

Grant Guidelines for Consultants, Contractors and Vendors

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program (Round 15)

This document covers the following project types:

- Tree Inventory
- Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP)
- Tree Maintenance
- Tree Planting

Introduction

The purpose of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program, a unit within the Division of Lands and Forests, is to help communities develop healthy community forests and sustainable UCF programs. The UCF Grant Program assists communities in planning and management of their urban and community forests.

Please read the following general information, and then the project-specific guidelines* for Tree Inventory/Community Forest Management Plans, Tree Planting or Tree Maintenance prior to bidding on projects. Not all information in this document will be applicable to every awardee.

1. **Consultant/Contractor.** Lists of contractors who have bid or worked on DEC UCF grant projects in the last few years have been distributed to all awardees. These lists contain names, emails, telephone numbers and websites where available. This will help awardees identify contractors that perform the type of work they are looking for. This list should not be interpreted as a recommendation by DEC of any individual business. Please let us know if you are no longer interested in bidding for UCF work, your information has changed or you would like to be added.
2. **Contacting awardee** – New York State (Governor’s office or DEC) will issue a press release announcing awards (municipality/not-for-profit name, type of project and amount). Awardees will go to bid anywhere from 60 days to approximately 1 year from the date of award announcement. It is beneficial to contact the awardees of the projects you may want to bid on, introduce yourself and let them know you will be bidding. If in doubt of the

contact name/s for this project, call the Town Clerk's office, Village Manager or check the website for Tree Board email, and make sure you are speaking to the correct person. If you were asked for quotes from a grant writer for the application, check with them for who to contact. Some of the awardees will put bids on Contract Reporter (<https://www.nyscr.ny.gov/>) and some will advertise in their local paper or just a website so it's good to know in advance what to expect. The bidding process is slower rather than faster and can go on throughout the first year. This UCF grant has a two-year contract.

3. **Request for Applications** – Please read the Urban and Community Forestry Round 15 Request for Applications* (RFA) carefully; this is the document the awardees used to apply for their grants. Eligible Projects begin on page 15. If you or the awardee feel there are items needed that DEC does not cover, the awardee can include them in this project at their own expense and without invoicing DEC for the cost. Please make this clear in the scope of work, bid and later in the invoicing. Otherwise, please bid and work only on the eligible items listed in the RFA and approved in the awardee's contract. Please contact the DEC Grant Administrator, Michelle Higgins, with questions.
4. **Kickoff Meeting** – all awardees have been asked to hold a kickoff meeting with the selected contractor and the regional DEC urban forester to ensure everyone is on the same page. If unable to be held in person, meetings by phone, Webex, Skype, Zoom or similar are fine. The meeting will probably include a municipal official or not-for-profit employee, a tree board member, the individual responsible for the payment of invoices, DEC urban forester and any other partners or members of interested parties such as the Economic Development team. You will be asked to walk them through the project and let them know what is needed, such as goals, timelines and outcomes. DEC's Urban and Community Forestry Program wants awardees to promote urban forestry so you may be asked to take part in photos, media interaction and resident questions. Clarify any permits needed and municipal work order coordination contacts, work hours and any DEC requirements for inspection.
5. **Final Presentation** – Outreach and Education - for Round 15, we have suggested awardees deliver a final presentation to the Village or Town Board, City Council, Community Board, volunteer committees or Conservancy or Friends of groups. If approved in the awardee's contract, they may include this task or request help with this task in their RFP. This generally involves a PowerPoint presentation and attending a public meeting. It may involve returning to the project several months after completion, so if costs need to be charged, add it to the bid sheet. We have found that these presentations are popular among local officials and residents; they will learn from you and it promotes urban forestry in general. Work with the awardee to make sure they take good quality photos and/or videos during the project.

Tree Inventory – Project-Specific Information

1. **Minimum Information.** Tree Inventories must include (from DEC Round 15 RFA with some clarification added):

- Column headings and description of column content
- Measurement of tree DBH (diameter at breast height) in inches
- Tree species – genus/species AND common names
- Street address location- notes on specific location (front, side, etc.) can be helpful for future reference
- GPS coordinates
- Location and size of empty and/or potential tree planting sites
- Location and diameter of stumps
- Crown condition and/or percentage of crown dieback (OR overall tree condition) (excellent to dead rating)
- Maintenance recommendation (prune, train, remove, etc.)
- I-Tree ECO Summary report of environmental benefits

Due to limited funding resources, the UCF program does not fund traditional woodland/woodlot inventories. If approved in the application, the UCF program will fund inventories of trees in woodlands within 30 feet of roads and trails. The primary purpose of inventorying this area is to identify risk trees, conduct an assessment and to help reduce liability, not to assess the health and maintenance needs of 100% of the woodland trees within 30 feet of roads and trails. A minimum size of tree should be set (e.g. 6 inches) as the criteria for assessing.

