



Trees for Schools: *Tree-planting Grants for New Jersey Public Schools, Colleges and Universities*

2025 Application Information Package

Announcement Date:	Wednesday, March 5, 2025
Informational Webinar:	Wednesday, March 19, 2025
Application Due Date:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025
Recipient Notification:	Wednesday, July 14, 2025
Link to Application:	https://webportalapp.com/sp/r2treesforschools
FAQ (Periodically Updated):	https://bit.ly/TreesForSchoolsFAQ
For questions regarding the online portal only:	
Kaitlyn Vollmer: Email grants@SustainableJersey.com or call 609 771-3189	
For questions regarding the project or application content:	
Melanie McDermott: Email mcdermom@tcnj.edu or call 609-771-2836	

Table of Contents

- A. Introduction..... 2**
- B. Eligibility Requirements 3**
- C. Project Timeline and Development 4**
 - Phase 1: Grant Application and Award 4*
 - Phase 2: Grant Execution and Project Planning 6*
 - Phase 3: Project Installation..... 7*
 - Phase 4: Maintenance and Final Report 7*
 - Project Timeline Summary 8*
- D. Eligible Grant Expenses and Compliance 9**
- E. Online Application Portal 10**
 - Create an Account 11*
 - Profile (Primary Contact Information)..... 12*
 - Starting a Grant Application 12*
- F. Application Guidelines 12**
 - Section One: Application 13*
 - Instructions for Filling Out Preliminary Planting Plan Template 15*
 - Section Two: Application Authorization 17*
- G. Selection Process 17**
- Appendix 1 - List of Municipalities identified by NJDEP as the 75 Most Impacted Overburdened Communities 20**

A. Introduction

The *Trees for Schools* program will provide \$4.5 million in grants to New Jersey public school districts, colleges, and universities to plant trees on school grounds and campuses. Grant funds also support caring for the new trees for two years, providing long-lasting benefits locally and across the state.

Trees combat climate change by storing carbon they pull out of the atmosphere, while mitigating the effects of rising temperatures and rainfall. Trees provide shade, habitat, beauty, and educational opportunities; they filter pollutants from air and water, reduce stormwater runoff, and lower carbon emissions and costs by saving energy in buildings. Tree-planting and stewardship at educational institutions not only enhances the environment in the towns and cities where they are located and improves human health and the quality of life for students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community alike.

This is the second cycle of Trees for Schools grants. Launched in 2023, the first cycle resulted in the planting of nearly three thousand trees at thirty-three educational institutions. Funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with proceeds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), this program is administered by the Sustainability Institute at The College of New Jersey (SI@TCNJ). SI@TCNJ manages the Sustainable Jersey certification programs.

The main features of the *Trees for Schools* program include:

- All New Jersey public school districts, community colleges, and state colleges and universities are eligible to apply except those that currently have an open Trees for Schools grant.
- Grant awards will range from a minimum \$10,000 to maximum \$250,000
- Eligible expenses include trees, site preparation, supplies, equipment, sub-contracts, and limited personnel and overhead ([see Section D](#)).
- No applicant match is required.
- This is a cost reimbursement grant. All payments will be made after the approval of financial reports including documented expenditures upon the completion of project milestones as described below.

THIS PACKET ADDRESSES THE TREES FOR SCHOOLS APPLICATION PROCESS. All public school districts, colleges, and universities will submit applications via the Trees for Schools [online grant application portal](#). **Emailed submissions will not be accepted.**

Applications must be submitted by Tuesday, May 13, 2025 by 11:59 PM.

Informational Webinar: Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Topics to be covered include:

- An overview of the program
- Importance and benefits of tree-planting
- How to select an appropriate site and develop a preliminary planting plan
- Application process, requirements and walk-through of the online portal
- An opportunity to ask questions

Register [here](#). The webinar recording and presentation will be posted on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#).

B. Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to participate in this program an applicant must be one of the following:

- New Jersey public school district, including one or more schools from pre-K through 12th grade levels
- New Jersey public charter school
- New Jersey community college
- New Jersey state college
- New Jersey state university

Previous recipients of Trees for Schools grants are not eligible to apply during this grant cycle.

Applications may include proposed planting areas on more than one location (school or campus property) owned by the applicant.

Planting may occur on lands owned by the above-listed institutions or on other types of public land that are used or frequented by students. In those cases where a portion of the trees will be planted on municipal, county, or federal land, documented permission of relevant jurisdiction must be supplied at the time of application. By the end of the project (September 2028), grantees will need to submit conservation restriction(s) signed by the relevant authorities protecting any trees funded by this grant program for 10 years, subject to limited, specified exceptions ([see below](#)).

Project sites on private land are NOT eligible.

Note: An applicant's eligibility to apply for this program is NOT limited by the status of other Sustainable Jersey grant awards. Similarly, eligibility to apply for funding in current or future Sustainable Jersey grant cycles will NOT be impacted by participation in this program.

Allocation of Funds by Project Type:

This program will give special priority to projects that plant trees in [overburdened communities](#), where lack of trees and an excess of paved and built surfaces often produce *heat islands*, and where green spaces are generally very limited. Consequently, forty percent of program funds (\$1.8 million) will be allocated to qualified projects that are located, or partially located, in census block groups that are characterized as Overburdened Communities as defined in [N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157](#). If the total of approved budgets for such projects is less than \$1.8 million, the balance will be reallocated to other qualified applicants. If applications in overburdened communities exceed \$1.8 million, the highest scoring applications will be funded and the remaining applications will compete in the other applicant pool.

To prioritize funding based on greatest need, additional points in the selection process will be assigned to applications from school districts (only) with participating schools that are located in overburdened areas within municipalities that have been identified as being severely impacted by a lack of tree cover and a high percentage of impervious surface.

