



USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Frequently Asked Questions

The help topics below answer many questions related to this Funding Opportunity and using the Online Application Grant Portal. Under each topic are definitions, instructions, and any related questions and answers that may be relevant to the topic. Issues you may encounter during the online application process are also covered.

Collection of Sensitive Personal Identifying Information (PII)

It is our policy not to collect sensitive personal identifying information (PII) on this website. PII information such as birth dates, social security numbers, and passwords are not asked for, are not collected, and are not stored by the Grant Portal.

Do not enter sensitive PII information on any web-form and do not upload any PDF or other document to the Portal that contains sensitive PII information.

If you think you mistakenly entered sensitive PII information and are unable to remove it, please contact the Admin or Technical contact listed at the bottom of this page for assistance. If we find any sensitive PII information during our review of your application, we will delete the sensitive PII information or PDF documents containing the sensitive PII information without notice.

Creating, Converting, and Uploading Adobe Acrobat PDF files.

The preferred PDF document type for upload to the Grant Portal is the standard PDF formatted document. Standard PDF documents are basic PDF documents without any special functionality or embedded logic or buttons. The follow PDF documents are NOT standard PDF documents:

- PDF Fillable Forms,
- PDF documents with embedded XML code (embedded logic or buttons),
- PDF documents that allow file attachments, and
- PDF documents with electronic signatures.

Although not mandatory, you should try to convert these non-standard PDF documents to the standard PDF format before uploading to the Grant Portal. Non-standard PDF

documents are NOT combined into your Generated Application document, instead, they are included in the document as a link to the separate non-standard PDF document. See the section below on how to convert your non-standard PDF documents to the standard PDF format.

Additionally, PDF documents you upload must NOT be password or content protected.

Any office documents you want to upload to the Grant Portal such as Microsoft Word or Excel, must be saved as a PDF document. PDF documents created using Microsoft's office applications are Adobe PDF compliant and compatible with the Grant Portal.

Converting Non-Standard PDF Documents and Forms to Grant Portal Compatible PDF Documents:

You should attempt to convert any Fillable Acrobat PDF Forms and Adobe PDF documents with embedded attachments before uploading them to the Portal. To convert these non-standard PDF files to a standard PDF file that can be combined into your Generated Application, you have a few options:

Option 1: (Preferred Method) Print the PDF Form to your computer's 'PDF File' printer device. To do this in Windows, open the PDF Form in your default Adobe Reader or Editor software; select Print; in the Print dialog window, change the printer to 'Microsoft Print to PDF' (or similar 'Print to PDF' printer device; click print; enter the file name and location where the converted PDF file will be saved. The PDF file created from this step is now a normalized (standardized) PDF file that can be uploaded to the Grant Portal.

Option 2: Print the Adobe Form PDF document, then scan it and save it as an Adobe PDF file. **NOTE:** Some scanning software may not create compliant Acrobat PDF files so if you receive a compatibility error after trying to upload the generated Acrobat .pdf file to the Grant Portal, you should try opening the PDF file in Adobe Acrobat Pro and saving it as a 'reduced size' PDF file. This should fix the compatibility issue.

Option 3: Open your Acrobat Form PDF document in Adobe Acrobat Pro DC or [Adobe's DocumentCloud](#) and convert/export it as a Microsoft Word Document. Then use Microsoft Word to save the document as an Adobe PDF document that can be uploaded to the Grant Portal.

Converting Image Files to Compatible PDF Documents:

If you have images that need to be uploaded to the Grant Portal, you have two options:

Option 1: Copy/paste your images into a Microsoft Word document, size and arrange your images, add text if necessary and then save the Word document as an Adobe PDF document. You can then upload the PDF document to the Grant Portal.

Option 2: Use Adobe Acrobat Pro DC or [Adobe's DocumentCloud](#) to convert your images into a Adobe PDF document. Then upload the PDF document to the Grant Portal.

