



# Urban & Community Forestry Grows Bigger Than Ever

Elise Schadler, Program Manager, VT UCF





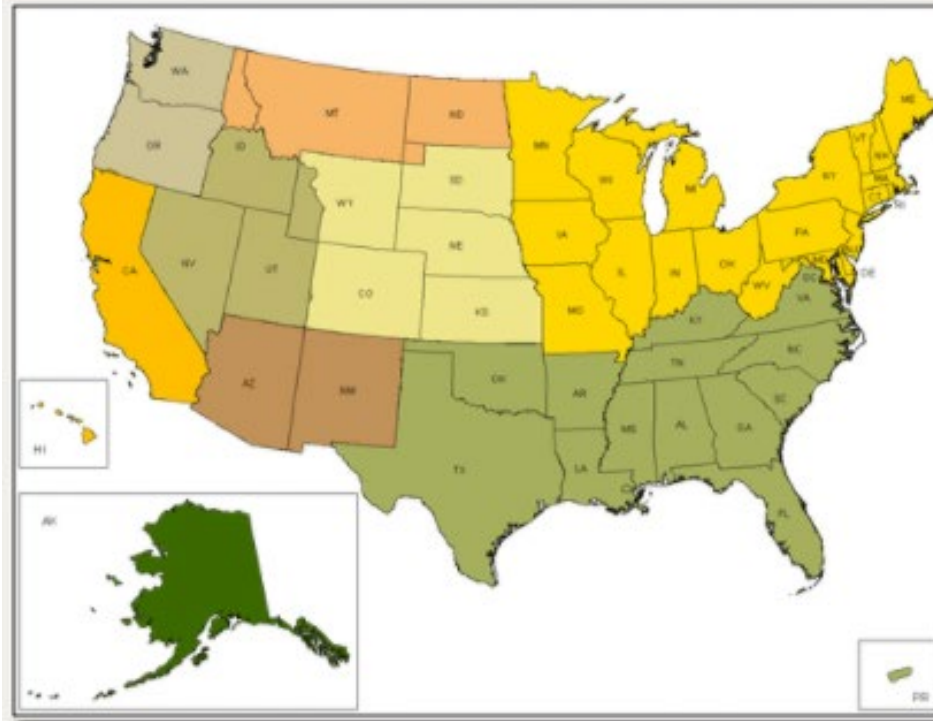
What would you do if I gave you \$50,000 for your community's urban trees and town forest?



# The Big Picture

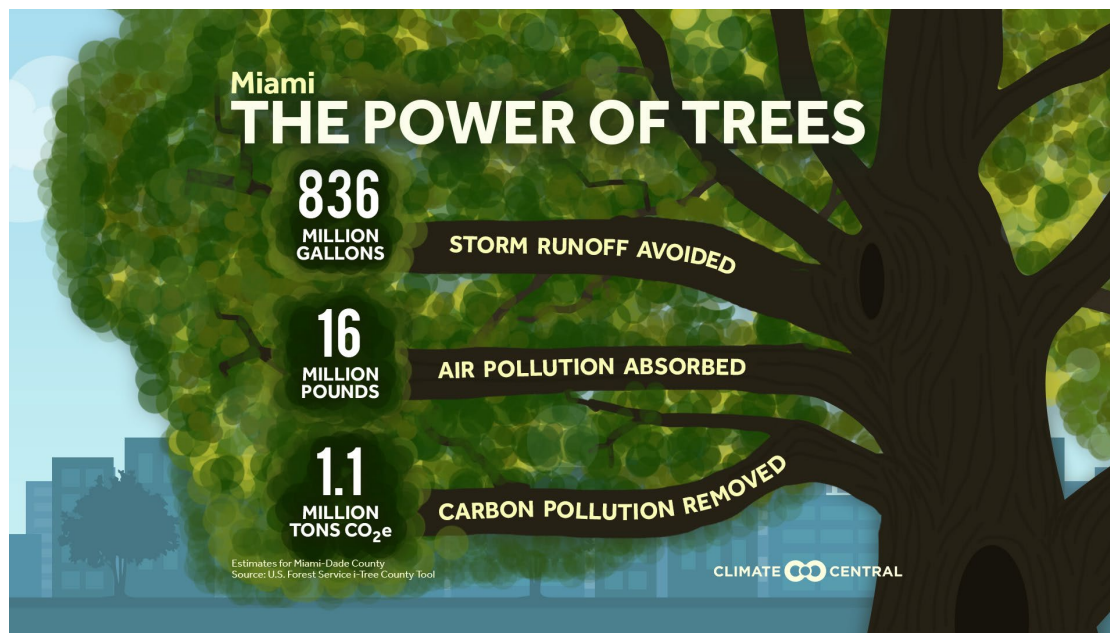
- 1990 Farm Bill established federal and state Urban & Community Forestry Programs.
- All states and territories receive annual funding from US Forest Service if they have:
  - UCF Coordinator
  - UCF Volunteer Coordinator
  - Advisory Council
- 1990 – 2020 Federal budget basically stagnant, no increase in base funding to states.

