

CoRe Webinar Questions and Answers

Questions and Answers (Q&A) for the CoRe Grant are closed as of COB February 25, 2025. ***Please contact your local DEC urban foresters, who can answer Questions throughout the entire open grant period.*** See Appendix 1 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions for a list of DEC urban foresters.

Question: We conduct plot sampling as part of our Rapid Site Assessment Program for natural areas. The data we collect is used to determine current conditions and future management prescriptions. Can we use that data for Section 2 of the Practice Template?

Answer: Yes, if the data collected will supply the required information. A summary of the RSA can be uploaded as supporting documentation for Section 2 of the Practice Template.

Question: Does the 10% allowance of shrubs in the approved planting plan implies that shrubs should be distributed throughout the entire project or could 10% of the area be specifically designated as shrubs only?

Answer: The 10% shrub allowance of the CoRe grant is intended to grow future understory shrubs that will help to shade out undesirable and invasive species.

Question: Does prevailing wage apply to all successful awardees?

Answer: Prevailing wage is mandatory for all municipalities when using State awarded funds. I am not sure about non-profits. I recommend that you reach out to the NYS Department of Labor for more information on the when's and who's regarding prevailing wage. <https://dol.ny.gov/>

Question: For awardees with partnership-based projects, is the bidder/ applicant responsible for securing and distributing reimbursements to partnering organization?

Answer: If a proposed project involves a cooperative agreement or partners, only one eligible, designated lead bidder can submit the bid for grant funding. The lead bidder must assume the responsibility for the project bid, performance of work consistent with this document, and the State of New York Master Contract for Grants. Letters substantiating the collaboration from each partner are required. These letters are to be uploaded to the SFS Grants Management system in a single PDF under the appropriate question for the bid.

The lead bidder will process reimbursement requests, receive reimbursements, and redistribute to applicable partners.

Question: Are applicants required to provide ground truth photos, even though it may be covered in snow?

Answer: As found in Section 4, pages 23-26 of the RFA –

a) Eligibility Questions

- Map(s) and photos must be uploaded. Only one PDF can be uploaded with each question. No hand drawn maps will be accepted. Were the appropriate maps and photos uploaded?
Pass=Yes, Fail=No

b) Project Evaluation, Scoring and Selection

- What is the location and overall condition of the site? Upload detailed description, maps (not hand-drawn), and **ground truth photos** of the site such as existing infrastructure, the property entrance, forest condition, and/or natural feature in the SFS Grant Management System.

Question: Requirements of the RFA include photo submission of project sites (pg. 23, section a) number 3. Item d.). If the snow does not melt away would photos of it still be expected? Or could we use Google Earth images in place, as they are completely clear and give a good view of the location.

Answer: Photos and maps of the project site(s) are required for submission as part of application. That said, to further describe the project site(s), other supplemental photos can be submitted.

Question: Is there a minimum stocking requirement for a stand that would trigger the need to hire a natural resource professional to fill out Section 2. Current Forest Stand Conditions?

Answer: Yes. Stands that have stocking levels of 30 square feet or higher of basal area evenly distributed across the stand will be required to provide the information in Section 2 of the Workplan Template. This information will need to be provided by a natural resources professional that meets the requirements outlined on page 24 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions. Stands with stocking levels under 30 square feet will be considered having a sparse overstory component and treated as new plantings (afforestation/ reforestation practice) and only need Section 3 completed.

Question: How do applicants upload a Workplan in SFS?

Answer: The second half of our CoRe grant webinar details how to apply in SFS. The webinar can be viewed online here: <https://meetny.gov.webex.com/webappng/sites/meetny-gov/recording/60b9b14bb0c8103dbb9e0ae5b0c784e4/playback>

For help with NYS grants, please visit the [Grants Management Resources for Applicants page](#) for documents, webinars, and trainings on navigating grant applications in SFS. For support with the SFS system, please log into the [Vendor Portal](#) and click the SFS Coach Icon. Or Contact the SFS Help Desk via email at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov or phone at 877-737-4185 toll-free.”

Question: Is there a template provided for the Long-Term Maintenance Plan?

