the consultant required to provide? What will you provide?

   Context and Time Frame — What background information does the consultant need to know about your project and your community? What project constraints are there? When will the project begin and end? If draft documents are required, when is the first draft due? When are completed documents due?

B. **Description of services**

   Who Does What? — What, specifically, do you want the consultant to do? Break the project into tasks and identify who will do each task - the consultant or you. Specify any additional personnel who will be working on the project and what tasks they will perform. Specify whether briefings, presentations, or other meetings will be required. Indicate whether facilities, equipment, or other support will be provided.

   Compensation—How and when will you pay the consultant? Is this negotiable? Depending on the project and your needs, consider flat fee, fixed fee plus expenses, per diem, or other payment basis. Indicate payment schedule, such as periodic payments, down payment with balance upon completion, or lump sum upon completion. For grant projects, specify final payment contingent on DNR approval of completed product(s). Regardless of payment method or schedule, specify that proposals must itemize costs.

C. **Request for qualifications**—Ask for a summary of bidders' education, training, practical experience, certifications, professional memberships, etc. relevant to the project.

D. **Request for references and sample(s) of similar work**—Request telephone numbers for all references. Specify that samples must be recent, similar to your project, and include sufficient information to evaluate the bidder.

E. **Deadline and procedure for submitting proposals and awarding contract**—Allow 3 to 4 weeks for bidders to respond. Indicate what criteria will be used to evaluate bidders. Indicate

how and when the successful bidder will be notified. If appropriate, specify that awarding of the contract will be contingent on grant funding.

F. **Name and telephone number of contact person**—Contact should be project manager or person best able to answer questions from prospective bidders.

G. **Miscellaneous**

Definition of terms—Terms such as "comprehensive," "management," "strategic," are subject to interpretation. Define ambiguous terms according to your needs and expectations.

Reference to industry standards—Technical specifications and safety standards (Tree Care Industry Association, International Society of Arboriculture, American National Standards Institute) should be cited for projects with staff training and/or tree work components.

Stipulations for specific equipment—You may want to specify certain computer software and/or hardware systems you currently use or intend to use in the future to ensure compatibility with your department's system (particularly useful for a tree inventory, allowing you to update it after the project is completed).

PRE-BID MEETING

Host an informational meeting prior to the deadline for proposals. Interested consultants should have the opportunity to visit the client community, ask questions, and meet the project manager and any others who will have input on the project. Such a meeting also allows prospective bidders to weigh the competition. These meetings are particularly useful if there are bid addendums or there is information all consultants should hear. Alternatively, you may simply want to meet one-on-one with prospective consultants.

SELECTING A CONSULTANT

Evaluate proposals and select a consultant based on criteria such as: proposal quality, consultant experience, samples of similar work, and recommendations of previous clients. Contact references and inquire as to consultant's ability to meet deadlines, accessibility during the project, working relationships with others, etc. Avoid selecting a consultant solely on the basis of cost.

FORMAL AGREEMENT

Upon notification of your grant award, formalize project requirements and responsibilities in a signed agreement with the consultant. The agreement must acknowledge all project requirements and clearly identify responsibilities of all parties. Many consultants provide a standard agreement for their services. Whether you accept the consultant's agreement or negotiate one specific to your project, the following elements should be included:

A. **Scope of Services** (including: definitions/terminology, applicable standards and specifications, description of work and who will do what, description of completed product[s], deadlines for completion of project components, penalties, limitations on services, number of meetings and presentations, project monitoring and review, evaluation criteria and process). **Specify a completion date well before the September 30, 2027 grant deadline to allow for review and revision(s) as necessary.**

B. **Compensation** (including: total compensation, method of payment). For grant projects, specify that final payment is contingent on DNR approval of completed product(s).

C. **Client Ownership of Data, Drafts, and Completed Products** (Specify **CLIENT** will own copyright to consultant's written products and all project data).

