TREES FOR NEBRASKA TOWNS 2023

Application Period	Award Notification by	Project Installation	Completion Deadline
Nov 2022-Jan 31, 2023	Feb 28, 2023	May-Oct 2023	Dec 10, 2023

What is Trees for Nebraska Towns (TNT)?

TNT is a statewide funding program for public tree planting projects, with a goal to help Nebraska communities enhance and expand the diversity, resiliency, and benefits of their community forests.

How Funding Works

TNT can award applicants $5,000 - $25,000 to complete a public landscape project. These funds come with a **match requirement**. To participate, you must match your award dollar-for-dollar with paid goods and services, donated goods and services and volunteer time.

Awarded funds are paid as a reimbursement to completed projects. Project sponsors are expected to cover all costs until reimbursements are made.

How to Apply

Get prepared by reading this guide, then schedule a pre-application consultation at https://plantnebraska.org/what-we-do/project-funding/trees-for-nebraska-towns.html. After this consultation you'll be given a link to the online application. Then complete and submit your application by **January 31, 2023**.

Program Partners

TNT is co-coordinated by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum and Nebraska Forest Service and sponsored by the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET). NET is a beneficiary of the Nebraska Lottery. Learn more at www.environmentaltrust.org.

WHO'S ELIGIBLE?

Municipalities
City Departments
Schools/PTOs
Neighborhood Associations
Non-profit Organizations
Garden Clubs
Other Community Groups
NOT *individuals or businesses*

WHAT QUALIFIES?

Public landscape projects requesting $5,000-$25,000:
- *streets, trails*
- *city parks, golf courses*
- *schools, colleges*
- *libraries, courthouses*
- *cemeteries, fairgrounds*
- *other public places*

NOT *gated properties*
NOT *private businesses*
NOT *residences*
NOT *projects installing:*
- ✘ *large, traditional lawns*
- ✘ *rock mulch*
- ✘ *plastic weed barrier*

NOT *projects outside Nebraska*

Questions can be directed to Kendall Weyers at kweyers2@unl.edu. More resources can be found at *www.plantnebraska.org*.

Program Rules

Here's what we expect from you as part of this program.

1. **Match your funding request.**
   This means that if you request $5,000, you're responsible for contributing another $5,000 in "match" so that your total project value is $10,000.

2. **Some match must be paid, not donated.**
   At least 50% of your match (or 25% of the total project value) must be in the form of *paid* goods and services. The rest can be donated goods and services and volunteer time, collectively referred to as "in-kind".

3. **Spend at least 80% of TNT funds on large maturing trees (materials and installation).**
   Large maturing trees must be the focus of the project. Maximum planted size is 1.5" caliper (deciduous) or 6' (evergreen), and maximum reimbursement for tree material cost is $250 per tree. There may be flexibility in these requirements for special situations.

4. **Get approval before you dig.**
   Funded activities should only begin after you receive full approval and Notice to Proceed. These are given after our review and acceptance of your final design and plant list you submit after initial acceptance.

5. **Keep us in the loop.**
   We know the unexpected happens. When it does, let us know. Whether plant availability challenges, construction delays, or whatever, we can work with you to adjust and keep the project moving forward.

6. **Follow specifications.**
   Plant materials must be high quality, meeting defined standards, be purchased from a nursery licensed to do business in Nebraska, and be planted correctly, all according to our *Specifications for Partnership Projects*.

7. **Undertake an outreach effort.**
   Spread the word about your project and the value of the community forest to your community through an event or campaign. Some examples include volunteer planting day, ribbon-cutting celebration, website or social media presence, and newspaper, radio or TV coverage.

8. **Get done by deadline.**
   Complete your project and submit paperwork no later than <u>December 10, 2023</u>.

9. **Correct any deficiencies**
   All projects will be inspected after completion. Any deficiencies need to be corrected as directed.

10. **Take care of your project for 10 years.**
    Sustainable landscapes need regular and proper maintenance, especially in their first year. Get your project's on-going maintenance in the budget and on the calendar.

> Additional program rule details can be found at our resource page at:
>
> https://plantnebraska.org/what-we-do/project-funding/begin-a-trees-for-nebraska-towns-project.html

How We Score Applications

We select Trees for Nebraska Towns projects competitively—applications are reviewed using this rubric.

Program Compliance - required to be considered

_____ (✔) Received by deadline
_____ (✔) Application complete
_____ (✔) Budget comprises qualifying expenses
_____ (✔) Local match at least equal to funding request
_____ (✔) Paid match comprises at least 50% of funding request, 25% of project value
_____ (✔) At least 80% of requested funds going toward large-maturing trees
_____ (✔) At least 1 outreach event or publicity effort planned

A. Background

_____ (2) Application demonstrates clear and thoughtful project goals.
_____ (2) Application demonstrates clear understanding of environmental sustainability and stewardship.
_____ *Subtotal B - Up to 4 points*
_____ (1) optional BONUS: Sponsor or coordinator has successfully led a previous successful project.
_____ (1) optional BONUS: Support team beyond project coordinator is clearly defined.

