

Tree for Every Delawarean Initiative (TEDI)

FY 2027 Call for Proposals

Tree Planting Projects in the Spring of 2027

DNREC Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy

100 W. Water Street, Suite 5A

Dover, DE 19904

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) engages with partner organizations to support tree planting projects in the State of Delaware. Delaware's Tree for Every Delawarean Initiative (TEDI) is a partnership between DNREC's Division of Climate, Coastal, and Energy (CCE) and the Department of Agriculture's Delaware Forest Service (DFS). The TEDI program is part of Delaware's comprehensive plan to respond to climate change by reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Planting trees increases carbon sequestration and storage and contributes to Delaware's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

This Call for Proposals (CFP) invites eligible organizations to apply for a TEDI grant to plant trees in the Spring 2027. This document outlines important grant information including applicant eligibility, project eligibility, application and proposal requirements and supplies and services that qualify for reimbursement through the grant. Grant recipients are solely responsible for all project coordination and scheduling, volunteers, staffing, site preparation, and the purchase of trees and supplies needed to implement the tree planting project.

Please budget your project carefully and accurately and avoid estimating or guessing. Research actual costs and get estimates before submitting your proposal. No additional TEDI funds can be requested once a project is selected. In addition, please do not "pad" or otherwise add extra funding to the project budget with the intent of returning it after the project is completed. Reserving extra funds in a project may prevent another worthwhile tree project from being selected and funded.

Deadline: Proposals must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday August 3, 2026.

Planting Timeframe: Trees can be planted in March, April and before May 15th of 2027.

Available Funding: Grant requests must be between \$10,000 and \$30,000. An anticipated \$118,000 in total funding is available for tree planting projects this fiscal year. Grant awards are contingent upon the TEDI program receiving its annual base funding.

Eligible Projects: Afforestation and reforestation tree-planting projects within the State of Delaware. Projects must be completed prior to May 15, 2027.

Ineligible Projects: Tree-planting projects comprising street trees, landscape trees, parking lots trees and/or any trees required by a county or municipality to comply with their land use development or zoning code.

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants include state agencies, conservation districts, counties, non-governmental organizations having 501(c)(3) status, municipalities, public school districts, private K-12 schools, colleges and universities, business entities responsible for corporate campuses and tribal governments.

Ineligible Applicants: Ineligible applicants include contractors, consultants, residential developers, commercial builders, homeowners' associations, and private citizens. Ineligible applicants such as homeowners' associations may be eligible to apply for Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) grants provided by the Delaware Forest Service. Additional information is available on the UCF website at <https://agriculture.delaware.gov/forest-service/urban-and-community/funding-opportunities/>.

Site Selection Criteria: Applicants must own and maintain the land where the project is proposed, or the proposal must include information on an agreement/acknowledgement with the landowner (see application for more information on landowner agreements). Trees are not permitted to be planted within utility or access easements or rights of way. All selected planting sites should be clear of overhead utility lines and other hazards. All buried utility lines at the planting site must be properly marked by Miss Utility in accordance with applicable law prior to tree planting.

Tree Selection Criteria: Trees must be native to Delaware or the Mid-Atlantic region (or native cultivars). Technical resources and tree selection guidance are available on the TEDI website: de.gov/tedi.

Cap on Average Cost Per Tree: The average cost per tree, including trees, supplies (i.e., mulch, tree tubes, stakes) and personnel costs (i.e., planning, planting labor), cannot exceed three-hundred dollars (\$300.00) per tree. The average cost per tree for a given project is calculated by dividing the total TEDI funds being requested by the number of trees to be planted. For example, a project requesting \$30,000 in TEDI funds to plant 100 trees would meet the \$300.00 average per tree cost, while a project utilizing \$30,000 in TEDI funds to plant only 50 trees would not.

Eligible Costs: The cost of trees must be in the project budget and must be part of the overall project proposal. Eligible costs include trees, tree planting supplies, maintenance supplies, and limited labor and personnel costs. The cost eligibility requirements below will apply to all projects:

- Trees native to Delaware or the Mid-Atlantic region (or native cultivars).
- At least 85% of the total proposal cost must be spent on trees and related planting and maintenance supplies such as tree tubes, stakes, watering bags, shovels, soil amendments, fertilizer, equipment rental, and mulch. Funding used for planting and maintenance supplies must be proportionate to the number of trees being planted and will be approved at the discretion of TEDI staff.
- No more than 15% of the total requested funding amount can be used for personnel costs such as planning, implementation, labor and planting.