## Regional UCF Programs



### USDA Forest Service Regions

- Alaska Region
- Northeastern Area
- Intermountain Region
- Northern Region
- Pacific Northwest Region
- Pacific Southwest Region
- Rocky Mountain Region
- Southern Region
- Southwestern Region



## ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT

Trees have a tremendous impact on local economies, from job creation to sales and services.



### EMPLOYMENT

More than **500,000** people are employed as a result of urban forestry activities.



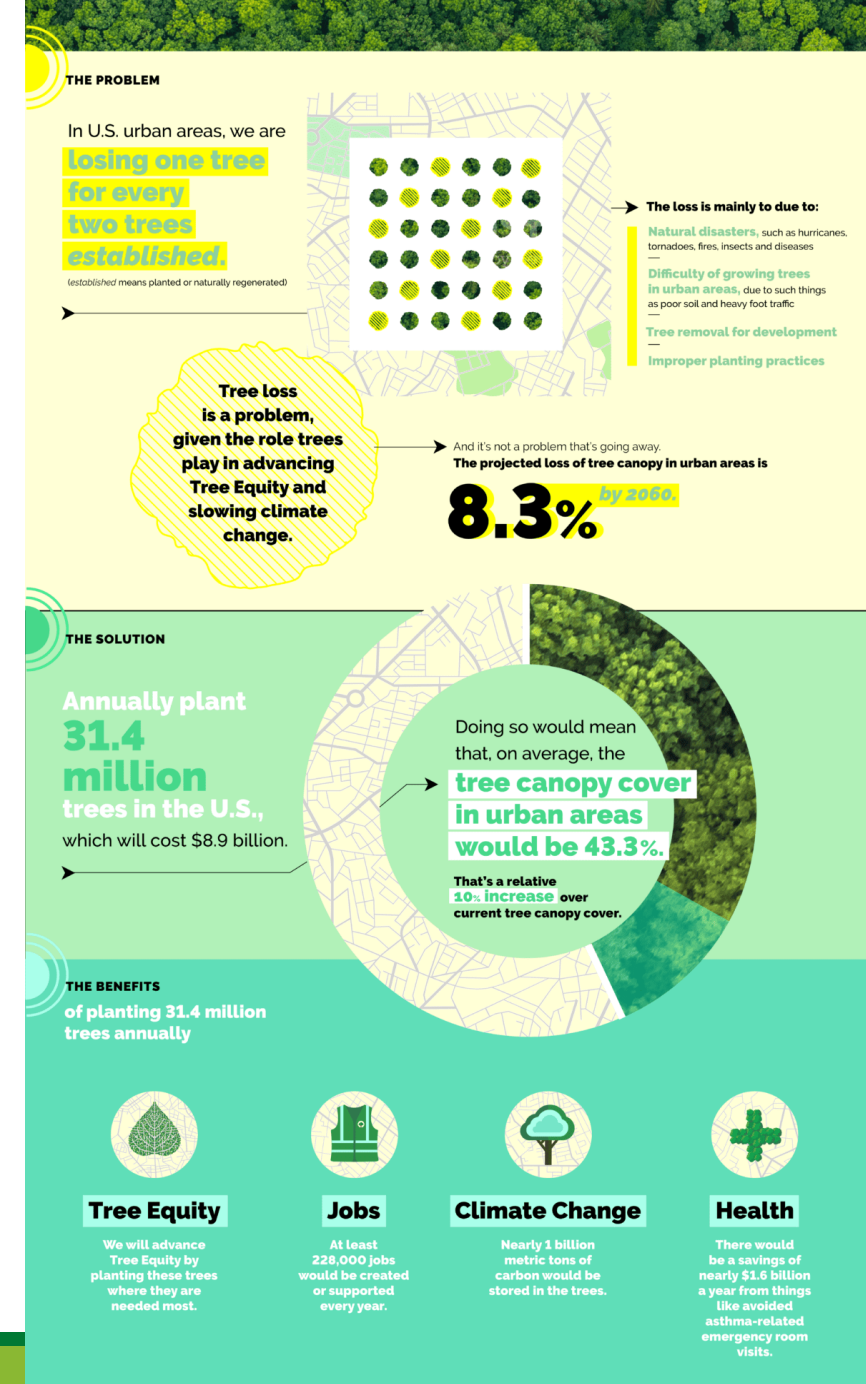
### INVESTMENT

Communities enrolled in the Tree City USA® program invested an average of **\$7.37 per resident** in tree planting and care in 2017, compared to just **\$3.00 per resident** in nonparticipating communities.



### ECONOMY

The urban forestry sector has an annual sales and employment footprint worth **\$64 billion.**







[Agency News Releases](#)

[Agency Reports](#)

[Blog](#)

[Digital](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[Press Release Archives](#)

[Radio](#)

[Help us improve  
USDA.gov](#)

## Biden-Harris Administration Announces Historic Funding to Expand Access to Trees and Green Spaces in Disadvantaged Urban Communities

*More than \$1 billion from President Biden's Investing in America Agenda will increase urban tree cover, boost equitable access to nature, and tackle the climate crisis*

**Newark, N.J., April 12, 2023** – Today the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing the availability of [\\$1 billion in grants](#) to increase equitable access to trees and green spaces in urban and community forests where more than 84% of Americans live, work and play. The announcement is part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda and the Administration's work to build a clean energy economy, advance environmental justice and create economic opportunity in communities across the country.

The funding announced today is part of a \$1.5 billion investment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program from President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act. 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

### Press Release

Release No. 0080.23

**Contact:** USDA Press

**Email:** [press@usda.gov](mailto:press@usda.gov)

Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 → \$1.6 Billion to Urban Forestry

- Announced on 4/12/23
- **\$1 billion** available in competitive grants directly from the USFS
- \$100,000 - \$50million
- State agencies, municipalities, non-profits, higher ed institutions, local organizations all eligible
- 5-year projects
- Full match waiver available if 100% of the project benefits *disadvantaged communities*.
- Priorities:
  - increase **equitable access to urban tree canopy** and associated human health, environmental and economic benefits in disadvantaged communities
  - broaden community engagement in **local urban forest planning**
  - improve community and urban forest **resilience** to climate change, pests and storm events through best management and maintenance practices
- Proposals due 6/1/23



# An Unprecedented Investment

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managingland/urban-forests>



# National Themes

- Increasing urban tree canopy cover
- Involving community members in planning processes
- Addressing “tree inequity”
- Climate resiliency
- Workforce development
- Urban wood utilization
- Increasing capacity to manage urban and community forests





