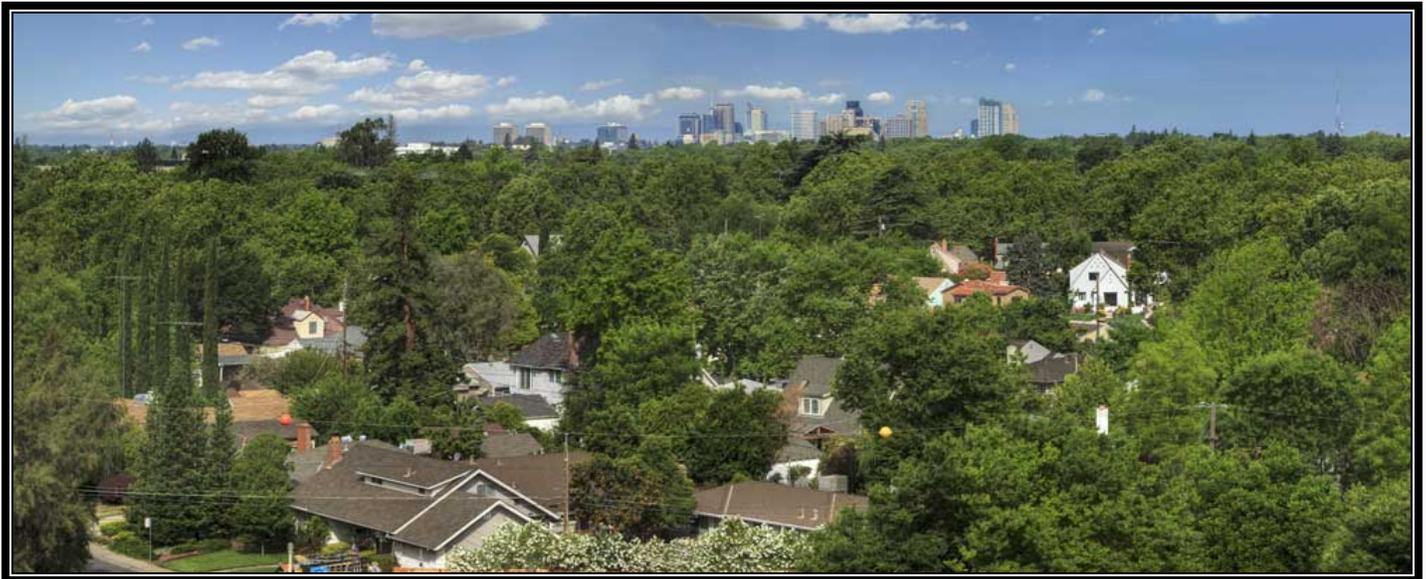




**State of California
Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)
Urban and Community Forestry Program
Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Grants**

**Urban Forestry: Woods in the Neighborhood Grant Program
Request for Proposals
2014/2015
Concept Proposals Due: November 13, 2014**



*CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry will offer workshops on the entire grant application and administration process for all prospective applicants.
Please watch http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php for dates, times, and locations of these workshops or contact your Regional Urban Forester (Appendix E of Procedural Guide) for details.*

Grant programs authorized by:

The California Urban Forestry Act of 1978 (Public Resources Code 4799.06 – 4799.12)

A copy of which can be found at:

http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry.php

Grant funds made available from the following sources:

The California Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund

and/or

USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program Funds

Urban & Community Forestry Greenhouse Gas Reduction Grants: Woods in the Neighborhood 2014-2015

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Please also see and refer to the *Urban & Community Forestry Grants Procedural Guide for 2014/2015*. This document is available at:

http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php

or

<http://www.ufeinfo.org/grantinfo.lasso>.

Grant applicants are responsible to meet the requirements of both documents. This RFP document takes precedence in the case of a conflict between the two documents.

Introduction:

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Urban & Community Forestry Program works to optimize the benefits of trees and related vegetation through multiple-objective projects that provide environmental services and cost-effective solutions to the needs of urban communities and local agencies, including, but not limited to, increased water supply, clean air and water, reduced energy use, flood and storm water management, recreation, urban revitalization, improved public health, and producing useful products such as bio-fuel, clean energy, and high quality wood. Such efforts play a significant role in meeting the state's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets under AB 32. We encourage resident participation in the development and implementation of state and local agency and non-profit organization urban forestry programs and projects.

The CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry Program has set aside funds to provide grants to organizations that wish to create or implement a "*Woods In The Neighborhood*" project that would purchase a vacant urban parcel or parcels and improve them with vegetation in a way consistent with the Urban Forestry Act of 1978 and the desires of the community. Examples include but are not limited to: passive recreation, green infrastructure, community garden or orchard, urban forestry education center, or a pocket park. The funding level of each CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry grant program may be adjusted based on the applications received. Strong preference will be given to communities identified as environmental justice communities utilizing the CalEnviroScreen 2.0 tool that can be found at: <http://oehha.ca.gov/ej/ces2.html>.

Eligible applicants include cities, counties, qualifying districts, or nonprofit organizations qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC 5096.605). Districts include, but are not limited to, school, park, recreation, water, and local taxing districts.

Purpose:

The purpose of this grant program is to fund the development and implementation of a "*Woods in the Neighborhood*" program or project that will reduce GHG emissions by helping improve urban forests, arrest the decline of urban forest resources, address climate change mitigation and/or adaptation,

facilitate the planting of trees in cities, improve the quality of the environment in urban areas through establishment of, and/or improved management of urban vegetation to optimize benefits to urban areas.

Practices that can be funded (including but not limited to):

- Funding for the purchase of a blighted neighborhood property or properties to repurpose it for a use consistent with the CA Urban Forestry Act and with a positive GHG benefit.
- Restoring or repurposing abandoned urban land and to develop community awareness of the benefits of managing California’s urban forests.
- Urban Forestry and/or Urban Greening Projects. Examples are: urban forestry education centers, bio-remediation projects, edible landscaping and/or community gardens and orchards, and other green infrastructure projects that have a positive GHG benefit.
- If your project somehow advances urban forestry, urban greening, or the management of urban natural resources, it may be eligible, ask CAL FIRE for assistance in determining eligibility.

Tree planting projects, Tree Inventories, Management Plans and Education programs are not the primary focus of this grant. Please refer to our other grants that specifically address those areas.

Project Rating Criteria:

All content of this RFP and the accompanying “Urban & Community Forestry Grants Procedural Guide for 2014/2015” document may be utilized for rating purposes. See below for specific information that will be utilized to rate projects.

Conditions:

All of the following conditions must be met for a proposed project to be eligible for a grant:

- Grant requests must be for the acquisition of and/or creation, development, and implementation of projects that somehow maintain or expand healthy urban forests.
- The amount requested must be between \$200,000 and \$1,500,000.
- The project will lead to sequestration of significant amounts of GHG and/or avoid emissions of significant amounts of GHG over a 40 year period (see “GHG Tracking and Reporting” below).
- Project is located in an “urban area” or “urban cluster” as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. (<http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/2010urbanruralclass.html>)
- The project must have a commitment for active participation from one or more of the following: local residents, local business, or local nonprofit organization.
- The project must display a sign with the logos and names of all organizations participating in the project, including the CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry Program. The sign must also cite the funding source.
- The applicant must comply in all respects with all applicable local and county ordinances, and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- Projects shall include an educational component. Not more than 20% of grant funds may be used for this educational component. The educational component as part of the overall project can be shown as project match dollars by the applicant.

- The applicant must agree to provide establishment care on all trees and other vegetation planted (including replacement) for at least three years after project completion. Evidence of long term maintenance for the trees and plants must also be shown. Communities able to show CalEnviroScreen 2.0 environmental justice status may qualify to receive funds for maintenance in a trust fund at project completion.
- Any tree planting within the project shall adhere to APPENDIX F of “*Urban & Community Forestry Grants Procedural Guide for 2014/2015*” at a minimum. Failure to follow the Standards will lead CAL FIRE to require replacement of the trees at the grantee’s cost. The Standards are also listed at the following web site:
[http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/downloads/CALFIRE Nursery Standards and Specs11 12 .pdf.](http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/downloads/CALFIRE_Nursery_Standards_and_Specs11_12.pdf)

Desirable Concept Proposal Attributes:

- The project will take place in a CalEnviroScreen 2.0 identified disadvantaged community.
- The project will serve a CalEnviroScreen 2.0 identified disadvantaged community.
- The project provides urban forest resources to areas where such resources are absent, or replenishes such resources where they are badly depleted.
- The project will focus on the multiple benefits of urban forestry and/or urban greening.
- The project will solve problems with green infrastructure that would otherwise have been solved using traditional methods.
- The project uses trees or other vegetation to reduce consumption of finite energy resources, reduce urban heat island effects, or to produce energy and other products from urban forests.
- The project uses trees or other vegetation to help reduce air pollution or improve air quality.
- The project has an educational component and develops public awareness of the need for expanding and managing urban forest resources and involves the public in implementing the project.
- The project will have high public health related benefits.
- The project benefit is high in relation to the budget requested.
- The project utilizes the largest canopied trees possible for the selected planting sites and shows a preference for planting sites that can support large canopied trees.
- The trees and plant materials selected are climate appropriate, drought tolerant, and well suited the site.
- The project will advance the practice of urban forestry.
- The project will arrest the decline of the urban forest.
- The project will be easily replicable elsewhere.

Ineligible Projects:

The following practices will not be funded by this grant program.

- Planting trees or other plants that require excessive maintenance such as: excessive long-term watering, fertilizing, exterminating, or controlling plant pests and diseases in order to survive.
- Projects that plant trees or other plants that will eventually conflict with overhead or underground utilities or ground-located infrastructure.
- Invasive species as determined by referencing the California Invasive Plant Council website (<http://www.cal-ipc.org/>) or similar reference.
- Projects that will supplant a locally funded budget item rather than supplement it.
- Projects that will not have a positive GHG benefit.
- Purchases to be made without a willing seller.

Eligible Costs (refer to sample budget, Procedural Guide APPENDIX B):

Costs for purchasing urban parcel(s)

- The purchase must be made by the grantee from a willing seller.

Trees and plant materials

- Trees in the #15 (gallon) container size are eligible. Other sizes will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Balled and burlapped and bare root tree stock may also be utilized if the sizes are equivalent (refer to APPENDIX F of “*Urban & Community Forestry Grants Procedural Guide for 2014/2015*”). These other sizes and types of trees must be approved by a CAL FIRE Regional Urban Forester prior to submission of the final proposal.
- Non-invasive plants that are drought tolerant and appropriate for the local climate and other site related limitations.
- Planting materials such as: Stakes, ties, and root collar protectors proportional to number of trees being planted; wood chip surface mulch to conserve soil moisture and inhibit weed growth, soil amendments in areas of hard clay soil or sandy soil; soil where needed to complete backfill; watering tools, and hand tools.
- Young tree and plant establishment costs such as: structural pruning, stake adjustment and removal, and water-wise irrigation.
- Fruit trees and edible plants are eligible with justification that they are an appropriate choice for the site and will provide significant benefits to the community.
- **Administrative costs**
 - Administrative costs directly related to the implementation of the project are eligible, but such costs must be justified.
 - Costs of tracking and reporting GHG according to the supplied criteria are eligible.
- **Overhead costs (for non-profit applicants only):**
 - A maximum not to exceed 10% of total State reimbursement. Overhead costs include items such as payroll administration, human resources, computer support, financing, and office support that are not directly related to the implementation of the project to be funded.
- **Education and signage:**
 - Purchase, development and distribution of education materials or events may be funded pending relevance to the scope of the proposed project. A maximum not to exceed 20% of grant request. All educational materials must recognize both the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program, and the funding source.
 - Funding source and program sign construction and materials. For sign requirement details, please contact your Regional Urban Forester (see Procedural Guide APPENDIX E).
- **Labor:**
 - Labor directly related to the project is eligible.
- **Construction and site preparation costs:**
 - In projects where the planting of trees involves establishment of a new permanent tree planting site, the costs for removal of asphalt, concrete paving, or other hardscape are eligible. The applicant must demonstrate that there is a need at the location. If hardscape cuts are to be made for tree planting, they must be 24 square feet in area at minimum. Larger is preferred.
 - Soil testing to determine the needs for the site is an eligible cost.
 - Water-efficient irrigation system supplies are eligible.
 - Other costs of construction are eligible with justification.

- **Ongoing Maintenance:**
 - In projects that take place in CalEnviroScreen 2.0 identified disadvantaged communities, projects that are carried out successfully in CAL FIRE's determination are eligible to receive up to two maintenance cycles (locally established cycle) of funding for ongoing tree and plant care and maintenance. A maintenance policy and plan must be in place and be submitted for CAL FIRE review, and be approved by CAL FIRE prior to the conclusion of the grant project to be eligible for this funding.

