| | **Outdoor Learning Grant Program**
2024-2025

GUIDELINES |

* Grant Guidelines change each year. Please read ALL directions carefully. *

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<u>Program Administrator</u>
This program is administered through the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the Utah Community Forest Council. *The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.*

<u>Eligible Applicants</u>
Eligible applicants include public schools (K-12), school supported programs such as PTA, PTO, and school community councils. Volunteer groups, non-profit 501(c)(3) groups, neighborhood associations, and civic groups may work in conjunction with and through one of the above.

<u>Funds Available</u>
Outdoor Learning Grant requests have a **minimum grant of $3,000 and a maximum of $15,000**. Grant monies awarded under this program are in the form of reimbursement grants and will be paid only upon **completion of granted projects**, and **submission of a final report**. Funds will be available to schools and organizations on a competitive basis in a 1:1 cost share match program. Successful applicants must provide a local match equal to or greater than the grant award. Only activities completed after the grant has been awarded will be considered "match". Grant dollars may not be used for projects that have already been accomplished.

All applications must be signed off by a Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands Forester prior to submission to the Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator. Area forester contact list is included as Appendix 1. A letter of support from the area forester may replace the signature only if a personal visit is unattainable.

<u>Deadline for Area Forester Signature</u>
Tuesday, July 23, 2024

<u>Application Deadline</u>
Wednesday, July 31, 2024

<u>Final Report Deadline</u>
Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Program Goals

To provide a unique resource for educators to foster creativity and awareness for the environment in an outdoor setting (2020 Utah Forest Action Plan, pg. 80) and to meet the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands objectives and strategies for U&CF.

The intent of the Outdoor Learning Grant is to provide funds to K-12 schools to implement an outdoor learning environment on their school grounds. Educators should be able to tie in existing curriculum, such as art, social studies, environmental education, and science, providing an outdoor setting to enhance learning opportunities. This will allow the students to connect with the world around them and engage in hands-on activities and experiences.

Outdoor Classroom Possibilities:

The following outdoor classroom scenarios will be considered for funding. However, this list is just for ideas. There is a significant amount of creativity that can be implemented in generating an appropriate outdoor learning area for students.

1. Designated area, on campus, dedicated to outdoor learning
2. Trees of various species planted throughout campus for the intent of outdoor learning
3. Maintenance and renewal of existing trees used for outdoor learning (pruning, mulching, etc.)
4. Outdoor learning materials used to promote environmental education (books, gloves, shovels leaf press, magnifying glasses, etc.)
5. Signage indicating tree and plant species
6. Demonstration Planting (such as planting trees for energy conservation, wastewater treatment, impervious surface water collection sites, wildlife habitat areas, low water use landscape plantings, social and psychological benefits, etc.)

> All tree planting projects must include a detailed three-year maintenance plan with the names of responsible parties for the maintenance. See Appendix II for more details.

Ineligible Expenses for Grant Reimbursement
- Food, drinks and refreshments for meetings, volunteers, etc. (may NOT be used as match)
- Costs associated with preparing the grant application (may NOT be used as match)
- Expenses not supported by proper documentation (may NOT be used as match)
- Nursery structures such as greenhouses (may NOT be used as match)
- Temporary shade structures and hoop houses (may be used as match)
- Play structures or playground equipment (may NOT be used as match)
- Tools, *e.g. chainsaws, shovels, gloves* (may be used as match)
- Computers, **including irrigation computers**, handheld devices, printers and office equipment (may be used as match)
- In-kind and overhead (may be used as match)
- Items not directly pertaining to the approved forestry project. (may NOT be used as match.)

RATING CRITERIA:

Selection Process
Applications will be reviewed and ranked by a committee composed of the Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator and selected members of the Utah Community Forestry Council and the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands.

Evaluation Criteria
Applications will be rated on the individual project goals and quality. Evaluation will focus on how each project meets the State U&CF goals (outlined on page 2).

PROJECT FUNDING, INSPECTION, REPORTING AND PAYMENT:

Funding Information
The funding range for proposals is $3,000 to $15,000. Grant finances provided by the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry and State of Utah, Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. This is a matching grant program requiring a 1:1 match. Only actual costs and expenses will be reimbursed. Volunteer labor and in-kind donations can be used for a local match equal to or greater than the grant award, but will not be counted as expenses for reimbursement.

General purchasing guidelines will be adhered to for any purchases made using these grant funds. For any single purchase over $1,000, at least two competitive quotes (by phone, fax, e-mail, etc.) are required. The purchase must be awarded to the lowest bid. Competitive quote documents must be maintained with the payment document to support validity. Bids for all contract work are required. No company shall be considered a "partner" in grant project.

The grant period will begin as soon as successful applicants are notified and expire May 20, 2025. Grant payments will be made upon review of financial documentation. Successful applicants must maintain project records including paid invoices, time & attendance sheets, and cancelled checks. Final project reports must be submitted by **May 20, 2025**.

Matching Contributions
Matching support may be in the form of *cash purchases* or *in-kind contributions*; all of these contributions must come from **non-Federal sources** (exceptions may apply).

> *Cash Purchases* are direct out-of-pocket expenditures for eligible project activities that are documented by paid invoices, cancelled checks, signed receipts or payroll records.