For further details on project classification and scoring under these criteria, see [Selection Process section](#).

C. Project Timeline and Development

This opportunity is designed to encourage and support applicants through the grant application, project planning, implementation, and reporting phases of the project.

Incorporating student involvement, classroom instruction, and experiential learning is highly encouraged in all aspects of the project, including in planning, tree-planting, stewardship, monitoring, and assessment of impacts, such as carbon sequestration. For example, primary and secondary school teachers could make educational linkages through [The Benefit of Trees: An Interdisciplinary Project-Based Unit](#) and other free resources available on the Sustainable Jersey for Schools [Climate Education resource page](#). Colleges and universities could link project tracking and performance to their climate action plans. Hands-on student involvement could be organized through environmental clubs at all levels.

Project Development

An informational webinar will be held online on **March 19**. The webinar will review the following project development steps in more detail, along with a demonstration on how to use the grants portal. It will provide the opportunity for applicants to ask questions. The recording and presentation will be posted on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#) within a few days.

Phase 1: Grant Application and Award

1) Identify potential locations for planting trees.

A note on terminology: For the purposes of this application, the term “project” will refer to all components of a single school district, college, or university grant proposal. The term “site” will refer to a single school or college campus at which trees will be planted. Within each site there may be multiple “planting areas” where trees are located.

Applicants must obtain any necessary permissions ([see Section Two](#)) to plant trees at the proposed locations. It is a good idea to initiate discussion with the relevant parties early in the process.

Eligible planting areas must be located on:

- Land owned by a NJ public school district
- Land owned by a county college
- Land owned by a state college or university
- Municipal, county, state or federal land that is adjacent to school, college, or university property and/or that is used or frequented by students (e.g., along streets, parks or playing fields), with documented permission of relevant jurisdiction.

Project sites on private land are **NOT** eligible.

Enrichment planting (interplanting) of trees within forested areas, including secondary re-growth, and removal of invasive species **are not eligible** activities for reimbursement under this grant.

- 2) From the appropriate authority, obtain a formal statement of support for the grant application and of commitment to maintain the trees that will be planted with grant funds. This document can take the form of a Board of Education resolution, memo signed by school business administrator and/or superintendent, or memo signed by college or university administrative authorities, including grants office or equivalent unit with fiscal authority. Note that by the end of the project (September 2028), grantees must execute and submit a conservation restriction providing for the protection of any trees funded by this grant program for 10 years, subject to limited, specified exceptions ([see 16](#)).

If trees are also to be planted on municipal, county, state, or federal land, obtain a letter or memo authorizing the planting of the trees and committing to their maintenance after the project period. Note that by the end of the project (September 2028), these entities must also execute and submit a separate conservation restriction providing for the 10-year protection guarantee, subject to specified exceptions, of any trees planted with program funding on land they own or control. More information can be found in [Section Two: Application Authorization](#), which must be submitted by **July 3, 2025**.

- 3) Form a project team, including a proposed project manager and financial officer, as well key members of staff with responsibilities and experience related to the campus landscape, such as buildings and grounds/facilities, business administrator(s) or campus landscape architect. Additional members could include faculty members in relevant fields, as well as student environmental club liaisons and leaders, or community groups.

School districts are also highly encouraged to engage external partners, such as municipal Shade Tree Commissions or Committees, Environmental Commissions, and/or green teams; tree stewardship, conservation, watershed, or other non-profit organizations; and colleges or universities. (Note: applicants may want to consider bringing qualified non-profit partners onto the project as consultants and/or subcontractors.)

- 4) Develop the preliminary planting and maintenance plan. See [Application Guidelines section below](#) for more detail. The basic elements of the plan include:

- Site location
- Map of project showing proposed planting area(s) at each site
- Estimated number of trees to be planted
- Description of site preparation activities
- Estimated budget

- 5) Grant applicants should use the project [budget template](#) when creating their project budget. See [Eligible Expenses section](#). Applicants may research costs directly and/or refer to the Unit Cost Guidelines for estimated unit costs for trees and certain activities. The Unit Cost Guidelines are listed in the [FAQ page](#) on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#).

- 6) Complete and submit application on or before **May 13, 2025**.

- 7) Awards will be announced in mid-July 2024.

Phase 2: Grant Execution and Project Planning

- 8) Within 15 days of the announcement of Trees for Schools grant awards, the Sustainability Institute will issue a detailed grant agreement for review and signature. The agreement will outline grant timeline and grant reporting requirements. Grant recipients must return the signed agreement within 35 days of receipt. Once the Sustainability Institute returns the fully executed grant agreement, grantees will be authorized to expend up to 10% of the grant total on a qualified consultant (professional, firm or non-profit organization) to assist with preparing the detailed planting plan and budget. (See 11).
- 9) Attend an online webinar, which will provide an overview of project implementation and important guidance on the financial reporting requirements of the grant. Attendance by both the project manager and financial officer is mandatory. The webinar recording will be made available on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#).
- 10) Attend one of two in-person mandatory workshops, which will explain how to develop detailed planting plans, maintenance plans, and budgets. Attendance by the project manager is mandatory; it also highly recommended that the consultant (if any) attend, as well as a staff member from the facilities department or other department responsible for maintaining campus trees and landscaping.
- 11) Complete a detailed planting plan. Specific guidance and a template for the detailed planting plan will be provided to grantees and posted on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#). The basic elements of the detailed plans include:
 - Location map
 - Planting location and number of trees to be planted by species, size and type of planting material
 - Site preparation activities
 - Labor or contracting arrangements for site preparation, planting, and maintenance
 - Maintenance and monitoring plan, including provisions to replace trees that do not survive until the end of the grant period (two years after planting). It also must cover plans for long-term maintenance after the project ends.
 - Note: The target survival rate is 85% or greater. If the tree survival falls below this threshold at the end of the project (two years after planting), adequate justification must be provided, or partial funding may be withheld.
 - Note: Most tree-planting contracts include the provision that trees that do not survive the first 12 months will be replaced by the contractor at no cost.
 - If any trees will be planted off school/college property, submit a letter of intent or memorandum of agreement from the public entity (municipal, county, or federal) that owns or controls property where trees will be planted that authorizes the planting of the trees and commits to their long-term maintenance after the grant period.
 - The final, detailed budget, with justification for any proposed changes to the preliminary budget.