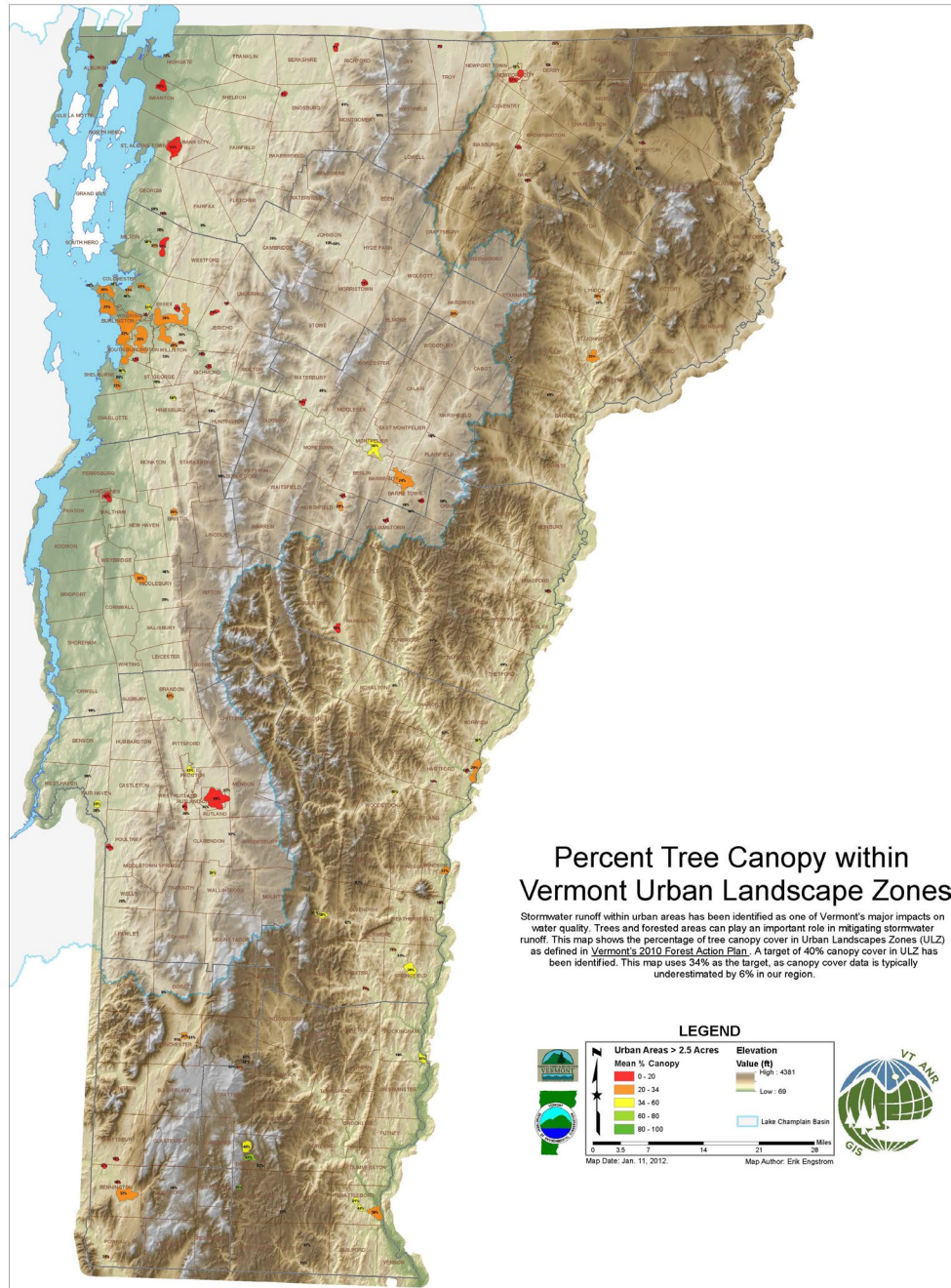


# The Vermont Picture



# Vermont's Urban Forest

- 243,000 (38.9%) of Vermonters live within a defined **Urban Area** (*high population density, high impervious surface area, low tree canopy cover*)
- ~12 million urban, downtown trees.
- Provide canopy cover over an average of ~31%





## Community Engagement in Urban and Community Forestry *2022 Data*

- 74 communities have a management plan/planting plan
- 60 communities have “staff”
  - 4 paid city arborists
  - Other municipal staff
  - Tree Wardens with arboricultural/forestry background
- 27 communities have a tree ordinance or policy
- 113 communities have a tree advocacy group
  - Tree Committees/Tree Boards
  - Conservation Commissions





## 10 Tree City USA Communities

- City of Burlington (29 years)
  - Town of Essex (1 year)
- Village of Essex Junction (8 years)
  - Town of Hartford (20 years)
- Town of Middlebury (5 years)
- City of Montpelier (21 years)
  - City of Rutland (31 years)
- City of South Burlington (15 years)
  - Town of Shelburne (6 years)
  - City of Winooski (4 years)







10,250 volunteer hours  
*(that we know of!)*

129 Communities  
received UCF Assistance  
in 2022





**Vermont Department of  
Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR)  
Division of Forests**

**Elise Schadler**  
Program Manager

**Joanne Garton**  
Technical Assistance  
Coordinator

**University of Vermont Extension (UVM)**

**Gwen Kozlowski**  
Volunteer &  
Education  
Coordinator

**Ginger Nickerson**  
Forest Pest  
Education  
Coordinator



# Normal Operating Mode of VT UCF 1990 - 2020

- Base funding from the USFS (\$200k)
- Special projects to chase grant funding to support staff
- Technical, Educational, Financial programming
- \$30,000 - \$80,000 in annual funding for competitive municipal grants







# 2023: Transformational



# 2023 Bottom line

---

This year VT UCF will have over \$1 million of financial assistance (grants) available to communities



