



Community Self-Assessment Tool for Technical Support from the SC Forestry Commission

The SC Forestry Commission's Urban and Community Forestry Program wants to ensure that each grant applicant is aware of and requests the most strategic support possible. In addition to specific projects, new technical support is now available. The following chart describes the types of data for which you might need technical support.

This assessment must be completed *before* applying for a grant from the SCFC. Please fill out this self-assessment tool to match your needs with our tools, in order to ensure you are asking for the right support that will most closely meet your community's urban forestry needs. This support can be provided in addition to a specific project.

After answering the questions, review your results and indicate which (if any) of the types technical support your community would like to receive. Technical support available is found on page 6.

Submit this assessment by 11/19/21 to Frances Waite fwaite@scfc.gov.

Data/Plan Type	Purpose	Applications
Tree Canopy Cover (data and map)	Track tree cover and create goals Create stats on tree % cover for a locality Determine where trees are (and are not) Generate spatial data on distribution of trees by income, public spaces, neighborhoods, master plans etc.	Use for planning and comparisons from past to future coverage (when repeated) Set realistic canopy goals Address planning and planting needs. Data can be used to generate ecosystem service statistics (e.g. air pollution removal) showing community benefits.
Tree Inventory	Determine health and needs of individual trees Calculate tree diversity (and needs for improvement) Flag trees for removal or care.	Call attention to diversity needs. Engage staff in understanding need for proper planting. Identify areas where trees not surviving (e.g. systemic issues of undersized tree wells) Establish condition of trees for future FEMA reimbursements in the event of storms
Tree Risk Assessment	Prepare for and reduce prevalence of risk-prone trees. Flag trees or limbs for removal or further monitoring.	Reduce costly damages from trees that may fail due to wind, storms, etc. Prioritize areas where a city or town should focus staff or inform how much to budget for tree care/hazards.
Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP)	A plan to guide the management of the urban forest and usually includes tree canopy goals, tree inventory and care plans, and budgeting for tree care, protection and risk management.	Allocate staffing and equipment needs Inform budget decisions for urban forestry and justification for expenditures Inform strategies for urban forest health Provide a process for program expansion
Storm Mitigation Plan	A plan to help the community prepare the urban forest for storms before they occur, to respond immediately following the storm and to guide long term recovery.	Create a process to identify and tend to trees at risk before a storm Create pre-storm contracts to speed up post storm recovery and ensure fair pricing and contractor availability Cleanup faster and handle tree debris appropriately including possible re-use
Green Infrastructure Plan	A plan to identify the community's trees as "green infrastructure" and strategies to conserve or expand tree cover and forest connectivity.	The plan can be used to identify the role of trees for stormwater uptake, wildlife habitat, reducing urban heating, improving parks, creating greenways, adapting to climate change, or revitalizing areas.

The self-assessment tool begins on the next page and must be completed BEFORE applying for a grant from the SCFC UC&F Program. Grants may only be awarded to a local government entity and the local government representative must complete this assessment tool.

Community Self-Assessment Tool for Technical Support

Estimated Time to Complete (15 minutes – not including time looking up answers).

Applicant Name: _____ Locality: _____

Is above named person authorized to apply on behalf of the municipality for technical support?
___ no, ___ yes, ___ unsure?

___ City, ___ Town, ___ County, ___ COG. Square miles: _____. Population: _____

#1) My community is a Tree City USA: ___ no, ___ yes, Go on to question #2.

TREE CANOPY COVERAGE

#2) My community has a tree canopy map that shows location of tree canopy. ___ no, ___ yes.

If you answered no, you may need a canopy map so you can track and plan for trees across your community – **See A: Technical Support for Canopy Mapping**. And, if you answered yes, see Question #3.

GOALS

#3) My community has a tree canopy goal. ___ no, ___ yes, If yes go to question #4.

#4) Did you use a map showing canopy location (e.g. spatial data) to establish the goal? ___ no, ___ yes. If you answered yes, see question #5. If you answered no, continue with question #6.

