



Community Urban Forestry Technical Support for 2023 from the GA Forestry Commission – Apply Today!

The GA Forestry Commission's (GFC) Urban and Community Forestry Program is offering a new support opportunity for cities, towns, universities, or regional commissions. In fall 2022, governments or universities can apply for support to map, plan for and manage their urban forests. There is also support available for specific projects. However, the care, management and expansion of healthy urban trees requires a suite of tools that many communities need to have.

These include:

A map of the urban forest to know:

- Where are trees abundant, scarce, healthy, unhealthy or damaged?
- Is our community gaining or losing our tree cover and at what rate? Should we be concerned?
- How can we justify spending the right amount to ensure a healthy urban forest?
- How much should we plant today, tomorrow, over the next decade to have a robust tree canopy?
- What are trees contributing to clean air, climate mitigation, urban heat reduction, stormwater uptake?
- Are trees equitably distributed regardless of race or income? If inequitable, how can this be changed?

A tree inventory to know:

- Are there trees that are at risk of failure or areas that are storm damaged or could be in the future?
- Are trees in parks, schools, city plazas, main streets in need of replacement or care to ensure future shade?
- How much does our community need to spend to make sure trees last long into the future?

An urban codes audit to know:

- Are we losing trees due to poor codes (inadequate standards for tree sites, planting or care, outdated tree lists) and are we losing open space due to excessive requirements (for parking, streets and other codes) that take away open space?
- What are the new codes, standards and practices to adopt that will make our city less paved and more green while still accommodating growth?
- What essential elements should we include to update our codes or adopt new ones?

An urban forest management or master plan to know:

- Where are trees needed most urgently?
- How can we budget for tree needs and integrate better tree care across city agencies?
- What equipment and personnel do we need now and into the future?
- Are we prepared for storms and tree damages (preparation, response, cleanup)?
- What are the timeframe and actionable goals we need to have in place to manage the forest and trees effectively and efficiently?

If you need help with any of the above, consider applying for technical support assistance from the GA Forestry Commission. The process for 2023 funding has been vastly simplified to deliver the support your community most needs.

The new process means:

- ✓ *Less paperwork and no long applications, the initial application takes just 20 minutes to complete online!*
- ✓ *Quick response to your funding requests, a decision will be made in the month of January. Applications due December 15.*
- ✓ *Opportunities for multi-year support, beginning with what you most need first and building up your program.*
- ✓ *Chances to apply for specific projects with the assurance you can select the most strategic sites/options.*

Consider whether your city is engaged in the following activities that could be helped by support from the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Climate or resiliency planning? Trees sequester carbon, reduce urban heating and take up stormwater. You can learn just how much pollution trees take up as well as how much more they can cool the city, clean the air and reduce flooding.

Engaged in **social equity planning** to help residents have equal access to green spaces, shade, cleaner air and outdoor fitness? These maps and strategies can evaluate the equity of city green spaces and trees and create strategies to make access to healthy landscapes accessible to all regardless of race or income.

Creating the next **comprehensive or master plan for your community?** You can gain vital data about land cover in your watersheds, access to trails and parks, complete green streets, shade, downtown business districts, and other planning needs that also require beautification, runoff reduction, healthy landscapes and successful redevelopment. Trees and urban forests contribute tremendously to successful cities, and new data for your city can help with all of the above needs.

Following are the types of assistance available.

| Data/Plan Type | Purpose | Applications |
|---|--|--|
| Tree Canopy Cover (data and map) | Track tree cover and create goals Create stats on tree % cover for a locality Determine where trees are (and are not) Generate spatial data on distribution of trees by income, public spaces, neighborhoods, master plans etc. | Use for planning and comparisons from past to future coverage (when repeated) Set realistic canopy goals Address planning and planting needs. Data can be used to generate ecosystem service statistics(e.g., air pollution removal) showing community benefits. |
| Tree Inventory | Determine health and needs of individual trees Calculate tree diversity (and needs for improvement) Flag trees for removal or care. | Call attention to diversity needs. Engage staff in understanding need for proper planting. Identify areas where trees not surviving (e.g., systemic issues of undersized tree wells) Establish condition of trees for future FEMA reimbursements in the event of storms |
| Tree Risk Assessment | Prepare for and reduce prevalence of risk-prone trees. Flag trees or limbs for removal or further monitoring. | Reduce costly damages from trees that may fail due to wind, storms, etc. Prioritize areas where a city or town should focus staff or inform how much to budget for tree care/hazards. |
| Tree Codes Audit | An audit of the locality's codes and policies that lead to good or poor forest management and those that drive imperviousness versus open space | List of codes to change or update for better tree management and survival. Can include assistance with updating a city's tree ordinance. Provides the justification for updating city/town codes. |