It is highly recommended that the detailed planting and maintenance plan be prepared by a qualified professional, such as a New Jersey Certified/Approved Forester, Licensed Tree Expert, Certified Arborist, or licensed Landscape Architect, or else a firm or non-profit organizational partner assigning qualified staff to the project. A grantee that instead wishes to work with an experienced staff member or volunteer without one of these formal qualifications must get pre-approval from Melanie McDermott (mcdermom@tcnj.edu). The consultant or qualified staff or team member who prepared it must be listed on the plan.

The detailed planting plan is due November 12, 2025. It must be signed by the appropriate authority, indicating the institution's commitment to implementing the plan. For a school district the authorized signatory could be the district business administrator and/or superintendent. For a college or university, authorized signatories might include administrative authorities, such as a dean, grants office, or equivalent unit with fiscal authority.

Grantees are encouraged to submit their plans and budgets via the grants portal as early as possible. **Plans will be reviewed on a rolling basis** and approved or returned within three weeks with feedback explaining what changes are needed for approval.

Upon approval of the detailed planting plan, the grantee is permitted to begin expending project funds, such as ordering the planting material. Grantees that have paid a consultant for planning services are eligible to submit an invoice with documentation of services rendered and proof of payment for reimbursement. The invoice should not exceed 10% of the total project budget.

Phase 3: Project Installation

12) Planting should take place in Spring 2026 (March-May). If completion and approval of the planting plan, the contracting process, or other contingency would otherwise delay the planting date past late May, approval may be given to schedule planting for Fall 2026.

13) Grantees are responsible for submitting a Post-Planting Report via the grants portal. The report is due by **September 15, 2026**. It shall include:

- site map showing location of all trees planted
- site preparation accomplished
- inventory of trees planted by species
- one or more photos of each site
- description of any student involvement or related education
- financial report on expenditures charged to the grant with supporting documentation.

14) Upon approval of the post-planting report, the grantee is eligible to invoice for reimbursement of the incurred, documented eligible grant expenditures that, together with any previously invoiced expenses, do not exceed 80% of the approved grant amount.

Phase 4: Maintenance and Final Report

After trees are planted, watering, protection and other maintenance activities begin immediately. Trees must be healthy and established at the end of the grant period, two years after planting. A final report documenting the status of the trees at the end of the grant period is required, together with the executed conservation restriction, which testifies to a commitment to maintain the trees over the long term.

15) Final monitoring data on tree survival and condition must be collected two years after the planting date (Spring 2026) and documented in the final report. The final report will be submitted via the grants portal, due **September 15, 2028**. It shall include:

- a site map showing location of all living trees that were planted by the project

- inventory of trees planted by species and health
- one more photos of each site
- description of any further student involvement or related education
- financial report detailing and documenting additional expenditures incurred since the submission of the post- planting plan, funding received to date, and any outstanding grant balance.

If the tree survival rate falls below 85%, justification must be provided in the report, or partial funding may be withheld. Inspections of 20% of the funded projects will be scheduled to verify tree survival. Selected grantees will be notified in advance.

- 16) A conservation restriction(s) covering all project sites must be submitted together with the final report. Conservation restrictions must provide for the protection of any trees funded by this grant program for 10 years, subject to limited, specified exceptions. A model conservation restriction is posted [here](#) on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#).

Upon approval of the final report and the executed conservation restriction(s), the grantee is eligible to invoice for all outstanding eligible grant expenditures up to the approved grant amount.

Project Timeline Summary

Phase 1: Grant Application and Award (March – July 2025)

- Trees for Schools program launch (March 4)
- Informational webinar (March 19)
- Complete application, including preliminary planting plan and budget
- Submit application (May 13)
- Grant award notification (July 14)
- Grant recipients eligible to expend funds for consultant to assist with project planning only (up to 10% of proposed budget)

Phase 2: Project Planning (August- December 2025)

- Develop detailed planting plan
- Webinar on project overview and reporting and financial documentation (August 7)
- In-person project design, tree-planting, and tree-care workshops (September 18-25)
- Submit detailed planting and maintenance plan with final budget (November 12)
- Plan is approved (by December 5)
- Once plan is approved, invoice for documented planning expenses (up to 10%); begin expending funds on approved budget items

Phase 3: Project Installation (January – September 2026)

- Procure materials
- Site preparation
- Plant trees (March-May)
- Submit post-planting report (September 15, 2026)

Phase 4: Maintenance and Reporting (October 2026 – September 2028)

- Water and maintain trees
- Submit final monitoring report with conservation restriction (due September 15, 2028; see [16](#))
- Once report is approved, invoice for remaining expenses up to the total grant award
- Inspections of 20% of the funded projects will be scheduled to verify tree survival.

D. Eligible Grant Expenses and Compliance

An informational webinar will be held on March 19 (the recording and presentation will be posted on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#)). It will address eligible grant expenses in more detail and will provide the opportunity for applicants to ask questions.