Converting Paper Images and Documents to PDF Documents:

You can scan images and documents using your scanner and save them as either a Word document (.doc) file or an Adobe PDF file. If saving as a Word document, you'll need to open the Word document and then save as an Adobe PDF file before uploading to the Grant Portal. NOTE: Some scanning software does not create fully compliant Adobe PDF files. If that happens, you can try opening the PDF file using Adobe Acrobat Pro and saving it as a 'reduced size PDF' file or you can try exporting the PDF file as a Microsoft Word document and then use Microsoft Word to edit the file and save it as an Adobe PDF file that can be uploaded to the Grant Portal.

Converting Other Non-Standard Adobe PDF Documents:

If the above steps fail to produce a compatible Adobe PDF file that will upload to the Grant Portal without errors, one of the following options may work to produce a standard Adobe PDF document compatible with the Grant Portal.

Option 1: Open the PDF document in Adobe Acrobat Pro then save it as a 'Reduced Size PDF'.

Option 2: Open the PDF document in Adobe Acrobat Pro, export it to a Microsoft Word document, then open the Word document and save it as an Adobe PDF document.

CONTACT US FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE:

For personal assistance with converting and uploading PDF files or for help with scanning Adobe Forms or images, contact [technical assistance](#). We can assist with getting your PDF forms, images, and other documents converted and uploaded to your grant application.

Other Resources:

Adobe Acrobat Pro DC is a desktop application program that allows you to edit PDF file directly and save them as 'Reduced Size PDF' files, export PDF files to other document formats such as Microsoft Word, combine multiple PDF files in to one PDF file and convert images and other files into PDF files.

Adobe DocumentCloud at <https://www.adobe.com/documentcloud.html> is a web based application that allows you to convert almost any file into an Adobe PDF document. It also allows you the ability to directly edit PDF files and reduce the size of PDF

files. Adobe offers a 7-day free trial for this online service if you do not already subscribe.

There are other online resources on the web that allow you to repair damaged and non-compliant/non-standard PDF files that may also work.

Delayed Partner Commitment / Support Letters

Send any delayed partner support or stakeholder letter not received by the application deadline should be sent to the grant administrative staff at SM.FS.UCF_IRA@usda.gov. In your email, include in the email subject line "UCF IRA Grant: ira-nnnnn - Grant Application Title".

Include your IRA grant ID and Grant Application title in the subject line.

In the body of your email, include the applicant contact/name along with your attached support letters.

"File cannot be normalized and will be included as a linked document."

If see the message *"File can not be normalized and will be included as a linked document"* when hovering over an upload PDF file, or if the 'Page Count' for the uploaded PDF file is 'unknown' after uploading a PDF document, this message indicates that the uploaded PDF file is a non-standard PDF file that can NOT be merged with or combined with your generated application. Instead of combining it with your Generated Application PDF file, this uploaded file will be referenced in the Generated Application PDF as a link to the actual non-standard PDF file you uploaded.

This situation is ok. however, if you are able to convert the file to a standard PDF format, that would be preferred. See the FAQ on [help with Adobe PDF files](#) for more information on converting the PDF file.

"Page Count: unknown"

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This situation is ok. however, if you are able to convert the file to a standard PDF format, that would be preferred. See the FAQ on [help with Adobe PDF files](#) for more information on converting the PDF file.

"Unable to view or download a PDF file"

If you click to a PDF file and it does not download or you get a message similar to:

Please wait...

If this message is not eventually replaced by the proper contents of the document, your PDF viewer may not be able to display this type of document.

--or--

The document you are trying to load requires Adobe Reader 8 or higher. You may not have the Adobe Reader installed or your viewing environment may not be properly configured to use Adobe Reader.

For information on how to install Adobe Reader and configure your viewing environment please see http://www.adobe.com/go/pdf_forms_configure.

These type messages indicates that your browser is unable to display / render the selected PDF file within the browser. Your browser is configured to open PDF files within the browser and it is unable to display / render the selected PDF file. In general, browser PDF viewing engines are not full functional and more than likely, the PDF file you are trying to view is a non-standard PDF document (such as a fillable PDF form or a PDF document with digital signatures). If your browser is unable to display / render these non-standard PDF files, you'll have to tell your browser to download PDF files instead of trying to open them within the browser.

You can also try using the FireFox browser instead as it's PDF support is more capable than that of the other browsers.