D. **General Terms and Conditions** (standard provisions common to any contract, including: proof of insurance, liability disclaimer, modification of agreement, termination and remedies, settlement of disputes, compliance with applicable laws, record keeping, conflict of interest, equal opportunity, etc.).

MANAGING THE PROJECT

Successful projects depend on effective communications between the client and the consultant and between the client and the DNR. The client is primarily responsible for maintaining these relationships.

- Brief the consultant on political realities, public attitudes, important issues, program limitations and other influencing factors.

- Designate a single project manager with whom the consultant will communicate throughout the project.

- Provide frequent input and active direction to the project. Avoid making assumptions.

- Initiate telephone communications regularly. Hold project meetings/briefings when necessary, as specified in your agreement.

- Address problems as soon as they are perceived. Be direct about any concerns.

- Thoroughly evaluate draft documents for clarity, feasibility, responsiveness to needs, etc. Supply copies to DNR for review and comment.

- Keep on top of the project by thinking ahead, allowing adequate time for review and comment, maintaining familiarity with status of all project components, etc. Periodically review both grant agreement and consultant agreement.

- Inform DNR immediately of problems or any proposed changes to project. CHANGES MUST BE APPROVED BY DNR PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION.

- Follow specific reporting and approval requirements as outlined in the grant agreement.

- DNR approval of completed grant-funded products is REQUIRED prior to reimbursement.

A WORD ABOUT CONSULTANTS

Consultants are professionals who take pride in their work. They want the products and services they provide to showcase their efforts and talents. They need your active input and direction to achieve a customized product that will be useful to you and a sample to solicit future clients.

Most will meet initially with prospective clients free of charge. Expect to pay for repeat visits.

Begin the consultant selection process early and be aware of the time it takes your community to make decisions. Consultants may have many jobs planned at any one time and cannot wait several months for a contract and then be expected to drop everything and do your project. The sooner you get on their schedule, the more likely it will be done when you want it to be.

Expect a certain degree of generic material in your product. Format and style, and certain supporting information may be the same or similar to that contained within other products the consultant has prepared. Data and analyses, goals and objectives, management recommendations, budget projections, and similar information should be customized for your unique needs and circumstances.

The Urban Forestry Consultants Directory is a listing of companies and individuals who have informed the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that they provide urban forestry consulting services in Wisconsin. This directory is provided for your information and convenience only. The fact that a consultant is or is not listed is not an endorsement nor criticism of that consultant by the Department. Additional consultants who are available in Wisconsin but have not contacted the Department are not listed in the directory.

APPENDIX E: GRANT REIMBURSEMENT SCHEDULE & INTERIM REPORTS DUE DATES

If an advance payment is received - recipient shall provide the Department documentation showing full expenditure of the advance within 30-days (Documentation needed: copy of invoice and proof of payment). Estimated turnaround for quarterly and annual reimbursement, depending on if reimbursement is submitted completely and accurately, is 30 to 45 days.

DATE DUE	Check if completed	Three Month Reimbursement Schedule - OPTIONAL
January 2, 2025		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses September 3 – December 2, 2024
April 2, 2025		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses December 3, 2024 -March 3, 2025)
July 2, 2025		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses March 4, 2025 – June 2, 2025)
October 1, 2025		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses June 3, 2025 – September 1, 2025
January 2, 2026		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses September 2, 2025 – December 1, 2025)
April 1, 2026		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses December 2, 2025 – March 2, 2026)
July 1, 2026		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses March 3, 2026 – June 1, 2026)
September 30, 2026		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses June 2, 2026 – August 31, 2026)
December 30, 2026		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses September 1, 2026 – November 30, 2026)
March 31, 2027		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses December 1, 2026 – March 1, 2027)
July 7, 2027		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses March 2, 2027 – June 7, 2027)
November 1, 2027		Grant three-month reimbursement request (project expenses June 8, 2027 – September 30, 2027, grant expiration)
DATE DUE	**Check if completed**	**Annual Reimbursement Schedule - OPTIONAL**
November 3, 2025		Grant annual reimbursement request (project expense September 3, 2024 – September 3, 2025)
November 3, 2026		Grant annual reimbursement Schedule (project expense September 4, 2025 – September 4, 2026)
November 29, 2027		Grant annual reimbursement request (project expense September 5, 2026 – September 30, 2027, grant expiration)
DATE DUE	**Check if completed**	**Final Reimbursement Schedule - REQUIRED**
December 30, 2027		Grant final reimbursement request (grant period September 3, 2024 – September 30, 2027)
DATE DUE	**Check if completed**	**Grant Interim Report Schedule (until grant is closed out) - REQUIRED**
March 3, 2025		Interim report
September 4, 2025		Interim report
March 5, 2026		Interim report
September 8, 2026		Interim report
March 9, 2027		Interim report
December 30, 2027		Final report

