

U.S. Forest Service National Agroforestry Center Fiscal Year 2020 Request for Proposals & Instructions – Agroforestry for Urban Agriculture Systems

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A. Background

The U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) requests proposals to substantially expand and accelerate the availability of evidence-based information to support decisions on the adoption and design of urban agriculture that includes agroforestry practices.

Agroforestry is the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems to create environmental, economic, and social benefits. Urban agriculture includes any type of agriculture practiced in cities, towns, suburbs, urban clusters, and communities. Urban agriculture systems can be located on public, private, or other land and be managed by for-profit, non-profit, or government entities.

The agreements awarded under this announcement will support USDA goals to maximize the ability of American agricultural producers to prosper by feeding and clothing the world and to provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious and secure food supply, as well as the USDA National Agroforestry Center goal to provide natural resource professionals with information that supports agroforestry adoption. This Request for Proposals supports the efforts of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production.

B. Dates

The application deadline is June 1, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. eastern daylight time (see [Section III, Part C](#)). Please note that there will be no additional extensions, even if the government is closed.

C. For More Information

Please direct all questions regarding this announcement to: Richard Straight (richard.straight@usda.gov); or Kate MacFarland (katherine.macfarland@usda.gov) of the USDA National Agroforestry Center.

D. Available Funding

The Forest Service plans to award up to \$100,000 under this announcement, with a maximum of \$50,000 and minimum of \$25,000 for any one proposal.

E. Goals

The Forest Service seeks proposals to create educational and outreach materials that promote the use of agroforestry approaches to urban agriculture that provide multiple benefits to producers and the community. These materials will support natural resource professionals in assisting communities and producers at different levels of interest and commitment towards implementing agroforestry practices into their urban agriculture systems. More specifically, proposals will describe a suite of evidence-based technology transfer materials on **one** of the following approaches to agroforestry implementation in urban agriculture:

1. Describe best practices from existing urban agriculture systems that include perennial crops **and/or** agroforestry practices (for example, existing food forests or community orchards).
2. Describe how urban agriculture systems can be modified to incorporate agroforestry practices (for example, adding windbreaks to protect community gardens or adding trees to vegetable beds to develop alley cropping systems).
3. Describe best practices or activities to support the establishment of new urban agroforestry systems (for example, designing a new food forest or other urban agroforestry system).

The proposal will draw from experience and working examples of how the selected approach (from the list above) is used in a state or region of the United States. The Pacific Islands and Caribbean Islands are included. Urban agriculture systems can be located on public or private land and be managed by for-profit, non-profit, or government entities.

F. Intent and Examples

The intent of this opportunity is to expand available resources related to how urban agriculture systems can include perennials and/or agroforestry practices. The expectation is an assembly of publications, videos, and/or other outreach materials based on community or producer experience and operations. Examples of urban agroforestry approaches and/or examples of including perennials in urban agriculture systems is a helpful model and motivator for others.

Materials developed for this project will be distributed in a digital format on the NAC website and will include NAC's name and website, the USDA logo, and other information to help connect users of these resources to NAC. These resources should be new materials developed for this project that fill gaps where information about this approach to urban agriculture does not yet exist or is not publically accessible. As required by law, all materials developed through this project should be in compliance with Section 508 accessibility standards.

Project deliverables **may** include the following elements. Proposals should describe in detail which elements will be created through the project and the methods planned to develop those deliverables:

- Case studies. The project could develop case studies that focus on the urban agroforestry practice and location specified in the proposal. These will include basic information about the urban agriculture system (farm or garden name, location, years in operation, farm size, details about the existing or proposed agroforestry practice (size, species, etc.), USDA or other technical or assistance received, market outlets, and future plans), as well as photos. The 1-2 page case studies should be designed in an attractive PDF format that can be shared for educational uses. High quality photo files will also be supplied to NAC; photos provided will have signed USDA photo release forms from the photographer, producer and/or people pictured in the photos. Proposals may but do not need to identify specific urban agriculture systems by name, but if the proposal does not include this information, the proposal should indicate how the applicant plans to identify these systems for the case studies.