Answer: There is not a template for the long-term maintenance plan.

Question: Is the practice plan template used to provide a proposed project plan, including tree planting?

Answer: A forestry practice plan template is a framework to document the intended management strategies for a specific project, outlining the planned activities, identifying forest practices and compliance with regulations. Section 2 (Project Types/Practices) of the RFA begins on Page 9, providing standards and specifications for eligible projects.

Question: Do all sites have to be identified by parcel at the time of application or can bidders submit a comprehensive methodology for each selected site: list of partners, site criteria, and an estimated acreage/number of trees?

Answer: Among other pertinent information; proposed project sites, applicable partners, and total number of trees anticipated for planting, must be identified at the time of application submission.

Question: Can a non-profit apply on behalf of a coalition of local nonprofits to fund multiple partnership focused invasive removal and planting projects.

Answer: If a proposed project involves a cooperative agreement or partners, only one eligible, designated lead bidder can submit the bid for grant funding. The lead bidder must assume the responsibility for the project bid, performance of work consistent with this document, and the State of New York Master Contract for Grants. Letters substantiating the collaboration from each partner are required. These letters are to be uploaded to the SFS Grants Management system in a single PDF under the appropriate question for the bid.

Advance payments of up to 25% of the awarded grant amount may be available to not-for-profit grantees once a Master Contract for Grants (MCG) has been fully approved by all applicable State agencies. Municipalities are not eligible to receive advance payments under State Finance Law.

Question: Can a “CoRe Qualifying Area” .shp file be made available for agencies and organizations that oversee and manage large areas (i.e. State and County agencies)?

Answer: The following link directs applicants to the web service behind the CoRe Qualification Mapping

tool, which allows applicants the ability to overlay their own data directly. This feature also allows applicants to download the data in shapefile and other formats.

[CoRe Grant Qualification WFL1 - Overview](#)

Question: Where does CoRe funding come from and will the grant be impacted by [the IRA freeze order](#)?

Answer: The CoRe grant opportunity is a State bondable appropriation through the executive budget and will not be impacted by the IRA freeze order.

Question: Are existing parklands eligible for reforestation projects under this grant, provided they meet the other program criteria?

Answer: The [CoRe Grant eligibility map](#) is the tool for bidders/ applicants to determine whether a potential Project Location is eligible for use of grant funds for the purposes of Afforestation and Reforestation, through this program. If an area is determined eligible, you will see “Qualifies for the CoRe Grant” on the left-hand side of the screen.

Question: If properties were acquired through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) federal program, would they be considered non-federal public properties eligible for reforestation funding under the CoRe Grant Program?

Answer: The federal government may choose to hold easements on specific properties acquired through this program. Your organization may wish to gain a clearer understanding of the agreement and potential land use limitations/restrictions placed on the target properties.

Question: If the NRCS buyout properties are not currently open to the public, would making them accessible post-reforestation meet the program's requirement for public access?

Answer: Proposed project area(s) must be open to the public prior to the date of application submission. As found on Page 4 of the CoRe Guidelines and BID Instructions: “The competitive CoRe grant program will expand and restore urban forested natural areas on public land and not-for-profit land open to the public.”

Question: Is establishing a tree nursery with deer fencing to aid reforestation and afforestation an eligible project?

Answer: As found on Page 10 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions, this grant opportunity is intended for Afforestation and Reforestation projects.

Question: Is starting a tree farm an eligible project?

Answer: The goal of this grant is to establish new forests or supplement seedling regeneration in existing forest stands after a natural disturbance or treatment through planting trees. This practice **cannot** be used to establish orchards, ornamental, nursery or Christmas trees farms.

Question: Should county governments propose smaller projects with a budget ranging between \$150-500,000?

Answer: County governments are eligible to apply for the CoRe grant opportunity to help facilitate afforestation and reforestation projects with estimated budgets ranging from \$150,000 for smaller projects, and up to \$3M for larger projects. Funding for CoRe totals approximately \$15M. \$3M of the total \$15M is available for State agencies, State authorities and State public benefit corporations, leaving \$12M available for other applicants. Of the remaining \$12M, \$3M is set aside specifically to fund smaller projects with anticipated budgets of \$150,000-\$500,000.00.

