

Boston Tree Alliance

Tree Planting and Care Grant

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Application due 11/06/2026



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With support from:



CITY of BOSTON

Table of Contents

The Boston Tree Alliance	3
Grant Information	4
Overview	4
Timeline.....	4
Eligibility	5
Eligible Applicants	5
Eligible Expenses.....	5
How to Apply.....	8
Application Submission.....	8
Required Documents	8
Budget and Cost Breakdown	9
Application Review	10
Contracting, Data Collection and Reporting.....	11
Support and Technical Assistance	12
Disclaimer.....	12
Application Questions	13

The Boston Tree Alliance

The Boston Tree Alliance (“The Alliance”) is a coalition of nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, urban forestry professionals, and stakeholders working collectively to **equitably grow and care for new trees on private property in Boston**. The Alliance is supported by Mass Audubon and the City of Boston’s Office of Climate Resilience in coordination with Parks and Recreation.

The [Urban Forest Plan](#) (UFP), which guides the efforts of the program, found that **60%** of Boston’s existing tree canopy is located on private land and there’s room to grow the canopy.

The program goals of the Alliance include:

- Increase access to trees and their benefits through tree planting and associated care
- Share tree planting and care best practices through public engagement and education
- Focus on disadvantaged communities that are under-canopied and susceptible to urban heat island effects, to support the city’s Heat Plan and Urban Forest Plan

Grant Information

Overview

The Boston Tree Alliance Tree Planting and Care Grant program is **providing up to \$688,00 in funding to support tree planting and associated care on privately owned lands in the city of Boston. Community-based and non-profit organizations may apply for funding starting on September 9th, 2026, for a maximum of \$249,000***. The program focuses on expanding access to trees and their benefits in under-canopied communities that experience greater impacts from urban heat islands. This program is funded in by a grant to the City of Boston from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Mass Audubon is contracted with the city to facilitate the distribution of grant funds and administer the program.

Organizations interested in tree planting and care are encouraged to apply for grant funding **regardless of previous experience**. Applications will be reviewed by Mass Audubon alongside the City of Boston.

**\$249,000 maximum applies per awardee over the lifetime of grant funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Applicants from prior rounds may reach out to the program manager if they have a question about the maximum amount they are eligible for this round.*

Timeline

Applications will be reviewed upon the close of the grant period.

Notice of Funding Opportunity Important Dates

September 9th, 2026	Application Opens
November 6th, 2026	Application Deadline

Informational Opportunities

September 23rd, 2026 3 PM – 4 PM	Grant Information Session (Virtual, Recording to Follow and FAQ Posted) - Register Here: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84461212693
October 2nd, 2026 10 AM – 12 PM	Fall Tree Planting Training and Grant Information Session (In-Person)

Eligibility and Guidelines

Please carefully review the eligibility requirements below prior to applying for funding. This is a competitive opportunity, and all successful applicants and proposals must meet the full eligibility criteria to be considered for funding.

Maximum Grant Request: \$249,000*

*Application Questions can be reviewed below and Scoring Criteria are provided in the Attachments and Guidelines. *\$249,000 maximum applies per awardee over the lifetime of grant funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Applicants from prior rounds may reach out to the program manager if they have a question about the maximum amount they are eligible for this round.*

Eligible Applicants

Non-profit and community-based organizations that have a current tax-exempt status in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are eligible to apply for funding, if they work with or serve Boston residents or businesses. Joint applications that involve partnerships are encouraged and, at times, necessary in situations when a for-profit corporation, public entity, unincorporated community group, or individual property owner wishes to apply for funding. In these cases, a nonprofit in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service and Commonwealth of Massachusetts must serve as a partner on the application, designated as the fiscal sponsor for the project. For-profit corporations, public agencies, and individuals not representing a community-based or non-profit organization are not eligible to apply for funding through this grant program without a fiscal sponsor. These stakeholders are encouraged to identify and collaborate with a local non-profit or community-based organization in Boston.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible Lands

Eligible applicants may apply for funding for a project to be conducted on **private land** within the city of Boston. Examples of private land may include, but are not limited to: residential land, commercial properties, cemeteries, churches, universities, and more. Note: Land owned by any public agency, whether city, state, or federal, is NOT eligible for tree planting. Situations of publicly-owned land under site control agreements or long-term leases by a non-public entity are not eligible to receive Boston Tree Alliance funding.

