



**TREEPENNSYLVANIA**  
PA URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY COUNCIL

# PA's Environmental Justice Forests

Request for Proposals // 2024-2025

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# Environmental Justice & Program Goals



TreePennsylvania's **PA's Environmental Justice Forests Grant Program** aims to provide opportunities for communities to increase tree canopy within specific Environmental Justice (EJ) areas throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, while concurrently engaging and educating community members on the myriad benefits provided by community and urban forests. With a multi-phase, multi-year approach, PA's EJ Forests Grant Program plans to : (1) increase tree canopy through targeted tree plantings in multiple communities across the Commonwealth, (2) provide Tree Tender training for members within those communities, and (3) provide technical assistance through the development of sustainable urban and community forestry practices. This collaborative project, in coordination and partnership with Penn State Extension Urban Foresters as well as PA DCNR Service Foresters, will directly assist communities in addressing climate resiliency, storm water reduction, water quality improvement, urban heat island mitigation, as well as increasing the health and wellbeing of community members.

## What is Environmental Justice?

TreePennsylvania follows the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) definition of **Environmental Justice (EJ)** :

*“Environmental justice means the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, wealth, race, color, national origin, area of residence, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other activities that affect human health and the environment so that people: are fully protected from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards, including those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and have equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices. It further involves the prevention of future environmental injustice and the redress of historic environmental injustice.”* [PA DEP Environmental Justice Policy / September 2023](#)

## What is an Environmental Justice Area?

Likewise, TreePennsylvania will use PA DCNRs online mapping tool, [TreeKeepers](#), to determine an applicant's status as an EJ area. Many larger municipalities may have several census blocks within its geographic area which may span degrees of Environmental Justice determination. Applicants are encouraged to review the [PA DEP's in depth profile of Environmental Justice](#) within the Commonwealth to learn more about this important topic.



## Program Goals

With guidance from a small subcommittee, TreePennsylvania is excited to provide funding opportunities to increase tree canopy within EJ areas. Municipalities and non-profit organizations may already be aware of several EJ areas within their geographic area, or may be new the distinction of EJ areas.

### **Accurate mapping tools to determine areas in need**

To that end, TreePennsylvania *will ask applicants to utilize the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) and DEP Environmental Justice layers on TreeKeepers, the DCNR tree mapping tool, to identify potential tree planting areas which meet the specific criteria for this grant program.* CEJST is a screening tool developed by the Council on Environmental Quality as directed by President Biden in 2021. This mapping tool uses specific dataset as indicators of burden, including : climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development. For more information about data and methodologies specific to CEJST, visit their [website](#).

### **Community education**

In partnership with PennState Extension Urban Foresters, TreePennsylvania aims to increase awareness and participation in community and urban forestry. Awarded applicants will have the opportunity to increase the base of community education through TreeTender training. Each community would have the opportunity to either host a training, or send one (1) community representative to a nearby training for every 25 trees funded through this program.

### **Technical assistance**

TreePennsylvania is fortunate to have longstanding partnerships with PA DCNR Service Foresters as well as PSU Extension Urban Foresters. These experts in the field of urban and community forestry will assist awarded communities with determining appropriate planting sites, reviewing potential site preparation needs, and selecting the appropriate trees from a seasonal, curated list of bare root trees.



# Project Timeline

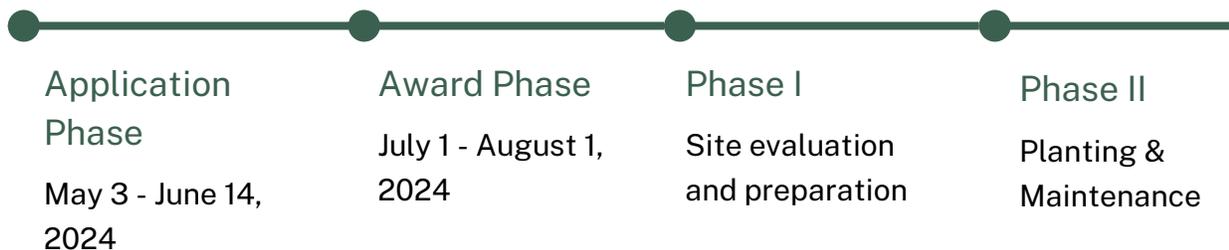
Interested applicants are encouraged to review the timeline below and determine if a project of this magnitude would fit within their current planting expectations.

Application Phase :: During this time, eligible communities are encouraged to attend weekly Information Webinars every Friday from May 10 - June 14, 2024. More information is available on the [TreePennsylvania website](#) in addition to the [online application](#). All applications are due by 4:00pmET Friday, June 14, 2024.

Award Phase :: All decisions on funding awards will be announced via email on July 1, 2024. In addition, awarded communities are required to attend one-on-one meetings following the award announcements.

Phase I :: July 1 - December 31, 2024 Awarded communities, with guidance from PA DCNR Service Foresters and/or PSU Extension Foresters, would conduct planting site evaluation and any necessary site preparation.