- Producer testimonial videos. The project could produce short videos (approximately 3-5 minutes each) that feature people involved with managing urban agriculture systems explaining how and why they have added or want to add perennials or agroforestry approaches to their urban agriculture system. The final product should be in a format that is usable across various mediums and platforms. It should conform to industry standards and best practices. Videos will have signed USDA release forms from the videographer, producer and/or people pictured in the videos.
- Urban agroforestry scenarios. Specific agroforestry scenarios for how perennials can be added to an urban agriculture system. The intent of these scenarios is not to describe a case study of a particular operation, but instead to provide potential producers with a detailed description of a sample system. A scenario could recommend a specific combination of trees, crops, and/or forage and livestock, plant spacing, relative position in the field/garden, etc. as well as economic and production information, if available. Because agroforestry practices and perennial crops change over time from establishment to a mature enterprise, description of what to expect over time should be included. These descriptions must be presented in a format that is easily accessible by natural resource professionals and include educational materials that can be provided to others. This format should be described in detail in the proposal (media, length, etc.).
- Educational videos. Building on the success of previous videos published through the eXtension Forest Farming Community of Practice, the project could produce short videos (approximately 3-5 minutes each) that feature “how to” information about chosen agroforestry practice in the specific region. The final product should be in a format that is usable across various mediums and platforms. It should conform to industry standards and best practices. Videos will have signed USDA release forms from the videographer, producer, and/or people pictured in the videos.
- Other creative ideas for meeting project goals. These other ideas and how they meet project goals should be described in detail in the proposal.

G. Preferences

Preference will be given to proposals that:

- Include a multiple land management and/or land access alternatives
- Include case studies from multiple communities in the same geographic region
- Include participation by producers who are Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers and/or develop materials targeted for use by producers who are Socially Disadvantaged Farmers or Ranchers, as specified in USDA regulations.

Note:

1. Basic research, equipment purchases, and construction will NOT be considered.
2. Expenses for self-marketing and self-promotion are not an eligible expense (company brochures, company business cards, company display materials, etc.).

H. Award Information

This will be an award of Federal Financial Assistance, and as such, the regulations at 2 CFR 200 apply. The Forest Service plans to award up to \$100,000 under this announcement. The minimum for an award is anticipated to be \$25,000. The maximum for an award is anticipated to be \$50,000. However, the Forest Service may consider awarding more to a proposal that shows significant impact. All awards are based on

availability of funding.

Awards under this announcement will be concluded by September 1, 2022. The Forest Service will notify a recipient if their proposal is selected for an award and indicate whether any additional forms or information is required and an estimate of when the recipient may proceed. The Federal government will incur no legal obligation until appropriated funds are available and a Forest Service Grant Officer returns a fully executed award letter to a successful applicant.

If your proposal is selected for an award, 10 percent of the Federal funds may be held by the administrator until final reporting is completed and approved.

Note: *An award to a for-profit entity will generate an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 1099 Miscellaneous Income that will be filed with the IRS and provided to the awardee. The Forest Service expresses no opinion on the taxability, if any, of the awarded grant funds.*

II. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are (1) A nonprofit organization. (2) A unit of local government. (3) A Tribal government. (4) Any school that serves any of grades kindergarten through grade 12.

B. Cost Sharing/Matching

There is no match required for this grant.

Applicants should use this [budget detail worksheet](#) as a guide to determine project costs.

Additional funds can be shown as leverage, but letters of financial commitment are not required.

Applicants should list all other funds (Federal, State, private) received for this project within the last 3 years (include agency, program name, and dollar amount).

III. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. SAM Registration

Prior to submitting a proposal, the applicant must be registered at www.sam.gov. SAM Registration is a free service and does not cost money.

B. Application Package

This announcement contains all instructions to complete an application package and includes Web links to required financial forms. In addition, this information and related Web links can be viewed and downloaded by visiting the [USDA National Agroforestry Center RFP webpage](#).

C. Content and Form of Application Submission

The proposal package must include all of the materials listed below. Requirements for the application include:

- a. Submit all parts of the application at one time, including letters of support and appendices. Separate letters of support, appendices, etc., will not be accepted.