# Breakdown of 2023 Available Grants

---

VERMONT URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM



# American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Urban Tree Planting Project

## Amount Available for Grants:

- ~\$550,000 for Urban Tree Planting Block Grant Program

## Timeframe

- 2024 and 2025 grant rounds; all funds need to be spent down by 9/26

## Eligible Activities

- An organization will be selected to implement a grant program for street and park tree planting in downtowns, neighborhoods, urban areas
- Aligns with goals in the Vermont Climate Action Plan
- Aligns with state water quality/stormwater mitigation goals

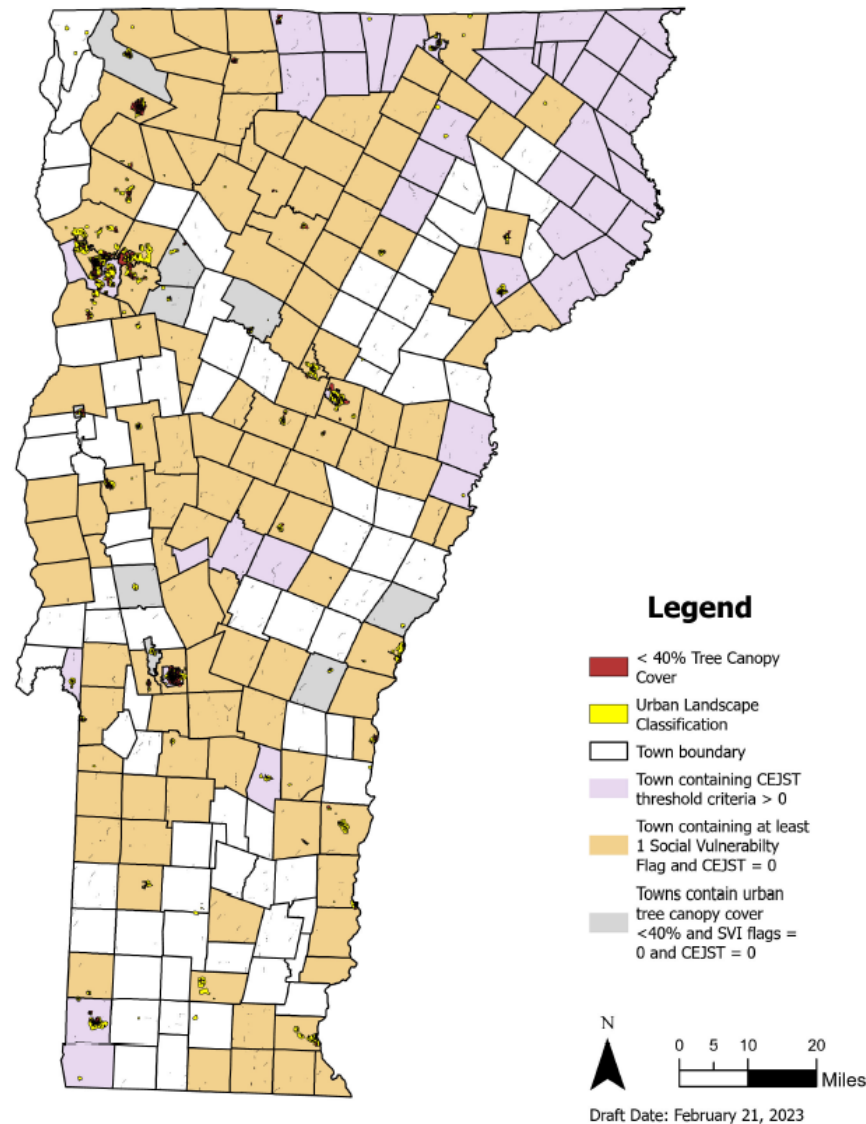
## Match Requirement

- No match

## Eligibility

- All communities eligible, priority will be given to applicants that align with:
  - National Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool
  - VT Department of Health's Social Vulnerability Index
  - Vermont defined Urban Areas with less than 40% tree canopy cover







# Inflation Reduction Act State Allocation: Community Grants

## Amount Available for Grants

- \$600,000

## Timeframe

- 2-3 annual grant rounds (TBD)
- Funded projects will have a 2-year project period

## Eligible Activities

- Will align with priorities for the national Inflation Reduction Act Urban Forestry grants

