



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

2023 Application Information Package

Announcement Date: Friday, April 28, 2023
Informational Webinar: Thursday, May 18, 2023
Application Due Date: Thursday, July 13, 2023
Recipient Notification: Friday, September 15, 2023
Link to Application: <https://webportalapp.com/sp/treesforschools>
FAQ (Periodically Updated): <https://bit.ly/TreesForSchoolsFAQ>

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A. Introduction

The *Trees for Schools* program will provide \$2.5 million in grants to New Jersey public school districts, colleges, and universities to support planting and maintaining trees on schoolgrounds and campuses across the state. By planting trees where young minds grow and knowledge is generated, the program is at once profoundly symbolic of sustainability and renewal and, at the same time, highly beneficial in myriad practical ways.

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, it also stimulates the local economy, boosts property values, and improves human health and the quality of life for students, faculty and staff, and the surrounding community alike.

Funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with proceeds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), this program will be 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
- Primary grant awards will range from a minimum \$10,000 to maximum \$250,000
- A supplemental proposal and budget may be submitted for up to an additional \$250,000. The supplemental proposals will be considered for funding contingent upon the availability of funds. (Maximum potential funding is \$500,000 total).
- Eligible expenses include trees, site preparation, supplies, equipment, sub-contracts, and limited personnel and overheads (see [Section D](#)).
- No applicant match is required.
- Grant payments will be made in installments upon the attainment of specified benchmarks (see [Section C](#)), with an initial payment of 10% of the proposed budget upon execution of the grant agreement.

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

Applications must be submitted by Thursday, July 13 at 11:59pm.

Informational Webinar: Thursday, May 18, 2023, 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 a:

- New Jersey public school district, including one or more schools with any combination of pre-K through 12th grade levels
- New Jersey community college
- New Jersey state college
- New Jersey state university

Applications can 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 (July 2026), grantees will need to submit conservation restriction(s) signed by the relevant authorities protecting any trees funded by this grant program for 30-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 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 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 million, the balance will be reallocated to other qualified applicants. If applications in overburdened communities exceed \$1 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 linkages to the New Jersey Climate Change Education Standards, and colleges and universities could link project tracking and performance to their climate action plans.

Project Development

An informational webinar will be held online on May 18 (recording and presentation found [here](#)). 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.

Phase 1: Grant Application

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.

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.
- 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.

Project sites on private land are NOT eligible.

Note that applicants must expect to be able to obtain any necessary permissions ([see 14](#)). It’s a good idea to initiate discussion with the relevant parties early in the process.

2) Obtain a formal statement from the appropriate authority 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 School Board 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 (July 2026), grantees must execute and submit a

conservation restriction providing for the protection of any trees funded by this grant program for 30-years, subject to limited, specified exceptions ([see 14](#)).

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 (July 2026), these entities must also execute and submit a separate conservation restriction providing for the 30-year protection, subject to specified exceptions, of any trees planted with program funding on land they own or control ([see 14](#)). More information can be found in [Section Two: Application Authorization](#), which must be submitted by **August 7, 2023**.

Important Update to Application Authorization Requirement for School District Applicants:

If your district wishes to apply for a grant, but it is not possible to obtain a Board of Education resolution in support of your application by August 7th, you may submit instead a signed letter from the Superintendent stating support for the proposal (see a sample letter [here](#)). Grant notifications will be made mid-September. If the district application is successful, it will be necessary to submit a Board resolution within 35 days of notification in order to move forward with the award.

- 3) Form a project team, including a proposed project manager 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 sub-contractors.)

- 4) In consultation with stakeholders, 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) Complete and submit application on or before **July 13, 2023**.
- 6) Awards will be announced by **September 15, 2023**.
- 7) Grantees will be eligible to receive 10% of total proposed budget at the start of the project. These funds can be used to hire a qualified professional, firm, or non-profit organization to assist with developing the detailed planting plan and final budget and/or also supervising field implementation. Grantees are encouraged to submit their plans and budgets as early as possible. Plans will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with a deadline of **November 22, 2023**.

