

Performance-Based Methodology for Allocating Urban & Community Forestry Program Funds

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Introduction

The purpose of the Urban and Community Forestry Program is to provide technical, financial, educational, and research services to communities so they can plant, protect and maintain community trees and forests, and utilize wood from these trees, to maximize environmental, social and economic benefits. Program performance will be measured on an annual basis by tracking the percentage of U.S. population living in communities that are: 1) managing, or 2) developing programs to plant, protect, and maintain their urban and community trees and forests (as compared to total U.S. population living in communities). This performance methodology, detailed in I - IV below:

- Measures and rewards performance using nationally accepted standards;
- Ensures that no state is precluded from participating in the program;
- Includes a mechanism to fund nationally and regionally significant projects;
- Provides different areas of the country flexibility to address their unique needs.
- Supports the agency mission to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

I. Determining funds for allocation to Regions, Northeastern Area, and International Institute of Tropical Forestry (Regions/NA/IITF)

The Washington Office will reserve the following from the Appropriation received from Congress:

- Congressional priorities (earmarks)
- WO operations
- National projects/initiatives, e.g., challenge cost share grants and other initiatives developed in consultation with the National Association of State Foresters (NASF)
- Funds for the U.S. Territories & Freely Associated States of the Pacific

II. Allocation of Funds to Regions/NA/IITF (national performance)

Remaining funds shall be allocated to Regions/NA/IITF based upon their percentage of the total U.S. population living in communities within each unit's administrative boundary that are managing,² or developing³ programs to plant, protect, and maintain their urban and community trees and forests.

III. Distribution of funds from Regions/NA/IITF to States (regional performance)

1. Before distributing funds to the states, each Region/NA/IITF will reserve funds for the following :
 - Operations and technical assistance.
 - Funding for competitive, regionally significant projects within or among Regions/NA/IITF using up to 10% of regional allocations in consultation with the applicable State Foresters.
2. Allocation Performance Elements: Remaining funds shall be distributed from the Region/NA/IITF to each state based upon each state's share of the FS unit's total population living in communities that are:
 - Managing programs to plant, protect, and maintain their urban and community trees and forests, and
 - Developing programs to plant, protect, and maintain their urban and community trees and forests. (See footnote on preceding page for definition of "managing" and "developing.")

Regions/NA/IITF will assign weights to the allocation elements with no less than 20% of the funds assigned to either the "managing" or "developing" element, in consultation with affected State Foresters.

Forest Service Regional Foresters, Northeastern Area Director and Director of IITF retain the authority to adjust funding distributions, in consultation with affected State Foresters, to maintain a basic UCF program at \$200,000 for states meeting national program direction and requirements. The Deputy Chief may adjust the national distribution to ensure that all FS Regions, the Northeastern Area, and IITF have sufficient funding to support continuation of technical assistance activities and program operations.

This new performance-based methodology provides for transition to full implementation so that, if possible, no state would receive a reduction in funding greater than 10% a year, phased in over a three-year period (FY 2006 – FY 2008).

¹ File dated 18Jul05 and received from K. Cline on 22Dec05 as "final" NAF wording [drh].

² Communities "managing" programs have received state assistance to achieve all of the following national performance measures: management plans, professional staff, ordinances/policies, and a local advisory/advocacy group (see performance measure descriptions on page 2, item IV).

³ Communities with "developing" programs have received state assistance to achieve at least one, but less than four, of the following national performance measures: management plans, professional staff, ordinances/policies, and a local advisory/advocacy group (see performance measure descriptions on page 2, item IV).

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IV. National Performance Measures

The following national performance measures are quantifiable indicators of successful technical, financial, and educational assistance to communities.

1. Management Plans: Communities that have active urban and community tree and forest management plans, developed from professionally-based resource assessments/ inventories.
2. Professional Staff: Communities relying on the services of individuals who have one or more of the following credentials, and who are directly employed or retained through written agreement to advise and/or assist in the planting, protection, and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests:
 - Degree in forestry or related field;
 - International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist or equivalent professional certification.
3. Ordinances/policies: Communities that have adopted and can present documentation of local/statewide ordinances or policies that focus on planting, protecting, and maintaining their urban and community trees and forests.
4. Advocacy/Advisory Organizations: Communities with active tree boards, commissions, or non-profit organizations that are formalized or chartered to advise/advocate for the planting, protection and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests.

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Appendix: Definitions and Examples

The following definitions and examples explain terminology used in the “Performance-Based Methodology for Allocating Urban and Community Forestry Program Funds.” The examples represent some of many possible scenarios. The examples should not be read as an all inclusive list nor are they intended to dictate specific methods or procedures.

1. State Assistance. For reporting purposes, communities in the “developing” category must have received state-sponsored technical, financial, and/or education assistance in the given reporting year. This annual assistance must be documented for auditing purposes by the state in an official community file. “Managing” level communities with all four components achieved, would not need documented annual assistance. For example:

- a) Training of community advisory/advocacy committee members or community staff involved in tree and forest program management is documented by state partner organizations toward annual educational assistance requirement.
- b) State staff or contracted personnel visit a community to provide one-on-one technical assistance, and document the visit.
- c) A state grant is provided to a community as documented financial assistance

Examples not meeting the criteria for “state assistance:”

- d) Telephone calls from the State UCF Coordinator to a community with professional staff do not count toward technical assistance requirement; visitation is minimum requirement for technical assistance.
- e) Newsletter to all communities does not count toward education assistance; group training is minimum requirement for education.