Grantees will be expected to comply with competitive public procurement standards as defined in:

- NJ Circular No. 23-09-DPP: <https://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/specialnotices/pdf/DPAcircular-22-09-DPP.pdf>
- NJ Circular No. 10-16-DPMC: <https://www.nj.gov/infobank/circular/cir1016c.pdf>

Planting material and planting

- Use the type of planting material (trees) most suited to site conditions: balled and burlapped (B&B), container-grown, or bareroot. Minimum sizes are 1.5" caliper measurement balled and burlapped (B&B), #10 container-grown, or 7' bareroot. Justification must be provided for planting any trees that are larger or smaller.
- Only tree species are allowed. No shrubs or herbaceous plants.
- Native tree species are preferred. However, the most important factor in species selection is suitability to the site and site conditions, including resilience to climate change impacts (including periods of high heat and/or drought punctuated by heavy to extreme rainfall), and potential pests and diseases.
- No invasive species may be planted; that is, do not plant any species or cultivated variety (cultivar) that is listed on the [Strike Team Do Not Plant list](#).
- Planting material may be purchased from nurseries, or the cost of the trees may be bundled with labor in a planting contract.
- Labor costs for planting may be bundled, contracted separately, hired directly for an hourly wage, performed by staff labor, or performed by volunteers. To facilitate comparison, it is broken out as a line item in the preliminary budget.

Site preparation

- Soil testing and localized soil improvements, such as soil amendments or structural soil.
- Removal of impervious surfaces, such as concrete.
- Establishment or extension of raised tree beds or tree pits.
- Removal of stumps and trees to prepare for replacement trees (justification for tree removal must be provided).
- Stump grinding.

Equipment

- Purchase, rental or repair costs for equipment directly needed by grantee for tree planting and maintenance for this project, such as shovels or irrigation equipment.

Supplies

- Tree protection and maintenance supplies, such as, mulch, compost, support stakes, irrigator bags, and planting tubes or fencing for deer protection.
- Supplies must be for use associated with the plantings funded by this grant.

Maintenance

- Subcontracts for site preparation or for watering, pruning and/or other care of project trees.
- Alternatively, maintenance activities may be combined in the same contract as planting labor, hired directly for an hourly wage, performed by staff labor, or performed by volunteers.

Consultant

- Up to 10% of the total project cost is allowed for assistance with planting design and project planning from a qualified professional, such as a New Jersey Certified/Approved Forester, Licensed Tree Expert, Certified Arborist, or licensed Landscape Architect, or else a firm or non-profit organizational partner assigning qualified staff to the project. A grantee that instead wishes to work with an experienced staff member or volunteer without one of these formal qualifications must get pre-approval from Melanie McDermott (email mcdermom@tcnj.edu).

Personnel Costs

- Salaries, benefits, and wages directly attributable to non-administrative project work, such as site preparation, tree planting, watering or other maintenance activities, and monitoring.
- Grantees will be expected to track hourly personnel costs associated with project work.

Indirect Costs

- Administrative costs (overheads) allowed up to 10% of total project cost if properly documented, such as by submitting a Statement of Activity report documenting withdrawals from a dedicated Trees for Schools grant account.

Costs must be reasonable as determined by the expert panel that will review the applications and decide on the grant awards.

Note that cost-effectiveness of the project in terms of carbon sequestered (trees per grant dollar) will be one of the factors considered in determining grant awards. Applicants are therefore advised to keep the expenses low relative to the number of trees planted and limit them to those necessary to ensure *healthy tree establishment and long-term maintenance*. Although in-kind contributions, e.g., volunteer unbudgeted staff labor, are not itemized in this application, their engagement will lower the overall cost and increase the cost-effectiveness of this project, thereby increasing its competitiveness.

Grant recipients are required to submit and receive approval on a detailed planting plan and final budget prior to purchasing the grant materials to ensure that all expenses using grant funds are eligible.

Grant recipients must have completed their project and submitted their final report by **September 15, 2028**.

Legal compliance

Grant recipients will comply with all relevant federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations.

E. Online Application Portal

The grant application can be accessed using this link: <https://webportalapp.com/sp/r2treesforschools>

Note: This is not the same account used to submit other Sustainable Jersey Grants Program applications or Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification applications. These accounts are not connected in any way—signing into this grant account will not sign you into your other Sustainable Jersey accounts, and vice-versa.

Applicants can submit one grant application requesting an amount between \$10,000 and \$250,000 using their grant account. Applications must be submitted using the online application portal by midnight 11:59 PM on **Tuesday, May 13**. At that time, the portal will close. Only online application submissions will be considered.



Trees for Schools Program Account

This account will be used for purposes of the 2025 Trees for Schools: Tree-planting Grants for New Jersey Public Schools, Colleges and Universities program funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and administered by the Sustainability Institute at The College of New Jersey. This includes submitting grant applications, project documents, and program reports.

Learn more about the Trees for Schools program [here](#) on the Sustainable Jersey for Schools website.

Sign In

Email

Password

Log In

[Forgot your password?](#)

Need an Account?

Sign Up

Create an Account

Sign Up

Enter an email address and choose a password to create a new account.

