

# Greener Nebraska Towns Application Guide

Nebraska community groups that need \$300-\$5,000 to improve their public landscapes like streets, trails, parks, campuses, schools, and fairgrounds are encouraged to apply for Greener Towns. Funding is awarded competitively to the financial sponsor of the project. Financial sponsors can be municipal, county, or state government, or non-profits (philanthropic, museums, educational, etc.); we cannot award funds to private individuals or private businesses.

Ready to change your community? We can help.

The Greener Towns Program provides funding, resources, and education opportunities to help Nebraska communities improve and protect their green spaces. Green spaces (also called green infrastructure) are the living complement to the built environment in our cities and towns (roads, buildings, utilities). Through Green Infrastructure, we utilize plants to keep a community healthy and vibrant. [Learn more about how green infrastructure is a part of vibrant, healthy communities in Nebraska.](#)

Greener Towns Landscapes improve property values, provide energy savings (heating & cooling), create recreation opportunities, and improve air quality. All furthering NSA's mission to plant Nebraska for healthy people, vibrant communities, and a resilient environment.

## **Our focuses:**

- Native and well-adapted plants that offer many benefits as well as create a sense of place and pride in our Nebraska landscapes.
- Trees shade and shelter us, mute noise pollution, reduce energy use, offer year-round beauty, and more.
- Water is essential. We need to conserve irrigation, protect rainwater, and reduce waste.
- Biodiversity is a cornerstone of any healthy ecosystem by supporting insects and birds while providing resilience to pests and disease.

**Allowable Expenses & Payments:**

Greener Towns funds can be used to pay for plants, mulch and soil amendments.

Grant funds are paid directly to vendors on behalf of the project sponsor.

**Match Requirements:**

For every dollar of Greener Towns funding provided, the project sponsor must show an equal amount of expenses toward the project.

- Projects requesting less than \$1,000 must provide 100% paid match (items or services the project sponsor pays for).
  - Common matching expenses include labor, site preparations, hard scape, etc.
- Projects receiving up to \$1,000 in funding may count volunteer hours and donated goods or services toward 100% of their match.
- Projects receiving over \$1,000 in Greener Towns funds may count volunteer hours and donated goods or services toward 50% of their match, the remaining 50% must be in paid expenses. Volunteer hours are valued at \$23.56/hour for adults and \$10/hour for youth under 18.

**Project Timeline:**

Awarded projects may begin after signing a Project Agreement. No expenses accrued or labor performed before signing a Project Agreement may be counted toward the funding budget.

All physical work must be completed by May 20th, 2026, unless an extension is granted in writing. Projects cannot be extended beyond June 15th.

Reporting Deadline: June 17th, 2026

**Application Timeline:**

Letters of Intent (LOI) will be accepted through January 31st, 2026 and will be reviewed as they arrive. Applicants will be invited to begin their application as their LOI is approved. LOI's must be received by the following cutoff dates to be eligible to apply for each round.

- **Round 1:** suitable for projects planning a fall 2025 planting or doing site preparations for a spring 2026 planting.
  - LOI's must be received by June 23rd
  - Application due July 27th
  - Funding awards will be announced by August 1st.
- **Round 2:** suitable for projects ready to plant a prepared site or projects doing site preparations for a spring 2026 planting.
  - LOI must be received by July 20th
  - Application due August 24th
  - Funding awards will be announced by August 29th.
- **Round 3:** suitable for projects who are ready to hit the ground running with a prepared site or are ready to do start site preparations for a May planting.
  - LOI must be received by January 25th 2026
  - Application due February 22nd
  - Funding awards will be announced by February 27th.

*The following documents are for planning purposes only. All forms must be submitted through online through the application portal.*

# Greener Towns Landscape Funding LOI

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## *University of Nebraska*

### **Allowable Expenses & Payments:**

Greener Towns funds can be used to pay for plants, mulch and soil amendments. Grant funds are paid directly to vendors on behalf of the project sponsor.

### **Match Requirements:**

Greener Towns funding must be matched 1:1 by the project sponsor (for every \$1 Greener Towns supplies, the project sponsor must supply \$1).