Question: Will the grant webinar recording be posted on the website?

Answer: Yes, please check back the website periodically as we anticipate the webinar to be posted in the coming days.

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Answer: Yes, please check back the website periodically as we anticipate the webinar to be posted in the coming days.

Question: When is the next round of the CoRe grant program anticipated to be?

Answer: When the grant program was first announced by the Governor's office, two additional Rounds of funding were anticipated to follow Round 1. However, this information was not included in the most recent State of the State. At this time, it is unknown whether a 2nd Round CoRe will be prioritized.

Question: Are properties that are open to the public for recreation with a free access permit eligible? Or are only properties with unrestricted access (i.e. no recreation permits needed) eligible?

Answer: Eligible project locations must provide opportunities for no-cost public access, in addition to the following requirements as detailed on Page 6 of the *CoRe Guidelines and Bid Instructions*.

Eligible projects must:

1. Be on non-federal public properties (i.e., state, county, municipal), privately owned land that is open to the public (i.e., preserves, land trusts, cemeteries); AND
2. Be within the boundaries identified by the CoRe Grant eligibility map. See Appendix 2 for methodology used to determine eligible project areas. Private property, other than what is described above, is not eligible for this bid opportunity.

Question: Are State-owned right of way, roadside pull offs, and rest areas included as eligible locations?

Answer: As outlined on page 6 of the Guidelines and Bid instructions, eligible project must be on non-federal public properties (i.e., state, county, municipal), privately owned land that is open to the public (i.e., preserves, land trusts, cemeteries); AND be within the boundaries identified by the CoRe Grant eligibility map. See Appendix 2 with CoRe RFA for methodology used to determine eligible project areas.

Question: Would labor hours for post-planting site monitoring be an approved task for reimbursement under the Afforestation/Reforestation Practice?

Answer: Post-planting maintenance/ monitoring can be a task as part of the project (up to the 5-year limit of the contract). Those after planting expenses do need to be listed separate from the other expenses.

Question: Could you please confirm again if there any specifics requirements on how tree survival rates should be documented and communicated? Sorry if I'm missing it in the RFA.

Answer: There are no specifics for documentation. In my experience, doing random sampling in a planting area will give an ideal of survival. If you have a process that is already in place, and you can have your DEC forester review it to see if it is acceptable to them. When the DEC foresters go out for inspections, they will use random sampling. The number of sampling points will be determined by the size of the planting area. If numbers look low, additional plots will be added. The data collected will be compared to what the awardee provided and if the survival rate is not met, a discussion can be had.

Question: A while back I think DEC had indicated they'd be open to multiple proposals from the same applicant. Given all the interest at the webinar, would DEC encourage that?

Answer: We are still allowing multiple proposals from the same applicant. They will be scored as individual projects. If we get a high demand (we hope!), we can review how we will disperse the funds. That will also be helpful when we make our request to Executive for future funding.

Question: What if we wanted to install deer browse fencing in a wooded parkland area?

Answer: As outlined on page 20 of the Guidelines and Bid instructions, wildlife exclusion fencing is an eligible practice if the wooded parkland meets the Bidders (Applicants), and Project Location requirements listed on Pages 5 and 6.

Question: Does the deer browse prevention extends to deer management (lethal or otherwise) or exclusively refers to fencing.

Answer: The Deer Enclosure Practice only authorizes the use of tree tubes and/or deer fencing (including the use of slash walls) as effective methods for protecting tree seedlings from deer.

Question: Planting in parks and other open spaces in highly urbanized areas, especially in EJ areas, can be daunting with regard to the impact of invasive species and seedling survivability. Is there any flexibility in the 65-75% survivability standard. What happens at the end of the project if results don't quite achieve this goal? Do we have to refund a portion of the grant?

Answer: The survivability standard is set at 65% or greater for bare root stock and 75% or greater for containerized stock. If at the time of inspection, either of these standards are not met, the Bidder will have an opportunity to replace the dead seedlings (at their expense) to reach the required survival rate or will not receive full reimbursement for the seedlings that did not survive.