- b. E-mail submittal only. No proposals will be accepted by fax machine or hard copy.
 - c. Deadline for submission: June 1, 2020, 5:00 p.m. eastern daylight time.
 - d. Each submittal must consist of two separate PDF (or Word) files, as follows:
 - 1. Part 1: Cooperator Contact Information, Narrative, and any appendices, preferably in a searchable PDF
 - 2. Part 2: Required Financial Forms
1. Project Application, Part 1: Cooperator Contact Information and Narrative, including Appendices
- a. Formatted to print on 8½- by 11-inch plain paper with 1-inch margins.
 - b. 11-point font (Arial, Calibri) or larger.
 - c. Page numbers.
 - d. Each “page” of the application is one side of a single-spaced, typed page.
 - e. A maximum of **five pages** per proposal for Part 1 of the Application. This does not include the Cooperator Contact Information page or appendices. Part 1 should have the following five sections with headings in bold:
 - 1. Basic Project Information, including which of the three approaches (listed in Section E: Goals) the proposal describes.
 - 2. Project Goals and Objectives
 - 3. Project Description
 - 4. Qualifications of Team and Partners
 - 5. Budget Summary and Justification in Support of SF-424A

Documentation exceeding the maximum five-page limit will not be considered.
 - f. Appendices should be well organized with an index so reviewers can readily find information of interest. Include only relevant information in the appendices that will help the review panel better understand and evaluate your project. Below are examples of information that can be included in the appendices:
 - 1. Letters of support from partners, individuals, or organizations, especially those playing a key role. Letters of support should display the degree of collaboration occurring between the different entities engaged in the project.
 - 2. List of all other funds (Federal, State, private) received for this project within the last 3 years (include agency, program name, and dollar amount).
 - 3. Curricula vitae for team members.
2. Project Application, Part 2: Required Financial Forms [all]
- The following forms need to be completed and submitted with your proposal. Forms a-f below are all on the same [Grants.gov website](https://www.grants.gov). Search the “Form Name” column for the appropriate form.

- a. SF-424: Application for Federal Assistance
- b. SF-424A: Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- c. SF-424B: Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (unless certified in SAM registration)
- d. USDA AD-1047: Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension
- e. USDA AD-1049: Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace (or USDA AD-1052 for States and State agencies)
- f. USDA AD-3030: Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporation Applicants
- g. [FS-1500-22: Financial Capability Questionnaire](#)

D. Submission Date and Time

Applications must be **received** electronically at the e-mail address for Rich Straight (richard.straight@usda.gov) by 5:00 p.m. eastern daylight time on June 1, 2020. NO EXCEPTIONS. No proposals will be accepted by fax or hard copy.

Incomplete proposals and those received past the official deadline will not be considered. If any part of the application is missing, the proposal will not be accepted.

E. Funding Restrictions

To develop an application and budget consistent with Forest Service grants and agreements requirements, use [these guidelines](#).

F. Confidentiality

Materials submitted to the Forest Service, such as grant applications and progress reports, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Upon request, the Forest Service may be obligated to disclose such records. However, documents or portions of documents will be protected if they satisfy the requirements of one or more FOIA exemptions. FOIA Exemption 4 protects commercial and financial information that constitutes a trade secret, or whose release would cause competitive harm to the organization that provided the information. FOIA Exemption 6 protects information whose release “would reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.”

In the event that the Forest Service receives a FOIA request seeking information provided by your organization, we are required by Executive Order 12600 to consult with you regarding the potential release of this information. When assembling your application, you may wish to highlight any information that constitutes a trade secret, whose release would cause you competitive harm, or whose release would impact personal privacy. For more information about the FOIA and its exemptions, please consult the Department of Justice [Guide to the Freedom of Information Act](#).

IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign points to each proposal based on its ability to meet the following

criteria. Each proposal can earn a maximum of 100 total points.