Ineligible Costs:

This grant cannot finance any undertaking or complete any practice designed to supplant rather than supplement existing local agency activities. Such ineligible practices shall consist of any request that CAL FIRE furnish grants to take the place of a regular or ongoing fiscal commitment to a program or project by a local government. Any practices that are required as mitigation of any kind may not be financed by this grant program. Additionally, the following are ineligible costs:

- Purely aesthetic items of any kind.
- Tree removal, unless the tree is dead, dying, or invasive and will be replaced. Exceptions may be made by CAL FIRE staff depending on the circumstance. Must get written CAL FIRE approval for exceptions.
- Water inefficient irrigation valves, pumps, sprinkler control timers or overly elaborate irrigation systems.
- Excessive hardscape.
- Excessive improvements not related to the urban forestry related function of the site.
- Trees or plants that consume excessive amounts of water.
- Trees or plants that are inappropriate for the chosen site or require excessive maintenance.
- Palms are not eligible.
- Any cost that would make a project a net GHG emitter.

Cost share:

These grants are to share the cost of eligible urban forestry projects. The proportion of the project's cost funded by CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry shall not be greater than 75%. Matching requirements (25%) for state funds may be met with in-kind activities or materials related to the project, as well as with any state funding source related to the project that is not the same as the state source of funding awarded by CAL FIRE. USDA Forest Service funds granted by the Urban and Community Forestry Program can be matched by non-USDA Forest Service federal funding. For example:

Total Project = \$2,000,000.00
 CAL FIRE Request = \$1,500,000.00
 Minimum match required = \$500,000.00

Important Notes on Cost Share:

Projects taking place in environmental justice communities as identified using CalEnviroScreen 2.0 criteria will be eligible to have their cost share requirement completely waived by CAL FIRE. This request must be made during the concept proposal process by checking the appropriate box on the form.

Projects that will serve a CalEnviroScreen 2.0 will be eligible to have increased cost share of up to 90% of project costs with a 10% matching contribution in the form of material, services, equipment, or funds from any non-state source. Such communities must be able to prove they meet the criteria. Please see Procedural Guide for further details.

GHG Tracking and Reporting

The State of California requires that grant projects track their carbon sequestration and avoided emissions, as well as any emissions a project may have. CAL FIRE has worked with the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the USDA Forest Service (USFS), and other partners to develop a methodology and tools for meeting these reporting requirements.

Reporting must be done for each grant project progress reporting period (quarterly). If improved tools become available during the project period, grantees may request CAL FIRE to approve an updated tool or methodology to increase accuracy or reduce costs with the same accuracy. Increased cost and/or reduced accuracy will not be approved.

Many projects may have a tree planting component, even if that is not the focus of the project. The suggested tool for tree planting is the USDA Forest Service Urban Tree Carbon Calculator. This tool can be found at the following web page:

http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry.php

Projects must project their GHG reductions and emissions for a minimum of 40 years. Direct sequestration of GHG, and any avoided GHG emissions resulting from co-benefits of the project may be taken into consideration. When reporting, the projected direct sequestration must be reported separately from the avoided emissions. In addition, any emissions associated with the project must be reported. A net GHG benefit must result when taking these three reported numbers into account. See for example:

CO2 Stored by the project	-24,089	metric tonnes (t)
CO2 Avoided emissions by project	-29,158	t
CO2 Emitted by the project	+1,000	t
Total CO2 Reduction	-52,247	t

For other project considerations, applicants must identify the tools that will be utilized to meet the project GHG reporting requirements above, and provide a justification. All calculations must be clearly shown.

Application Process:

The first step is to complete a Concept Proposal. If your Concept Proposal is selected, you will be asked to complete a Project Application. The Concept Proposal can be found at:

http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php

or

<http://www.ufe.org/grantinfo.lasso>

- Concept proposals must be submitted electronically in the provided format by November 13, 2014.
- Email or electronic submissions other than in the provided format will not be accepted unless alternative arrangements are made with Urban & Community Forestry Program staff at least two weeks prior to the deadline.
- Do not send unsolicited materials. Doing so will result in rejection of the application.
- In the case of technical difficulties or an inability to utilize the online format, please contact your CAL FIRE Regional Urban Forester for authorization to use alternative grant submittal procedures (see Procedural Guide Appendix E).
- Late submissions will be rejected. No exceptions. Late is defined as: after 11:59 PM PST on the due date according to CAL FIRE’s email system.