Phase 2: Grantees Submit a Detailed Planting Plan for Final Approval

8) Specific guidance and a template for the detailed planting and maintenance plan will be provided to grantees and posted on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#) in mid-September. Two in-person, regional, mandatory workshops will be held to inform and assist grantees on plan development. 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.
- Final, detailed budget, with justification for any proposed changes to the preliminary budget.
 - 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 will be made available on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#).
 - Note: Approval of any increase in the total budget is subject to the availability of funds.
- The detailed plan and budget must be signed by the appropriate authority(ies) and must indicate the institution's commitment to implementing the maintenance activities over the long term as per 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
- 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.
- It is highly recommended that the detailed planting and maintenance plan be prepared by a New Jersey Certified/Approved Forester, Licensed Tree Expert, Certified Arborist, licensed Landscape Architect, or non-profit organizational partner with qualified staff. If a grantee has retained a professional consultant for the project, the detailed planting plan is an eligible grant expenditure that can utilize up to 10% of the approved budget. The plan should be signed by the consultant or qualified staff or team member who prepared it.

9) Upon approval of the detailed planting plan grantees will be eligible to receive 40% of the final approved budget.

Phase 3: Project Installation

- 10) Planting should take place in Spring 2024 (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 2024.
- 11) Grantee is responsible for submitting a post-planting report. Reports will be submitted through the grants portal. Specific guidance for the post-planting report will be provided to grantees. The report will be due by **July 31, 2024**. It shall include a site map showing location of all trees planted, site preparation accomplished, numbers of trees planted by species, two or more photos of site, and summary of expenses charged to the grant with supporting documentation (e.g., invoices, financial ledger). (Note: If a grantee has retained a professional consultant for the project, the post-planting report could be a reimbursable expenditure under that contract).
- 12) Grantees will be eligible to receive 30% of the approved budget upon receipt of the post-planting report.

Phase 4: Maintenance and Reporting

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 (2) years after planting. (Of course, stewardship and maintenance of project trees should continue long after the grant period closes.)

- 13) Final monitoring data on tree survival and condition must be collected two years after the planting date (Spring 2026). The final report will be submitted via the grants portal and shall include a site map showing location of all living trees that were planted by the project, numbers of trees planted by species, condition of the trees, two or more photos of the site, and summary of expenses charged to the grant with supporting documentation (e.g., invoices, financial ledger). Specific guidance for the post-planting report will be provided to grantees. It will be due by June 30, 2026. Grantees will be eligible to receive the final grant payment upon approval of the final report. and the conservation restriction ([see 14](#)).
 - If the tree survival rate falls below 85%, justification must be provided, or partial funding may be withheld.
 - Sustainability Institute staff or consultants will perform inspections of 20% of the funded projects to verify tree survival. Projects to be inspected will be randomly selected. Selected grantees will be notified in advance.
- 14) The 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 30-years, subject to limited, specified exceptions. A model conservation restriction will be posted on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#).
- 15) Grantees will be eligible to receive the remaining grant funds upon approval of the final report and the executed conservation restriction(s).

Project Timeline Summary

Phase 1: Grant application and award (April – September 2023)

- Trees for Schools program launch (April 28)
- Informational webinar (May 18)
- Complete application, including preliminary planting plan and budget
- Submit application (July 13)
- Grant award notification (September 15)
- Grant recipients eligible for first progress payment (10% of proposed budget)

Phase 2: Project Planning (October – December 2023)

- Detailed planting plan development
- Project design, tree-planting, and tree-care workshops (October)
- Submit detailed planting and maintenance plan with final budget (November 22)
- Plans approved (December 20)
- Grant recipients eligible for second progress payment (40% of final budget)

Phase 3: Project Installation (January – July 2024)

- Procure materials
- Site preparation
- Plant trees (March-May 2024)
- Submit post-planting report (due July 31, 2024)
- Grant recipients eligible for third progress payment (30% of budget)

Phase 4: Maintenance and Reporting (July 2024 – July 2026)

- Water & maintain trees
- Submit final monitoring report (due July 31, 2026)
- Grant recipients eligible for final payment (20% of budget)

D. Eligible Grant Expenses

An informational webinar will be held on May 18 (recording and presentation found [here](#)). 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. The minimum size is 1.5" caliper measurement and the maximum size is 3" caliper. 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 (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 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 implementation supervision from a qualified professional (such as a licensed landscape architect or consulting forester).

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 allowed.

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 will be asked 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.

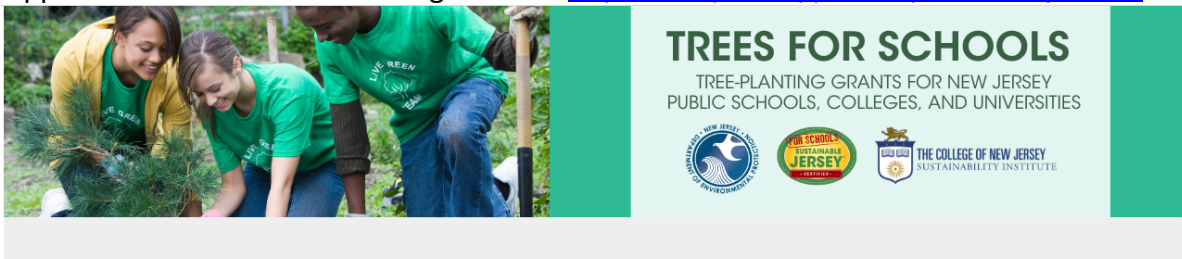
Grant recipients must have fully expended all grant funds, completed their project, and submitted their final report by **July 31, 2026**.