Eligible Geographic Boundaries

In addition to the requirements for projects to occur on private land in the city of Boston, [tree planting must take place within specific geographic boundaries as outlined in the map linked here](#), in accordance with census tract boundaries approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Eligible project areas are shaded blue. Projects that occur outside of the specified geographic areas in the linked map will not be eligible to receive funds from this grant in this round.

Eligible Uses of Funding

Eligible project activities include:

- Tree planting on private property (this may include one or multiple properties).
- Maintenance activities associated with tree planting projects (watering, weeding, inspection, pruning, mulching, staking) for up to 2 years after planting.
- Site preparation for tree planting projects (de-paving, green infrastructure, stump removal, decompaction, etc. **as directly related to new tree planting**).

All tree-related work completed under this grant must follow the latest relevant American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards (e.g., ANSI Z60.1 Nursery Stock Standards, A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations) and International Society of Arboriculture Best Management Practices or equivalent.

Bi-annual in-person training opportunities and virtual resources for tree planting and care are provided by the Boston Tree Alliance. Please review the [guidelines for Planting, Maintenance, Species Selection, and Green Infrastructure](#) in the provided [Attachments and Guidelines](#).

Ineligible Projects and Expenses

Projects and expenses ineligible for Boston Tree Alliance funding include, but are not limited to:

- Tree planting and maintenance on publicly-owned land (lands owned by federal, state, or municipal government entities)
- Tree planting and maintenance projects outside of the specified geographic boundaries outlined in the [map here](#).

- Tree care costs for trees **not** planted with Boston Tree Alliance grant funds.
- Projects that do not meet the program goals of the Boston Tree Alliance or that do not follow the required standards and guidelines.
- Site preparation that is not directly connected to tree planting, or that does not prioritize new tree planting long-term outcomes.

Planting projects will not install any [Massachusetts state-listed invasive species](#), including invasive species listed as “restricted,” “pending further review,” or “non-restricted,” or that are on a watch list. Species selection should account for local climate, site characteristics, and tree species.

How to Apply

Application Submission

Applications can be submitted through the [online application form](#). All applicant materials can be found on the grant application portal at boston.gov/tree-grants.

Follow the instructions below:

1. Review the information and the Application Questions listed within the NOFO. Ensure eligibility requirements are met before proceeding.
2. It is recommended to first complete the application questions outside of Airtable to save all answers in case the web application closes. Prepare answers and documents such as a draft budget using the template.
3. [Open the Application Link here](#).
4. Fill out all required fields and upload supporting documents as instructed.
5. Click submit. You will be notified when your application has been received.

Required Documents

Organizations should prepare to provide detailed project implementation plans to describe how they will accomplish their goals, which should be clearly connected to the goals of the Alliance. Projects must include tree planting on private land, but may incorporate site preparation (stump grinding, de-paving, etc), green infrastructure, irrigation systems, and other costs that are **directly associated with new tree planting**.

Applicants must provide:

- Completed application for funding via online application form, including details about tree planting and 2-year maintenance plan.
- [Budget spreadsheet](#).
- A tree species list for planting (may be a draft but any changes must be approved by the Boston Tree Alliance Urban Forester).
- Signed landowner agreement(s) from private property owners **or** a detailed plan for ensuring agreements are received before funding can be disbursed.
- If applicable, any site plans with the planting address to detail tree locations.