- Projects receiving up to \$1,000 in funding may count volunteer hours and donated goods or services toward 100% of their match.
- Projects receiving over \$1,000 in Greener Towns funds may count volunteer hours and donated goods or services toward 50% of their match, the remaining 50% must be in paid expenses. Volunteer hours are valued at \$23.56/hour for adults and \$10/hour for youth under 18.

### **Project Timeline:**

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  - LOI's must be received by June 23rd
  - Application due July 27th
  - Funding awards will be announced by August 1st.
- **Round 2:** LOI received by July 20th, application due August 24th, funding awards will be announced by August 29th. Round 2 is suitable for projects ready to plant a prepared site or projects doing site preparations for a spring 2026 planting.
  - LOI must be received by July 20th
  - Application due August 24th
  - Funding awards will be announced by August 29th.
- **Round 3:** suitable for projects who are ready to hit the ground running with a prepared site or are ready to do start site preparations for a May planting.
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writing. Projects can not be extended beyond June 15th.  
Reporting Deadline: June 17th, 2026

### **Project Name\***

*Character Limit: 100*

### **Property Type:\***

How would you describe the property where this project will take place? Greener Towns projects must be accessible to the public or in spaces dedicated to education.

#### **Choices**

Municipal (owned by city/village, downtown, mainstreet)  
Park/plaza  
Nonprofit (churches, museums, educational)  
Trail/Trailhead  
School (public, private, childcare)  
College/University  
Other (accessible to the public or committed to education)

### **Project Sponsor\***

Who is the financial sponsor of this project? The sponsor will be the official recipient of the grant funds, will make purchases for the project, and will be responsible for reporting at the completion of the grant.

*Character Limit: 100*

### **Relation to Project\***

How is the project sponsor related to the project? Ex: property owner, property manager, partner (explain), etc.

*Character Limit: 250*

### **If not the sponsor, identify the property owner:**

*Character Limit: 50*

### **Who is the main contact for the project and what is their connection to the project?\***

This is the person doing or overseeing the physical work of the project. They will receive all communication on deadlines and reporting.

*Character Limit: 100*

### **Primary contact email\***

This email will receive all communication about the application process, award, reporting, and deadlines. Be sure the email account is checked regularly.

*Character Limit: 254*

### Primary Contact Phone Number\*

Character Limit: 12

### County where the project will be located.\*

Character Limit: 30

### City where the project will be located.\*

Character Limit: 30

### Street address, geographic coordinates, or location description.\*

Character Limit: 100

### Top 3 landscape benefits your project will provide to the community (beautification is a given):\*

Greener Towns focuses on functional landscapes that provide services such as water conservation, biodiversity, climate resilience, education and contribute to human health. While every maintained landscape adds to the beauty of a community, Greener Towns landscapes should go beyond beauty and compliment the build environment by contributing to the function of the community.

#### Choices

Conserve Water  
Collect and Filter Rainwater  
Provide Habitat  
Cool or Shade an area  
Create a Sense of Place  
Create a Community Gathering Space

### Tell us about your project.\*

Give us the big picture, there will be room for details in the full application. (1,000 characters)

Character Limit: 1200

### Anticipated Start Date\*

Greener Towns cannot pay for purchases made prior to signature of, and start date listed in, the Project Agreement. The earliest possible start date is August 1, 2025.

Character Limit: 10

### Anticipated Completion Date\*

Greener Towns cannot pay for purchases made after June 15th, 2026.

Character Limit: 10

### Anticipated Funding Request\*

Greener Towns can only pay for plants, soil amendment, and mulch. This can be an estimate and can change as you complete the full application. Maximum request \$5,000.

*Character Limit: 20*

### What stage of planning is your project in?

We accept projects in all stages of planning, this question helps us understand how your budget may evolve and your timeline. We can provide feedback to projects during the application process and can provide consultation services to projects to more directly assist with planning. Consultation services depend on the availability of our staff and can be counted as match if completed after signing the project agreement.

#### Choices

Just getting started and would appreciate NSA's help developing our project.

Beginning stages, we have an idea but no firm plans.

In the middle, we have a plan but are still finalizing details.