To force your browser to download PDF files instead of viewing them within the browser, you can following the step below (depending on your browser).

Chrome Settings – Automatically download PDF files so that they can be opened with your computer's default PDF viewer, such as Adobe PDF Viewer.

1. In Chrome, go to the **"Menu"** icon, then choose **"Settings"**.
2. In the **"Privacy and Security"** section, select **"Site Settings"**.
3. Select **"Additional content settings"**.

4. Scroll down and select **“PDF documents”**.
5. Switch the **“Download PDF files instead of automatically opening them in Chrome”** to **“On”**.
6. PDF files will download in Chrome just like any other file. You can select the downloaded file at the bottom of the window, then choose **“Always open with system viewer”**, then the file will open in the default PDF viewer.

Edge Settings – Automatically download PDF files so that they can be opened with your computer's default PDF viewer, such as Adobe PDF Viewer.

7. Ensure that Power PDF is installed on the computer and set as the default application for PDF's.
8. In Edge, go to the **“Menu”** icon, then choose **“Settings”**.
9. In the **“Cookies and Site Permissions”** section, select **“PDF Documents”**.
10. Select **“Additional content settings”**.
11. Switch the **“Always download PDF files”** to **“On”**.
12. PDF files will download in Chrome just like any other file. You can select the downloaded file at the bottom of the window, then choose **“Always open with system viewer”**, then the file will open in the default PDF viewer.

When will I be notified if my application is accepted for funding?

See the Calendar for details. [Calendar](#)

Accept Online Applications: May 3, 2023 - June 1, 2023

Grant Applications are Screened for Eligibility: June 2 - June 10, 2023

Eligible Grant Applications are Reviews by the Grant Review Team: June 10 - July 31, 2023

Forest Service announces Applications selected for funding: TBD

Direct Cost vs. Indirect Cost

[Direct vs. Indirect Cost](#)

Understanding direct costs and indirect costs is important for properly tracking your organization's expenses. Knowing the difference between the types of costs will help you to prepare a competitive budget proposal and you will have a better grasp on your accounting, thus better equipped to plan.

In cases of government grants or other forms of external funding, identifying direct and indirect costs becomes extra important. Grant rules are often strict about what

constitutes a direct or an indirect cost and may allocate a specific amount of funding to each classification.

Often, funding for a specific project will largely support direct costs. Certain government agencies might allow you to explain why indirect costs should be funded, too, but the decision to grant funding is at their discretion.

When a company accepts government funds, the funding agency may also have several strict mandates in place regarding the maximum indirect cost rate and which expenses qualify as indirect costs.

Direct Costs	Indirect Costs
If the cost can be identified specifically with a particular cost objective such as a grant, contract, project, function, or activity, then it is a direct cost	Costs of an organization that cannot readily be assigned to a particular project but are necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the project
Examples: raw material, direct labor, fuel	Examples: operating and maintaining facilities, depreciation, and administrative salaries
Highly variable mainly due to market factors	Relatively stable
Direct costs affect the products/services prices, and are thus calculated per project or per item	Indirect costs affect the whole business and are thus calculated monthly or annually

Contractual costs are those services carried out by an individual or organization, other than the applicant, in the form of a procurement relationship. The costs a contractor, including an individual consultant, incurs for travel are included in the contractual line item of the budget.

The budget justification should address each of major cost categories (salaries, fringe benefits, equipment, travel, supplies, other direct costs, and indirect costs), as well as any additional categories required by the sponsor.

Fringe benefits include but are not limited to the cost of leave, employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. The budget narrative should identify the

applicant's fringe benefit rate. The applicant should not combine the fringe benefit costs with direct salaries and wages in the personnel category.

Disadvantaged Community Definition

You can use tools like the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#), [Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool \(EJScreen\)](#), [Tree Equity Score Map](#), similar state-specific tools, or other equity indicators to identify low canopy and disadvantaged communities. You should rationalize the use of whichever tool(s) you use for the purposes of the UCF Program.