Budget and Cost Breakdown

Applicants should provide an anticipated total budget and budget breakdown that **may** include these eligible expenses for **labor** and **materials**:

- **Admin Costs, Planning and Engagement:** staff or subcontracted time to identify sites, secure landowner agreements, implement plan, or provide landowner education for tree planting and care of grant-funded trees. Indirect/administrative costs may not be more than 10% of total budget.
- **Planting:** costs of trees, mulch, staking, gator bags, items for time-of-planting and staff or subcontracted planting time. May include site preparation costs as detailed in [*Attachments and Guidelines*](#).
- **Maintenance:** 2 years from time-of-planting costs of watering, resetting mulch, young tree pruning, and staff or subcontracted inspection time.

Please see the provided [budget template](#). While matching funds are looked upon favorably during the review process, they are not required for an applicant to be considered for funding.

Application Review

Applications are reviewed by Mass Audubon and City of Boston staff members. Applications for Tree Planting and Care Grants will be reviewed based on the Scoring Criteria provided in the [*Attachments and Guidelines*](#). Applications will be reviewed at the close of the grant round after November 6th, 2026. All applicants should expect to receive final decisions within approximately two months of application submission.

Contracting, Data Collection and Reporting

If awarded, grant recipients should be prepared to:

- Sign a Contractor Agreement with Mass Audubon and provide a signed W-9.
- Provide proof of insurance issued in the applicant organization's name, or in the name of whomever is performing tree planting and care on private property, commercial general liability insurance with the amount of not less than \$1,000,000 each occurrence and \$2,000,000 in the aggregate and workers compensation insurance in statutory amounts.

Applicants selected to receive funding will be required to attend an orientation session to review project requirements before implementation. This session will also provide training on tree planting and care best practices, as well as collecting and reporting data.

Once all requested materials are received, grantees will be required to submit a project invoice to Mass Audubon. Funds will be distributed to grantees approximately 3-4 weeks after invoices are received, prior to project implementation.

All grantees must submit a Landowner Access agreement(s) PRIOR to beginning work on private property.

All grantees are required to submit data within 2 weeks of tree planting, and inspection data 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years after trees are planted. Boston Tree Alliance staff will provide direction and guidance on reporting procedures and platforms.

Support and Technical Assistance

An informational webinar will be held on September 23rd, 2026. A recording will be made available on the website following the webinar. Technical assistance will be available for applicants to develop their projects in both sessions. Additional open drop-in hours will be made available for folks unable to attend these sessions. Sign up to attend an information session on the application website under “[Information Sessions](#)” or [click this link to register](#). All applicants are encouraged to reach out for technical assistance by emailing **bostontreealliance@massaudubon.org**.

Disclaimer

The City of Boston and Mass Audubon are equal opportunity employers.

Application Questions

Please review the Notice of Funding Opportunity for applicant eligibility.

Organization Information

Organization Name

Organization Mission Statement

Organization EIN Number

Mailing Address

Contact Information

Project Lead Full Name

Role/Title

Email

Phone Number

Street Address

Alternate Contact Name and Email

Are you applying in partnership with another organization? Please list the organization(s), full name of contact person, and their contact information.

Insurance Requirement: Does your organization, or whomever will be performing tree planting and maintenance, have issued in its name “commercial general liability insurance in the amount of not less than \$1,000,000 each occurrence and \$2,000,000 in the aggregate and workers compensation insurance in statutory amounts”?

General Project Description

Project Title:

Requested Grant Amount (\$):

Number of Trees Planted:

Project Summary: Provide a brief narrative description of your project in 200 words or less. Include the project goals and expected project impact (please refer to the Alliance goals listed in the Notice of Funding Opportunity). Scoring criteria are provided in the **Attachments and Guidelines** document.

Timeline: Describe your overall project timeline. Include time frames that you plan to plant, care for, and inspect trees.

Location/Addresses: List all locations and addresses where tree planting will occur. If not known, list expected neighborhoods or general locations. Funding cannot be disbursed until addresses for tree planting are known. *[*Projects MUST take place within the geographic boundaries outlined in the map linked here.](#)*

☐ Indicate here if you would like to be connected with residents and landowners in the City of Boston who have completed the Boston Tree Alliance new tree request form.

