

## **GROW-OFF Request for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions**

(Updated 2/7/24)

How do you define Disadvantaged Community?

For allocating these federal funds to disadvantaged communities, we rely on the definition of Disadvantaged Community outlined in Executive Order 14008, which include, but are not limited to those that are:

- Low income, high and/or persistent poverty
- High unemployment and underemployment
- Racial and ethnic residential segregation, particularly where the segregation stems from discrimination by government entities
- Linguistic isolation
- High housing cost burden and substandard housing
- Distressed neighborhoods
- High transportation cost burden and/or low transportation access
- Disproportionate environmental stressor burden and high cumulative impacts
- Limited water and sanitation access and affordability
- Disproportionate impacts from climate change
- High energy cost burden and low energy access
- Jobs lost through the energy transition
- Access to healthcare
- High housing cost burden and substandard housing

What if my community does not qualify as disadvantaged according to the CJEST or Denali Commission Distressed Communities Report? What about a Tribe that wants to plant an orchard in a community that is not considered disadvantaged at large?

100% of funds benefit disadvantaged communities but that can happen in different ways. It's OK if the organization itself is not located in a CJEST-designated disadvantaged community as long as 100% of funds will benefit a disadvantaged community, such as Tribal members or students at a Title 1 school.

Federally recognized Tribes or Tribal organizations are eligible to receive funding and there is not a requirement that work must be performed on Tribal lands.

What are INELIGIBLE expenses for this funding?

Examples of project activities that are NOT eligible for funding under Urban and Community Forestry Authorities include:

a. Research: Basic research as defined in 2CFR 422.1, "Systematic study directed toward fuller knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and of observable facts without specific applications towards processes or products in mind." Note: Technical transfer, education, and outreach activities associated with applying research can be included in the application.).

b. Construction and capital improvements. Examples of construction include facilities, infrastructure, roads, new buildings, culverts, and boardwalks.

c. Land acquisition (conservation easement and fee simple) projects.

d. Cost-share, reimbursement, and other types of payment provided directly to private landowners. However, Urban and Community Forestry funding (and match) may be used to perform work on private lands; for example, an eligible entity could pay for trees to be planted on private lands with permission of the landowner.

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e. Small business start-up funding.

f. Equipment purchases are rarely approved and will be reviewed prior to grant award. Equipment rental should be considered as an alternative. Equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

Is there a cap on the indirect rate for sub-awardees?

RurAL CAP will honor negotiated indirect cost rate agreements (NICRA) with a federal agency. If your organization does not have a NICRA, you may budget in 10% de minimis for indirect costs.

Is there a timeline for when sub-awardees must plant trees?

There are no timeline requirements for planting trees. With a nearly five-year grant period, there is time for careful selection of trees to ensure their best chance for survival. In addition, with shipping challenges, remote areas may need to start with very young plants.

What about a food forest or orchard that has already been started but needs revamping (e.g. replanting, signage, training, maintenance, adding elements to make it more of a "community space")? Would this be eligible?

Revamping/improving existing food forests or orchards is eligible. There is no expectation that every project must include tree planting. However, a five-year plan for community engagement and maintenance should be included.

Are sub-awardees required to be involved with the project over the full grant period?

Yes, sub-awardees must plan to be involved in the project over the entire grant period and must include a budget to pay the Project Champion to conduct program activities during all five growing seasons of the grant period.

Would it be okay to add onto an existing community garden?

Yes, this would be an excellent arrangement!

Can an organization submit multiple applications?

No, each organization may only submit one application.