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/treesfornjschools>



Trees for Schools Program Account

This account can be used to submit an application to participate in the Trees for Schools: Tree-planting Grants for New Jersey Public Schools, Colleges and Universities program funded by the New Jersey Department of Environment and Natural Resources and administered by the Sustainability Institute at The College of New Jersey.

Learn more about the Program [here](#) in the Application Information Packet. **Applications are due Thursday, July 13, 2023.**

Questions

If you have any questions about your account, contact Kaitlyn Vollmer at grants@SustainableJersey.com or call 609 771-3139.

If you have any questions about the program, contact Melanie McDermott at mcdermom@tcnj.edu or call 609-771-2836.

Sign In

Email

Password

[Forgot your password?](#)

Need an Account?

Applications must be submitted using the online application portal by midnight 11:59 PM on **Thursday, July 13, 2023**. At that time the portal will close. Only online application submissions will be considered.

Follow the detailed instructions in [Appendix 2](#) to help you get started using the online application portal. You will be asked to create an account and profile (primary contact information) before you are able to access the application form.

F. Application Guidelines

All public school districts, colleges and universities will submit applications via a web 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 and go back to update information in earlier sections. Sections include:

- Section One: Application
- Section Two: Grant Authorization

Applications must be submitted using the online application portal by midnight 11:59 PM on **Thursday, July 13, 2023**. Section Two of the application is not due until **Monday, August 7, 2023**.

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

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

Section One: Application

Eligibility Inquiry

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.

Applicant Information

- **Select applicant type**
 - New Jersey Public School District
 - New Jersey Community College
 - New Jersey State College
 - New Jersey State University
- **Enter School District, College or University name**

- **Mailing Address** (for purposes of sending grant award checks)
- **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").
- **Employer Identification Number** – EIN can be provided by business administrator/fiscal contact

Application Contacts:

- **Contact information including name, title or affiliation, email address and phone numbers will be requested for the following people:**
 - Primary Contact for Grant Application and Reporting (Requested in the Profile Section)
The primary contact must be a college, university, or school district employee.
 - 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.
 - Fiscal Contact
The fiscal contact must be a person authorized to manage official funds.
 - District Superintendent or College or University Administrator with appropriate authority.
The particular position held by the appropriate college or university administrator may vary among different higher educational institutions.

Grant Funding Requested

All applicants must submit a *primary grant proposal*, for which the total budget must fall within the range from \$10,000 to \$250,000.

Applicants may *also* choose to submit a *supplemental grant proposal*, which may be submitted for an amount up to an additional \$250,000. The supplemental project may be approved for funding contingent upon the availability of funds. The maximum potential funding is \$500,000 total.

Grant payments will be made in partial installments upon the attainment of specified benchmarks, with an initial payment of 10% of the proposed budget upon execution of the grant agreement.

- **Grant Funding Requested:**
 - Are you also submitting a Supplemental Grant Proposal? (Y/N)
 - Primary Grant Funding Amount
 - If applicable, enter the Supplemental Grant Funding Amount Total
- **Preliminary Budget.** See [budget template](#) for guidance in preparing an initial budget that will be submitted along with the corresponding preliminary planting plan as part of this grant proposal. If possible, the applicant may base budget estimates on past experience or market research. Applicants could seek information on project costs from, for example, municipal Shade Tree Commissions/Committees, regional non-profit organizations/partners, college/university faculty and

extension officers, potential contractors, or plant nurseries. Additionally, or alternatively, applicants may refer to the Unit Cost Guidelines for estimated unit costs for trees and for certain site preparation activities and labor costs. The Unit Cost Guidelines will be made available on the [Trees for Schools webpage](#).

Separate budgets and budget justification narratives must be provided for the primary grant proposal (up to \$250,000) and for the optional, supplemental proposal (if any) for up to an additional \$250,000.