Eligible Activities & Uses of Funding

Examples of eligible activities include projects that:

- Foster individuals, groups, and organizations in the communities served to become engaged participants in urban forest planning, planting, and management, especially those in disadvantaged communities that do not have adequate resources to install or maintain green infrastructure or are underrepresented.
- Protect, enhance, and expand equitable urban tree canopy cover to maximize community access to human health, social, ecological, and economic benefits particularly in disadvantaged and nature-deprived communities experiencing low tree canopy cover, extreme heat and frequent flooding. Improve and increase access to parks and nature in communities..
- Encourage long-term urban forest planning, assessment, and management.
- Encourage proactive and systematic maintenance and monitoring of urban trees and forested natural areas to improve forest health; assess risk to forests from pests, disease, and adverse climate impacts; and formulate adaptive management strategies to improve forest resilience.
- Advance the use of tree and forest inventories, monitoring, and assessment tools in priority areas, including monitoring and measurement of extreme heat.
- Improve preparation for severe storms and the recovery of damaged or deteriorated landscapes to more healthy and resilient conditions.
- Protect, enhance and increase access to watersheds in urban and developing areas with a focus on conserving and managing forest patches, and green storm-water infrastructure.
- Provide paid training experiences for urban forestry crews to establish and maintain urban forests into the future. Support youth employment opportunities, including workforce development and training for the creation and maintenance of green jobs and economic opportunities for planning, planting, and sustainably maintaining trees and forests, including training and retaining urban arborists, and producing and using urban forest products

- Develop paid on-the-job training opportunities, including pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, to expand workforce development pathways for green careers in urban and community forestry.
- Address exotic invasive pest species that adversely impact urban forests.
- Work across jurisdictional boundaries, leveraging ideas and resources to increase capacity to provide equitable access to benefits across the larger landscape and at a greater geographic scale.
- Aid in planning, goal setting, and skill sharing with other professions such as urban planners, engineers, educators, recreational and public health officials.

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

- 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.).
- Construction and capital improvements. Examples of construction include facilities, infrastructure, roads, new buildings, culverts, and boardwalks.
- Land acquisition (conservation easement and fee simple) projects.
- 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.
- Small business start-up funding.
- 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 non-expendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

Questions and Answers:

(Q) Per the legislation, eligible activities are tree planting and related activities. What does “related activities” include? I have many interests that could be related, including urban wood, tree nurseries, tree maintenance, removal.

(A) Refer to the UCF authorities. The activities you have listed here are all eligible.

(Q) Can we use IRA funds for state lands? For instance, Mt. Loreto serves an urban area?

(A) Yes. All existing congressional authorities provided to the Urban and Community Forestry Program through the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act are applicable to the Inflation Reduction Act. These authorities apply to non-Federal forest lands.

(Q) Are urban woodlands and natural areas in parks eligible for funding under this program? Or would this be strictly limited to street trees and more traditionally maintained park trees?

(A) Urban woodlands and natural areas within public parks could possibly be eligible, but may require a 1:1 match if not associated with a disadvantaged community. The main focus is to assist disadvantaged communities as identified by the [CEJST tool](#) that have little or no canopy cover.

We would probably need more clarity once proposal was submitted.

(Q) Clarify requirements related to activities on private property?

(A)

1. For planting on private property, maximize the likelihood of tree establishment and long-term survival.
2. Ensure adequate access is granted by the landowner for all planned activities, including follow-up maintenance, monitoring, or other on-site work.
3. Release the federal government from any liability associated with work completed on private property.

Protecting Federal Investment in Private Property Tree Planting: The proposal should outline an appropriate strategy for tree retention and highlight how the project will ensure the trees grow and flourish beyond the grant period in the proposal. Examples may include written agreements/pledges by the resident, education workshops, municipal- or partner-provided maintenance, monitoring schemes/schedules, or recognition awards for tree survival at a particular year. Example language for a written agreement may include:

- I will plant and care for my tree according to the Tree Owner's Manual (or similar state-level best practices document) for as long as it is within my right to do so.
- I agree to plant my tree(s) immediately at the address listed above, to give my tree(s) on-going care while I own them (or for X years), and to adhere to guidelines related to inhibiting the movement and dispersal of invasive pests and disease, such as not moving any mulch received at the event outside of the distribution county. I understand the tree(s) are under no warranty or guarantee.
- In addition to providing appropriate care, I have no plans to further expand any buildings or pavement on my property in the next X years that would result in the removal/reduction of planting area for my newly planted tree(s).

