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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: USDA Forest Service Invests in Intermountain Region disadvantaged urban communities, provides more equitable access to nature

1 message

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USDA Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Intermountain Region

Forest Service News Release

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USDA Forest Service Invests in Intermountain Region disadvantaged urban communities, provides more equitable access to nature

OGDEN, UT, April 12, 2023 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the USDA Forest Service is investing more than $1 billion in disadvantaged urban communities by supporting work to increase access to trees and the social, health, and economic benefits they provide. Of the total funding, the Forest Service is allocating more than $5.25 million to states in the Forest Service Intermountain Region to bolster competitive subgrants, support state projects, provide technical assistance, and assist states with other related services.

“Investing in our urban forests is investing in the health and wellness of our communities,” said Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. “Trees provide numerous benefits, like improving air quality, reducing stormwater runoff, providing shade, creating safe outdoor spaces for recreation, and stimulating other kinds of investments. Equitable access to these benefits is key, as everyone deserves the opportunity to live in a healthy and sustainable environment.”

Beyond providing funding directly to state and territory forestry agencies, the Forest Service is making up to $1 billion available as competitive grants. The grant funding is available to community-based organizations, tribes, municipal and state governments, nonprofit partners, universities, and other eligible entities as they work to increase tree cover in urban spaces and boost equitable access to nature while bolstering resilience to extreme heat, storm-induced flooding, and other climate impacts.

Through this grant funding opportunity, the agency will invest in proposals that extend beyond planting new trees, such as proposals for maintaining and managing urban forests, increasing community engagement in local urban forest planning, and improving community and urban forest resilience to climate change, extreme heat, forest pests and diseases, and extreme weather events.

The final funding amount will depend on the total funding requested from proposals and their potential impact on disadvantaged communities. The open application period extends from April 12, 2023 to June 1, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. EDT. For more information, visit the Forest Service urban forests webpage.

The funding, made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act, is part of a $1.5 billion investment in the Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry Program. This historic level of investment will enable the Forest Service to support an unprecedented number of projects that will improve public health, increase access to nature, and deliver real economic and ecological benefits to cities, towns, and Tribal communities across the country.

The Urban and Community Forestry Program supports the Justice40 Initiative, which aims to ensure that 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and lack access to trees and nature.

The Forest Service supports vibrant and healthy urban communities through supporting healthy urban forests. For information on how to apply for federal Urban and Community Forestry grants, visit https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests using the opportunity number USDA-FS-2023-UCF-IRA-01, or grants.gov. For more information on funding to states and territories, visit the state allocations https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf/fy23-state-allocations. To learn how to apply for state or territory-administered subgrants, contact local state forestry agencies.

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