Planting Spaces – The main objective of the inventory is to give communities an idea of the current status/condition of their street trees while giving them enough vacant spaces to cover 5-8 years of planting. This should be more than enough to accommodate existing planting trends and to encourage a larger planting plan without overwhelming the awardee. We have found that identifying 25% of the trees and stumps as planting spaces will work for most awardees. (20% of the # of total sites. For instance, if you have 5000 trees, 25% is 1250. 20% of 6250 total sites is 1250) In Round 15, the cap on vacant planting spaces DEC will pay for is 25%, unless otherwise preapproved in the DEC contract. Since it's difficult to know the total number of trees until the inventory is complete, we will cover the cost of the number of planting spaces up to 27%. Awardees should prioritize areas where they would like to plant in the next 5-8 years (i.e. Environmental Justice areas, revitalizations, proposed infrastructure improvements, etc.).

2. **Bidding Table** – this is most likely what you will see as part of the RFP or RFQ during the bidding or quoting process from the municipality or not-for-profit. The numbers listed here are samples – the inventory to be bid could be 750 trees or 17,000 trees. The table below is an example of what awardees may use when requesting bids or quotes for Round 15:

Item for Bid	Cost per Unit (Rate)	# of Units	Total Bid (Rate X # of Units)
Tree Inventory Startup (enter lump sum price for inventory of up to 2,000 trees and stumps)		1	
i-Tree Inventory Report (to be delivered with tree inventory)		1	
Additional Expected Trees (enter price per tree for inventory of 2,001 to 6,000 trees)		4,000	
Additional Expected Trees (enter price per tree for inventory of 6,001 to 10,000 trees). Add more boxes for higher number of trees and price grades		4,000	
Vacant Planting Spaces, (not to exceed 25% of total tree inventory and based on planting goals)		500	
Meetings – initial, phone meetings, kickoff, final, public presentation – anything expected to be charged such as training (List out and pricing may be per item or hourly; not to exceed amount approved in DEC contract)		3	
Community Forest Management Plan (Basic)		1	
Optional Community Forest Management Plans (e.g. Planting Plan, Storm Preparedness and Response). Add more boxes for extra plans and price each.)		1	
CONTRACT TOTAL (MAX)	n/a	n/a	

3. **Kickoff meetings.** A successful kickoff meeting will help ensure everyone is clear about objectives, goals and roles.

Prior to the meeting, send any agenda items or materials the awardee needs to read, compile (previous inventories or management plans) or consider. Ask them to tell you what’s important to them as a municipality or not-for-profit for the tree inventory – e.g. have they been thinking about rain gardens/streamside planting/old maples and ask if they have any concerns about the area you are going to inventory; do they have historic trees that may form a tree walk brochure later on; are they looking to mitigate coastal flooding/bad soil areas/drought prone parks and can you recommend specific trees to plant in the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP)? It’s important to be aware of the CFMP goals and objectives before collecting data in the field. If you as contractor are setting up a kickoff meeting (unlikely), make sure the regional DEC urban forester is invited in a timely manner. See the DEC forester list in the General Guidelines document and don’t hesitate to call or email and introduce yourself prior to the kickoff meeting.

Please work out with the DEC forester when the final inspection should be done. If you are a local company and can be available anytime, this can be left until after the inventory is complete at mutual consent. If you are not a local company and it is inconvenient, or you will need to charge the project to return for DEC inspection (if needed) please discuss this early on, then if there are questions or concerns on either side, it can be worked out before the certified arborist leaves. It would also be helpful to invite the DEC forester to meet with you and the awardee on site during the inventory process. During the tree inventory, if critical trees are observed, and they need immediate attention, please contact the awardee without delay. They may want to attend to these trees right away.