Question: Does grant apply to replacing invasive trees with natives on municipal property?

Answer: For eligible lands, yes. For sites where there is more than 30% cover of vegetation, which will compete or interfere with seedling or tree stock growth, mechanical control, vegetation exclusion, and/or herbicide control will be required.

Question: Would vacant lots or schoolyards be included in "natural areas in urban communities?"

Answer: Potential Project locations must meet the eligibility requirements outlined on pages 5 and 6 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions, and have the ability to establish new forests, to be eligible for this grant opportunity.

Question: What about cemeteries, are they eligible?

Answer: As outlined in section g) Project Locations Eligible on page 6 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions. *Projects must:* 1. Be on non-federal public properties (i.e. state, county, municipal), privately

*owned land that is open to the public (i.e. preserves, land trusts, **cemeteries**); AND 2. Be within the boundaries identified by the CoRe Grant eligibility map.*

Question: What is the timeline for reimbursement? Quarterly or as we go? In other words, can we get reimbursed quickly.

Answer: Grant Program Payment information is outlined in Section 8. On page 36 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions.

Question: On the Tree Equity scoring within the RFA: do low priority sites (90-99) given 3 points or 0? That range appears in both rows.

Answer: Question 5. Tree Equity Score (page 27) of the Project Evaluation, Scoring and Selection section incorrectly shows LOW Priority (90-99 score) on two lines:

What is the Priority rating for the majority (at least 50%) of the project area?

(A) HIGHEST Priority (0-69 score) or HIGH Priority (70-79 score) 6 points

(B) MODERATE Priority (80-89 score) or **LOW Priority (90-99 score)** 3 points

(C) **LOW Priority (90-99 score) or NONE** Priority (100 score), or if the property is not covered by the Tree Equity Score maps 0 points

If your project location has a Tree Equity Score of LOW Priority (90-99 score), you will receive **3** points for scoring.

Question: How was the eligibility map developed?

Answer: Appendix 2. CoRe Eligibility Map Methodology is located on page 39 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions.

Question: Can a municipality and NPO work together? I ask this because coming up with funds ahead will be tough for our NPO without the Municipality support?

Answer: If a proposed project involves a cooperative agreement or partners, only one eligible, designated lead bidder can submit the bid for grant funding. The lead bidder must assume the responsibility for the project bid, performance of work consistent with this document, and the State of New York Master Contract for Grants. Letters substantiating the collaboration from each partner are required. These letters are to be uploaded to the SFS Grants Management system in a single PDF under the appropriate question for the bid.

Advance payments of up to 25% of the awarded grant amount may be available to not-for-profit grantees once a Master Contract for Grants (MCG) has been fully approved by all applicable State agencies. Municipalities are not eligible to receive advance payments under State Finance Law.

Question: On the CoRe eligibility map, is it the purple areas that qualify?

Answer: Yes, there will also be a statement on the left under “About this Location” stating “Qualifies for the CoRe Grant.”

Question: Are costs associated with post-planting site maintenance and stewardship covered during the 5-year grant period?

Answer: Follow up treatments may be needed to successfully complete the practice, and supplemental water will be required to be provided as needed to the plantings. Treatments and watering systems can be used within the 5-year grant period, and the associated costs can be submitted for reimbursement. The most cost-effective treatments and systems shall be utilized.

All after-planting care expenses need to be separate budget line items from pre-planting work. See Note at the top of page 30 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions.

Question: Please clarify the minimum and maximum grant amounts for eligible state agencies.

Answer: Up to \$3 million (of the \$15 million total) is available to State agencies, State authorities and State public benefit corporations. Projects have a minimum of \$150,000 and a maximum of \$500,000.

Question: Is the Practice Plan Template something we need to submit with our grant applications? In other words, does this mean that during the grant application stage we need to hire an arborist/forester to fill out this template?

Answer: As part of the Eligibility Question outlined on pages 23-25 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions, Question 7 asks if the Practice Template is uploaded. If not, the application will fail eligibility and not be evaluated and scored.