APPENDIX F: IRA GRANT GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNITY-WIDE PROJECTS, TREE REMOVALS, WORK ON PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Community-Wide Planning and Policy Development

Community-wide planning and policy development are allowable if a significant part of the area of interest is identified as disadvantaged, the focus is on disadvantaged communities, and includes community engagement that collects input to influence decisions. Best practices include:

- Community-wide **Management Plan** needs to include significant and documented community engagement (seeking input to influence decisions) and include strategies for improving service to disadvantaged communities. Ideally, upon plan completion, the grant will include implementation of management strategies on the ground solely in disadvantaged communities.

- Community-wide **Tree Inventories** can take place even beyond the disadvantaged areas, but there needs to be a plan (it could be a planting, operations, management, or similar one) that focuses on disadvantaged communities (as noted above) and ideally includes on the ground tree planting, maintenance, and/or protection measures solely in disadvantaged communities.

Tree Removal

Removal of trees is allowed according to the following:

1. Trees removed are replaced within the grant period at a rate of at least 1:1, and ideally higher. The new trees should be in the vicinity of the removed ones where possible, and always within the disadvantaged community.
2. The threshold for determining tree removal eligibility is detailed in the proposal, and
3. Trees that are removed pose a current risk to public safety or are anticipated to be a risk in the near future.

Examples of acceptable tree removals:

1. Dead, standing trees that pose a risk to public safety.
2. Other high-risk trees. *
   The method and threshold by which trees are defined as hazardous or high risk should be outlined in the proposal

Examples of unacceptable street ROW or private, residential tree removals:

1. Invasive species unless they are dead or high risk to public safety or urban forest health in a disadvantaged community.
2. Healthy trees posing no risk to public safety currently or in the near future.

Work on Private Property

All Work

Grantee will obtain documented permission for work to be completed and be granted access to the private property(ies) on which the project will take place.

Planting

For projects involving planting on private property, the proposal must outline clear and convincing measures that will be in place to maximize the likelihood of tree establishment and long-term survival.

Two primary requirements pertain to grant activities taking place on private property.

1. Maximize the likelihood of tree establishment and long-term survival. Please see below for more detail and examples.
2. Ensure adequate access is granted by the landowner for all planned activities, including follow-up maintenance, monitoring, or other on-site work.

Protecting Federal Investment in Private Property Tree Planting:

The proposal should outline an appropriate strategy for tree retention and highlight how the project will ensure the trees grow and flourish beyond the grant period in the proposal. Examples may include written agreements/pledges by the resident, education workshops, municipal- or partner-provided maintenance, monitoring schemes/schedules, or recognition awards for tree survival at a particular year. A written agreement with a resident shall note who is responsible for calling Digger's Hotline. Additional example language for a written agreement may include:

- I will plant and care for my tree according to industry best practices for as long as it is within my right to do so.
- I agree to plant my tree(s) immediately at the address listed above, to give my tree(s) on-going care while I own them (or for X years), and to adhere to guidelines related to inhibiting the movement and dispersal of invasive pests and disease, such as not moving any mulch received at the event outside of the distribution county. I understand the tree(s) are under no warranty or guarantee.
- In addition to providing appropriate care, I have no plans to further expand any buildings or pavement on my property in the next X years that would result in the removal/reduction of planting area for my newly planted tree(s).

