



## Application for Technical Assistance and Urban Forestry Support from South Carolina Forestry Commission and the Green Infrastructure Center Inc.

### Overview

The SC Forestry Commission's (SCFC) Urban and Community Forestry Program and the Green Infrastructure Center are offering assistance for communities to better manage and grow their urban forests. This survey application ensures that each community is aware of and requests the most strategic support to benefit the urban forest. Support includes tree canopy mapping, planning, management, planting, code and ordinance development, master plans, and policies. More details are found at the end of this survey. New this year is an option for adoption under a more comprehensive program Trees4SC!

All applicants must complete this self-assessment survey whether for technical support or you may be considered for other funding opportunities directly through SCFC. Please fill out this needs survey that will help us match your needs with our available support.

**NEW!** While this is the third year of technical support for cities and towns for forest mapping, benefits modeling, and planning, the new **Trees4SC!** project is funded through an award from the SC Forestry Commission's USDA Inflation Reduction Act funds to "adopt" communities and provide multi-year support for neighborhood plantings, training and even redesigning parks, school grounds or other civic spaces with new trees.

You will be contacted in January 2024 to discuss your request and support availability. While this is a competitive application, we aim to support as many applicants as possible. This application is due by December 15, 2023. Work will begin in 2024.

**Eligibility:** Any SC municipal government agency or federally-recognized tribe is eligible to apply for this support. If your community received prior support you can still apply for new assistance. Eligibility for this expanded support requires that the community census tract is classified as "disadvantaged." See this map for eligible disadvantaged communities: [Disadvantaged Communities Map](#)

After answering the questions, review your results and indicate which support your community would like to receive including if your city would like to be adopted for multi-year support and tree planting. More details about this support are found at the end of this survey. Once you complete the online survey we will have a record of your application. If you are unable to complete this on-line survey you may instead request a paper version from Frances Waite [FWaite@scfc.gov](mailto:FWaite@scfc.gov)

While this is a competitive application, we aim to support as many applicants as possible.

**WAIT!** Before starting this survey there is information to have ready in order to answer all the questions in one sitting. This survey does not allow you to save work and come back later. It must be completed in one session. To take the survey quickly, have answers to these questions available before starting:

- 1) Does your locality have a digital tree canopy coverage map/data? How old is the data (what year was it created, it's okay if unsure)?
- 2) Does your city have a tree inventory? (how old, entire city, neighborhood?)
- 3) Does your city have an urban forest management or master plan?
- 4) Are you authorized to apply for this support or Trees 4SC program? <

Please know that if your answer to all # 1-3 of the above is “no,” that’s okay! Technical assistance grants are being provided to help your community answer “yes” to most or all of these questions in the future! For question 4, be sure to engage with the right staff or leadership from your community to ensure you can apply for assistance on behalf of your city, town, or municipality. If you received support last year, you can apply again for the next level up for support. For example, last time your community created a canopy map and goal and this year you want to create an urban forestry master plan. Or, you are ready for a major investment and want help from us to educate the community, plant trees and restore urban landscapes, apply for the full Trees4SC support.

**How will we evaluate requests for assistance?** Evaluation depends on what type of support you are requesting. And all relevant survey questions must be answered!

**Criteria for Trees4SC! Program:** If requesting adoption under the **Trees4SC! Program** – a multi-year program to address tree policies, map canopy, set goals and plant trees with disadvantaged communities, the locality must contain disadvantaged communities based on the map: Climate and Justice Screening Mapping Tool [map](#). The following criteria will be used to evaluate communities requesting assistance under the Trees4SC Program:

- 5 points are awarded for 25% disadvantaged communities
- 10 points for 50% disadvantaged communities and
- 15 points for 75% or greater disadvantaged communities based on the map: [Climate and Justice Screening Tool](#) **Total Points Possible: 15**

**Criteria Used for All Applicants:**

**Partners:** If you have already identified partners you plan to work with (and they have agreed) you will receive an additional 3 points. Examples of partners include local universities or schools, civic groups, tree boards and others. *Total Points Possible: 3*

**Results:** You will you receive 1-5 points for how clearly and specifically you describe how you plan to use the results of the assistance for real community needs (e.g. we plan to use the canopy map to update our comprehensive plan or to set a canopy goal.). *Total Points Possible: 5*

\* 1. Is your community a new applicant? Note that re-application is allowed to advance your community to the next step (e.g. you have a map, and now your community would like a tree planting campaign).