We have a design and are ready to order plants. Site prep is ready to begin upon award.

### Project Start Disclaimer.\*

Projects cannot begin work until an award agreement is fully signed and executed by the project sponsor and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. Work completed before the execution of the award agreement will not be paid for and will not be considered part of the project, and thus will not count toward matching expenses. This application is not a project agreement and does not authorize you to begin any work on this project.

#### Choices

I understand and agree to the terms listed above.

# Greener Towns Landscape Funding Application

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*University of Nebraska*

## *Program Information and Application Guide*

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### **Our focuses:**

- Native and well-adapted plants that offer many benefits as well as create a sense of place and pride in our Nebraska landscapes.
- Trees shade and shelter us, mute noise pollution, reduce energy use, offer year-round beauty, and more.
- Water is essential. We need to conserve irrigation, protect rainwater, and reduce waste.
- Biodiversity is a cornerstone of any healthy ecosystem by supporting insects and birds while providing resilience to pests and disease.

### **Allowable Expenses & Payments:**

Greener Towns funds can be used to pay for plants, mulch and soil amendments.

Grant funds are paid directly to vendors on behalf of the project sponsor.

### **Match Requirements:**

Greener Towns funding must be matched 1:1 by the project sponsor (for every \$1 Greener Towns supplies, the project sponsor must supply \$1).

- Projects receiving up to \$1,000 in funding may count volunteer hours and donated goods or services toward 100% of their match.
- Projects receiving over \$1,000 in Greener Towns funds may count volunteer hours and donated goods or services toward 50% of their match, the remaining 50% must be in paid expenses. Volunteer hours are valued at \$23.56/hour for adults and \$10/hour for youth under 18.

## *Organization Information*

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### **Saving Your Work**

As you work on this application, a draft will automatically save as you go so you can come back to finish your work at any time. The system will automatically save after every 100 characters typed as well as anytime you click away from a question. You can also manually save by clicking "Save" at the bottom right hand side of the form.

When you return, you will see your draft application on your dashboard. Click "[Edit Application](#)" to return to your draft.



You can collaborate with colleagues on your application using the blue Collaborate button in the upper right hand corner.

For more information on this feature see the following Collaborator Article.

## Request Details

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### Project Name\*

The name of the project is attached to each and every form within your process. This has been pulled from you LOI and is not editable.

*Character Limit: 100*

### Tell us about your project.\*

Tell us about the space, what does a successful project look like to you, how will it serve your community? Examples: community gathering space, conversion to more sustainable landscaping, display/education garden, space for youth to engage with nature, habitat, water conservation, etc.

*Character Limit: 3500*

### How will this project benefit your community?

Who will use this project?

How will people interact with it?

What need have you identified in your community that this project will help address?

*Character Limit: 3500*

### What green infrastructure benefits will your project provide to your community?\*

Green spaces (also called green infrastructure) are the living complement to the built environment in our cities and towns (roads, buildings, utilities). Green infrastructure utilizes plants to keep a community healthy and vibrant.

Our focuses:

- Native and well-adapted plants that offer many benefits as well as create a sense of place and pride in our Nebraska landscapes.
- Trees shade and shelter us, mute noise pollution, reduce energy use, offer year-round beauty, and more.
- Water is essential. We need to conserve irrigation, protect rainwater, and reduce waste.
- Biodiversity is a cornerstone of any healthy ecosystem
- Placemaking creates recognizably Nebraskan landscapes that draw people together and help create a sense of belonging.

*Character Limit: 3000*

### Who will do the physical work of preparing for and planting your project?\*

Site preparation includes:

- removal of existing weeds or unwanted plants.
- loosening/tilling of hard or compacted soil.
- spreading compost.
- hardscape work.

Plan to water plants at planting and apply mulch soon after planting.

*Character Limit: 300*

### Who will do the physical work of establishing your project?\*

#### Weed Control:

Weeds will need to be monitored for the life of the project but are most critical in the first 3 years. A typical project requires weeding:

- Year 1: weekly in the first few month, biweekly for the remainder of the growing season.
- Year 2: biweekly to monthly depending on weed pressure.