Ensure that those planting on private lands also have the capacity for **monitoring or additional technical assistance** related to tree health should the resident need it. Funding for this capacity during the grant period may be included in the budget.

Standards and Best Management Practices

For planting projects, species lists will be developed by a technical expert knowledgeable of local climate, site characteristics, and tree species, and approved by DNR Urban Forestry staff. DNR staff will help ensure that local species diversity is increased. Planting projects will not install any <u>state-listed invasive species</u> and it is expected that new trees are maintained for at least three years afterward. Grantees with planting projects may later be requested to report those trees in a DNR survey or map.

All tree-related work completed under this grant will follow the latest relevant ANSI standards (e.g., ANSI Z60.1 Nursery Stock Standards, A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations) and International Society of Arboriculture Best Management Practices or equivalent. Contact your regional urban forestry coordinator if you need more information.

APPENDIX G: DEFINING DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES AND USING MAPS

As required by the USDA Forest Service, all IRA funds allocated to the department's Urban and Community Forestry program must benefit "disadvantaged communities". While there is a general definition of what constitutes a community*, there is no set definition of what makes one disadvantaged, other than having a combination of non-exclusive variables identified in federal memoranda (see here and here).

To accommodate the requirements of the IRA funding and allow for efficient and equitable disbursement of these funds, an emergency rule was promulgated to temporarily modify the administrative code for the department's Urban and Community Forestry grant program. The emergency rule defines disadvantaged community as "a community that experiences greater economic, social, or environmental burdens relative to the rest of the state and that is identified on a map or list produced by the department under s. NR 47.55 (1m)."

As required by the Forest Service, all IRA projects must benefit disadvantaged communities – that is, the funded work should take place within the geographic borders of, or otherwise benefit populations within, disadvantaged communities. The Forest Service requires that project eligibility be determined using a federal or federally-approved environmental justice or equity tool.

Furthermore, the federal government has identified the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool as a necessary tool to help define these areas. With approval granted by the Forest Service, the DNR has also incorporated elements of the Environmental Protection Agency's EJScreen into its identification of disadvantaged communities.

With the above parameters, this opportunity for IRA funding opens eligibility to local units of government and non-profit organizations if the work takes place in, or benefits populations within, the below areas. Additionally, federally recognized tribal governments are eligible.

1. **Any Census Tract identified as disadvantaged within the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (Council on Environmental Quality)**
2. **Any Census Block Group at or above the state's 90th percentile using any of the 13 environmental justice or 13 supplemental indices within EJScreen (Environmental Protection Agency).**

A map is available online to see where these areas are located (statewide image below). Additionally, a list is available that identifies the cities, villages and towns that have any disadvantaged communities within them, as defined with the above criteria (posted online).