## Match Requirement

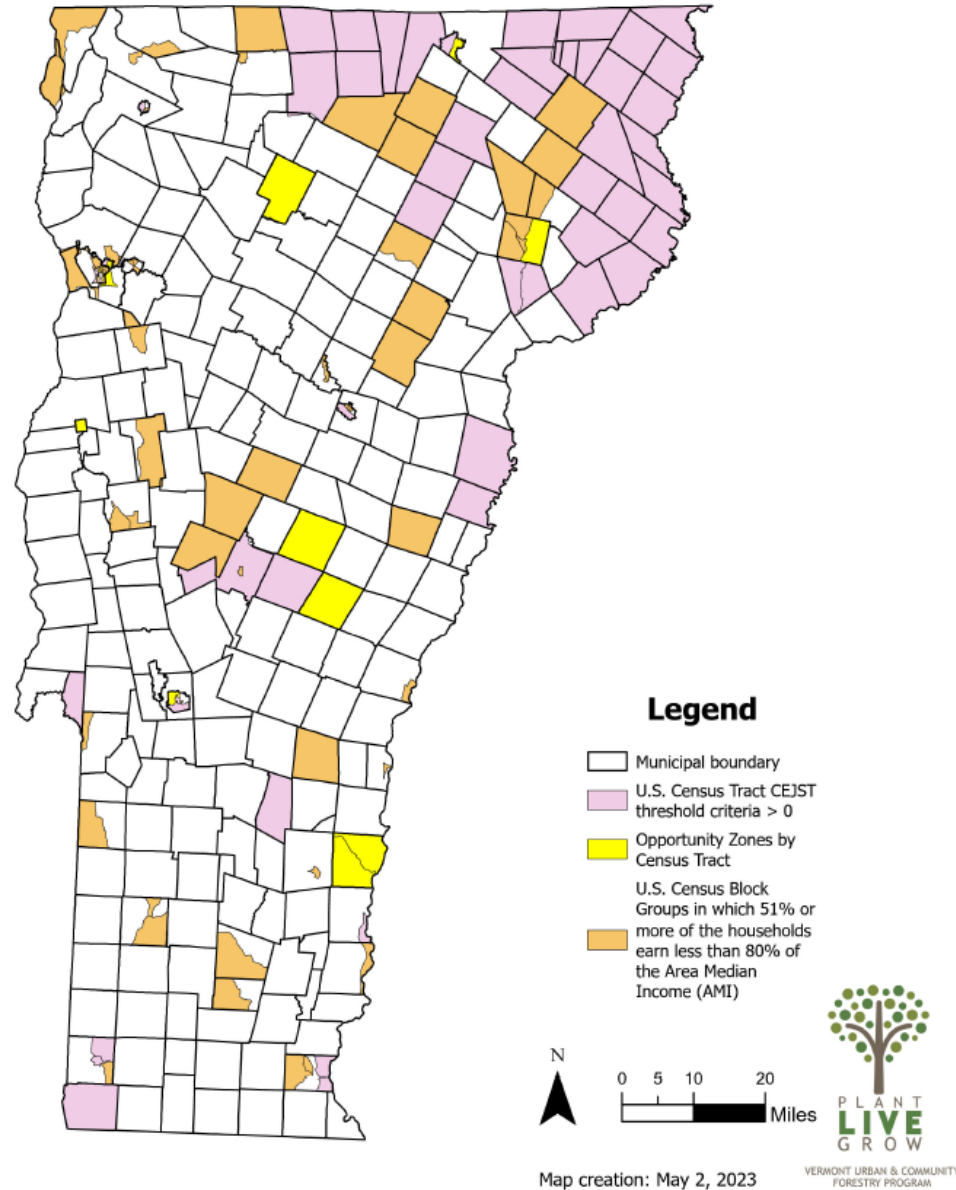
- No match

## Eligibility

- Disadvantaged Communities, as defined by the US Forest Service using the following tools:
  - National Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool
  - National HUD Opportunity Zones
  - National HUD Low-Moderate Income areas



## Vermont Municipal Map: Identification of CEJST + HUD Census Tracts





# Growing Urban Forests in the Face of Emerald Ash Borer Grants

## Amount Available through Grants:

- \$90,000 - \$150,000 (TBD)

## Timeline

- 2023 grants, 1-year project period

## Eligible Activities

- Public ash tree removals in urban areas
- Replanting of trees to replace removed ash
- Interplanting of trees between ash

## Match Requirement

- 1:1 match

## Eligibility

- TBD; must be in “urban areas” and may use UCF’s updated Urban Tree Canopy layer