Email

Password

- ⊕ Must contain at least one lowercase letter
- ⊕ Must contain at least one uppercase letter
- ⊕ Must contain one number
- ⊕ Must be between 8 and 32 characters
- ⊕ Must not be an email address

Confirm password

- ⊕ Passwords must match

Sign Up

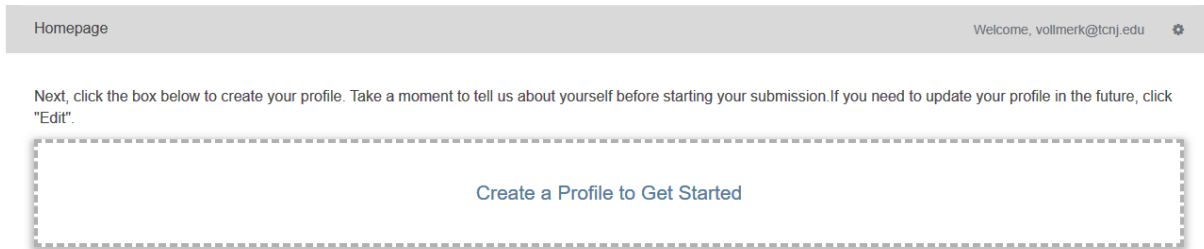
A representative for the applicant can use the Sign Up button to create an account. **Be sure to record the email address and password you used.** Only one representative's account can have access to the applicant's application.

An application does not need to be completed in one sitting—representatives can use the Sign In feature to log back into their account and continue working on the application.

Note that if an applicant applied for a Trees for Schools last year, they can choose to use the same account (Sign In) to submit a 2025 application or create a new one (Sign Up). Note that, at this time, previous grantees are not eligible to apply for a second round of funding.

Profile (Primary Contact Information)

After Signing Up for an account, you will be prompted to create a profile before you are able to start a grant application. The profile form will house information on the application's primary contact. If your primary contact changes, the profile can be updated to reflect the new primary contact.



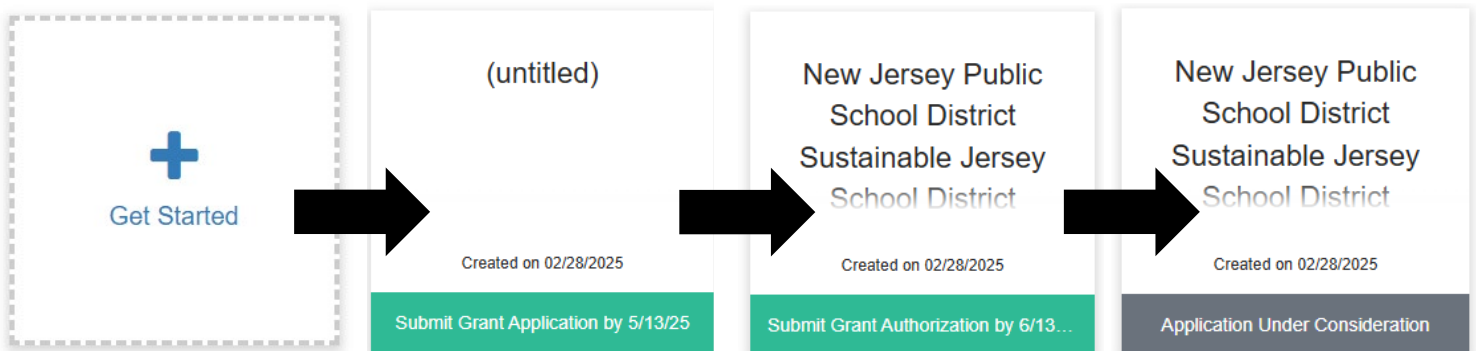
Primary Application Contact

This is the primary person Sustainable Jersey will correspond with regarding this application and any subsequent award. The primary contact must be a college, university or school district employee. It cannot be a consultant. If a consultant is responsible for completing the grant application, they should list a qualified person as the primary contact and not themselves.

- Name
- Title
- Organization
- Phone Number
- Phone Number Extension (if applicable)
- Email Address

Starting a Grant Application

After completing the Profile section, you can start a grant application with the + Get Started button. The application status bar will update as you progress through each stage of the application.



F. Application Guidelines

All public school districts, colleges and universities will submit applications via the web-based grants portal. The online application is designed to collect the information needed to evaluate a proposal without overburdening the applicant.

The grant application is broken into **two** sections. You will only be able to access the next section after completing the previous section. However, you will be able to access any completed section up until its completion deadline, meaning you can make changes even after submitting. Sections include:

- Section One: Application - must be submitted by **Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:59 PM**
- Section Two: Grant Authorization - must be submitted by **Friday, June 13, 2025 11:59 PM**

Program Application: Access the online application form, upload attachments, and submit the completed application through the grants portal found [here](#).

The following sections provide guidance on how to complete the online application.

Section One: Application

Applicant Information

The applicant must be either a New Jersey public school district with one or more schools, a community college, or a state college or university.

- **Select applicant type**
 - New Jersey Public School District
 - New Jersey Public Charter School
 - New Jersey Community College
 - New Jersey State College
 - New Jersey State University
- **Applicant Name:** Enter School District, College or University name
- **Mailing Address** (for purposes of sending grant award checks)
- **Employer Identification Number** – EIN can be provided by business administrator/fiscal contact
- **Unique Entity Identifier** – If applicant doesn't already have one, getting a UEI is free and easy. (Go to UEI: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>, click "get started", follow the steps to create an account, and then go to "get started" again and choose "Get a Unique Entity ID Only").

Application Contacts:

- **Contact information including name, title or affiliation, email address and phone numbers will be requested for the following people:**
 - Project Manager

The project management contact should be whoever is taking the lead on managing the project and can answer project-related questions. A provisional contact listed may be listed in the application and updated as needed after the grant is awarded. The project manager and primary contact may or may not be the same person as the primary contact.

- Fiscal Contact

The fiscal contact must be a person authorized to manage official funds.

- Administrator Contact
 - *Public School District Applicant:* School District Superintendent
 - *Public Charter School Applicant:* School Principal
 - *College/University Applicant:* College/University Administrator with appropriate authority.