It is strongly advised to utilize the services of a natural resource professional familiar with collecting the data required to fill out the Practice Template.

Question: Does this grant provide funding for operational support, specifically for maintaining newly planted trees? Our park system covers 850 acres and has experienced significant tree canopy loss due to EAB and winter storms. We are looking to hire a dedicated watering personnel to ensure the health of the new trees, as the current responsibility is managed by an overburdened operations team.

Answer: During the 5-year grant period, supplemental water will be required to be provided as needed to the plantings. Watering systems can be used, and the associated costs can be submitted for reimbursement. The most cost-effective systems shall be utilized. After the project is completed, the bidder is expected to maintain this practice at their own cost to reach the long-term goal of establishing

and maintaining planted trees within 10 years. This includes performing the proper cleaning and thinning of planted areas to reduce competition, pruning and replacement of species necessary to maintain forest cover. The bidder will develop a long-term maintenance and cost plan for the lifespan of the practice.

All after-planting care expenses need to be separate budget line items from pre-planting work. See Note at the top of page 30 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions.

Question: Would this grant be available for building Bio-swales into creeks leading into LI Bays? Would an engineer's stamp be needed for the DEC permit?

Answer: All projects must meet the eligibility requirements outlined on pages 5 and 6 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions. Bidders are required to follow all requirements to obtain required permits (local and state) and follow the requirements of those permits.

Question: Would the grant cover funding for extending a water line for irrigation to the new planting area?

Answer: During the 5-year grant period, supplemental water will be required to be provided as needed to the plantings. Watering systems can be used, and the associated costs can be submitted for reimbursement. The most cost-effective systems shall be utilized. After the project is completed, the bidder is expected to maintain this practice at their own cost to reach the long-term goal of establishing and maintaining planted trees within 10 years. This includes performing the proper cleaning and thinning of planted areas to reduce competition, pruning and replacement of species necessary to maintain forest cover. The bidder will develop a long-term maintenance and cost plan for the lifespan of the practice.

Question: Is there any provision in the RFA for minimizing jumping worm spread into uninvaded forest areas for those using containerized stock?

Answer: Jumping worms are designated a prohibited invasive animal under New York's 6 NYCRR Part 575 – Prohibited and Regulated Invasive Species and cannot be sold, transported, or purchased in the State of New York. Fines are issued by NYS Department of Ag and Markets or Department of Environmental Conservation for public or nursery violations.

Question: Is there a resource list of foresters, natural resource professionals that can be utilized as a resource for applicants?

Answer: DEC foresters are here to help. A list of the local DEC urban foresters is listed in Appendix 1 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions.

For additional services that DEC foresters don't provide such as forest management plans, forest stand improvement, appraisals, and more, one of our cooperating foresters can help. Additional information and a list of participating private foresters can be found on the [Find a Cooperating Forester webpage](#).

Professional societies such as the [International Society of Arboriculture](#) and [Society of American Foresters](#) have lists of certified professionals that can be utilized.

Question: Is this supported by federal funding? Is it OK to leverage another urban forestry federal grant project for the proposed work?

Answer: Funding for the CoRe Grant opportunity comes from state funds as a part of the Governor's 25 Million Tree Initiative. As outlined in Section b) Budget Costs NOT Eligible (page 23)- Other state or federal funding: Costs paid from other state or federal funding sources are not eligible for reimbursement or match.

Question: Does the CoRe grant allow for overhead administrative costs?

Answers: As outlined on pages 22 and 23 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions:

a) Budget Costs Eligible for Reimbursement

- Personal Services: Salaries directly devoted to the project implementation are eligible, including staff time to write practice plans and conduct implementation such as site preparation, tree planting, tree protection installation, and maintenance activities that assure tree survival. Grantees will be required to document time worked, tasks, pay ratio and payment.

Administrative costs will not exceed twenty percent (20%) of total grant amount.

Administrative costs refer to post-award contract development, submitting the required quarterly reports and requesting reimbursement.

*b) Budget Costs **NOT** Eligible*

- Indirect/Overhead: Costs including accounting fees, insurance, interest, legal fees, labor burden, rent, repairs, telephone bills, expenditures, space/property, and utilities.

