

# MAINE GREEN DOWNTOWNS TREE PLANTING GRANTS 2012 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

THE MAINE DOWNTOWN CENTER, THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION'S  
MAINE FOREST SERVICE, AND GROWSMART MAINE  
USDA FOREST SERVICE – URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY CFDA 10:675  
ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDERS NETWORK



A PROGRAM OF THE MAINE DOWNTOWN CENTER

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## MAINE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

*Empowering Maine People to Power Maine's Economy*

## Environmental Funders Network

*A project of the Maine Community Foundation and the Maine Philanthropy Center*

Application Deadline  
**February 29, 2012**

Maine Downtown Center  
295 Water Street, Suite 5  
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# Maine Downtown Center Green Downtowns and Project Canopy

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Maine Downtown Center and Project Canopy are seeking proposals from municipal governments currently part of the Main Street Maine program or Maine Downtown Network for downtown planting projects in those Maine communities.

The amount of grant dollars available to the Maine Downtown Center and the Department of Conservation's Maine Forest Service (MFS) for this grant program is approximately **\$50,000**. This amount is contingent on federal and state funding levels. Applicants are eligible to submit proposals for up to **\$8,000**. The grant period is from May 1, 2012 to October 30, 2012.

## **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:**

The Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program is a national initiative designed to strengthen the connections between people and their environment. The USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program was authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL95-313) and revised by the 1990 Farm Bill (PL101-624) to promote natural resource management in populated areas and improve quality of life. Urban and Community Forestry Program goals of awareness, outreach and environmental equity, partnerships, and comprehensive natural resource management focus on achieving healthy sustainable forests, sustainable economic development, and information management.

Equal funding is provided through the Environmental Funders Network (EFN). The EFN is a joint program between the Maine Community Foundation and Maine Philanthropy Center. Funding is provided to the Maine Development Foundation to strengthen links between the natural and built environment in Maine's historic downtowns and specifically to create more environmentally friendly, attractive and appealing downtown areas.

**The goal of this grant program is to provide funding and technical assistance to MDC Main Street Maine and Maine Downtown Network communities in support of the Green Downtowns program principles and goals in these communities.** Planting trees and caring for existing trees is an integral part of sustainable community forestry management. These grants provide an excellent opportunity for communities to increase tree cover, tree health, engage citizen volunteers, and build support for their community forestry program. Applicants are encouraged to contact Maine Downtown Center and/or Project Canopy staff to discuss project ideas. Eligible projects are limited to those that support MDF's Green Downtowns principles, including:

- ◆ **Improved community health and quality of life** – Plant trees in visible, contiguous locations where they make a direct, positive impact on the downtown community. Tree planting projects improve air and water quality, reduce noise pollution, and beautify neighborhoods and travel corridors.
- ◆ **Business district enhancement** – Trees planted in business districts can have a positive impact on the economy. Consumers are more willing to patronize business districts that have tree lined streets, shaded parking, and green spaces.

## **ELIGIBLE GRANTEES:**

Local municipal units of government currently in the Main Street Maine program or Maine Downtown Network, may be awarded grants for proposals that meet program guidelines.

### **COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT:**

This is a 75/25 (Green Downtowns/local) match program based on reimbursable costs. The maximum amount of federal funds awarded may not exceed 75% of the project cost and shall be no more than **\$8,000** per community application. Applicants must match federal and foundation funds in the form of cash, services or in-kind contributions that meet program standards and guidelines. The applicant may use current reasonable rates, i.e. the value of a professional consultant's time based upon his/her standard hourly rate of pay, when estimating the value of non-cash donations and in-kind services, e.g. volunteer time.

### **ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS:**

#### **Eligible Reimbursable Costs:**

The only costs eligible for reimbursement are those associated with one or more of the following:

- Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants.
- Purchase of essential supplies and materials.
- Purchase and planting of trees, along with maintenance during the grant period. Three-year maintenance with a 90% survival rate is expected on all plantings, however, maintenance costs outside of the grant period are ineligible.
- Costs associated with site preparation and soil amendments.

#### **Eligible Non-reimbursable Costs (Applicant's Share or Match):**

The following costs are not reimbursable, **BUT** are allowed to meet the community's **minimum cost-sharing requirements of 25%** of the total project cost.

- Cash or in-kind donations and services.
- Salaries, fringe, and overhead costs.
- Volunteer labor, machinery and equipment.

#### **Ineligible Costs (And NOT allowed as part of the community's cost-share):**

This cost-share program is for projects and/or activities not currently funded. It is not intended to be a substitute for existing funding levels. The focus of the program is to support new initiatives that would not otherwise occur during the funding cycle.

- Purchase of machinery or equipment.
- Construction of any kind, e.g. sidewalks or roads.
- Purchase of land or land charges.
- Purchase of plant material classified as invasive species by Project Canopy.
- Purchase and planting of Norway maples (including cultivars).
- Purchase and planting of ash species (*Fraxinus* sp.)— due to likelihood of eventual spread of the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*).
- Normal, community wide periodic maintenance of utility (telephone, electric, and cable) lines unless it is site specific and necessary to the project.