The particular position held by the appropriate college or university administrator may vary among different higher educational institutions.

Financial Information

Grant Funding Requested

The total amount requested must fall within the range between \$10,000 and \$250,000.

- Enter requested grant amount

Risk Assessment Form

All applicants must complete and submit the [Risk Assessment form](#) required by The College of New Jersey. This form will ask you to provide a copy of your negotiated rate agreement and a copy of your most recent audit as either an additional upload or website link. The applicant's fiscal contact, such as the business administrator, CFO, or controller, should be able to provide the information for this section.

- Upload Risk Assessment form
- Upload Negotiated Rate Agreement
- Upload Most Recent Audit

Preliminary Budget.

Use this [budget template](#) as a worksheet to prepare a preliminary budget that justifies the total grant amount requested. If the project is funded, this amount will remain fixed, but there will be an opportunity to modify budget line items in line with the [detailed planting plan](#) that will be developed.

Where possible, supply estimated costs provided by a project consultant or based on local market research. Applicants could seek information on project costs from, for example, municipal Shade Tree Commissions/Committees, regional non-profit organizations, college/university faculty and extension officers, potential contractors, or plant nurseries. Additionally, applicants may refer to the Unit Cost Guidelines [in the FAQ](#) for estimated unit costs for trees, site preparation activities, and labor.

IMPORTANT: If the applicant is working with a consultant or contractor, unit cost estimates may incorporate contractor planting labor. Alternatively, tree-planting labor may be listed as a separate line-item expense. The *only* costs that should be listed as line items are those that potential grant recipients would pay directly, as opposed to being absorbed by a contractor and passed on, for example, through higher tree prices.

No applicant match is required, and in-kind contributions are not listed in the preliminary budget template.

- Upload Preliminary Budget Excel Sheet

Budget Justification Narrative: Explain the basis and utility of the line-item costs in the preliminary budget. If using in-kind funding, donations or staff/volunteer time, elaborate on it in this section. Do not add it to the Preliminary Budget template.

- Enter Budget Justification Narrative

Information on Project Site(s)

For the purposes of this application, the term “project” will refer to all components of a single school district, college or university grant proposal. The term “site” will refer to a single school, or a college or university campus or property, at which trees will be planted. Within each site there may be multiple “planting areas” where trees are located (e.g., around building entrances, playing fields, outdoor classrooms).

Brief Project Description: Provide a brief, summary description of the project and its goals.

- Enter Project Description

Preliminary Planting Plan Upload: Using the [Preliminary Planting Plan template](#), the applicant should develop a preliminary planting plan that incorporates all sites (schools or college campuses) where trees are to be planted as part of the applicant’s grant proposal.

- Upload Preliminary Planting Plan

Instructions for Filling Out Preliminary Planting Plan Template

Detailed instructions are available via the instructions tabs in the [Preliminary Planting Plan template](#).

Site Information

Enter name(s) of each campus or property (site) where trees in the first column, one per row. Then, provide the following information for each site:

- Site Name
- Street address
- GPS Coordinates (latitude and longitude) of one point per site
- Estimated number of trees to be planted by size classification: small, medium, large
 - There are numerous sources of information on trees and their characteristics, including mature height ranges. The Missouri Botanical Garden’s [Plant Finder](#) is a good source that is easy to use.
- Site preparation activities planned (e.g., remove concrete, install tree pits)
 - Estimated number of existing trees by size to be removed at project expense in order to make space for trees to be planted

Overburdened Communities Information

Indicate which of your project sites falls within, or partially within, an overburdened community using this [mapping tool](#) developed by the NJDEP. Note that this mapping application typically works best in Chrome, Firefox and IE/Edge. Safari may provide some issues with rendering of the layers. As per instructions in the template, colleges and universities (only) must upload the site location maps generated using the NJDEP mapping tool.

Top 75 Impacted Municipalities – School District Applicants Only

Only School District applicants need to provide this information using the [mapping tool](#) developed by the NJDEP.

- Is the school district located in a municipality that is one of the 75 most heavily impacted by lack of tree cover and a high proportion of impervious surfaces, as identified by NJDEP? See listing in [Appendix 1](#).

Co-Benefits

Co-benefits are defined as social, economic or environmental benefits that will be realized due to the implementation of the project beyond the primary focus of this program on increased carbon sequestration.

For each project site, indicate which co-benefits apply by entering “1” in the corresponding column in the template. Additional benefits or elaboration may be entered in the Comments column (Explain highly significant or additional project co-benefits).

Preliminary Management Plan: Briefly identify who will have ongoing responsibility for watering and maintain the trees once the project trees are planted (e.g., facilities staff, regular landscape contractor, special project contractor). If trees will be planted on municipal or any property not owned by the applicant, be sure to detail the proposed arrangements for maintaining the trees both during the project period *and over the long term*.

- Enter Preliminary Management Plan

Maps: Upload a screenshot, .pdf, .png or .jpg of a project map (or maps) with proposed planting area(s) at each site delineated on the map(s). Sketch maps would be acceptable. However, you may submit a more precise, detailed map if one has been developed. Colleges and universities (only) must also upload one or more 'overburdened communities' maps generated using the [NJDEP mapping tool](#) to represent all project sites. If more upload space is needed, combine maps into one PDF or word document to upload.

- Upload maps

Photos: Upload 1-2 .png or .jpg photos of each site. If more upload space is needed, combine photos into one PDF or word document to upload.

- Upload photos

Additional Project Information

Project Support and Capacity to Implement and Maintain Trees: Each question will have its own text box.