Question: Is there a minimum acreage for these projects?

Answer: No, there is no minimum acreage size for projects. The only "minimum" is for bid requests which is \$150,000.

Question: What is considered a new "forest" area? Is there a definition for a forest?

Answer: The definition that will be used in the Reforestation Plan is:

Forest: An ecosystem characterized by tree cover often consisting of stands varying in characteristics such as species, composition, structure, density, or age class

Besides having to meet the eligibility requirements outlined on pages 5 and 6 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions, proposed project areas will need to meet the requirements outlined for the Eligible CoRe Practices. The goal of this grant opportunity is to create new or enhance existing forested natural areas.

Question: I believe it was stated that parks aren't covered. If a portion of a park is a forest is that covered?

Answer: One of the main goals of the CoRe grant program is to expand and restore urban forested natural areas on public land and not-for-profit land open to the public. Besides having to meet the eligibility requirements outlined on pages 5 and 6 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions, proposed project areas will need to meet the requirements outlined for the Eligible CoRe Practices. Natural areas within parks that can support one of the Project Types/ Practices are eligible. Planting individual trees along streets or in maintained areas (mowed lawns, playgrounds, etc.) of a park are not eligible for this grant opportunity.

Question: Can we submit one application for multiple projects?

Answer: Bidders may submit one application with multiple project sites. Bidders may also submit multiple applications for multiple projects.

Question: Will there be future opportunities for this type of grant?

Answer: We are hopeful to continue offering grant opportunities like this in the future. Those opportunities will be proposed each year in the budget and must be approved in the State budget process.

Question: When will the next DEC Urban and Community Forestry funding round (Round 17) be released?

Answer: That is uncertain at this point. We are currently in the grant contract process for Round 16 and IRA funding. Once those are complete and the CoRe bid period ends, we can evaluate timing for Round 17. Urban and Community Forestry Grant opportunities can be found on our DEC Urban and Community Forestry Grants [webpage](#). In addition, the DEC Delivers monthly e-newsletter for the topic [Forests, Plants and Land Conservation](#) will include Urban Forestry and forestry-related grants.

Question: Our not for profit group has worked with our local SWCD to remove invasive species from our 63 acres of natural forest within our city park. We spent over 100 hours of volunteer time removing invasive species in a 5-acre parcel. Listening to you today makes me think that planting trees will score

higher than removing invasive species. Can you speak about the invasive species removal part of this grant.

Answer: Site preparation is a key component of this grant opportunity. If invasive species vegetation control (which is a reimbursable practice cost) on a proposed project site is required, it will have to follow the standards outlined for the Eligible Practices listed in the Guidelines and Bid Instructions.

Question: We have 3 municipalities who are working together on their reforestation practices, including retaining one arborist to guide work in all 3 Villages. May we apply as a group (one Village as lead applicant and the other 2 Villages as partners)? Or does each muni have to submit their own application?

Answer: If a proposed project involves a cooperative agreement or partners, only one eligible, designated lead bidder can submit the bid for grant funding. The lead bidder must assume the responsibility for the project bid, performance of work consistent with this document, and the State of New York Master Contract for Grants. Letters substantiating the collaboration from each partner are required. These letters are to be uploaded to the SFS Grants Management system in a single PDF under the appropriate question for the bid. In this case one of the municipalities would have to decide who is going to be the lead bidder.

Question: For containerized seedlings, is there a stock size requirement?

Answer: For containerized planting stock, eligible size range is 1-5 gallon size containers.

Question: Are we able to get reimbursed for past investments involved with our forest restoration project?

Answer: As outlined on page 23 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions:

*b) Budget Costs **NOT** Eligible*

- Outside contract term: Costs incurred prior to an award or prior to a contract start date or after the contract end date, including costs associated with grant preparation. A contract term start and end date will be determined by DEC at the time of an official award and cannot be backdated. Funds may not be used to reimburse municipalities for acquisitions that have already gone through closing or will go through closing before DEC issues an official award and establishes a contract term.

Question: Can funding be used for planting of supplemental understory herbaceous species?