# Communities Caring for Canopy Grants

## Amount Available through Grants:

- \$50,000 (anticipated)

## Timeline

- 2023 grants, 1-year project period

## Eligible Activities

- Any activity that supports moving a community's urban and community forestry program forward

## Match Requirement

- 1:1 match

## Eligibility

- Open to all municipalities, higher education institutions, and non-profit organizations



# Fruit & Nut Tree Grants (through Vermont Garden Network)

## Amount Available through Grants:

- ~\$8,000

## Timeline

- 2023 grants, 1-year projects

## Eligible Activities

- Fruit and nut tree planting at community garden sites
- Site preparation, plant maintenance

## Match Requirement

- No match

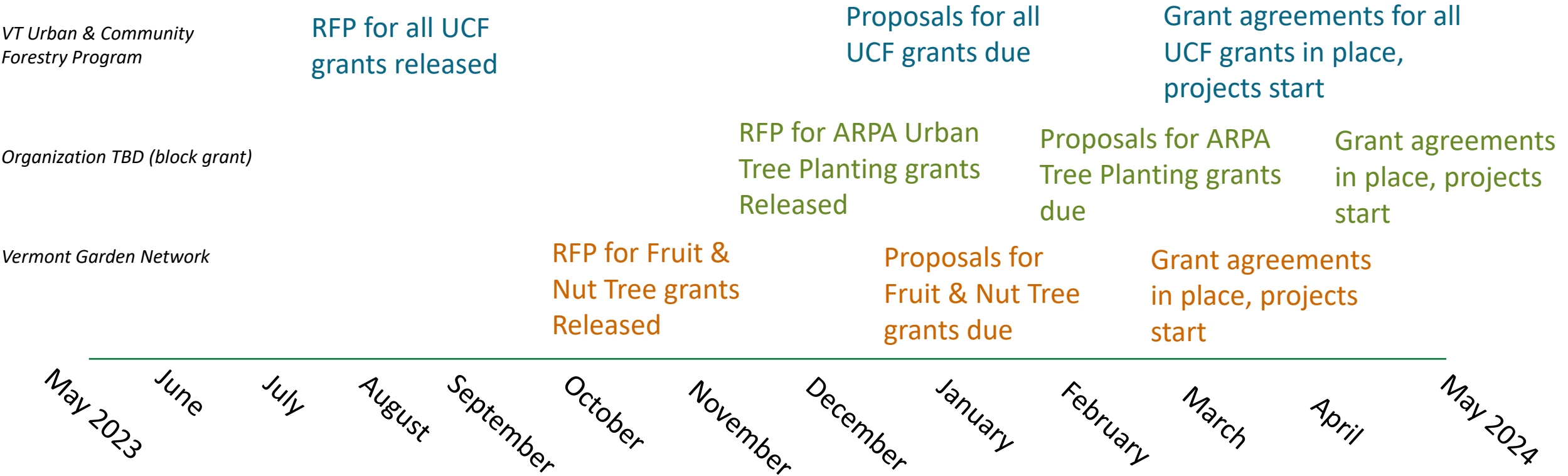
## Eligibility

- Community garden sites in Vermont (schools, affordable housing communities, non-profits, community gardens, educational centers, food co-ops, libraries, etc.)





# Estimated Timeline for Grants



# What to expect for the grants VT UCF is administering

- All grant information on [vtcommunityforestry.org](http://vtcommunityforestry.org)
- Request for Proposals (RFPs) for grants administered by VT UCF will be released at the same time, with same due date.
- Grant ranges will increase (\$5,000 - \$50,000 instead of \$1,000 - \$5,000)
- As always, state grants are reimbursement grants.
- Clear information about eligibility for different grant programs, with maps and community lists.
- Improvements to grant proposal process (form submission, no more PDFs).
- Video tutorials for grant application process.
- Increased technical assistance available for project proposals.

Sign up for our newsletter TREEmail to stay in the loop!

**[www.vtcommunityforestry.org/newsletter](http://www.vtcommunityforestry.org/newsletter)**



# Questions for YOU

---

1. What is challenging about developing a project in your community?
2. How could our grant application process be improved?
3. What ideas do you have?
4. Who in your community or in your networks should know about this?
5. What questions do you have about this funding?





[Elise.Schadler@vermont.gov](mailto:Elise.Schadler@vermont.gov)