

Legislative Summary

To request new legislation authorizing the Department of Finance to apply, accept, and spend grant funds in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and the Division of Urban Forestry/Department of Parks and Recreation, that further supports the implementation of urban forestry best management practices around tree preservation and tree canopy growth in the City of Cleveland and similar communities suffering from tree canopy loss and impacts of climate change.

Background/Purpose:

This grant-funded project, led by City of Cleveland, proposes a coordinated effort to address urban tree canopy loss in Justice40 neighborhoods, as determined by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool (<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/>) throughout the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. This request for funding represents a collaborative effort led by the City of Cleveland to advance the goals of the Cleveland Tree Plan through increasing capacity for urban forestry through transformational tree maintenance, young tree training and establishment, including watering and mulching, and a robust tree inventory, as well as tree planting through partner organizations, with funding directly benefitting neighborhoods with under a 24% tree canopy coverage. This grant will catalyze the beneficial transformation of tree canopy conditions in our Cleveland and Cuyahoga County's most disadvantaged census tracts, creating a focused strategic investment in communities have been left behind for over 60 years.

Scope of Work/Commodities/Services:

The Department of Finance in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and the Urban Forestry Division is seeking legislative authority for the following scope of work, to be funded by the grant dollars being sought:

- Apply, accept, and spend grant funds to be awarded through the USDA Forestry Service's "Inflation Reduction Act - Urban and Community Forestry Program";
- Request authority for the Division of Urban Forestry and/or the Mayor's Office of Sustainability to enter into one or more contracts with a provider of tree inventory services;
- Request authority for the Division of Urban Forestry to enter into one or more requirement contracts for the necessary items of labor and materials needed for urban forestry services, including but not limited to, maintaining and planting trees, and removing trees, stumps, and tree waste material, for the purpose of maintaining and restoring the urban tree canopy of Cleveland;
- Request authority to enter into one or more sub-grant award agreements to community partners including Cuyahoga County, The Cleveland MetroParks and The Cleveland Tree Coalition, whose fiscal agent is Western Reserve Land Conservancy;

- The Mayor's Office of Sustainability will collaborate with the Division of Urban Forestry and the Department of Parks and Recreation to execute this project.

Justification/Urgency:

The justification for legislation is due to the need for council's authority to accept and spend grant dollars and a requirement from the USDA Forestry Service for the City of Cleveland to submit the final application for these funds the week of July 22nd and to sign an award letter accepting these funds in early September.

Anticipated Costs and funding source:

Anticipated Grant: Up to \$3,400,000. Requires no match from the City of Cleveland.

Schedule or Term of Grant:

5 years (October 1, 2024 – September 30,2029) for grant implementation. Award notices expected the week of September 9, 2024.