Using the submit button at the end of the form field will submit the concept application electronically. Before clicking to submit your concept application, please print a copy for your records and go to the file menu in your current version of Adobe Acrobat Reader (<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>) and select the “save a copy” option. This will allow applicants to retain a copy of the application for their records.

Information required on the Concept Proposal shall include:

Complete the online application and follow the format, directions about size limitations etc. Failure to fully complete the form will result in rejection of the application.

The project description should include a description of the project, the number and job nature of the people involved in the project and the source of funds, materials, equipment or services to be provided by the applicant. Also include the number of trees to be planted within the project. Provide your proposed budget following the format provided in the concept proposal form.

Project Timeline:

Projects Completed By December 31, 2019

Projects Closed By June 1, 2020

No Reimbursement Possible After this date

Note: Please see *Urban & Community Forestry Grants Procedural Guide for 2014/2015* for reporting requirements for this grant program.

What happens after submitting a Concept Proposal?

(Please see APPENDIX H of the *Urban & Community Forestry Grants Procedural Guide for 2014/2015* for a CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry Program Grant Process Flow Chart).

Concept Proposal Review and Filing

Upon receipt of a Concept Proposal for an urban forestry project grant, CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry staff or a designee of the CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry Program Manager shall review it for conformance with the California Urban Forestry Act of 1978 (Public Resource Code 4799.06 to 4799.12), The California Code of Regulations (Title 14, Division 1.5,

Chapter 9.7), this Request For Proposals, and the *Urban & Community Forestry Grants Procedural Guide*. Such review may include an inspection of the project area, if applicable.

If the Concept Proposal is found incomplete in a material way or the proposed project is not eligible for a grant, the applicant will be informed that the Concept Proposal is ineligible. Only when a Concept Proposal is complete and the project is deemed eligible for a grant, will CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry staff file the Concept Proposal.

Notification of Application Status

CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry staff shall notify each applicant whose Concept Proposal has been filed and reviewed of the status of its proposal within ten working days of the completion of review.

(1) For those Concept Proposals that have ranked high enough in the initial review, CAL FIRE shall notify the applicant and invite them to submit a Project Application for a grant for the project. Invitation for a Project Application is NOT a guarantee of funding. Once a Project Application is submitted, CAL FIRE Urban & Community Forestry staff will notify the applicant if a grant will be awarded as the circumstances allow. The applicant may then either withdraw their Project Application or complete the negotiations and execute a grant agreement. When the grant agreement is executed, the Director of CAL FIRE will make the grant funds available to the recipient in the manner and at the times specified in the agreement. Do not begin work on a project prior to receiving a fully executed grant agreement. Doing so may result in the project being ineligible for reimbursement.

(2) For those Concept Proposals that are eligible but for which there are no existing funds due to ranking, CAL FIRE shall notify the applicant that they will be invited to submit a Project Application if funds become available during the fiscal year.

Administration: To receive a grant, successful applicants must enter into a grant agreement with CAL FIRE. Grant recipients must agree to complete their project and allow for periodic inspections. In return, CAL FIRE agrees to share the cost of the project.

Technical Assistance: For technical assistance in preparing the Concept Proposal, the applicant should contact the CAL FIRE Regional Urban Forester located in the area nearest to the proposed project (see *Urban & Community Forestry Grants Procedural Guide* APPENDIX E):

Request for Record Review:

Within ten days of the receipt of notice that the application has been denied the applicant may request that the Director of CAL FIRE personally reconsider the decision of rejection. The request shall identify the applicant and the proposed project, and shall briefly state the applicant's reasons for requesting reconsideration. The Director shall consider the application and all of the correspondence from interested parties in reviewing the decision.

Final Decision by the Director of CAL FIRE:

If the Director finds that the decision to reject the application conforms to these guidelines and the Urban Forestry Act, the Director shall uphold the decision. If the Director finds that the decision to reject the application does not conform to these guidelines or the Act, the Director may approve the application.

Federal Affiliation

This program is made possible through a cooperative relationship with the USDA Forest Service.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

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