Ineligible Costs: Please check with TEDI staff regarding any expenditures not specifically listed below prior to including it in your proposal. Funds may not be used to purchase the items listed below:

- Grass, grass seed, sod, flowers, flower seed or any ground cover plants.
- Shrubs - generally defined as being less than 13 feet tall with multiple stems or trunks less than 3 inches in diameter. Plants that do not clearly fall within the parameters of this definition will be considered and approved by TEDI staff on a case-by-case basis.
- Large and/or heavy equipment such as excavators, vehicles, chippers, shredders, chain saws, hole augers, etc. However, in some cases they may be rented.

- Signs, food, drinks, snacks, sunscreen, bug repellent, any clothing (i.e. t-shirts or ball caps).
- Trees not native to Delaware or the Mid-Atlantic region.
- Travel costs, parking, mileage, tolls, meals, etc.
- All project expenditures (including purchase of trees, supplies, labor or contractual services) made prior to the issuance of a purchase order (PO) by DNREC.

Match: No match is required to receive a TEDI grant, but is encouraged.

Submissions: Applicants are limited to one proposal. However, the proposal can include multiple tree planting sites.

Timeline:

August 3, 2026	Deadline for 2027 proposals
September 4, 2026	Tentative notification of grant awards
September-October, 2026	Procurement process, contracts, purchase orders issued
March – May, 2027	Tree planting and project implementation
May 15, 2027	Deadline for final invoices and report

Proposal Instructions:

- Proposal submissions are due to the Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy no later than 5:00 p.m., Monday, August 3, 2026.
- Proposals must be submitted via email to Scott Blaier at scott.blaier@delaware.gov.
- Proposals must use the formal TEDI proposal template/application. The proposal template includes organization contact, project scope, and other criteria including project benefit, community outreach, and project feasibility.

Evaluation Criteria and Project Selection: DNREC seeks to fund projects

that support tree planting at various scales and in a variety of settings that help the state meet its goal of planting one million trees by 2030. Proposals may be approved for full or partial funding and may include conditions. Proposals will be reviewed and scored based on the evaluation criteria below and ranked by a team composed of staff from DNREC and the Delaware Department of Agriculture. Evaluation criteria will be based on the following weighted criteria for a total of 100 points.

- **Project Scope (30 points).** The project proposal is complete, well-planned, contains a detailed budget, and is easy to understand. The need and justification for the project and the level of funding requested is clearly defined.
- **Project Benefit (35 points).** The project has clearly defined benefits which could include one or more of the following: wildlife habitat protection and enhancement, water quality improvements, reduction in stormwater runoff, connects disconnected forest lands, food trees and forests, shading and cooling, improved quality of life, benefits with regard to climate change or passive recreation opportunities.
- **Environmental Justice Considerations (5 Points).** The project considers equity, fairness, and/or underserved communities. Refer to Appendix A of this call for proposals for additional information.
- **Outreach (15 points).** The project demonstrates an opportunity for learning or outreach and touts the benefits of tree planting and proper planting and care. This could be accomplished directly by engaging volunteers in the tree planting activity and similar activities or indirectly through webpages, social media posts, etc.
- **Overall Feasibility (15 points).** The funding request is reasonable and measures to implement the project within the specified timeframe are practical and clearly defined. If the project requires any landowner agreements, they should be identified in the project. If the project is selected, landowner agreements must be executed and in place before a grant agreement with DNREC can be signed.

Transfer of Funds: The transfer of funds will take place by one of two mechanisms, as specified below.

For state agencies, public schools, colleges and universities:

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be signed by DNREC and the receiving state agency.
- Funding will be transferred through an Intergovernmental Voucher (IV).

For non-state agencies:

- A memorandum of agreement (MOA) will be signed by DNREC and the receiving party. Funding will be processed according to Delaware's procurement requirements and grantees must register at: (<https://mymarketplace.delaware.gov/about.shtml>).
- Purchases cannot be made with TEDI funds until the MOA is signed by both parties and a purchase order is issued by DNREC.
- Funding will be transferred on a reimbursement basis after specific tasks or milestones of the project are completed and an itemized invoice is submitted to DNREC. The grant recipient may receive up to 50% of the total grant award prior to the planting date if milestones and deliverables are met.
- The grantee must hold adequate liability insurance in accordance with State of Delaware liability requirements. However, a waiver may be requested to reduce the coverage amount for a specific insurance requirement. Waivers are not guaranteed and at the discretion of the State of Delaware.
- All recipients must have a W-9 on file with the State Division of Accounting and must be registered as an approved supplier <https://accounting.delaware.gov/suppliers/>.