#### Establishment Watering:

Perennial plants:

- Week 1-2: water every other day (unless 1" rain)
- Week 3-4: water twice a week (unless 1" rain)
- Week 5-6: water once a week (unless 1" rain)
- Rest of the growing season and second growing season: water when it has been 2+ weeks without 1" rain

Trees and Shrubs:

- At planting: 10 gallons
- Week 1-2: 2.5 gallons a week
- Week 3-6: 2.5 gallons every other week
- 6 weeks-end of growing season: 2.5 gallons once a month
- Winter + first 2 years: 2.5 gallons every other month unless significant rain or snow

*Character Limit: 300*

### Who will provide ongoing maintenance for this project.\*

Who will continue to care for this project after the establishment period. Weeding, annual cleanup, and watering during drought will be ongoing for the lifespan of the project.

*Character Limit: 1000*

### What tasks have been completed in preparation for this project?\*

Check every box for items your project has completed. We accept projects in all planning stages. This question helps inform us on what you may need help with and your timeline.

#### Choices

- We have a vision and goals for our project.
- We have identified the location and size of planting areas.
- We know how many trees we will plant.
- We have a design and species list.
- We have a date for beginning site preparations.
- We have begun or completed site preparations.
- We would like NSA assistance completing one or more of these steps.

### We intend to care for this project for a minimum of 10 years.\*

Greener Towns project agreements require that projects be maintained for 10 years. NSA is available for advice and problem solving during that time.

#### Choices

I understand and agree to the terms listed above.

## Budget

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### Funding Request\*

How much are you asking Greener Towns to pay toward your project? Greener Towns funds are paid directly to the vendor for plants, soil amendments, and mulch. The maximum request is \$5,000.

*Character Limit: 20*

### Paid Match\*

For every dollar of Greener Towns funding provided, the project sponsor must show an equal amount of expenses toward the project.

- Projects requesting less than \$1,000 must provide 100% paid match (items or services the fiscal sponsor pays for).
- Common matching expenses include labor, site preparations, hard scape, etc.

*Character Limit: 20*

### Donated Match

For every dollar of Greener Towns funding provided, the project sponsor must show an equal amount of expenses toward the project. Projects requesting more than \$1,000 may provide up to 50% donated match (items or services, including volunteer time, donated to the project by people other than the fiscal sponsor).

*Character Limit: 20*

### Upload your budget table.\*

Use the budget template ([download here](#)) to build your budget and upload it. More instructions are listed on the template, be sure to read and follow them closely.

*File Size Limit: 15 MB*

## Next Steps

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### Anything else?

Is there any further information you would like to share with us?

*Character Limit: 1200*

### Project Start Disclaimer

Projects cannot begin work until an award agreement is fully signed and executed by the project sponsor and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. Work completed before the execution of the award agreement will not be reimbursed or paid for, and thus will not count toward required matching expenses. This application is not a project agreement and does not authorize you to begin any work on this project.

### Choices

I understand and agree to the terms listed above.

**Once you submit your application, you cannot edit the form. Please review your answers before submitting.**

**After you submit this application, check your email for the submission confirmation. You can expect to hear from us in 4-6 weeks.**

## Budget Table

### GREENER TOWNS

2025-2026

List your anticipated project costs and match items inside the **red boxes**. Cells outside of red boxes will fill in automatically as you go. Review the summary tables below to make sure you're meeting requirements for match. All grant funded purchases, match purchases, and volunteer labor must be made or completed after signing the Project Agreement and before the Project End Date.

Project: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	REQUESTED FUNDS	PAID MATCH	IN-KIND MATCH		TOTAL
	Paid by GNT (\$)	Paid by You (\$)	Donated Items (\$)	Volunteer/ Staff Time (\$)	
Planning and Design	X				\$0.00
Soil Ammendments					\$0.00
Site Preparation Labor	X				\$0.00
Plant Material					\$0.00
Plant Installation	X				\$0.00
Mulch/Soil Ammendments					\$0.00
Signage	X				\$0.00
Outreach	X				\$0.00
Initial Maintenance	X				\$0.00
Plant Replacement					\$0.00
[OTHER]	X				\$0.00
[OTHER]	X				\$0.00
[OTHER]	X				\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

### Definitions:

<b>Requested Funds</b>	this is what you are asking the Greener Towns grant to pay for.
<b>Paid Match:</b>	anything your project sponsor is spending money on, regardless of the source of that
<b>Donated Items:</b>	physical items or equipment hours offered to the project.
<b>Donated Items:</b>	physical items or equipment hours offered to the project.