4. **Level II or III Risk Assessment** – (optional plan) this was listed in the Request for Applications as an optional assessment, but no awardee applied for it in Round 15.
5. **Consultant follow-up** – (optional plan) This is designed for the municipality or tree board that may need assistance a year after the initial tree inventory and CFMP to discuss tree inventory updates, training staff in tree care and to discuss and receive guidance with specific tree problems and ideas they may have. If the awardee applied for this and it was approved in the application, we will ask them to itemize it in the bid, even if in a general way.
6. **Asset management software** – (optional plan) Tree Inventory/asset management software can be bid or listed as a separate item in a request for bids if it has been approved for the project. It is recommended that awardees should choose software that best fits the needs and capabilities of the field staff who will update the Tree Inventory and which they can maintain beyond grant funding. Each year, more awardees move to natural resource or local asset management systems for all DPW needs. DEC generally will not pay for tree inventory management software if the awardee has asset management software. Awardees may purchase their choice of software without grant funding.
7. **I-Tree ECO report** – please deliver and invoice the report with the Tree Inventory. It should not be billed again with the CFMP. This is needed with the tree inventory as it gives the awardee a narrative to work with as they meet regarding the CFMP.

Community Forest Management Plan – Project-Specific Information

CFMPs should be *individualized* to the village, town, city, park or area that was inventoried. The closer the reference to the locality, the better it will be understood by the community. It is important that the goals and needs of the awardee are met and that they have clear and concise information to move forward. A well written plan will more likely garner support from community officials, buy-in from community residents and will be more successfully implemented. Think of the CFMP as a document that can be filed in the local library for reference and community interest, as the downtown revitalization, comprehensive plans and

waterfront plans are intended to be.

1. **The awardee should provide** the following information to incorporate into the plan:
 - Local and urban forestry history
 - Historic and current photos (The community should provide photos for the plan and choose the cover photo. They should discuss with the consultant examples of very good and very bad trees that could be represented in the plan. They can provide photos showing community trees in different areas being inventoried by the company and of the tree board etc. Let them know what resolution is needed for photos.)
 - Content for sections about significant trees, trails, planting initiatives or other noteworthy and related activities

2. **CFMP meeting** – After completion of the inventory and before work begins on the CFMP, a second meeting can be held. Participants could include the awardee, partners such as the tree board, the consultant, DEC urban forester and anyone else working on the CFMP. Once again, the awardee should discuss their needs, goals and objectives for the CFMP. At this point the consultant will have a good feel for the inventoried area and be able to discuss details or specifics that should come into play in the CFMP. Some examples that may come up in the conversation include:
 - Are there major planting areas that could be addressed first?
 - Are there obvious areas for pocket parks or other small projects that could be undertaken by the DPW and volunteers?
 - Are there historic trees that should have special treatment?
 - Are there invasive species that should be treated or managed?

For Round 15 we would like to wait until after the Tree Inventory is complete and DEC urban forester has inspected and approved it before moving forward with the CFMP. Your input will be vital at the conclusion of the tree inventory to determine what the community needs for their individualized CFMP.

3. **The minimum requirements** for the CFMP as per the UCF Round 15 RFA include:
 - A vision for the long-term community forest and a strategy for how to care for the community trees.
 - The use of the tree inventory which identifies management needs i.e. pruning rotations, removal implementation, and prioritization of workload.
 - The development of budgets and work plans, including timelines and tasks, to meet that vision.
 - i-Tree benefit analysis of environmental issues such as: water quality, air quality, reduce urban heat island effect, energy efficiencies, storm water management, and health.
 - Recommended: Describe creation and/or use of a community tree board that includes volunteers and designate their activities.
 - If needed: Basic in-house training/meeting of responsible staff by the contracted consultant that will provide guidance to all those involved with ongoing maintenance of the Tree Inventory, and implementation of the CFMP. Follow up by consultant in the

second or third year is also available to ensure positive long-term support (only if approved in application).

The consultant should present the final plan to the community at a public meeting. This will count as an outreach activity. The awardee should invite the press and DEC urban forester.

Tree Maintenance – Program-Specific Information

Tree Maintenance projects are based on a prior Tree Inventory which identified trees to be removed and priority pruning needs. Some of these projects will include use of municipal equipment and labor for clean up or chipping, for instance. Close communication will be necessary with the awardee if this is the case.

1. **Bidding** – The table below is an example of what awardees may use when requesting bids or quotes for Round 15:

Item for Bid	Cost per Unit (Rate)	# of Units (example)	Total Bid (Rate X # of Units)
Tree Removal dbh 6" – 10"		20	
Tree Removal dbh 11"- 15"		7	
Tree Removal dbh 16" - 20"		3	
Tree Removal dbh 21"-25" (add more boxes for different sizes as needed)		5	
Tree Pruning – attach a list with location, dbh, condition and risk to determine work needed. Price per tree or average price.		45	
Stump Removal - average or exact price per dbh including cleaning to 8"-12" pits) Attach a list.		25	
Meetings – initial, phone meetings, kickoff, final, public presentation (anything that may need to be charged such as training) (List out and pricing may be per item or hourly; not to exceed amount approved in DEC contract)		2	
Training (if applicable)			
CONTRACT TOTAL (MAX)	n/a	n/a	

2. **Extra Trees** - After the bid or quote has been awarded and if there are funds remaining, the awardee can request approval from DEC that extra trees be removed or pruned. The contractor can voice an opinion on the tree removal Bid list e.g. If pruning is a suitable alternative, it could be done, with approval from the awardee.