*"Either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a geographically dispersed set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions." *Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative*, M-21-28 (July 20, 2021)
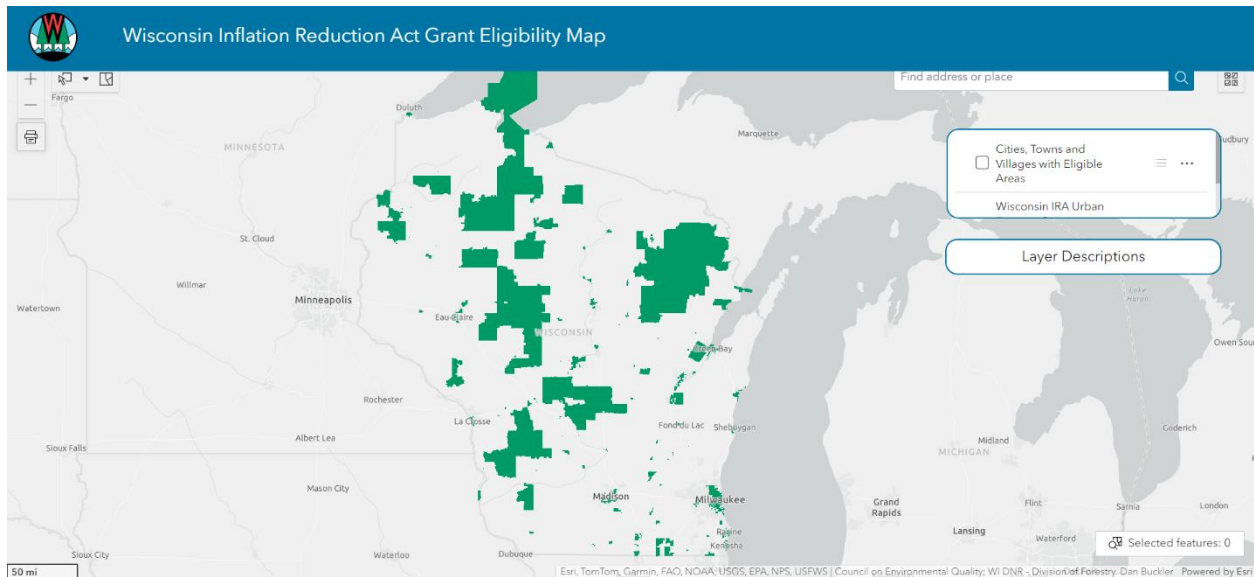
Using Equity Tools

The [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) and [EJScreen](#) were used to determine eligibility for the Urban Forestry IRA grant opportunity (if your area is in green on the [DNR map](#), it is an eligible area). While telling the story of why your area is in need of the investment in urban forestry, you are not required to use those tools. Nonetheless, if you're interested in learning about or using CEJST and EJScreen, instructions on how to navigate the sites are below.

[Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#)
Zoom into your area of interest and click on it. On the right side of the screen you'll see categories highlighted in blue that were met. Click on those categories for specifics on why that area was considered disadvantaged. This Census tract in Green Bay, for example, is considered disadvantaged in the Legacy pollution and Workforce development categories.
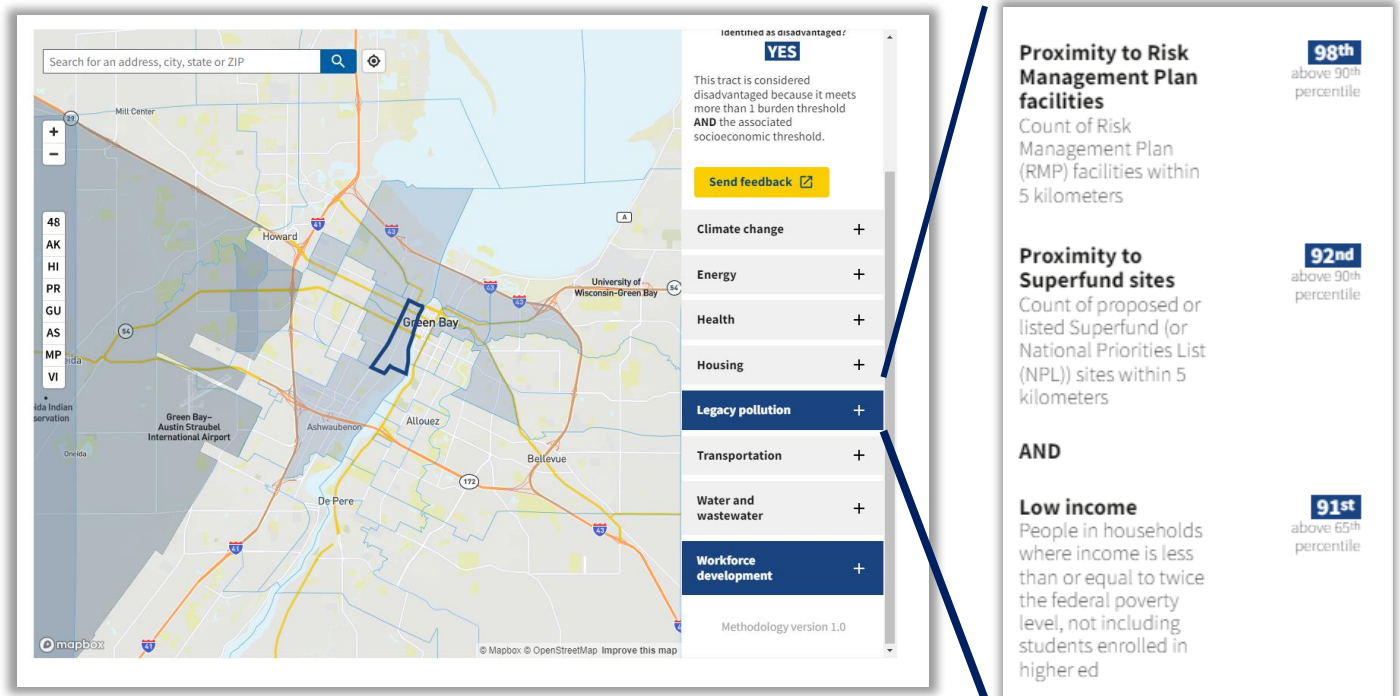
Additional information pops up that elaborates on why the Census tract was considered disadvantaged in that category. For this tract, Legacy pollution was triggered because it is close to sites of hazardous waste **and** is above their Low income threshold.