- My community received a technical support grant in 2023.
- My community did not receive support in 2023.

\* 2. Applicant name (person applying)

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\* 3. Name of Locality

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\* 4. Is above named person authorized to apply on behalf of the municipality for technical support?

- Yes
- No

\* 5. Assistance preference will be given first to cities and towns. Urban counties (or urbanized areas in counties) may also be eligible. My community is a

- City
- Town
- County

\* 6. My community is designated as a "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation. If unsure see: <https://www.arborday.org/programs/treecityUSA/index.cfm#recognizedSection>

- Yes
- No

## Tree Canopy Mapping and Tracking Goals

\* 7. My community has a tree canopy map showing locations of tree canopy. If you answer 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.

- Yes
- No

\* 8. My community has a tree canopy goal. If yes, also answer question #9.

- Yes
- No

9. Did you use a map showing canopy location (e.g. spatial data) to establish the goal? If you answered yes, see question 10. If you answered no, continue with question 11.

- Yes
- No

10. 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 tree canopy?

If you answer no to this question, then you may need an updated canopy map, and possibly a new, more realistic canopy goal. See A: Technical Support for Canopy Mapping at the end of this survey. If you answered yes, also answer the next question.

- Yes
- No

11. Do you have a plan for how you are achieving or maintaining your canopy goal?

If your respond no to this question, then you may need to consider having an urban forest management plan which should include a canopy goal. See question #12 for more on whether you need a new or updated plan.

- Yes
- No

12. Does your canopy plan include a strategy for how many trees you are planting annually to achieve it? Also see question #13.

If your answer is no, you may need assistance with establishing a planting plan and strategy. See Technical Support for Urban Forest Master Plans.

- Yes
- No

13. If you answered yes to question #12 tracking trees planted, are you achieving your planting goals (# of trees per year)? If yes, see #14.

- Yes
- No

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14. How do you track the number of trees planted to monitor goal achievement?

If you do not have a system in place to track trees planted to achieve your goal, you may need help establishing a tracking system. See technical support for Tree Inventory.

- Use a tracking software, city logs the locations of newly planted trees.
- Track trees given away by location of recipient at tree giveaways.
- Use a public app for anyone to log a planted tree which populates a database (may include third party managed websites).
- Other (please specify)

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## Tree Inventory

\* 15. Tree Inventory: Do you have a tree inventory (completed within the last 5 years?) If you replied yes, also answer question #16, if no, see question #17.

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

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16. Do you use your tree inventory to inform planting plans and tree maintenance?  
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 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 Tree Inventory. If not, consider Technical Support for Urban Forest Master Plans.

- Yes
- No

## Urban Forest Management Plan

\* 17. Do you have an urban forest management plan (UFMP)? (A plan detailing canopy goals, using inventory data for maintenance schedules and budgeting, personnel needs and timeframes for implementation).

If you respond no, then your community may need one. Note that an effective plan relies on good data, so you should have answered yes to questions #7 canopy map, and #15 tree inventory (ideally). Note that you can apply for canopy maps or inventories to get ready to create a plan. See technical support for Urban Forest Management Plans if you do not have an UFMP.

- Yes
- No

18. Do you have an urban forest master plan (a spatial plan with locations for where to plant trees now and in the future)? An urban forest master plan can be used to inform tree planting and is included in the Trees4SC option.

- Yes
- No

## Storm Mitigation/Storm Plans for the Urban Forest

\* 19. Does your community 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? If not, then you probably need an urban forest storm mitigation plan or an update to your locality's emergency plan to include trees, see technical support for Storm Planning.

- Yes
- No

\* 20. Do you need help building support for urban forestry and already have a spatial canopy map? Note: You would have already answered yes to question #7. If you answered yes, then you may need help with ecosystem benefits modeling. This also can include support for marketing and messaging about the urban forest.