Answers: Plantings must consist of trees and shrubs stock. Up to 10% of the site may include shrub plantings.

Question: Are old, abandoned apple orchards that are overrun with invasives on public park land eligible for this grant?

Answer: One of the main goals of the CoRe grant program is to expand and restore urban forested natural areas on public land and not-for-profit land open to the public. Besides having to meet the eligibility requirements outlined on pages 5 and 6 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions, proposed project areas will need to meet the requirements outlined for the Eligible CoRe Practices. Natural areas within parks that can support one of the eligible Project Types/ Practices are eligible. This grant opportunity cannot be used to establish orchards, ornamental, nursery or Christmas trees farms.

Question: Can you elaborate on the monitoring requirement, how the data should be collected and communicated to DEC?

Answer: Data that should be collected will be based on the project completed. Standard forestry information (Example- data collected for the Practice Plan Template) would show a natural resource professional how a stand has changed over the 10-year period.

As outlined in the Guidelines and Bid Instructions:

Monitoring - Once implemented to the specifications listed for the practice, the bidder will monitor this practice throughout its lifespan (10 years) to evaluate success. Frequently inspect the site within the first years of practice establishment to address threats to tree survival (i.e., insects, disease, browsing, etc.). Monitoring records should be maintained by the bidder throughout the lifespan (10 years) of the practice and available upon request by DEC. These records should provide the necessary information needed to enable the DEC to evaluate the site. DEC may also conduct on-site monitoring throughout the lifespan of the project to evaluate project and program success.

Question: I have a clarifying question about project vs site - we have a concept where we have multiple sites across a few parks within the same city - can that be one application?

Answer: Bidders may submit one application with multiple project sites. Bidders may also submit multiple applications for multiple projects.

Question: Any requirements for the amount that can be used for project management?

Answers: As outlined on pages 22 and 23 of the Guidelines and Bid Instructions:

a) *Budget Costs Eligible for Reimbursement*

- Personal Services: Salaries directly devoted to the project implementation are eligible, including staff time to write practice plans and conduct implementation such as site preparation, tree planting, tree protection installation, and maintenance activities that assure tree survival. Grantees will be required to document time worked, tasks, pay ratio and payment.

Administrative costs will not exceed twenty percent (20%) of total grant amount.

Administrative costs refer to post-award contract development, submitting the required quarterly reports and requesting reimbursement.

b) *Budget Costs NOT Eligible*

- Indirect/Overhead: Costs including accounting fees, insurance, interest, legal fees, labor burden, rent, repairs, telephone bills, expenditures, space/property, and utilities.

Question: I might have missed this part, but is there a minimum size requirement for planting stock? I saw containerized/bare root, but is this intended to be smaller seedlings I assume? And are there minimum stocking/acre requirements?

Answer: There is no minimum size requirement for bare root stock. For containerized planting stock, eligible size range is 1-5 gallon size containers.

- The minimum planting density for bare root trees for establishing new forested areas is 500 trees per acre,
- Containerized seedlings should be planted at a minimum density of 100 trees per acre.
- Fewer trees per acre may be allowed depending on the species planted or the forest type being replanted, site conditions, type of tree stock. For example, special or rare ecological habitats may require fewer trees per acre.

Question: Is there another grant in the state for street trees and parks to help fulfill the state tree planting project?

Answer: Current Urban and Community Forestry Grant opportunities can be found on our DEC Urban and Community Forestry Grants [webpage](#). The public can also sign up for [DEC Delivers](#) to help stay connected. Subscribe to as many topics as you wish. There are many topics to choose from that cover nearly every aspect of our work in addition to very specific topic announcements such as grant opportunities.

Question: Are tree removals required for site restoration covered under this grant?

Answer: Requirements for vegetation removal would be based off the site-specific information provided by the natural resource professional and the goals and objectives of the landowner. The Eligible Practice Standards are listed in Guidelines and Bid Instructions.

Question: Would goats or sheep be acceptable to use in combating invasives?

Answer: The answer to this would be site specific based on current site conditions, goals and objectives of the landowner and the silvicultural management recommendations made by the natural resource

professional. Special care and standards would be required to ensure no damage is done to the residual stand, otherwise supplemental treatments and plantings may be required.