EJScreen

The Environmental Protection Agency's EJScreen is more complex and a bit less user-friendly to navigate. Nevertheless, to see the index percentiles for your area of interest, zoom to the area, then click the tab for "Reports" and click "Select Block Group". Click on your area of interest and a Census block group will be highlighted. Click on "EJScreen Community Report".
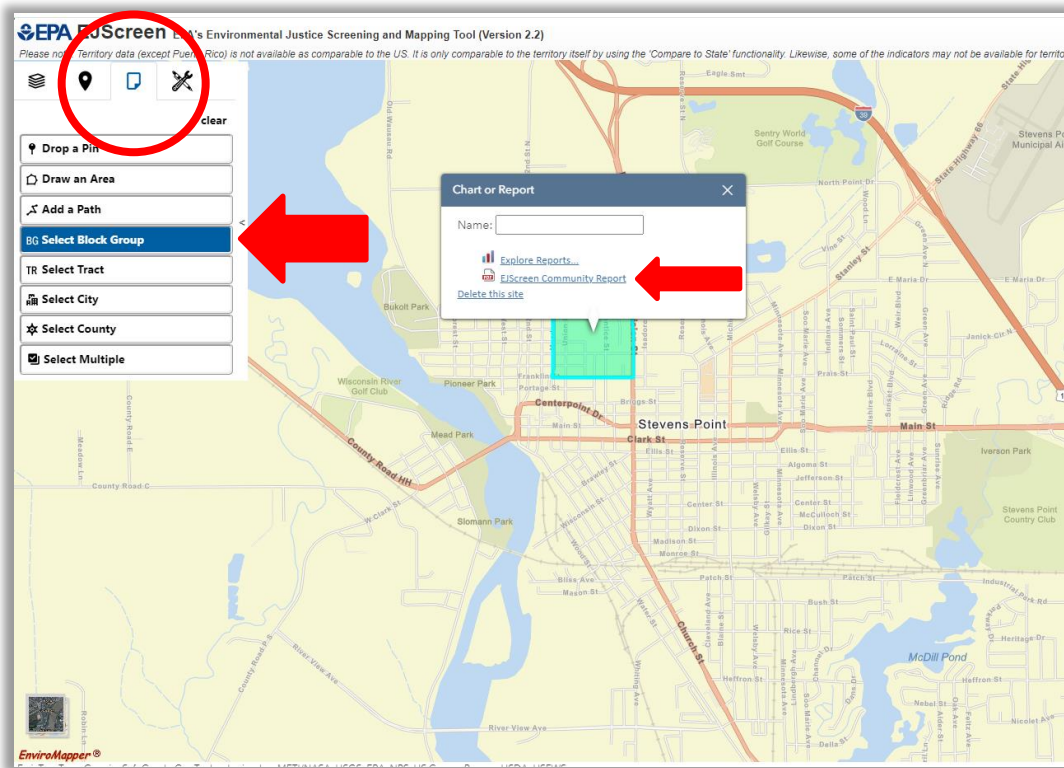
After you click on "EJScreen Community Report", a new tab will open in your internet browser (give it up to a minute to load). A page rich with information about that particular block group will appear. While the index graphs show why your area was considered disadvantaged (at or above the 90th percentile for the state), the whole document contains potentially other useful information about the demographics and environmental burdens within that block group.