Ensure that those planting on private lands also have the capacity for monitoring or additional technical assistance related to tree health should the resident need it. Funding for this capacity during the grant period may be included in the budget. Consider adapting the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan Template for Newly Planted Trees

to help grant recipients develop a maintenance plan prior to grant award and possibly as part of the proposal evaluation.

Federal Funding

\$100,000 is the minimum and \$50,000,000 is the maximum Federal funding award. All Federal funding must be matched (dollar for dollar) with non-Federal match which may include allowable and allocable in-kind contributions (i.e., personnel salary, fringe, and indirect costs; services, materials, supplies, equipment donations; and volunteer assistance), and private and public (non- federal) monetary contributions.

Cash match is from the applicant's budget, such as personnel salary, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, and supplies, or cash provided by another party. The source of the cash match cannot be derived from another Federal award or grant.

In-kind match is a non-cash contribution of value. A non-Federal entity's in-kind match must meet the following criteria:

- Verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records
- Not included as contributions for any other Federal award.
- Necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives.
- Allowable under subpart E of 2 CFR 200.
- Not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs.
- Provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and
- Conform to other provisions of 2 CFR 200, as applicable.

Matching funds must be derived entirely from non-Federal sources (unless expressly authorized in law by the other federal program).

Federal Funds Match Waiver

Any Non-Federal cost-share requirement otherwise applicable to projects carried out under this section may be waived at the discretion of the Secretary. **Match may be waived for proposals that deliver 100 percent of the funding/program benefits to disadvantaged communities.**

Applications seeking match waiver must clearly describe the scope of work to be performed in applicable disadvantaged communities, and identify online vulnerability and environmental justice equity data tools referenced to support a disadvantaged community designation, (e.g., White House Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

([CEJST](#)), EPA Environmental Justice and Screening Mapping Tool ([EJScreen](#)), EPA [EnviroAtlas Interactive Map](#), [Opportunity Zones](#)), or other government sponsored vulnerability tools which inform metrics applicable to the scope of work. Multiple tools may be used. **All work must be tracked at the level that designates disadvantaged communities.** Applicants receiving match waiver approval that pass-through funding (sub-award) for work in disadvantaged communities must pass the match waiver to sub-awardees performing the work.

While the pace of federal expenditures and cost sharing/matching may vary throughout the award period, the agency will actively monitor expenditure rates and cost sharing/matching levels as it receives payment requests to ensure the total cost sharing/matching requirement is met by the award period of performance end date. Additional details about cost sharing or matching funds/contributions are located at [2 CFR 200.306](#).

Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements

All federal grant funds are to be matched at least equally (**dollar for dollar**) with non-federal match which may include allowable and allocable in-kind contributions (i.e., personnel salary, fringe, and indirect costs; services, materials, supplies, equipment donations; and volunteer assistance), and private and public (non- federal) monetary contributions.

Cash match is from the applicant's budget, such as personnel salary, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, and supplies, or cash provided by another party. The source of the cash match cannot be derived from another Federal award or grant.

In-kind match is a non-cash contribution of value. A non-Federal entity's in-kind match must meet the following criteria:

- Verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records
- Not included as contributions for any other Federal award.
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- Allowable under subpart E of 2 CFR 200.
- Not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs.
- Provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and
- Conform to other provisions of 2 CFR 200, as applicable.

Matching funds must be derived entirely from non-Federal sources (unless expressly authorized in law by the other federal program).

Questions & Answers:

(Q) Can the State ask for a match waiver?

(A) Yes. Match waiver requests will be prioritized for projects that focus on disadvantaged communities. The match waiver must be passed on to sub-grant recipients

(Q) If a match waiver is not requested or eligible, do we presume 1:1 required non-federal match per standard UCF program guidelines?

(A) Yes

(Q) Is the only way to get a match waiver is if nearly the entire grant is focused on disadvantaged communities?

(A) Yes

Matching Funds / Cost-Share (What is This?)