Question: Will there need to be a bidding process to engage a natural resource professional?

Answer: Bidders/ Applicants will need to follow their agency, municipal or local procurement requirements for selecting a natural resource professional if no staff member has the qualifications or experience.

Question: Section 2 in the Practice Template, we may have issues reporting in the current basal area and stems/acres before we submit the bid. Can this be estimated or assigned a range of values?

Answer: A natural resource professional should be able to provide the requested data which is necessary to give an accurate representation of current forest stand conditions. Generally applied methods for inventorying forest stands include point sampling (also known as variable-radius plot sampling) and fixed plot sampling. Methods applicable to specific situations, depending on stand conditions and objectives of the inventory, include strip sampling, line transect sampling, crop-tree inventory, and the zigzag transect. The method chosen must be appropriate for the geographic location and condition of the stand and efficient regarding information collected in a given amount of time.

Question: Since this is for urban forests in densely populated places is there some requirement regarding chemical use and the fact kids play in the woods?

Answer: When the Grantee hires a contractor to apply herbicides as part of this grant, the Grantee's Contractor must be a registered pesticide business that is currently registered with the NYS DEC and employs a certified applicator in the appropriate category (i.e., Category 2). A pesticide applicator who is a holder of a N.Y.S. Commercial Applicator Permit (Category 2) must be present during the spraying operation. They must also follow all local rules and regulations.

Question: Do we need to have a design completed by a forester prior to applying? We're a SUNY campus and I don't think we'd be able to retain a forestry professional that quickly. As the campus landscape architect, could I qualify as "other natural resource professional" for the sake of the application and plan to hire a forester using a portion of the funds?

Answer: The need for a forestry professional (or other natural resource professional) is determined by the proposed project. In the case of an afforestation/ planting project, as the campus landscape architect, you may have the experience and knowledge to be the natural resource professional. If more silvicultural experience is needed with forest stand restoration/ degraded understory, then a forester may need to be hired to collect the necessary data and make the forest management recommendations.

Question: We are considering a wholistic urban forest plan that encompasses the campus and surrounding municipality. We see that one of the reimbursement practices that is funded is: Planning by a forester, arborist, natural resources professional, or specialist in restoration and reforestation. Would the plan alone be eligible, or would it have to be the plan plus some of the implementation?

Answer: Planning by a professional is a reimbursable task if it is directly related to one of the eligible Project Types/ Practices outlined in the RFA (page 9). A plan by itself is not eligible practice.

Question: Would it be beneficial to apply through the municipality rather than the campus?

Answer: If a proposed project involves a cooperative agreement or partners, only one eligible, designated lead bidder can submit the bid for grant funding. The lead bidder must assume the responsibility for the project bid, performance of work consistent with this document, and the State of New York Master Contract for Grants. Letters substantiating the collaboration from each partner are required. These letters are to be uploaded to the SFS Grants Management system in a single PDF under the appropriate question for the bid. In this case either the municipality or campus would have to decide who is going to be the lead bidder.

Question: There is a big need right now for replanting trees that died due to the Emerald Ash Borer and that includes replanting trees in park settings. Is this something that would be eligible for this grant opportunity?

Answer: One of the main goals of the CoRe grant program is to expand and restore urban forested natural areas on public land and not-for-profit land open to the public which include natural areas affected by the Emerald Ash Borer. Natural areas within parks that can support one of the eligible Project Types/ Practices outlined in the RFA (page 9) are eligible. Planting individual trees along streets or in maintained areas (mowed lawns, playgrounds, etc.) of a park are not eligible for this grant opportunity.

Question: What is the deadline for Question and Answers? Specifically, is the deadline for question submission 2:00 p.m. ET on February 25, 2025?

The Guidelines and Bid Instructions file contains two deadlines for submitting Question, the front cover page states 2:00 p.m. on February 25, 2025, and Page 4 states COB (Close of Business) on February 25, 2025.

Answer: The 2:00 PM in the Guidelines was added as an error and we will adhere to COB February 25th as the deadline.