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| Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) or Master Plan | A plan to guide the management of the urban forest and usually includes tree canopy goals, tree inventory and care plans, and budgeting for tree care, protection and risk management. | Allocate staffing and equipment needs Inform budget decisions for urban forestry and justification for expenditures Inform strategies for urban forest health Provide a process for program expansion |
| Storm Mitigation Plan | A plan to help the community prepare the urban forest for storms before they occur, to respond immediately following the storm and to guide long term recovery. | Create a process to identify and tend to trees at risk before a storm Create pre-storm contracts to speed up post storm recovery and ensure fair pricing and contractor availability Cleanup faster and handle tree debris appropriately including possible re-use |
| Professional services of an ISA Certified Arborist/Urban Forester | Services provided by an experienced certified arborists/urban forester who can guide the development and implementation of a municipality's community forestry program | Employ or contract with an ISA Certified Arborist/Urban Forester Direct all aspects of a tree care program, conduct tree inventories and risk assessments, enforce tree ordinance Develop and implement tree management and storm mitigation plans. |
| Green Infrastructure Plan | A plan to identify the community's trees as "green infrastructure" and strategies to conserve or expand tree cover and forest connectivity. | The plan can be used to identify the role of trees for stormwater uptake, wildlife habitat, reducing urban heating, improving parks, creating greenways, adapting to climate change, or revitalizing areas. |

Things to know:

How is support provided? If you select and are chosen to receive technical support you will receive that support directly from the GA Forestry Commission's consultant the Green Infrastructure Center. No money changes hands.

What paperwork is needed? Paperwork for technical support requires only a letter of commitment to participate.

What if I already know what I want to get funding for? You still have to take the survey. We need to ensure you have all the bases covered and are asking for the most strategic support for your community. So do fill out the survey. It includes a space to request project specific support too. If asking for financial support (e.g., to plant trees, to hire a consulting arborist) then you will need to fill in a longer application too (after we receive your survey).

What time do I/my community need to contribute? For any technical assistance, some of yours' and your agencies' time will be necessary. You will need to review maps for accuracy, attend several (2-3) online workshops to review results or discuss goals, and you will spend time on any strategies developed – those of course will be your decision. Over the course of a year, consider that you (combined with others in your agency) might contribute a few thousand dollars of time (combined). This is no more time than any other project you are participating in, but your community will be getting a value of services of around \$10,000.

Once you complete the required on-line application, you will be contacted in January 2023 to discuss your request and support availability. While this is a competitive application, we aim to support as many applicants as possible. **The application deadline is December 15, 2022.**

I'm interested! What do I need to do next?

Attend the Georgia Forestry Commission **Grant Webinar on November 30, 2022 at 10am**. The Green Infrastructure Center will present an overview of this program along with a live Q&A session providing an opportunity to ask questions about the program. Register for this webinar at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3308578249126463244>

The next step is to take the survey. **BUT WAIT!** Before starting this survey there are several things to know in order to answer all the questions in one sitting. This survey does not allow you to save work and come back later. It must be completed in one go. Here is the information you will need to know to before you start in order to get through all the

questions. Once you have gathered this information, the survey should take about 20 minutes to complete.

- 1) *Does your locality have a digital tree canopy coverage map/data? How old is the data (what year was it created)?*
- 2) *Does your city have a tree inventory? When was it collected and for which areas? (entire city, neighborhood?)*
- 3) *Does your city have an urban forest management plan or forest master plan? How old is the plan (what year was it created)?*
- 4) *Does your city have a storm mitigation plan? How old is the plan (what year was it created)?*
- 5) *Does your city employ an arborist? If not, that's okay too.*
- 6) *What is the racial and ethnic makeup of the people who would be served by a project with your locality? If the project serves the entire city you can use the census report for your area or look up the census block groups covered by the area you want to study. Most comprehensive plans list this information but for the most up to date information visit <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/> and type in the name of your community to get results for your area.*
- 7) *Are you the person who will be responsible for completing applications for assistance on behalf of your city? (If no, please be sure to gain the approval necessary before applying for financial or technical support.*

Please be advised that if your answer to all # 1-5 of the above is “no,” that’s okay! Technical assistance grants are being provided to help your community answer “yes” to most or all of these questions in the future! For question 7, be sure to engage with the right staff or leadership from your community to ensure you can apply for assistance on behalf of your city, town, university or other jurisdiction.

The self-assessment survey must be completed *before* applying for a grant from the GFC. Fill out the self-assessment tool to match your needs with our tools, in order to ensure you are asking for the right support that will most closely meet your community’s urban forestry needs. This support can be provided in addition to a specific project.

Take the on-line survey. Click this link below or use the QR code at right:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/urban_forest_survey

This 20-minute self-directed survey will help you assess which type(s) of support to apply for. At the end of the survey, your results will point to the types of support you most need. This serves as your pre-application. You will then be contacted no later than mid-January 2023 to discuss your request and next steps. Note the December 15 application deadline! If you are unable to complete the on-line application due to disability or other similar reasons, please contact Joan Scales below for a paper copy.



Still have questions? Contact:

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