B. Environmental Impact

_____ (2) Project emphasizes native and adapted plants.
_____ (2) Project emphasizes diversity and avoids high dependence on over-used species.
_____ (2) Project emphasizes sustainability and minimizes inputs like mowing, irrigation, and chemical use.
_____ (2) Project provides wildlife habitat and contributes to increased biodiversity.
_____ *Subtotal B - Up to 8 points*

C. Longevity

_____ (4) Project has a thoughtful and realistic long-term plan for maintenance and plant replacements.
_____ (4) Project has a clear funding source for maintenance and a clear responsible party.
_____ *Subtotal D - Up to 8 points*
_____ (2) optional BONUS: Project uses bare root, Rootmaker or grow-bag trees.
_____ (1 or 2) optional BONUS: Design and/or maintenance utilizes professionals in landscape design/care.

D. Community Impact

_____ (2) Project involves multiple partners, volunteers or other types of community engagement.
_____ (2) Project includes a thoughtful community outreach and education effort.
_____ (2) Project considers how it fits into surrounding lands and addresses a *proven* community need.
_____ (2) Project demonstrates clear benefit to the public.
_____ *Subtotal C - Up to 8 points*
_____ (1) optional BONUS: Project takes place on a Nebraska Statewide Arboretum affiliate site.

BONUS POINTS: Take any of these steps to increase your application's competitiveness.

+1 Show that you've led a successful project before.
+1 Clearly define support team beyond coordinator.
+2 Plan to use bare-root, grow-bag or similar high-quality root system trees.

+1 Partner with a professional on landscape design.
+1 Partner with a professional on landscape care.

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Application Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure that your application is submitted correctly and meets requirements.

Before you apply

<u>Have your responses ready</u> for when you apply online so you can submit your application in one session. You can't save it or return to it later.

<u>Read</u> all the program documents, found at *www.plantnebraska.org/community-landscapes/project-funding/trees-for-nebraska-towns.html*

- ☐ Program and Application Guide (this document)
- ☐ Rules Governing Reimbursement
- ☐ Specifications for Partnership Projects
- ☐ NSA Diversity Initiative
- ☐ Trees for Eastern Nebraska
- ☐ Trees for Western Nebraska

Documents to upload

You'll need to have these completed, scanned and ready to upload when you apply.

- ☐ **Budget Table**
- ☐ **3-6 Photos** (of project site and special conditions)
- ☐ **Preliminary Design** (graphic sketch that includes project dimensions and location on your property)
- ☐ **Optional Supporting Documents** (up to five pages, including letters of support, planning documents, evidence of community need, etc.)

Partners and Support Team

These questions are good prep for the application and the project, so spend time answering them together before you apply.

1. TEAM DYNAMICS
- ☐ Who will participate in planning and implementation?
- ☐ What does each member bring to your Team?
- ☐ How will you divvy up work?
- ☐ What timeline/milestones will be used to gauge and ensure progress is being made?
- ☐ What communication method will be used to keep everyone on task and on the same page?

2. PROJECT IMPACTS
- ☐ Where is your project located?
- ☐ How would you concisely describe your project?
- ☐ What specific community need will your project address? How do you know this need exists?
- ☐ What are your goals for this project? How does your design address these goals?
- ☐ How do you plan to engage your community? What will you do for your required outreach effort?
- ☐ Who will be responsible for maintaining it?

Thank you for applying!

Your application is due online by January 31.

How to Start a Project

Use this road map to guide you toward a successful project. By building on what you value and how that fits into the neighborhood, you'll get more support and bigger impacts.

Work together.

- Who do you see around the community? Would they want to collaborate with you? What role could they play?

- Meet up to discover what you all value. What do you want to see in your community? How can this project benefit you?

Get organized.

- Identify what you already have. What people and resources are available? How do these compare with what you need?

- Get to know your community (context!). Take a walk around with partners to get a better understanding of the community and the land. How does it compare to other communities? What does it have that you want to keep? What's missing?

Explore designs.

- Study your site conditions. Soil, light, slope, views, access, and use all matter.

- Partner with a designer to create a vision. Share what you've learned so far, then set goals together and prioritize them.

- Budget your project. Consider the potential costs and risks. Realistically consider how much time it will take from you to make your landscape a reality (and keep it that way).

Make connections.

- Open the door to resources by identifying organizations, city departments and businesses that can help you.

- Get in touch with experts like your local Extension agent or city Tree Board for answers and advice.