- Yes
- No

## Serving Low Income Communities

\* 21. Does your city have disadvantaged communities? Use this link to find locations for Disadvantaged communities map [Disadvantaged communities map](#) If your city has disadvantaged communities, answer yes and go to question 22.

- Yes
- No

22. Do you work with or serve your disadvantaged communities any any of the following ways? Check all that apply. Note, if you have disadvantaged communities, but are not currently serving them, there is technical support to help you do so!

- Education in and for low income communities
  - Tree planting in low income communities
  - Tree inventory in and for low income communities
  - Tree safety (tree risk assessment) in and for low income communities
  - We do not currently serve them directly, but we would like to do so.
  - Other (please specify)
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## Serving residents of a minority class

\* 23. Does your program serve people who are members of a minority class (e.g. Asian, Pacific Islanders, Hispanic, African American, Other) If yes, go to question #24. Hint, you can use census data from the American Community Survey. If your program or department serves your entire city and your city contains members of minority classes in your population, (e.g. 15%) then you are hopefully serving all citizens including those from minority populations.

- Yes
- No

24. Please describe how your program or project serves members of a minority class:

- Education
- Tree planting
- Tree inventory
- Tree safety (tree risk assessment)
- Other (please specify)

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25. 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 Urban Forest Master Plans.

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## Tree Ordinance

\* 26. My community has an updated tree ordinance that covers the planting, care and removal of trees on public property. If not, consider asking for assistance with a Tree Codes Audit.

- Yes
- No

## Results! What type of support is best for your community?

### Interpret your results!

If you answered no to question **#1 Tree City USA membership**, 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: [Tree City USA](#)



If you answered no to **question #7 canopy map**, 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 #10 updated canopy map**, you may need to update your canopy map.

If you answered no to **question #8 canopy goal**, 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. You may need an urban forest master plan or help using your canopy data.

If you answered no to **questions #9 canopy location, or #10 updated canopy map**, then you may need help creating an updated tree canopy map.

If you answered no to **question #11, plan to achieve a canopy goal**, then you may need help to create an urban forest management or master plan, which should include a canopy goal.

If you answered no to **question #12 tree planting strategy**, you may need help creating a tree planting plan. If you answered no to **question #13 tracking trees planted**, you may also 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 #15 tree inventory**, 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 **question #16 (applying inventory for management decisions)** you may need technical support for putting your inventory to use, as part of an urban forest or an emergency forest management plan (see items C, D, E).

If you answered no to **question #17, (applying tree inventory for management decisions)** 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 or master plan.

If you answered no to **question # 18 (storm mitigation plan)** then you may need an urban forest storm mitigation plan, see technical support for E. Storm Planning.

27. Have you identified city or community partners to work with? For example, civic groups, tree groups, schools? List those groups whom you plan to or already include in your urban tree program. Hint: the more the better!

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If you answered no to **question #19 (building support for urban forests)** 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 Canopy Mapping (A2) and Master Plans (C).

If you answered no to **question #20 (serving low income or disadvantaged residents)**, and your community has areas noted on the screening tool [map](#), you may need qualify for help to engage these communities in tree planting with the **Trees4SC! Project**. See technical support for Canopy Mapping (A and B) and Master Plans (C) or the Adopt US Trees4SC! Option H.

If you answered no to **question #22 (serving people who are a minority class)**, and your community has populations of minority residents, you may need help in outreach strategies or support for engaging these communities. If you were unsure or could not **answer question #23, (how minority residents are served) or question #24 (how success in serving minority residents is tracked)**, then you may need help in measuring your success. See technical support for Canopy Mapping (A) and Master Plans (C).

If you answered no to **question #25 (tree ordinance)**, you may need help with conducting a tree codes audit to determine if your codes are up-to-date or with creating a new ordinance. See Tree Codes Audit G.

If you have good data on hand and you are ready for your community to create a city or town-wide canopy master plan consider asking for help with C, D, or E or **Adopt US Trees4SC! Option H**.

If you are working on sustainability or resilience planning, then your community may be ready to work on including trees as part of a green infrastructure plan, see technical support F or **Adopt US Trees4SC! Option H**. Trees can be considered and planned for as part of the community's infrastructure, and this can also help to justify their replacement following a storm or other disaster. 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. Staff from the SCFC will review your responses to this self-assessment survey 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.