Matching/Cost-share

There are two kinds of matching/cost-share: cash and third-party in-kind.

1. Cash: includes cash spent for project-related costs. The allowable cash match must include costs that are necessary, reasonable, and allowable under the federal program.

Matching and cost share funds have the same restrictions as federal funds. These funds must follow the same allowable and unallowable guidelines in their federal award. If, for example, a conference is unallowable under the grant award that has matching requirements, then grantees would not be able to use the matching funds instead. The expense must be allowable with federal funds for it to be allowable with matching or cost share funds.

2. Third Party In-Kind: this includes, but is not limited to, the valuation of non-cash contributions provided by a third party. An in-kind match may be in the form of services, supplies, real property, and equipment. The value of the service may be used for the matching requirements, if the services are necessary, reasonable, and allowable under that federal program. Grantees are allowed to use unrecovered indirect costs for matching or cost sharing requirements; however, this requires prior approval of the federal awarding agency.

For third-party in-kind matching—such as supplies, equipment, or space—the value must not exceed the fair market value at the time of the donation.

For volunteer services, the rates must be consistent with the rates normally paid for similar work in the organization. If an employee from another organization conducts services free of charge, the services should be valued at that employee's regular rate of pay, in addition to their fringe benefits and allowable indirect costs. There are online resources to help you determine the value of volunteer time, such as: <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>. It is important to maintain a record for tracking and reporting volunteer time and services.

Grantees are required to maintain records, which clearly show the source, amount, and timing for all matched contributions. While grantees are not required to submit their supporting documentation to the Department of Justice, their records must be available in the event of an audit or site visit.

NICRA - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

NICRA

To be reimbursed for indirect costs, you must first establish an appropriate negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). To do this, prepare an indirect cost rate proposal and submit it to the cognizant federal agency. The cognizant federal agency is generally determined based on the preponderance of federal dollars you receive.

The term “de minimis rate” refers to the rate that is available to certain recipients (and certain subrecipients, which is 10% of “modified total direct costs” (MTDC). This is specifically defined in 2 CFR 200.68. This definition must be followed. If your indirect cost rate is over 10%, you will need a NICRA with your cognizant agency, which is the Federal agency responsible for reviewing, negotiating, and approving cost allocation plans and indirect cost proposals on behalf of all Federal agencies.

All direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award)

If the Forest Service (FS) is your cognizant Agency and you need to obtain a NICRA, please visit FS Resource Audit branch (RAB) [Audit and Assurance Staff | US Forest Service \(usda.gov\)](#). Refer to the Appendix for the FS NICRA application that you may be required to submit. Please contact the RAB before filling out the form below.

Pass-Through Funding (Sub-Awards)

In response to stakeholder feedback and to alleviate the administrative burden on small, capacity-strained applicants, to expedite funding to communities in greatest need, and to increase opportunities to award high volumes of grants in condensed time-frames, applications from eligible entities with demonstrated ability to competitively pass-through (sub-award) funding to community-based organizations and other partners serving disadvantaged communities are encouraged. **A minimum of 80% of all funding to a pass-through entity must be competitively sub-awarded to community-based organizations, or other partners serving disadvantaged communities.** Funding to Pass-Through Entities will be executed through a grant or cooperative agreement with substantial Forest Service involvement, at the discretion of the Forest Service.

For this funding opportunity, a “**Community Based Organization**” is defined as a public or nonprofit organization that supports and/or represents a community and/or certain populations within a community through engagement, education, and other related services provided to individual community residents and community stakeholders. A “community” can be characterized by a particular geographic area and/or by the relationships among members with similar interests and can be characterized as part of a broader national or regional community where organizations can be focused on the needs of urban, rural and/or tribal areas, and other similar groups.