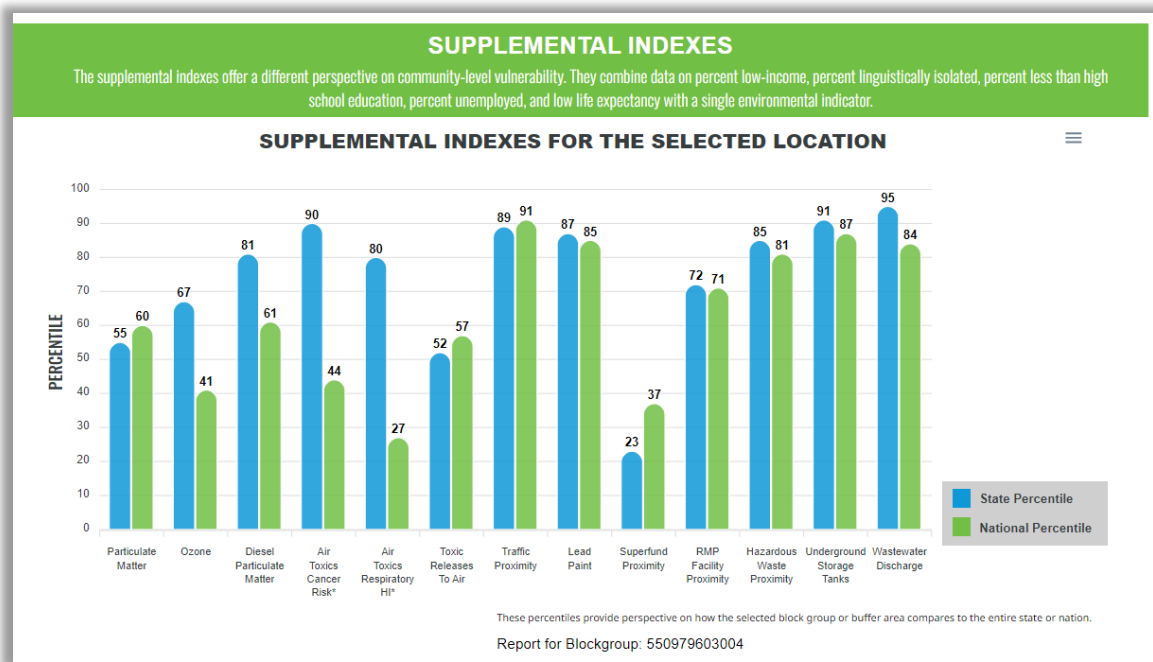
Other Available Environmental Equity Tools

- [Tree Equity Score](#)
- [Environmental Justice Index](#)

APPENDIX H: EMERGENCY RULE LANGUAGE

The Inflation Reduction Act monies have different requirements than our normal urban forestry grant program requirements, which prompted the department to undergo the emergency rule change process to temporarily modify state administrative code governing the grant program.

The DNR will be implementing the Inflation Reduction Act grant funding through emergency rule. The emergency rule language in Board Order FR-06-23(E) has been approved by the Natural Resources Board and Governor, and will be posted to the Wisconsin State Legislature website once in effect. We anticipate an effective date of April 8, 2024. The emergency rule will govern the eligible projects and the grant procedures for this IRA grant opportunity.