#5) Was your current canopy cover map created within 5 years of establishing your canopy goal? In other words, do you know your canopy percentage based on mapped data and then did you use that to establish a goal to maintain or expand that canopy? ___ no, ___ yes

If you answered no to question #5, then you may need an updated canopy map, and possibly a new, more realistic canopy goal. **See A: Technical Support for Canopy Mapping**. If you answered yes, then go on to the next question.

STRATEGIES

#6) Do you have a plan for how you are achieving or maintaining your canopy goal? ___ yes, ___ no. If no, then you may need to consider having an urban forest management plan which should include a canopy goal. Go to question #7 for more on whether you need a new or updated plan. If you answered yes, go to question #8.

#7) Does your canopy plan include a strategy for how many trees you are planting annually to achieve it? ___ yes, ___ no. If no, you may need assistance with establishing a planting plan and strategy. **See Technical Support for Tree Planting Plans**. If yes, are you achieving your planting strategy (# of trees per year)? ___ yes, ___ no If yes, see #8.

#8) Do you track how many trees you are planting and where in order to track goal achievement? ___ yes. ___ no. If no, you may need help establishing a tracking system. **See technical support for Tree Tracking.**

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

#9) Do you have an urban forest management plan? ___ yes, ___ no. If no, then you probably need one. Note that an effective plan relies on good data, so you should have answered yes to questions #3, #4 and #5. **See technical support for Urban Forest Management Plans.**

#10) Tree Inventory: Do you have a tree inventory (completed within the last 5 years?) ___ yes, ___ no. If yes go to question #11, if no, see question #12.

#11) Do you use your tree inventory to inform planting plans and tree maintenance ___ yes. ___ no. If yes, do you use your inventory to inform planting plans (e.g. increasing diversity of tree planting in specific blocks) or, is your inventory sitting on a shelf un-used? If your inventory is not used or if you answered “no” because you lack an inventory, you may need help determining a strategy for what to inventory and why (don’t collect tree data just for data’s sake – have a plan for why and where to inventory trees). An inventory can be done as part of an urban forest management plan or as a follow on from a canopy study. *If you have established why and where you want to do an inventory, see technical support for Conducting an Inventory.* Also see question #12.

#12) Do you have a Storm Mitigation Plan for your urban forest or a chapter in your locality’s emergency response plan devoted to tree risk assessment, tree debris removal and pre and post storm tree response? ___ yes, ___ no. If no, then you probably need an urban forest storm mitigation plan or an update to your localities emergency plan to include trees, see **technical support for Storm Planning.**

MARKETING

#13) Do you need help building support for urban forestry and already have a spatial canopy map (You would have already answered yes to question #4) ___ yes, ___ no. If you answered yes to the need to build support, then you may need help with **Technical Support F, Making the Case for Trees.** This also can include support for marketing and messaging about the urban forest.

#14) Does your program serve low income communities? ___ yes, ___ no. If yes go to question #14a, and also to #s15 and #16)

#14 a) Please describe how your program or project serves them:

___ education, ___ tree planting, ___ tree inventory, ___ tree safety (risk assessment)

Other (describe), _____.

#15 Does your program serve people who are members of a minority class (e.g. Asian, Pacific Islanders, Hispanic, African American, Other) ___ yes, ___ no If yes, go to question #15, a.

#15 a) Please describe how your program or project serves them:

___ education, ___ tree planting, ___ tree inventory, ___ tree safety (risk assessment), ___ other (please describe), _____.

#16) If you serve low income or minority communities, how do you measure that you have reached that population (e.g. track addresses for donated trees and correlate tree projects to census data on income or race)? Please reply below and note that assistance for effective outreach strategies is available – see technical support for ***Making the Case***.

Results

If you answered no to question #1, then we strongly encourage your community to become a Tree City USA. There are additional grants available to Tree City USA communities. Find out more here < <https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityusa/>>

If you answered no to question #2, you likely need a canopy map. It's essential for goal setting, locating planting opportunities or to inform a future management plan. If you answered no to question #5 you may need to update your canopy map.

If you answered no to question #3 you likely need a goal. To establish a realistic goal, you need to know **both** how much tree canopy you have now and the possible planting area of the future along with a budget for how to achieve that.

If you answered no to questions #4 or #5 then you may need help creating an updated tree canopy map.

If you answered no to question #6, then you may need help to create an urban forest management plan which should include a canopy goal.