\* 28. Applicants can apply for technical support for items A-G and this assessment will be used to show how your community arrived at the particular request(s). 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 A1 and possibly A2 to start with and then apply for more advanced work, such as a management plan or inventories in the following year. Check the boxes next to the items your community wants support for.

- A1. Canopy Mapping:** Remote sensing analysis to develop tree canopy maps and plantable areas maps including help to establish a canopy goal. Includes 4 bands of imagery analysis for a full landcover map. Also includes an open-space plantable areas analysis.
- A2. Ecosystem Benefits Modeling:** Includes an assessment of ecosystem services such as stormwater uptake, urban heat mitigation and air quality benefits. Must have completed A1. to do A2. but if applied in year 1 (2022) for a canopy map, then can apply in year two for ecosystem benefits modeling.
- B) Tree Inventories:** A field based-assessment of tree health including diameter, species, condition and recommended action for up to \_\_\_\_ # of trees. Locations chosen/requested should be based upon an existing strategy such as an existing tree planting plan or urban forest master plan. If no such plan exists, consider requesting help with creating a plan before starting an inventory. Note, you may also want to Tree Risk Assessment. This requires hiring an arborist who is certified in assessing tree risks (risk of a tree or its limbs falling and causing personal or property damages).
- C) Tree Planting Plans/Urban Forest Master Plan:** Uses recent canopy maps and plantable areas data (see A1 above) to fit trees into the landscape and target them to where they are most needed using community goals. Includes a tree budgeting tool and evaluation of where to conduct inventories. This also can be done as an update to an existing plan. Also can include help with key messages, outreach and engagement strategies and graphics for education and engagement. Requires a recent, high quality

canopy map. (May request support items A1 or B to create data to inform the plan if community does not have data).

- D) 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). This work would be funded through a direct grant and the locality is responsible to contract for this work by a firm that has demonstrated experience in creating such plans. (May request support items A1 or B to create data to inform the plan if community does not have data).
- E) 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 are a key need for any emergency plan for a community (to complete this work, a locality should have completed A, B, and either C or D above (ideally). Communities who are ready to move to this step, will receive a review for where they most need to improve emergency forest management (preparation, response or recovery) and assistance with the steps and processes.
- F) 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. It includes evaluating green pathways across the city as well as larger forest patches that can support urban birds or wildlife.
- G) Tree Codes Audit:** An audit of the locality's codes and policies that lead to good or poor forest management and those that drive imperviousness versus open space. List of codes to change or update for better tree management and survival. Can include assistance with updating a city's tree ordinance. Provides the justification for updating city/town codes.
- New! H) Adopt US Trees4SC!** This program entails all the elements of A1, A2, C, E and even F, G AND a tree planting campaign with local neighborhoods in disadvantaged communities. Staff will be assigned to work with your community over 2-3 years to help you map canopy, set goals, create planting plans, adopt new codes or policy improvements, educate the community, and plant and care for trees. This option takes greater commitment from the city or town to participate but it also yields a long term investment with trees planted. Also includes designing urban spaces to re-green them (e.g. a vacant lot to a park) and assistance to apply for additional grants.

\* 29. **Strategic reasons for requested support:** Add any important background about your request and why now is a strategic time for your city, town, or municipality or Council of Government to begin a project in this space. If you chose "other," use this space to elaborate on your request (a full proposal will still be required). If applying for support A: Canopy Mapping and Benefits, note whether your community is applying for A1 and A2 or both. Due to funds

limitations, it is unlikely that more than two of the support items can be funded in one year. Requests for multiple types of assistance may be split into multiple years. No recipient should select more than two of the letters.

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\* 30. Applicant name

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\* 31. Name of locality

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\* 32. Email

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\* 33. Phone

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\* 34. Department

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\* 35. Mail address (street or POB)

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\* 36. City/town

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\* 37. State

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\* 38. Zipcode

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This survey was designed by the Green Infrastructure Center Inc. under a grant from the South Carolina Forestry Commission from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Anyone needing assistance with completing this survey should contact [fwaite@scfc.gov](mailto:fwaite@scfc.gov)

39. What is your position or role within the city or tribe?

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