



# **Leafing Out Grants (LOGs) for Overburdened Communities (OBCs) Education Grant**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**Announcement Date: November 1, 2024**

**Application Due by January 6, 2025 by 5:00 p.m.**

**Submit your application via the:**

**Provided Fillable PDF**

**Send to [leafingoutgrant@dep.nj.gov](mailto:leafingoutgrant@dep.nj.gov)**

NJ Urban and Community Forestry Program

Mail Code 501-04, PO Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625 609.292.2532 |

[www.communityforestry.nj.gov](http://www.communityforestry.nj.gov)

<https://www.facebook.com/NJurbanandcommunityforestry>

This grant opportunity is funded through the Inflation Reduction Act, USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## **What is the NJ Urban & Community Forestry Program?**

The New Jersey Urban & Community Forestry Program (NJUCF) is authorized by the [New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act \(N.J.S.A. 13: 1L-17.1 to -17.9\)](#). Through this program, we work with municipalities such as yours to encourage, promote, and support the stewardship and effective management of trees and forest ecosystems in New Jersey's communities. We do this through both technical and financial assistance to help you establish, grow, and maintain a healthy urban and community forest. You can find out more here about the [NJUCF program](#).

## **Where is the grant funding coming from and how big a grant can we seek?**

This funding is made possible by the U.S. Forest Service through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). You can learn more about the IRA and its urban forestry component on the [USDA website](#). The IRA provides funding for urban and community forestry investments that:

- Increase access in disadvantaged urban communities to trees and the associated benefits they provide to human health, the environment, and the economy;
- Broaden community engagement in local urban forest planning, tree planting, and management activities; and
- Improve community and urban forest resilience to climate change, extreme heat, forest pests and diseases, and storm events through best management and maintenance practices.

The NJUCF applied for and received an \$11.25 million grant through the IRA, 80% of which is being passed through to municipalities to support investments like those noted above. This Leafing Out Grant (LOG) is part of the \$11.25 million federal award. It will provide a maximum of \$12,500 (approximately \$4,167 per year) per funded municipality. Applicants for these three-year grants are expected to seek the full funding amount. See further in this RFP for examples of educational activities.

## **Who is eligible to apply?**

If you received this solicitation, then your municipality is eligible to apply.

Specifically, this grant is for Overburdened Communities (OBCs), which are determined using the federal [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST mapping tool) and the percentage of land area that is considered an [overburdened community according to the NJDEP Office of Environmental Justice](#). This grant is for communities whose census blocks all are considered to be OBCs by one or both of these tools.

## **What does the IRA training/education grant cover and when?**

A training/educational grant will enable your employees (and/or engaged community volunteers) to build their knowledge of urban forestry and arboriculture. This grant will provide a maximum amount of \$12,500 total (approximately \$4,167 per year) for your municipality over the grant period to pay for attendance at approved training events.

Through this grant, NJUCF will provide attendee registration fees for approved training conferences or seminars with an emphasis on funding events hosted by our partner organizations (e.g., Rutgers University, the NJ International Society of Arboriculture, and the NJ Shade Tree Federation). NJUCF core<sup>1</sup> training and the annual NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference are two trainings for which funds from this grant may be used. Other trainings may be added to this pre-approved list through those organizations. You are also required to seek pre-approval for trainings not on the list that would benefit your municipal and volunteer staff in the care and maintenance of your urban and community forest. Note that only the registration cost of pre-approved training/educational opportunities will be provided.

You must apply by the due date and submit all required information to be eligible for both grants.

Annual funding will be provided (approximately \$4,167) for education/training per municipality. This will ensure you are properly planning the use of the resources and growing your capacity in a meaningful way.

### **Why should my municipality apply?**

Through these LOGs, your municipality can improve its resilience to climate change, combat urban heat island effects, increase resiliency to pests and storm events through best management and maintenance practices, and more through education and training. These grants are all about giving you the tools you need to break down the barriers that prevent you from participating in NJUCF's accreditation program, and work with us to start, plan, and advance a strong, self-sustainable local urban and community forestry program that will enhance the quality of life for your citizens and all New Jerseyans.

### **Is this a reimbursement grant?**

Not exactly. These grants will pay for courses attended by grantees. The funds will go directly to the host of the program, on behalf of the grantee; advance payments to the municipality will not be made. However, if your municipality receives a grant, we will pay for the registration for courses/programs which are part of the approved grant project and relate to the project. Your attendance at the course is required if advanced registration is provided by us. NJFS will work directly with the program host, and details will be in your grant agreement.

### **Is there a match requirement?**

No. You are not required to match grant funds.

### **How many total grants do you expect to award?**

We expect to award this grant opportunity to all notified municipalities, up to 43, as a three-year grant, through this RFP. Should additional funding become available, we may award more funding for applications received in this round.

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<sup>1</sup> Completion of the core training program will satisfy one of the four requirements of municipalities and counties seeking approved status under the requirements of the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act. Core training is designed to introduce individuals who represent municipalities and counties to the stewardship of urban and community forests throughout the state.

### **What do I need to do to apply?**

Each municipality may only submit one training/educational grant application.

The application will be a fillable PDF, and you must supply any necessary supporting documentation.

### **What is the deadline for applying?**

You must submit your grant application to [leafingoutgrant@dep.nj.gov](mailto:leafingoutgrant@dep.nj.gov) by 5:00 p.m. on January 6, 2025.

### **When would I be notified that my municipality is getting a grant?**

We expect to complete review of the training/educational grant applications by Feb 1, and will notify successful applicants shortly thereafter.

### **What happens after I'm notified that my municipality is being awarded a grant?**

You will have to submit a letter of acceptance for the grant, which will provide the general terms and conditions you must comply with, such as progress, timing, etc.

### **Additional Information:**

NJUCF reserves the right to:

- Monitor the progress of all grant awards and withdraw grant funding if a grantee fails to comply with the requirements of its grant agreement.
- Disqualify any applicant whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of this RFP.
- Seek clarification from an applicant to effectively evaluate an application.

### **Who can I contact if I have additional questions?**

Should you have any questions, you can reach out to Brian McDonald, NJUCF program coordinator, at [leafingoutgrant@dep.nj.gov](mailto:leafingoutgrant@dep.nj.gov) or [brian.mcdonald@dep.nj.gov](mailto:brian.mcdonald@dep.nj.gov)