- Briefly describe the applicant's capacity to maintain a healthy campus tree canopy. What staff and systems are currently in place to maintain trees on campus?
 - *Applicant may explain existing resource constraints and justify how project funds will sufficiently improve management capacity to achieve project success – including investments in long-term tree survival past the end of this project.*
- Briefly describe applicant's track record implementing other grant-funded projects, or projects of a similar scope, if any. This entry is optional.
- Will the team collaborate on this project with any external partner organizations on this project (e.g., non-profit conservation organizations, colleges or universities, municipal shade tree commissions, community groups)? If so, please identify the partners and describe their roles in the project.

Project Highlights, Impacts and Educational Value: One text box to provide a narrative account of any special features of this project proposal which you would like to highlight beyond what has already been covered in this proposal. For example:

- How will students be integrated into the project?
- What will be its educational value and its broader impact on your educational institution, its students, and the surrounding community?

Optional Additional Materials: If more upload space is needed, combine materials into one PDF to upload.

(1) Document student/curricular involvement

- Upload proposals, letters of support, or other documentation from faculty, department heads, project partners, school club leaders, or others demonstrating plans for:
 - student involvement in project planning, tree-planting, maintenance, monitoring and analysis, and/or educating others on the value of trees

- integrating learning from engagement with the project into the curriculum. For K-12 schools describe how this would align with the state’s climate change learning goals.

(2) Document internal support:

- Upload any other documentation demonstrating support for the project from the school/district/college/university leadership, faculty or other internal parties

(3) Document external support:

- Upload letters of commitment and/or support from project partners (e.g., non-profit organizations, colleges or universities, municipal shade tree commissions, community groups) that would be materially involved in the project.

Note: these materials may help qualify the applicant for extra points in the selection process ([see below](#)).

Section Two: Application Authorization

Authorization to Submit Application: In order to participate in this program, an applicant must upload documentation that it is authorized to apply for this grant. The authorizing documents must be signed and dated and name the Trees for Schools grant; the school district, college or university applying; the total amount being requested. **This documentation must be uploaded into the grants portal by Friday, June 13.**

- For applicants that are school districts or public charter schools, this will take the form of a resolution adopted by the School Board. Please note that it would be best to start the process of obtaining this resolution as early as possible to allow enough time to have the resolution adopted. A resolution template is available [here](#).
 - Upload Grant Authorization to Submit Application
- Colleges and universities must supply a statement on official letterhead signed by their authorized representatives, including grants office or equivalent unit with fiscal authority.
 - Upload Grant Authorization Letter to Submit Application

Additional Authorization Documentation: If a portion of the proposed project site, or a portion of the site, is located on land owned by a governmental unit and not by the school district or college/university (e.g., municipal streets or county parks), a letter or memo from that governmental authority supporting the application and granting permission for project implementation is required. The letter/memo should also include an agreement about who is responsible for the tree maintenance after the project period.

- Upload Additional Grant Authorization Documentation

G. Selection Process

Applications that meet the program eligibility requirements will be evaluated by a project selection committee. Applications will be scored based on the weighted criteria below.

Application Evaluation Criteria

Carbon Sequestration Potential (up to 15 Points)

- Amount of carbon dioxide (metric tons CO₂ equivalent) that the project is projected to sequester. Sustainable Jersey will calculate this projected value based on the preliminary planting plan submitted as part of the application.

Cost Effectiveness (up to 15 Points)

- Cost effectiveness of carbon sequestration the project is projected to achieve (project cost/lifetime carbon sequestration potential (metric tons)). Sustainable Jersey will calculate this projected value based on the preliminary planting plan and budget submitted as part of the application.

Overburdened Community (up to 10 Points) or Impacted Overburdened Community (up to 20 Points)

- A project with one or more sites (i.e., schools, college or university campuses, or other public properties where trees will be planted) that is/are located in a census block group designated as an “[Overburdened Community](#)” (OBC), as defined by the NJDEP and in law ([N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157](#)), will receive up to 10 points.
- An “Impacted Overburdened Community” is an OBC that is further identified as being severely impacted by a lack of tree cover and a high percentage of impervious surface. Applicants that are school districts (only) that are located in municipalities defined by the NJDEP as “impacted OBCs” (as listed in [Appendix 1](#)) will be eligible to receive additional points, subject to the following additional qualification.
 - In order to receive up to 20 additional points, a project that is located in one of these 75 municipalities must also have one or more sites that are located in a census block group that is overburdened, as determined by use of the NJDEP assessment tool.
- Proportional points will be awarded based on how many schools in the school district application are within the impacted and OBC areas. For applications where all schools in the applying school district are within an OBC or impacted OBC, all the extra points are awarded for the respective category. In applications where only some of the schools qualify as impacted OBC or OBC, proportional points are given.

Co-Benefits (up to 15 Points)

- A project may receive up to 15 points based upon the degree of co-benefits project is expected to provide.
- Co-benefits are defined as social, economic and/or environmental benefits that will be realized due to the implementation of the project beyond the primary benefit of greenhouse gases reduced or increase in carbon sequestration. Co-benefits include, but are not limited to,
 - improving “tree equity” by improving people’s access in areas lacking trees and green spaces
 - creating new or improved outdoor recreation or teaching/learning space
 - providing shade to reduce the heat island effect in areas dominated by paved surfaces
 - providing shade to buildings, saving energy and money
 - improving air quality by filtering the air
 - increasing resilience by reducing impervious surfaces and improving stormwater interception
 - improving water quality by filtering rainwater
 - improving human health and quality of life, and
 - enhancing habitat for birds, insects and other species.