3. **Pruning** - Arborists/contractors should adhere to the ANSI A300 pruning standards and will not:
 - leave branch stubs
 - make unnecessary heading cuts
 - cut off the branch collar (not make a flush cut)
 - top or lion's tail trees (stripping a branch from the inside leaving foliage just at the ends)
 - remove more than 25 percent of the foliage of a single branch
 - remove more than 25 percent of the total tree foliage in a single year
 - damage other parts of the tree during pruning
 - use wound paint, unless to mitigate the spread of oak wilt
 - prune without a good reason
 - climb the tree with climbing spikes

4. **Stumps** - Stump removal/stump grinding may be requested along with removal and pruning. The bid request should indicate depth of grinding (best 8"-12"), whether pits will be clean of grindings and backfilled with topsoil ready for new plantings or designed to be left bare and filled with grindings. Street tree pits should be clean including as much root removal as possible and back filled with either topsoil or with other suitable substrate such as structural soil. Open grown park tree stumps do not need top priority except where a trip hazard exists. DEC will work with the awardee prior to bid to make sure they are aware of standards needed.

5. **Credentials** – An ISA certified arborist needs to supervise any tree removal and tree pruning project. Any tree work around power lines requires EHAT/EHAP certification. It is also recommended that awardees contract with Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA)-accredited companies. Insurance needs and permits will be determined by the awardee and are not directly reportable to DEC. Stump removals do not require an ISA Certified Arborist.

6. **DEC Inspections** – The regional DEC urban forester will inspect the work when the contractor is finished. The contractor should keep a running list of work completed in case the DEC forester wants to perform an interim inspection. Please supply a confirmed removal list that matches the number and location of the tree list originally bid or amended. The awardee will provide this, but it is important for the contractor to list each tree, size and location on the invoice please.

Tree Planting – Program-Specific Information

Of all the UCF projects, the tree planting has the biggest immediate impact on the community and usually involves a volunteer group as well as a municipality or not-for-profit organization. When bidding on these projects, the contractor, nursery or installer should be made aware if volunteers may be involved. Either the contractor or the municipality should have a tree care

expert supervising for the day of delivery and installation, and this should all be included in the bid document.

1. Contractors must use only **non-invasive species**, (view the invasive species list, http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/islist.pdf)
2. Awardees and contractors must follow DEC’s Minimum Standards for NYS DEC Tree Planting Projects (www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/107360.html) and should also follow the ANSI 300 (Part 6) standards for tree planting. Any questions regarding **ANSI tree planting standards** should be directed to the DEC regional urban forester. For regional contact information, see the Guidelines for All Awardees document. Please pay particular attention to planting depth and be sure crews and volunteers are trained before beginning the planting.
3. **Bidding** – This is the example of bidding or quoting grid most municipalities will use for Round 15:

Item for Bid	Cost per Unit (Rate)	# of Units	Total Bid (Rate X # of Units)
Example – Tree Species 1 (size 1.5” caliper, specify bare root or balled and burlap)		17	
Example – Tree Species 2 (size 2” caliper, specify bare root or balled and burlap)		12	
Example – Tree Species 3 (size 1.5” caliper, specify bare root or balled and burlap)		20	
Example – Tree Species 4 (size 2” caliper, specify bare root or balled and burlap)		42	
Meetings – initial, phone meetings, kickoff, final, public presentation (List out and pricing may be per item or hourly; not to exceed amount approved in DEC contract)		2	
Delivery and installation (number of trees total)		1	
Maintenance costs (if approved in application)		6	
Supplies (stakes, guards etc. if applicable)		1	
CONTRACT TOTAL (MAX)	n/a	n/a	

4. **DEC Inspections** – The regional DEC forester will inspect the work when the planting is finished. Please supply a confirmed planting list/invoice that matches the number and location of the trees originally bid or amended. The awardee will provide this, but it is important for the contractor to list each tree, size and location on the invoice please.

* The Round 15 RFA, project-specific guidelines and other UCF grant-related documents and instructions are available online at www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/107360.html.

End.