Below is a summary of the emergency rule changes:

The emergency rule changes modify the current procedures, found in ch. NR 47, Wis. Adm. Code, for the administration of the DNR's UCF Grant Program awards to local governments, tribal governments, and not-for-profit organizations for the purpose of funding urban and community forestry projects as authorized under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 USC 2101 et seq.), as amended. The goal of these modifications is to facilitate the disbursement of new federal monies allocated under the IRA, and distinguish these IRA funds from state or other federal funds. Rule changes include introducing match waivers for grantees, establishing an advance payment of no more than 50% of the grant upon award to all grantees, allowing annual reimbursement for multi-year projects, increasing the maximum grant award amount to $500,000, and specifying that only projects that benefit disadvantaged communities are eligible for these funds. These rule changes will help facilitate equitable and efficient access to IRA funding through the DNR's UCF Grant Program.

The changes to the existing rule text are as follows:

SECTION 1.   NR 47.52 (1m) is created to read:

NR 47.52 (1m) "Disadvantaged community" means a community that experiences greater economic, social, or environmental burdens relative to the rest of the state and that is identified on a map or list produced by the department under s. NR 47.55 (1m).

SECTION 2.   NR 47.52 (2m) is created to read:

NR 47.52 (2m) "IRA" means the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, Public Law 117-169.

SECTION 3.   NR 47.53 (1) is amended to read:

NR 47.53 (1) An eligible applicant, described under s. NR 47.55 (1) may apply for a grant under this subchapter for the purposes specified under s. NR 47.55 (1m) and (2).

SECTION 4.   NR 47.54 (1) is amended to read:

NR 47.54 (1) ~~A~~ Except as provided in sub. (1m), a grant under this subchapter shall be no more than 50% of actual eligible costs except that no grant may exceed $25,000 or be less than $1000.

SECTION 5.   **NR 47.54 (1m) is created to read:**

NR 47.54 (1m) An IRA-funded grant under this subchapter shall be no less than 100 percent of actual eligible costs except that no grant may exceed $500,000 or be less than $1,000.

SECTION 6.   **NR 47.55 (1m) is created to read:**

NR 47.55 (1m) IRA FUNDING AND DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES. To be eligible to receive an IRA-funded grant under this subchapter, projects shall benefit disadvantaged communities. The department shall produce a map or list that identifies disadvantaged communities using data and a methodology that is developed in consultation with the forest service. All projects that benefit Federally Recognized Tribes are eligible to receive an IRA-funded grant under this subchapter.

SECTION 7.   **NR 47.58 (2) (a) is amended to read:**

NR 47.58 (2) (a) ~~N~~Except as provided in par. (am), not-for-profit organizations may request an advance payment of no more than 50% of the grant upon the awarding of the grant.

SECTION 8.   **NR 47.58 (2) (am) is created to read:**

NR 47.58 (2) (am) Any grantee receiving an IRA-funded grant under this subchapter may request an advance payment of no more than 50 percent of the grant upon the awarding of the grant.

SECTION 9.   **NR 47.58 (2) (b) is amended to read:**

NR 47.58 (2) (b) Each grantee shall submit to the department a final ~~accounting claim for~~ reimbursement request, supported by evidence of cost, within 90 days after the grant expiration date. In addition, grantees with IRA-funded multi-year projects shall submit to the department an annual reimbursement request on forms provided by the department, supported by evidence of cost, within 90 days after the anniversary of the grant start date if the grantee is seeking annual grant payments under par. (c).
    Note: Reimbursement forms are available on the department's website at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/ under the topic, "Urban Forestry Grants."

SECTION 10.   **NR 47.58 (2) (c) is amended to read:**

NR 47.58 (2) (c) Final balance payments for ~~not-for-profit organizations~~ grantees that received an advance or annual grant payment, and grant payments for all other grantees, shall be made upon approval of the final report and the final ~~accounting claim~~ reimbursement request. For IRA-funded grants, annual grant payments shall be made upon approval of the annual reimbursement request, if one has been submitted under par. (b).