Project Quality, Readiness and Feasibility (up to 10 points)

- A project may receive up to 10 points for project readiness and likelihood of success, as demonstrated by the strength of the project team, preliminary planting plan, appropriate budget, and realistic time-line. “Success” is primarily defined as establishment and maintenance of trees in a manner leading to their long-term health and survival.

Tree Maintenance Plan and Capacity (up to 10 points)

- Project proposal includes strong maintenance plan.
- The applicant has demonstrated competency of staff (or regular contractors) in maintaining healthy trees on campus. Staff and systems are in place to plant, protect, monitor, and maintain trees on school or university/college property. *(Applicant may explain existing resource constraints and justify how project funds will sufficiently improve management capacity to achieve project success.)*

Project Support (up to 5 Points)

- The applicant demonstrates institutional commitment to long-term protection and maintenance of project trees.
- The applicant has demonstrated the capacity to manage and complete grant-funded projects of a similar scope successfully.
- External partner organizations (e.g., non-profit conservation organizations, colleges or universities, municipal shade tree commissions, community groups) support the project and will add capacity to the project team.

Educational Value and Student Involvement (Bonus: up to 10 points)

- The project will involve students in planning, tree-planting, stewardship, monitoring, research, and/or educating others on the value of trees.
- The project will integrate learning from engagement with the project into the curriculum. For K-12 schools, this integration would align with the state’s climate change learning goals.
 - Upload supplementary materials (e.g., letters of support or plans from faculty or curriculum specialists) that demonstrate how project will serve as a basis for ongoing experiential and classroom learning.
 - Upload supplementary materials (e.g., letters of support or plans from faculty, club leaders) that demonstrate plans for student involvement in project planning, tree-planting, monitoring, maintenance and/or educating peers, family, and community members on the value of trees and the ecosystem services they provide.

Appendix 1 - List of Municipalities identified by NJDEP as the 75 Most Impacted Overburdened Communities

School Districts that are located in the listed municipalities are eligible for additional points.

Municipal Code	Municipal Name	County	Public Schools K-12 in OBCs	Municipal Code
1304	Asbury Park City	Monmouth	3	1304
102	Atlantic City	Atlantic	11	102
901	Bayonne City	Hudson	13	901
701	Belleville Twp	Essex	11	701
203	Bergenfield Boro	Bergen	7	203
702	Bloomfield Twp	Essex	11	702
204	Bogota Boro	Bergen	3	204
407	Brooklawn Boro	Camden	1	407
408	Camden City	Camden	19	408
1201	Carteret Boro	Middlesex	5	1201
717	City Of Orange Twp	Essex	12	717
206	Cliffside Park Boro	Bergen	4	206
1602	Clifton City	Passaic	14	1602
1203	Dunellen Boro	Middlesex	3	1203
902	East Newark Boro	Hudson	1	902
705	East Orange City	Essex	20	705
212	East Rutherford Boro	Bergen	3	212
213	Edgewater Boro	Bergen	2	213
2004	Elizabeth City	Union	37	2004
211	Elmwood Park Boro	Bergen	5	211
218	Fairview Boro	Bergen	3	218
219	Fort Lee Boro	Bergen	6	219
1316	Freehold Boro	Monmouth	4	1316
221	Garfield City	Bergen	7	221
903	Guttenberg Town	Hudson	1	903
223	Hackensack City	Bergen	8	223
1603	Haledon Boro	Passaic	2	1603
904	Harrison Town	Hudson	6	904
225	Hasbrouck Heights Boro	Bergen	4	225
2007	Hillside Twp	Union	6	2007
709	Irvington Twp	Essex	12	709
906	Jersey City	Hudson	43	906
907	Kearny Town	Hudson	7	907
2008	Kenilworth Boro	Union	2	2008
2009	Linden City	Union	10	2009
230	Little Ferry Boro	Bergen	2	230
231	Lodi Boro	Bergen	6	231
1327	Long Branch City	Monmouth	7	1327
232	Lyndhurst Twp	Bergen	6	232
116	Margate City	Atlantic	1	116
237	Moonachie Boro	Bergen	2	237

1213	New Brunswick City	Middlesex	12	1213
714	Newark City	Essex	65	714
239	North Arlington Boro	Bergen	5	239
908	North Bergen Twp	Hudson	7	908
245	Palisades Park Boro	Bergen	3	245
1607	Passaic City	Passaic	18	1607
1608	Paterson City	Passaic	51	1608
1708	Penns Grove Boro	Salem	2	1708
427	Pennsauken Twp	Camden	9	427
1216	Perth Amboy City	Middlesex	13	1216
2012	Plainfield City	Union	13	2012
119	Pleasantville City	Atlantic	7	119
1610	Prospect Park Boro	Passaic	2	1610
2013	Rahway City	Union	6	2013
249	Ridgefield Boro	Bergen	4	249
250	Ridgefield Park Village	Bergen	4	250
330	Riverside Twp	Burlington	3	330
2014	Roselle Boro	Union	9	2014
2015	Roselle Park Boro	Union	5	2015
256	Rutherford Boro	Bergen	3	256
909	Secaucus Town	Hudson	7	909
1220	South Amboy City	Middlesex	1	1220
1819	South Bound Brook Boro	Somerset	1	1819
259	South Hackensack Twp	Bergen	1	259
262	Teterboro Boro	Bergen	1	262
1111	Trenton City	Mercer	21	1111
910	Union City	Hudson	15	910
2019	Union Twp	Union	8	2019
911	Weehawken Twp	Hudson	3	911
912	West New York Town	Hudson	9	912
514	Wildwood City	Cape May	3	514
1225	Woodbridge Twp	Middlesex	22	1225
437	Woodlynne Boro	Camden	1	437
269	Wood-Ridge Boro	Bergen	1	269