> *In-Kind Contributions* include third party donations of supplies or equipment, value of time by employees or volunteers on eligible project activities. Assistance provided by Federal employees may not be claimed as part of the local match.

> In-Kind Contribution Guidelines
> - Volunteers - $33.49 per hour (must include sign-up sheet of volunteers, date, and hours worked)
> - Donated professional services – use customary rates for services provided
> - Donations of materials – use customary retail rates

Review of Projects

The Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands reserves the right to inspect projects at any time. All educational materials (written or video developed) as part of a grant project should be reviewed by a Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands forester prior to final printing to ensure that standards for tree planting and maintenance are met.

Project Completion Report

A final report MUST be submitted to the Community Forestry Program Manager by May 20, 2025 including the following:

1. Official Final Report Form (provided upon grant award)
2. Summary detailing how the project goals and objectives were achieved; for example, a tree planting project detailing the number and species of trees planted, photos of the completed project and maintenance plan
3. A cost summary showing eligible costs, cash and in-kind matching contributions, and donated items.
4. Supporting documentation of invoices and cancelled checks, for in-kind labor volunteer log sheets, newspaper articles, newsletter stories, photographs and letters verifying fair market value of donated items or services.

Payments to Grant Recipients

Payments will be made as reimbursement for approved project expenditures. The grants administrator will review all reports. Reimbursement will be based on the originally approved request, not to exceed 50% of the project's actual costs.

EXTENSIONS:

If an applicant cannot complete the proposed project within the given timeframe, the applicant must notify the grant administrator and forfeit funding or request an extension before the final report deadline. **Written request to extend or forfeit grant dollars must be received by the grant administrator no later than May 20, 2025**.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Application Deadline

Completed application must be received no later than July 31, 2024. Electronic copies are required. E-mail electronic entries to: **jlfarley@utah.gov**

For Additional Information Contact:

Jeran Farley
Community Forestry Program Manager
Telephone: (801) 330-7976
Email: jlfarley@utah.gov

Appendix I: Contact Information

A representative from the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands must sign off on your proposal. Below is a list of area foresters who can approve your applications.

Division of Forestry Fire and State Lands:

Salt Lake City Office (Wasatch Front) — *Tooele, Morgan, Utah, Davis, Salt Lake Counties*
Scott Zeidler – Northern Utah Community Forester, (385) 226-7494, scottzeidler@utah.gov

Cedar City Office (Southwest) — *Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, Washington Counties*
Ryan Johnson – Southern Utah Community Forester, (435) 559-0219, ryanjohnson@utah.gov

Logan Office (Bear River) — *Box Elder, Weber, Cache, Rich Counties*
Morgan Mendenhall – Area Forester, (435) 669-1153, morganmendenhall@utah.gov

Moab Office (Southeast) — *San Juan, Emery, Grand, Carbon Counties*
Jordan Nesbitt – Area Forester, (435) 210-4891, jordannesbitt@utah.gov

Richfield Office (Central) — *Sanpete, Sevier, Juab, Millard, Wayne, Piute Counties*
Justin Short – Area Forester, (435) 633-5992, justinshort@utah.gov

Heber Office (Northeast) — *Daggett, Summit, Duchesne, Uinta, Wasatch*
PJ Abraham – Area Forester, (435) 671-3326, pjabraham@utah.gov

State Office — *Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands*
Jeran Farley –Community Forestry Program Manager, (801) 330-7976, jlfarley@utah.gov

Appendix II: EXAMPLE Tree Planting and Maintenance Specifications

At Planting Time: Once tree is set in the hole, cut and remove all twine, wiring and fabric around trunk and around the root ball. Also cut any girdling roots.

Immediately After Planting:
1. *Watering* – Water each plant immediately and continue watering until bubbles stop rising in the watering basin. Add additional soil, if needed to eliminate air cavities or to cover exposed roots. Position the root collar of trees at or slightly above soil line, so as to prevent trees from being planted too deeply.
2. *Mulching* – Shredded wood chips or other course organic material up to four inches thick in at-least a three to four-foot diameter around the tree. Keep mulch a minimum of four inches away from the tree trunk.
3. *Prepping* - Remove the ties, labels and trunk protectors immediately after planting.
4. *Staking* – Stake only if necessary; remove after first year.
5. *Pruning* – Do not remove lower branches, the leader (main shoot), or permanent lateral branches. Limit pruning of newly planted trees to the removal of rubbing, dead or broken branches or of a competing leader. For large deciduous shade trees, begin removal of lower branches in the 3nd or 4rd year to promote good form. Limit branch removal to no more than 25% of total branches each year thereafter.

Extended Maintenance
1. For the three years following planting the grantee or designated authority will inspect and maintain tree by regular or routine watering, checking for insect and disease, weeding, and structural pruning

2. Maintain mulch ring and expand laterally as crown diameter increases.

3. Each year, watering berms must be increased in diameter to include the entire area under the tree's canopy to encourage roots to grow laterally. In areas of winter freezing, it is important to break down berms at the beginning of winter so ice dams do not form around the base of the tree. These berms can be rebuilt each watering season and should be made larger in diameter every year.

For planting and maintenance information refer to:
www.treesaregood.com
www.treecaretips.org
www.forestry.usu.edu

For species selections refer to:
www.treebrowser.org
Or contact your area forester or local USU extension agent.