2. Management Plans. A detailed document or set of documents, developed from professionally-based resource assessments/inventories, which outlines future management of the community’s urban and community trees and forests. The plan must be **active** (i.e., in use by the community and updated as needed to incorporate new information). For example:

- a) An “Urban Forest Master Plan,” based on a satellite imagery study and GIS analysis, or other inventories and assessments, that sets goals for tree canopy cover in residential and commercial areas, recommends areas for reforestation, recommends areas for preservation, promotes community education and outreach efforts, and recommends tree maintenance policies for City or County properties.
- b) A “Street Tree Planting and Maintenance Plan” based on an inventory of trees and open spaces in street rights-of-way. These types of plans include information such as a prioritized list of tree pruning and removals, a prioritized list of replacement and new tree plantings, a recommended yearly budget, and a recommended list of tree species for replanting.
- c) A “Regional Watershed Management Plan” whose resource assessment includes specific analysis and management recommendations for the community’s trees and forest resources. The plan includes management recommendations for vegetative buffers and invasive species in the community including areas for preservation and restoration.
- d) A “City Parks Vegetation Management Plan” based on an inventory of park trees and invasive plants that includes a plan for the removal of invasives, abatement of tree hazards and reforestation.
- e) A hazard tree reduction and replanting plan based on a survey of community commercial or residential rights-of-way.

3. Inventories. A document or database containing specific, standardized information recorded on a number of individual trees in an identified area of the community. For example:

- a) Data recorded on each tree in community neighborhoods, for example a unique tree number, DBH, height, branch spread, condition rating, hazard rating, etc. The inventory could be conducted on public and private land or only on public lands depending on the individual community. The professionally-based inventory could be conducted by professional staff, trained volunteers, consulting arborist, or any combination of these. This includes statistically structured inventories that do not require inspection of all trees in all cases.
- b) A STRATUM (Street Tree Analysis Tool for Urban Managers) or other street tree inventory and analysis system along selected city streets.

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- c) An inventory of parkland trees. The inventory may also include the data in example (a) above, and additional information on invasive plant species impacting the health of individual trees and forest stands.
 - d) Individual tree or groups of trees locations shown on a GIS layer, including species and canopy coverage. The tree data entered into the GIS could be compiled from one or more of the examples above and other sources such as tree inventories required of builders and developers during the development process.
- 4. Resource assessments.** A document or database containing specific, standardized information on groups of trees, other natural resources, and other features (such as the built environment) in the community. For example:
- a) A satellite imagery or aerial photography study that documents community tree cover and identifies current vegetative cover types and land uses. The study may include an analysis of the change in tree cover over time.
 - b) A GIS study that identifies sensitive land areas (forested areas, floodplains, steep slopes, problem soils, etc.) and overlays parcels, landownership, zoning district, and utility and street rights-of-way.
 - c) A UFORE (Urban Forest Effects Model) analysis, or similar type of analysis, using randomly located plots to model the environmental services provided by a community's forest.
 - d) A windshield survey of community tree health and condition to ground-truth or update other resource assessments.
 - e) A survey of public property to identify available tree planting locations including community street rights-of-way, parkland, and other public properties.
- 5. Professionally-based.** Tree inventories and resource assessments developed by, or developed under the supervision of, *professional staff* (as defined below), with experience in conducting inventories and/or assessments. The inventories and assessments must be conducted using industry-standard data collection, data analysis and data presentation techniques and protocols. Volunteers involved in the inventories and assessments must be trained and proficient in the industry-standard protocols and techniques.
- 6. Professional Staff.** Individuals who have one or more of the following credentials, and who the community directly employs or retains through written agreement to advise and/or assist in the development or management of their urban or community forestry program: 1) a degree in forestry or related field (e.g., urban forestry, horticulture, arboriculture, etc.) and/or 2) International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist or equivalent professional certification. For example:
- a) The City Arborist or Urban Forester who is employed full- or part-time and responsible for the planting, protection and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests.
 - b) A Public Works employee who is an ISA Certified Arborist and who supervises the town's tree crews responsible for the pruning, maintenance and removal of public trees.
 - c) A credentialed, locally-based state agency resource professional that provides urban forestry and arboricultural consultation services on a regular and routine basis throughout the year to the town through a written Memorandum of Understanding between the town and the agency.
 - d) An American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) Registered Arborist that has a contract with the city to provide regular and routine services to review site plans and inspect construction sites to enforce city tree and landscaping ordinances.
 - e) Any person that is an ISA Certified Arborist or equivalent that is retained to provide urban forestry and arboricultural consultation services on a regular and routine basis by the city or town through a written agreement.
- 7. Ordinances/policies.** Statutes or regulations that direct citizens and local governments in the planting, protection and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests. For example:
- a) A town "Tree Ordinance" that dictates how trees are to be planted and maintained in the community and under what conditions trees can be removed. Depending on the jurisdiction, the ordinance may apply to just public trees, or public and private trees.
 - b) A comprehensive set of community regulations and/or policies on tree preservation and landscaping that may include sections of the Zoning Ordinance, Code and Public Facilities Manual.

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- c) City regulations developed to be in compliance with a state “Watershed Preservation Ordinance.” The regulations may establish tree and natural areas preservation, buffer requirements, reforestation and building restrictions in the watershed in the community.
- d) A local ordinance established under a state mandate that requires each local jurisdiction to adopt tree protection standards and employ a “Tree Warden,” or equivalent, with specific statutory responsibilities to oversee the planting, protection and maintenance of trees and forests in the community.

8. Advocacy/Advisory Organization. Organizations that are formalized or chartered to advise (organizations established by the local government) or advocate or act (non-governmental organizations active in the community) for the planting, protection and maintenance of urban and community trees and forests. For example:

- a) A Tree Board of citizens appointed by local elected officials to advise policy makers on needed tree ordinances, policies, and management.
- b) A voluntary citizens group such as “City ReLeaf” that is active in advocating for tree planting, preservation and management in communities.