1. Project Goals and Objectives (10 points total)
 - a. Alignment with the Urban Agroforestry Funding Opportunity Goals and Intent (Sections I.E. and I.F.) (10 points)
2. Project Description (45 points total)
 - a. Clear description of methods (10 points)
 - b. Clear and reasonable deliverables and outcomes given funds requested (25 points)
 - c. Creativity and use of appropriate technology (10 points)
3. Project Impact (35 points total)
 - a. The urban agriculture system and agroforestry approach meets outreach and education needs (15 points)
 - b. Breadth of resources, from general awareness to more technical in nature (15 points)
 - c. The selected urban agroforestry approach achieves multiple benefits (5 points)
4. Qualifications of Staff, Organization, and Partners (10 points)
 - a. Team member(s) qualifications and past performance (10 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be evaluated against the criteria listed in [Section IV, Part A](#). All applications will be screened to ensure compliance with the administrative requirements as set forth in this Request for Proposals. **Applications that do not follow the directions for submission or incomplete applications will be disqualified without appeal.**

A panel of Federal experts will perform a thorough technical review of eligible proposals and evaluate the proposals according to the criteria outlined in this announcement. In addition, the Forest Service may consider performance and status of previous or ongoing Federal grants and awards in making awards under this program and authority.

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date

April 3: Approximate issuance of Request for Proposals

June 1: Proposal submission deadline

July 1: Approximate date for award announcement

August 1: Approximate date of award

V. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

It is expected that applicants will be notified about funding decisions on or around **July 1, 2020**, by e-mail. Successful applicants will receive notification from the appropriate Forest Service Grants and Agreements Office.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements Financial Checklist

If your proposal is selected for funding, this checklist will help in its smooth processing.

1. Register in the System for Award Management (formerly Central Contracting Registration).

If you are not currently registered or are unsure of your current expiration date, please go to www.sam.gov. This process can take time; please ensure your registration is up to date, if awarded. SAM Registration is a free service and does not cost money.

2. Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) Number

Do you have a DUNS number that identifies your organization as listed on your application, or do you "share" this number with other parts of a larger organization? Do you have more than one DUNS number? If so, please use the DUNS number that matches the Employer Identification Number (EIN) assigned by the IRS.

3. Employer Identification Number (EIN)

Do you have an EIN that is specifically assigned to your organization, or do you "share" this number with other parts of a larger organization? Do you have more than one EIN? If so, please provide the one EIN that matches the IRS letter required in Part 1 of this section showing your current not-for-profit or for-profit tax status.

4. Indirect Costs

Do you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with your cognizant agency if you intend to show indirect costs for reimbursement with Federal funds or as a component of your match? If not, you can use the de minimis rate of 10% and avoid the negotiation process.

C. Reporting

1. Quarterly Progress Reports

Quarterly Progress Reports are required on a three month basis from the date of award. The reports provide an overview of accomplishments of the goals and objectives listed in the approved project narrative, including draft versions of resources for review by NAC staff.

2. Semi-Annual Financial Report

Federal Financial Reports ([SF-425](#)) are required. Specific requirements will be provided in the official Award letter if your proposal is selected for funding.

3. Review of Materials

- a. One month before the conclusion of the agreement, materials will be reviewed by NAC for content consistent with USDA programs and policies. Final changes requested by NAC will be made by the project team.

- b. One month before the conclusion of the agreement, materials will be reviewed by NAC to ensure they meet the standards and specifications outlined in the agreement and NAC needs for outreach and education.
4. Final Progress Reports

A detailed Final Progress Report is required. The Final Progress Report includes the following items:

- a. Final Summary Report – A brief overview of resources created included in the approved agreement. This should include a description of publications, videos, tools, etc.
 - b. Final Accomplishment Report – A detailed report that includes a project overview; goals and objectives; methodology; results; discussion; findings; recommendations; and photo release forms for all images. This report can include lessons learned to be considered for similar future projects.
5. Required Statements on All Documents, Publications, Audiovisual Material, and Electronic Media

The following statements need to be included on all documents, publications, audiovisual material, electronic media, and related informational pieces for public distribution that result from projects funded by this National Agroforestry Center Funding Opportunity:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

If the material is too small to permit the full statement to be included, the material must, at minimum, include the following statement, in print size no smaller than

the text: *"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."*

6. Communication About Publicity

Communication about media events or activities generated by the award should be provided to the National Agroforestry Center *in advance of the event or media release* and also be included in the Annual Progress Report. This ongoing communication about media activity will enable the Forest Service to raise the visibility of the work completed from this award.

D. Agency Contacts

For questions regarding this Request for Proposals or administrative regulations, contact Richard Straight (richard.straight@usda.gov); or Kate MacFarland (katherine.macfarland@usda.gov)