Responsibilities of each pass-through entity include the following:

1. Design an equal opportunity competitive project application submission and evaluation process that alleviates burden, including but not limited to technical and administrative burden, on small, capacity-constrained applicants.
2. Develop outreach efforts and plans to reach all underserved or disadvantaged communities, especially urban communities, tribal governments and indigenous communities, youth, and public minority land grant institutions, for awareness of the availability of sub-award funding.
3. Develop a sub-award process that ensures efficient and effective fund dispersal and completion of sub-awardee projects within a 1year period. All sub-awardee projects must be completed within the five-year, Pass-Through Entity grant performance period.
4. Create an efficient progress and financial tracking and accomplishment reporting system for Urban and Community Forestry IRA sub-award projects.
5. Manage the application in-take processes, evaluations, sub-awards process, project risk through ongoing monitoring, and project tracking and reporting for communities. Sub-awards to communities will not be individually approved by the Forest Service. Submit timely financial and progress reports and success stories (brief project description and outcomes, with project photographs and recipient testimonials where feasible) with the USDA Forest Service.
6. Assist sub-awardee with development and distribution of communications and promotional materials that support the funded program of work and reflect IRA as the source of funding.

Performance Period

You have up to 5 years to complete your project.

IRA grants cannot be extended beyond 5 years of the award date. The award date is the date when the Forest Service signed the award (not the start date). We encourage early closeout of grants by submitting the final report and final invoice when the project is completed.

SAM.gov Registration

System for Award Management (SAM)

General

Sam.gov is an official website for U.S government. All entities must register with SAM in order to conduct business with the federal government. On April 4, 2022, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (UEI). Once you go to this website for the first time, you will see a window pops up below:



You have reached SAM.gov, an official website of the U.S. government. There is no cost to use this site.

The unique entity identifier used in SAM.gov has changed.

On **April 4, 2022**, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (generated by SAM.gov).

- The Unique Entity ID is a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.gov.
- As part of this transition, the DUNS Number has been removed from SAM.gov.
- Entity registration, searching, and data entry in SAM.gov now require use of the new Unique Entity ID.
- Existing registered entities can find their Unique Entity ID by following the steps [here](#).
- New entities can get their Unique Entity ID at SAM.gov and, if required, complete an entity registration.

I manage an entity. What do I need to do?

For more information about this transition, visit [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) or the Federal Service Desk, [FSD.gov](https://fsd.gov). You can search for help at [FSD](#) any time or request help from an FSD agent Monday–Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

Additionally, you will see all announcements and alerts posted on its homepage. It is important to review them. For example, the latest alert below addresses the delay of validation applicants' information. Therefore, it is recommended that you **register very early on to avoid delays**. This link provides FAQ to [validating your entity](#).



Entity Validation Delays [Hide Details](#)

Jul 5, 2022

Due to high demand, entity legal business name and address validation tickets are taking longer than expected to process.

We are working on tickets in the order received. You can find resources related to this process [here](#). Please do not create multiple incidents for the same request.



Registration and Validation

- Register/Renew your registration early. You will need to register SAM to do business with the U.S federal government. Every year you will need to update and renew your registration. If your SAM registration expires, there will be a delay in receiving funding or adding new funding through a modification.
- Gather Up Your Basic Information. Before you get started with SAM registration, you will need to know some important information. For instance, you will need your company tax ID number, which should be listed on tax forms. You also will need the routing number and account number for your business bank account, as payments to you will be made through SAM so this info is stored in your SAM account. You also might need to know your North American Industry Classification System Codes if you will be applying for Contracting. These codes identify the specific goods or services (or both) that your company provides.
- Tax ID and Physical Address. Make sure to use the Tax ID number that you have with the federal government. Use the same name as you register with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Once you registered, you can add another name as "doing business as" inside of SAM. Use the physical addresses to register for your UEI and have address proof ready to show (i.e., lease) if being requested by SAM.gov for validation.
- Entity Registration Checklist: See [checklist link](#) to help you prepare your registration. If you are applying for Financial Assistance award only, click on the 2nd link which will get you straight to the checklist.

Prepare for Entity Registration in SAM.gov



SAM.gov is an official website of the United States government. SAM.gov is FREE to use. There is no charge to get a Unique Entity ID, register your entity, and maintain your entity registration at SAM.gov.

What can you do with this guide?

The questionnaires and checklists here will help you gather the information you need and prepare to answer the questions in your entity registration.



All Awards registration allows you to bid on contracts and other procurements, as well as apply for financial assistance. Look for the icon on the left to submit an All Awards registration.