### Match Requirements

You must contribute at least \$1 for every \$1 of Greener Towns funding you receive.

You are requesting:  in Greener Towns funds

Total Matching Expenses

if red, you have not met the minimum match expenses.

### Other Grants Received for this Project:

Grant Name	\$ Amount
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

# What Can Greener Towns Pay For?

*Greener Towns funds will be paid directly to the vendor on behalf of the project. NSA may grant approval for projects to place an order and direct the invoice to NSA for specific purchases on a individual basis.*

## Greener Towns Expenses:

- **Plants:** plant orders will be placed by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum on behalf of the project. Invoices will be paid directly to the vendor.
  - The grant recipient may place an order and submit the invoice to the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum for payment with prior approval.
  - Plants purchased by the grant recipient may be counted as match.
- **Soil Amendments:** including compost, manure, and topsoil may be ordered by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum on behalf of the project. Invoices will be paid directly to the vendor.
  - The grant recipient may place an order and submit the invoice to the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum for payment with prior approval.
  - Soil amendments purchased by the grant recipient may be counted as match.
- **Mulch:** including wood, straw, or other organic materials may be ordered by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum on behalf of the project. Invoices will be paid directly to the vendor.
  - The grant recipient may place an order and submit the invoice to the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum for payment with prior approval.
  - Mulch purchased by the grant recipient may be counted as match.
  - No forms of inorganic mulch (ex: rubber, rock, etc.) may be used in projects funded by Greener Towns.

*Greener Towns requires that you match your award dollar-for-dollar with expenses paid for by the Project Sponsor.*

**Projects receiving more than \$1,000:** *At least 50% of your match must be in the form of paid contributions. The rest can be donated services, materials and volunteer time.*

Paid Match
Design services performed by a landscape designer, landscape architect or engineer
Paid employee time or contracted site prep, planting, or maintenance labor
Rental equipment fees (rototiller, sod cutter, jackhammer, skid loader, etc.)
Removal of pavement, brush and dead/dying trees
Soil grading to direct water for proper drainage
Temporary erosion control measures to cover bare ground during site preparations.
Stones and rocks for ornament or raingardens
Paths and sidewalks
Benches and seating
Walls, stairs, railings and fencing
Rain barrels and downspout extensions
Green roofs
Hoses, wands and sprinklers
Drip irrigation systems and gator bags
Approved hardy plants like those included in the <i>Plants for Nebraska</i> list
Installation labor performed by a landscape company or contractor
Eco-friendly lawns like buffalograss or fine fescue, bee lawns and no-mow lawns
Tree stakes and fencing
Educational signs and plant labels

Donated Match
Donated* compost, topsoil and hardwood mulch
Donated* professional design and installation services
Donated* plants and seed
Donated* delivery fees and equipment rental
Donated* materials like stones or pavers
Donated* benches and other amenities
Donated* signage and outdoor art
Hours** spent by Green Team (after initial program acceptance) planning and coordinating your project
Hours* spent by staff/volunteers performing labor related to site preparation
Hours** spent by staff/volunteers planting, mulching, watering and weeding your project***
Hours** spent by Green Team and staff/volunteers coordinating an outreach effort like speaking to a class, posting on social media, publicizing with the newspaper or hosting an event

\*For donations to count as match, you must submit a receipt or invoice created by donor with dates, quantities and \$ value of their donation.

\*\*For hours to count as match, you must submit a completed a time log with names, dates, duration and descriptions of activities.

\*\*\*Time spent on your project must occur before you ask for reimbursement. Projected hours can't count as match.

Adult volunteer hours are valued at \$23.56 per hour.

Youth (under 18) volunteer hours are valued at \$10 per hour.