Final Reporting and Documentation:

- Each grantee must submit a final report as a grant deliverable.
- The final report (a template will be provided) must include:
 - Name of site/community and location for each planting project
 - Number of trees planted, including tree species and size
 - Partner organizations involved in planting project, if applicable
 - Final planting designs or maps for each project site
 - Photos of actual trees being planted and site before and after
 - Full accounting of funds spent, including invoices for all purchases
- All tree planting projects must be completed by the deadline established in the timeline section of the MOA.
- Tree planting data must be entered into the TEDI Tracker by the final report deadline.
- Organizations and agencies receiving TEDI funds are required to acknowledge the source of funding in their publications or websites and post a small outdoor sign (provided by TEDI) acknowledging TEDI funding at the location of the tree planting project if practicable.
- TEDI staff shall be informed of planting dates when established.

- The final invoices must be submitted to TEDI staff by the deadline established in the timeline section of the MOA.

Please contact Scott Blaier (TEDI coordinator) with any questions at scott.blaier@delaware.gov or (302) 735-3480.

Appendix A: Environmental Justice

FY 2027 Tree for Every Delawarean (TEDI) Call for Proposals

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies; and the equitable access to green spaces, climate resilience, public recreation opportunities, and information and data on potential exposures to environmental hazards.

To learn more about environmental justice at DNREC and access information and resources available to communities, please go to:

<https://de.gov/dnrecej>

Environmental justice is a consideration used to select projects for TEDI funding. TEDI project proposals should consider and identify any direct and indirect benefits the project will provide to adjacent and/or nearby environmental justice communities. Applicants should include a description of these benefits in the project proposal. This appendix has been provided to assist applicants in identifying potential environmental justice benefits associated with their project.

For example, benefits can include shading and cooling, water quality improvements, flood abatement, food trees and forests, passive recreation and/or educational opportunities.

Applicants should use the tools below to identify environmental justice communities. If the project area is not within or adjacent to areas identified by one of the tools below, potential environmental justice benefits can still be described at a statewide or regional scale. Projects that do not have a clear link to an environmental justice community are still eligible for funding. Environmental justice is one of several factors that will be evaluated to determine which project proposals will receive funding.

When using the tools to identify environmental justice project benefits, consider the following questions as they relate to your project:

- 1). Is the project located within or adjacent to a Limited English

Neighborhood and/or DeIDOT Equity Focus Area as identified by the DNREC EJ area viewer?

- 2). Is the project within or adjacent to an area with a tree equity score of 70 or less as identified by the American Forests Tree Equity tool?
- 3). Will the identified community be involved in any aspect of the project?
- 4). Will the project provide shade and cooling and/or potentially mitigate heat island effects for the identified community as temperatures rise with climate change?
- 5). Will the project help mitigate air pollution and generally improve air, water and soil quality for the identified community?
- 6). Will the project provide recreation, aesthetic and other similar benefits to the identified?
- 7). Will the project deliver improved human health outcomes through passive recreation, food or aesthetics (air quality for example)?
- 8). Will the project mitigate impacts from natural disasters such as flooding by improving stormwater management in the identified community?

Various tools can be used to identify environmental justice project benefits. Two examples of tools are provided below. Other tools can also be used if determined to be more suitable.

DNREC Environmental Justice Area Viewer:

To integrate environmental justice into its decision-making, DNREC has developed a map-based tool that leverages data and information from DNREC programs and external partners to help identify communities disproportionately impacted by agency decisions and environmental issues.

The DNREC Environmental Justice Area Viewer tool is available here:

<https://dnrec.delaware.gov/environmental-justice/data/>

American Forests Tree Equity Score:

Trees can help address damaging environmental inequities like air pollution. The tree equity score combines certain metrics such as tree canopy, population density, income, employment, surface temperature, race, age and health into one single score between 0 and 100. The tree equity score mapper can be found by visiting

<https://www.treeequityscore.org/>. A tree equity score is available for select communities in Delaware but not all. If this method of analysis is chosen, please note all proposed tree planting projects located in areas having a tree equity score of 75 or less, as shown in the American Forests online mapper tool.