[Jump to All Awards entity registration questionnaires and checklists](#)



Financial Assistance Awards Only registration allows you to apply for financial assistance, or grants and loans, only. Look for the icon on the left to submit a Financial Assistance Only registration.

[Jump to Financial Assistance Awards Only entity registration questionnaires and checklists](#)

- Socio-Economic Entity: Under General information, make sure that you click all that applies to your organization, especially if you qualify under socio-economic categories, Native-American entity, or Disadvantaged business category. This is important as some grants have set asides if you qualify under this category. Visit <https://www.sba.gov/> to learn more about these programs.

General Information

- ☐ Country of Incorporation
- ☐ State of Incorporation (U.S. entities only)
- ☐ Company Security Clearance (optional)
- ☐ Highest Employee Security Clearance Level (optional)
- ☐ Institution Type (e.g., foundation, hospital, educational, if applicable)
- ☐ Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (must be certified by a federal agency)
- ☐ Native American Entity Type (if applicable)
- ☐ Organization Factors (e.g., S corporation, LLC, foreign-owned)
- ☐ Entity Structure (e.g., Corporate Entity-Not Tax Exempt, Corporate Entity-Tax Exempt, Proprietorship)
- ☐ Profit Structure (e.g., for-profit, non-profit)
- ☐ Socio-economic Categories (e.g., veteran-owned, minority-owned)

- Two or more administrators for your organization. It is recommended to have multiple people who can renew and update your SAM registration. If you lose access to the email that has the access to SAM, you will have to create a new account and submit a notarized letter to SAM granting you access again. If you leave the organization, the new

person will have to go through the same process of submitting a notarized letter and gaining access to the organization's SAM. This can lead to delays in receiving your funding related to a grant or agreement. A backup person from your organization can go into SAM and give that access immediately removing the delay.

- Review twice! Double check everything and make sure it matches your documentation exactly when setting your SAM account up for the first time or for SAM recertification process. Any information entered incorrectly will create a delay in the process. During times of high volume, it may add several weeks to the time it takes to register your entity.

Sub-Granting

(Q) Can we give a grant to a non-profit foundation to help administer and distribute competitive grants?

(A) Yes. The legislation lists organizations that the grants can be awarded to: "a State agency, a local governmental entity, an agency or governmental entity of the District of Columbia, an agency or governmental entity of an insular area, an Indian Tribe, or a nonprofit organization."

(Q) Can we give grants to companies?

(A) No. The legislation lists organizations that the grants can be awarded to: "a State agency, a local governmental entity, an agency or governmental entity of the District of Columbia, an agency or governmental entity of an insular area, an Indian Tribe, or a nonprofit organization." States may contract with private companies.

(Q) Do all sub-awards need to go through a competitive process?

(A) Yes

What Lands are Eligible?

Eligible applicants may apply for funding for a project to be conducted on non-Federal lands such as:

- State and local government,
- Homeowner associations,
- Private lands, and
- Tribal/Alaska native corporation (includes Trust lands).

Lands owned or administered by the federal government are not eligible for this funding opportunity except for lands held in trust for Native American Tribes and individuals (hereinafter Trust lands).

Who Can Apply?

Entities eligible to apply for funding under this NOFO include:

- State government entity
- Local government entity
- Agency or governmental entity of the District of Columbia
- Agency or governmental entity of an insular area (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103))
- Federally Recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations/villages, and Tribal organizations as defined in 25 USC 5304 (I) and operating within the United States, or its territories
- Non-profit organizations
- Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education
- Community Based Organization

Applicants that include contributing partners must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the “partner(s).” Partner organizations from disadvantaged communities must be full partners in the project. A letter of commitment is required to be submitted by each contributing partner.

Can you help me understand where the legislation prioritizes tree plantings in underserved communities?

Justice 40 Executive Orders Department Direction direct us to address disadvantaged communities.

Is this the only opportunity to apply for the IRA funds, or will we have opportunities in future years to submit proposals?

No, there will be additional opportunities until all funding has been awarded.

If we contract some or all work out, who is responsible for reporting and accomplishments?

The applicant is responsible for grant reporting. It may require data, accomplishment summaries, and other content from contractors to aid in reporting.