Phase II :: January 1 - December 31, 2025 Awarded communities would conduct two sessions (Spring and Fall) of tree planting and maintenance.



# Eligibility



## Applicant Eligibility

TreePennsylvania welcomes applications for this program which meet one or more of the following criteria :

- PA Commonwealth municipalities
- Non-profit organizations

Previous grantees to our Bare Root Tree Grant program are also welcome to apply; however, **applicants selected for this program would be ineligible from participating in TreePennsylvania’s Bare Root Tree grant program during this grant term (July 1, 2024-December 31, 2025).**

Due to funding restrictions, we are *unable to accept* applications from specific geographic areas including the five (5) counties surrounding Philadelphia (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia), as well as Allegheny County. In addition, we are *unable to accept* applications from corporations and private individuals.

All tree plantings must occur in designated CEJST and EJ areas and on publicly owned and publicly accessible land. Interested applicants are encouraged to contact us to confirm eligibility. Experienced communities as well as those new to planting bare root trees are encouraged to apply.

# Program Phases

## TreePennsylvania’s PA’s EJ Forests Phases : 2024-2025

Application	Award	Phase I	Phase II
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application submission</li> <li>• Info webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award announcement</li> <li>• Individual meetings with Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site evaluation</li> <li>• Site prep               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Invasive species removal</li> <li>◦ Tree removal</li> <li>◦ Sidewalk cuts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project report to Committee</li> <li>• Planting plan finalization</li> <li>• Tree Tender trainings</li> <li>• Species selection</li> <li>• Plantings</li> <li>• Maintenance</li> <li>• Final report to Committee</li> </ul>

### Phase I : July 1 - December 2024

During Phase I, awardees would be required to meet with either PA DCNR Service Forester or PSU Extension Forester to develop and review the proposed planting plan, conduct site evaluations, and present site preparation needs for approval. No tree plantings would occur during Phase I.

### Phase II : January 1 - December 2025

During Phase II, awardees would attend Tree Tender trainings, present a project update to the Committee, and finalize planting plans including species selection. Communities would conduct two sessions of tree plantings - one in the Spring 2025 and one in the Fall 2025. All work must be completed by December 31, 2025.

# Funding Guidelines

## Funding Guidelines

The primary goal of this program is to provide funding for Bare Root Trees within EJ areas throughout the Commonwealth. TreePennsylvania was fortunate to receive generous funding through PA DCNR for this unique grant program. To that end, there are several budgetary restrictions which all awardees would need to adhere to.

### Grant request amounts

Minimum grant request : \$6,000

Maximum grant request : \$64,000

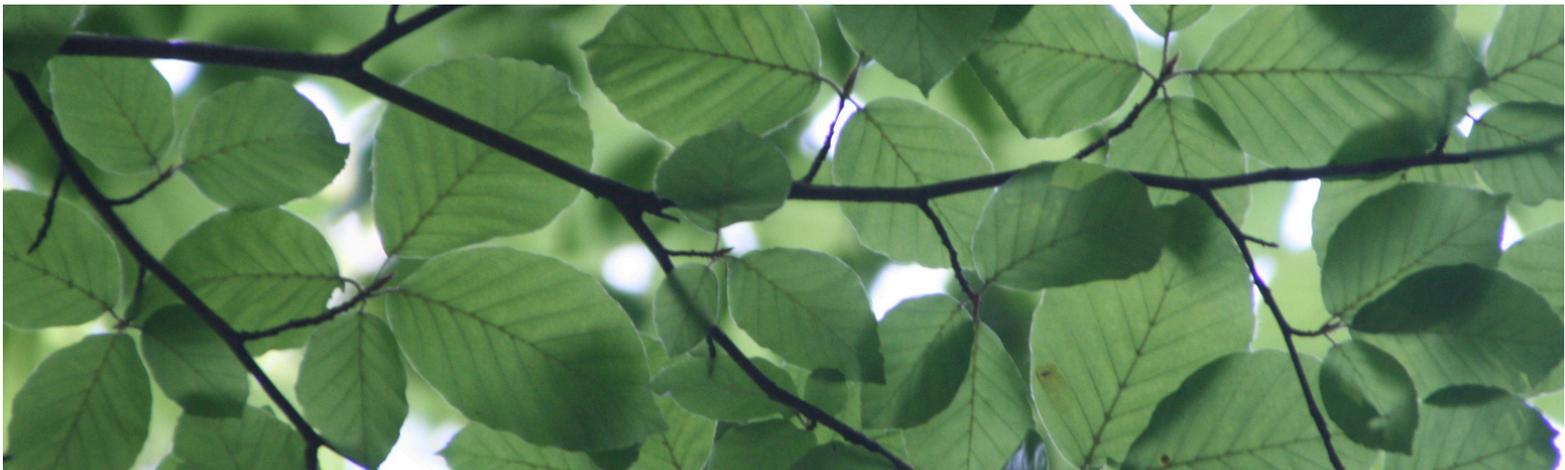
*\*see page 9 for more details on eligible costs and grant request examples*

### Trees and tree costs

Bare root trees will be selected from a curated, seasonal species list focusing on medium to larger canopy trees. For the purpose of this program, tree costs will be estimated at \$120/tree including delivery. Funding will be provided directly to the nursery on behalf of the grantee.