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:**

To be considered for funding, applicants must meet the following requirements:

**Application Form:**

- Complete the application form, including budget information. MDC and Project Canopy recommends that applicants obtain quotes for the cost of trees from nurseries and include the quotes with the application.
- The application must be signed by the designated and official representative.

**Narrative: (1-3 pages)**

Applicants are required to submit a narrative with their application containing the following information:

- A brief history of your community downtown tree program including mission and goals for the next several years.
- A description of the project, including what you expect to be developed, produced, performed and/or implemented; a clear and measurable work plan for the project; and a timeline for completion of the process.
- A description of how your project will effectively contribute to Green Downtown principles.

**Three-Year Maintenance Plan:**

A three-year maintenance plan must be included in your application. The plan should identify individuals and resources responsible for tree maintenance over a three-year period. Only tree maintenance costs during the grant period are eligible for reimbursement or may be used as match.

**Project Map/Planting Locations:**

Include a map of the project area, clearly delineating planting locations. Trees must be planted on public property or on property with free public access that is visible from, or contiguous to, transportation corridors.

**Letters of Support:**

Applications that include a broad range of participants will be favored. Applicants are required to include letters of support from partners that include specific commitments and contributions to the project, e.g. amount of volunteer labor committed, estimated services provided, donated equipment or labor, and not just a general statement of support.

**Community Capacity Checklist:**

Please complete the community capacity checklist and submit it with your application.

**FUNDING REVIEW AND CRITERIA:**

Proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis. Project proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation team made up of individuals from the Maine Downtown Center, Department of Conservation’s Maine Forest Service, GrowSmart Maine, and Project Canopy partners. The grant review criteria are:

Project contributes to the goals of Project Canopy	10 Points
Project supports Green Downtowns principles	10 Points
Project need and value to the community are evident	10 Points
Project has a realistic budget and timeline	5 Points
Community partnerships are evident and described in letters of support	5 Points
Application is complete, legible, and clearly presented	5 Points

**IF AWARDED A GRANT:**

Each grantee is required to sign an agreement for performance containing the required Federal General Assurances. The grant period is from May 1, 2012 to October 30, 2012.

**Successful applicants cannot commence work or incur any expenses against the grant until an agreement between Project Canopy and the authorized agency/organization has been signed. Expenses incurred outside the agreement period shall be deemed ineligible for reimbursement.**

**TIME TABLE:**

- 2/1/2012:** Grant announcement
- 2/29/2012:** Applications are due to MDC no later than 5 p.m.
- 3/30/2012:** Successful applicants will be notified by the MFS of conditional project approval

Successful applicants must spend allocated federal funds between **May 1, 2012 and October 30, 2012**. Applicants must complete final project reporting procedures, furnish documentation of project completion, and submit expenses to the MFS within 30 days following completion. Unless prior approval has been granted, grantees will be ineligible for reimbursement if completed grant documentation is not furnished to MFS by **November 30, 2012**.

**PAYMENT PROCESS:**

Funds will be awarded on a reimbursement basis only. This means that all expenses have been paid in full and the project is complete before filing for grant payment. Funds awarded under the grant are available once satisfactory work has been completed, within the contract period as described in the original scope of work, and after verification of expenditures and match. Grantees must file a request for reimbursement, and send records of expenditures and match to the MFS, within 30 days following completion of the project, but in no case later than November 30, 2012. Payment shall be made to the authorized local government unit, educational institution, or non-profit organization. Grantees can normally expect payment within 60 days of receipt of expenditure documentation.

**All records and receipts associated with the project must be maintained and available for inspection by the Maine Forest Service and State and Federal auditors for three (3) years after the grant period.**

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**

Technical assistance is available to all grant applicants from the Maine Downtown Center, Maine Forest Service, and GrowSmart Maine. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from personnel. Questions concerning the application process and/or project development, should be directed to Ryan Neale, Program Director, Maine Development Foundation at (207)626-3119, Jan Ames Santerre, Project Canopy Coordinator at (207) 287-4987, Kimberly Ballard, Community Outreach Director at (207) 699-4330 x3; or your local District Forester (listed below).

**DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION MAINE FOREST SERVICE DISTRICT FORESTERS**

- Morten Moesswilde, MFS, 536 Waldoboro Road, Jefferson, Maine 04348 (207) 441-2895
- Jim Ecker, MFS, P.O. Box 415, Old Town, ME, 04468 (207) 441-4308
- Dan Jacobs, MFS, 2 Forestry Road, Island Falls, ME, 04747 (207) 441-4128
- Steve MacDonald, MFS, P.O. Box 130, Jonesboro, Maine 04648 (207) 441-4924

Ken Canfield, MFS, 356 Shaker Rd., Gray, ME, 04039	(207) 441-3712
Patty Cormier, MFS, PO Box 416, Norridgewock, Maine 04976	(207) 592-2238
Gordon Moore, MFS, PO Box 1107, Greenville, Maine 04441	(207) 441-4139
Merle Ring, MFS, 131 Bethel Road, West Paris, Maine 04289	(207) 441-3276
David Rochester, MFS, 45 Radar Road, Ashland, Maine 04732	(207) 441-3817