If you answered no to question #7 you may need help creating a tree planting plan.

If you answered no to question #8, you may need help with creating a tree tracking app or other on-line tools available to register planted trees to meet your goal.

If you answered no to question #9, and you have completed a canopy map, possibly an inventory as well, then you may be ready for technical support for an urban forest management plan.

If you answered no to #10 and you have already completed a canopy map, then you may be ready for a tree inventory to inform a management plan. Note that a tree inventory can also come after a management plan!

If you answered no to #11 you may need technical support for putting your inventory to use, as part of an urban forest or an emergency forest management plan.

If you answered no to question # 12 then you may need an urban forest storm mitigation plan, see technical support for Storm Planning.

If you answered no to question #13 you may need technical support to generate statistics to make the case for urban trees or to hone your messaging and marketing strategy. See technical support for Making the Case.

If you answered no to question #14, and your community has such populations of low income people residents, you may need help in outreach strategies or support for engaging these communities. If you were unsure or could not answer question #14a, you may need help in measuring your success.

If you answered no to question #15, and your community has such populations of low income people residents, you may need help in outreach strategies or support for engaging these communities. If you were unsure or could not answer question #14a, you may need help in measuring your success.

If you answered no to question #16, you may need help in measuring your success and who you are serving and how well you are doing so. See items A, B, D, or F below.

If you have good data on hand and you are ready for your community to create a city or town-wide green strategy you may be ready for a green infrastructure plan, See technical support F. Trees can be considered and planned for as part of the community's infrastructure. A green infrastructure plan can be used to identify the role of trees for stormwater uptake, wildlife habitat, reducing urban heating, improving parks, creating greenways, adapting to climate change, or revitalizing areas and strategies to realize these benefits.

See the next section for a description of available support. Funders from SCFC will review your responses to this self-assessment and your requests for support. You will be notified if your community was selected and for what type of support. We may also contact you to obtain additional information in order to process your request and best match your needs with available services and support

Available Technical Support

Applicants can apply for technical support for items A-H and they must submit this assessment to show how they arrived at their particular requests. Note that some items may take more than one year to schedule and complete. If you are starting from the beginning (no data, no goals, no plan) you may consider beginning your request for Technical Support A and B and possibly C to start with and then apply for more advanced work, such as a management plan, in the following year.

- A) **Canopy Mapping:** Remote sensing analysis to develop canopy maps and plantable areas maps including help to establish a canopy goal (note that tools such as i-Tree canopy are not location specific, so remote sensing data are needed to show where trees are located).
- B) **Tree Planting Plans:** Uses recent canopy maps and plantable areas data to fit trees into the landscape and target them to where they are most needed using community goals.
- C) **Tree Inventories:** A field based-assessment of tree health including diameter, species, condition and recommended action for up to ____ # of trees.
- D) **Tree Tracking and Budgeting:** Uses canopy maps and inventory (if available) to plan for funding an urban forest planting plan including responsible parties, and funding plans.

- E) **Urban Forest Management Plans:** A detailed plan for how to care for the urban forest including staffing, equipment, planting and tree care and steps to achieve a canopy goal (if established or can be established as part of creating the management plan).

- F) **Making the Case for Trees:** Uses existing tree canopy maps (maps must be in GIS format and spatially based) to calculate ecosystem services such as air quality and carbon sequestration. If full land cover map and plantable areas have been mapped, can also include stormwater uptake calculator (developed by GIC). Also includes help with key messages, outreach and engagement strategies and graphics for education and engagement.

- G) **Emergency Forest/Storm Planning:** Planning for how to prepare the urban forest for storms, pre-contracting for debris removal and clean-up and recovery plans and urban waste wood re-use.

- H) **Green Infrastructure Plan:** The plan can be used to identify the role of trees for stormwater uptake, wildlife habitat, reducing urban heating, improving parks, creating greenways, adapting to climate change, or revitalizing areas.

I would like help with technical support items:

Letter:

___ Reason: _____

___ Reason: _____

___ Reason: _____

___ Reason: _____

Contact Information

_____ applicant

_____ locality

_____ email

(_____) _____ phone

_____ address
 (Department) (street) (City) (state) (zip)