### Match

Awardees would be required to provide evidence of a 1:1 match using either cash (paid) or non-cash (donated) expenses. Examples may include paid staff time (administrative or manual labor), paid contracted time, or donated volunteer time.



# Eligible and Ineligible Costs

## Eligible Costs

Recognizing the expenses related to tree plantings, this program aims to assist communities in mitigating some of the most onerous costs : site preparation. Please note : Funding for grants, although awarded to communities, will be used to purchase trees and site preparation costs. **Funding is not provided directly to grantees.**

### Site Preparation

- removal of invasive species
- removal of dead/failing trees
- sidewalk cuts
- planting site preparation (hole digging)

### Tree costs and delivery

- purchase of between 25-200 trees per planting season (50-400 trees total)
- delivery of purchased trees

### Distribution of expenses

- Site preparation costs may not exceed 25% of the total project costs.
- Tree costs may exceed 75% of the total project costs *if site preparation costs are not requested.*
- *Applicants may choose to forgo funding for site preparation; however site preparation must be completed prior to plantings.*

### Funding request examples

Maximum request for site preparation *and* trees :

- \$16,000 for site prep
- \$48,000 for approx. 400 trees (200 trees/season)
- \$64,000 total request

Minimum request for site preparation *and* trees :

- \$2,000 for site prep
- \$6,000 for approx. 50 trees (25 trees/season)
- \$8,000 total request

Maximum request for trees *only*

- \$48,000 for approx. 400 trees (200 trees/season)

Minimum request for trees *only*

- \$6,000 for approx. 50 trees (25 trees/season)

continued...



### Ineligible Costs

The following costs may be used for match, but would be *ineligible* for coverage through this program :

- Trees not on the approved species list
- Trees planted on privately owned land
- Mulch
- Administrative costs
- Salaries (*outside of site prep and tree planting*)
- Paid labor (*outside of site prep and tree planting*)
- Equipment (*outside of site prep and tree planting*)
- Materials which may be used for another project, such as :
  - gator bags
  - tree guards
  - stakes
  - shovels
  - gloves

# Grantee Requirements

Throughout this funding program, TreePennsylvania will require the following responsibilities on behalf of grantees :

## Communication

- Most communication concerning this project will occur via email and virtual meetings/webinars.
- Applicants are asked to provide primary and secondary contact information. In the event of a staffing change, it is the responsibility of the applicant/grantee to notify TreePennsylvania and provide updated contact information.
- Applicants/grantees are expected to respond to emails in a timely manner or provide an alternate contact in the event of an extended absence.
- Grantees are required to provide periodic progress reports and one final report via an online form.

## Trainings

- With assistance from PSU Extension, grantees are provided access to [TreeTenders training\(s\)](#) during this grant term.
- Grantees are asked to send one (1) community member, municipal staff member, or other interested party to TreeTenders training for every twenty-five (25) trees awarded through this program.

## Tree Plantings

- Grantees are required to provide specific dates and locations for grant-funded tree plantings.
- Grant-funded trees must be planted in a designated EJ and CEJST areas using [TreeKeepers](#) mapping software, and on publicly accessible and publicly owned land.
- Grant-funded trees must be added to DCNR's [TreeKeeper](#) mapping software within two (2) weeks of planting. Guidance for adding trees will be provided by DCNR with support from TreePennsylvania.

## Financial Obligations

- Grantees are asked to provide evidence of a 1:1 match for their awarded funding. Match may be in any combination of cash or non-cash.

# Application Guidelines

## **Application Submissions**

Applicants must use the [online application form](#) available through [TreePennsylvania website's PA EJ Forests page](#). All applications are due by Friday, June 14, 2024 at 4:00pmET.

## **Application Criteria**

Applications will be reviewed by TreePennsylvania's EJ Forests Committee, comprised of PSU Extension Foresters, several PA DCNR Service Foresters, members of the TreePennsylvania Board, as well as experts in the field of urban and community forestry. Committee members will utilize an comprehensive matrix to evaluate applications. Recognizing many communities may be interested in this program, priority will be given to those with the capacity and dedication to successfully plant and maintain bare root trees including a strong volunteer base, evidence of successful plantings, and a strong interest in developing relationships with PA DCNR Service Foresters and/or PSU Extension Foresters.

## **Award Announcements**

All applicants will receive an email from Jessica Cavey, Program Director on or about July 1, 2024. Once approved, applicants will be scheduled to meet with members of the EJ Forests Committee.



# Contact us with any questions

[www.treepennsylvania.org](http://www.treepennsylvania.org)  
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