Landowner Agreements: An example Landowner Agreement is included in the **Attachments and Guidelines**.

If you do not have address(es) for tree planting, describe your plan to obtain landowner agreement(s).

All grantees must provide a landowner agreement that allows access to each property for planting and maintenance activities to receive funding. Please indicate that you acknowledge this requirement below.

☐ I acknowledge that I must provide a signed landowner agreement to access and work on private property prior to project implementation.

Upload any signed Landowner Agreements or other supporting documents.

Detailed Tree Planting and Care Plan

Please describe your plan for the following steps of the project: planning and engagement, planting, and maintenance. Additional information may be requested as part of the review process, so please provide as much detail as possible.

Review the Species Selection, Planting, and Maintenance sections of [Attachments and Guidelines](#) for more information on strong project proposals.

Planning

Project Elements:

- ☐ Planting trees
- ☐ Maintenance activities for up to 2 years associated with tree planting project (watering, weeding, inspection, pruning, mulching, staking)
- ☐ Site Preparation as directly associated with tree planting project
 - ☐ Simple/ Small (stump grinding, de-compaction, soil remediation)
 - ☐ De-Paving
 - ☐ Green Infrastructure
 - ☐ Irrigation Systems
 - ☐ Tree Removal

Detailed Site Preparation: Describe how you will accomplish your project goals for site preparation.

- **Simple/Small Projects:** General description.
- **De-Paving:** General description, approximate sq footage, type of impervious surface being removed.
- **Green infrastructure:** General description, components being utilized as well as overall square feet and other dimensions like depth.
- **Tree Removal:** Description of removal tree, name and contact information of certified arborist making recommendation.
- **Irrigation System:** Information on whether new system is added or existing system is being added to, acknowledgement of drip line and spacing requirements.

Roles: Clearly describe any staff and/or subcontractor roles and responsibilities throughout the project, along with relevant experience. List any staff who will oversee tree planting.

Outreach, Engagement, and Community Impact: Describe your general approach for community engagement/outreach and education connected to tree planting and care, as well as the project's expected community impact.

Siting and Species Selection: Describe your general approach for siting trees within planting addresses. Include who will engage DigSafe, site assessment to select “right tree, right place,” tree species selection, individual tree stock selection, purchasing, transportation, storage, and how and when the designee will perform these tasks.

Tree Species List: List all expected tree species, and if possible, stock type and size. Changes to this list can be made with approval from the BTA Urban Forester. Please refer to the Species Selection section of the [*Attachments and Guidelines*](#).

Planting

Please describe your general approach for planting trees. Include who will plant the trees, what tools will be used, how trees will be planted, and sources of recommendations (i.e. BMPs or arborists). Please refer to the Planting section of the [*Attachments and Guidelines*](#).

Maintenance

Please describe your general approach for tree maintenance for 2 years after time of planting. Responses should include tree watering, staking, pruning, re-mulching, and responsibilities for maintenance activities and documentation. Please refer to the Maintenance section of the [*Attachments and Guidelines*](#).

Data and Reporting

Who will collect data and report on the day-of-planting? Who will perform follow-up inspections for the tree(s)? (Inspection of each tree or group of trees include 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years after time-of-planting, with data and photo documentation reported back to the Alliance).

Optional: Site Preparation

Describe any site preparation activities in detail and how these activities are directly tied to new tree planting success. Be sure to include details about the extent of work and expertise involved.

Project Budget

Please refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity for a list of eligible and ineligible expenses.

\$249,000 maximum applies per awardee over the lifetime of grant funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Applicants from prior rounds may reach out to the program manager if they have a question about the maximum amount they are eligible for this round. All expenses must be connected to the planting and care of grant-funded trees.

Applicants should provide an anticipated total budget and budget breakdown of eligible expenses using the list of eligible expenses and the [budget template](#) provided in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Your budget should be uploaded through your application on AirTable.