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

- Upload Primary Grant Budget Excel Sheet
- If applicable, Upload Supplemental Grant Budget Excel Sheet
- **Budget Justification Narrative:** If planning on using in-kind funding, donations or staff/volunteer time, you can elaborate on it in this section.
 - Enter Primary Grant Budget Justification Narrative
 - If applicable, enter Supplemental Grant Budget Justification Narrative

Information on Project and 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., clustered near building entrances, playing fields, outdoor classrooms). If trees are to be planted off-campus on municipal, state or county land that is nearby and that is used or frequented by students (e.g., along streets, parks or playing fields), incorporate associated activities and expenses within the preliminary plan and budget for one of the sites.

- **Brief Project Description:** Provide a brief, summary description of the project and its goals.
 - Enter Primary Grant Brief Description
 - If applicable, enter Supplemental Grant Brief Description
- **Capacity to Implement Project**
 - Briefly describe the applicant’s demonstrated capacity to maintain a healthy campus tree canopy. What staff and systems are in place to plant, protect, monitor, and maintain trees on school or university/college property? How would this grant help fill any gaps in current capacity sufficiently to ensure project success?
 - How will any external partner organizations add capacity to the project team, (e.g., non-profit conservation organizations, colleges or universities, municipal shade tree commissions, community groups)?
 - Briefly describe applicant’s track record implementing other grant-funded projects, or projects of a similar scope.

Preliminary Planting Plan and Additional Information

- **Preliminary Planting Plan Upload:** The applicant should develop one preliminary planting plan using the [Preliminary Planting Plan template](#) that incorporates all sites (schools or college campuses) where trees are to be planted under the applicant’s primary grant proposal. If applying for a supplemental grant, a second preliminary planting plan should be created.

- Upload Primary Grant Preliminary Planting Plan
- If applicable, upload Supplemental Grant 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)

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.

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).

- **Project Highlights and Impacts:** Use this space 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, in describing site-level "co-benefits." What will be the impact on your educational institution, its students, and the surrounding community?

For supplementary proposals, how would the additional elements proposed expand upon these benefits and advance overall project goals? Note that the success of the project should not depend upon these additional elements being funded. The primary proposal should be able to stand on its own even if the supplementary funding is not awarded.

- Enter Primary Grant Project Highlights and Impacts
- If applicable, enter Supplemental Grant Project Highlights and Impacts

- **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. If more upload space is needed, combine maps into one PDF or word document to upload.
 - Upload Primary Grant maps
 - If applicable, upload Supplemental Grant maps
- **Photos:** Upload 2-3 .png or .jpg photos of each site. If more upload space is needed, combine photos into one PDF or word document to upload.
 - Upload Primary Grant photos
 - If applicable, upload Supplemental Grant photos
- **Optional Additional Materials:** If more upload space is needed, combine materials into one PDF or word document to 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.

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.

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 on official letterhead, signed and dated and name the Trees for Schools Planting Program; the school district, college or university applying; the total amount applied for (primary grant budget); and the total amount, if any, of the supplemental budget request.

For applicants that are **school districts**, 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

Important Update to Application Authorization Requirement for School District Applicants:

If your district wishes to apply for a grant, but it is not possible to obtain a Board of Education resolution in support of your application by August 7th, you may submit instead a signed letter from the Superintendent stating support for the proposal (see a sample letter [here](#)). Grant notifications will be made mid-September. If the district application is successful, it will be necessary to submit a Board resolution within 35 days of notification in order to move forward with the award.

Colleges and universities must supply a statement 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, an external panel with diverse related expertise. 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. The review committee 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. This factor is calculated as the preliminary budget total divided by 30-year carbon sequestration potential of the total number of trees to be planted as indicated in the preliminary planting plan.

Overburdened Community (up to 15 Points) or Impacted Overburdened Community (up to 25 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 15 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 25 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.

Tree Maintenance and Stewardship Commitment (10 points)

- Project proposal includes strong maintenance plan and demonstrates institutional commitment to long-term protection and maintenance of project trees.

Capacity and Support (10 Points)

- The applicant has demonstrated the capacity to manage and complete the project successfully by implementing other grant-funded projects, or projects of a similar scope.
- The applicant has demonstrated the capacity to maintain a healthy campus trees canopy. Staff and systems are in place to plant, protect, monitor, and maintain trees on school or university/college property. To the degree there are deficiencies, receiving this grant would enable the applicant to address them in a manner sufficient to ensure project success.
- 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.

Project Readiness and Feasibility (up to 10 points)

- The project shows high likelihood of success, as demonstrated by the strength of the project team and proposal, including the preliminary planting plan and an appropriate budget. In this context, “success” is primarily defined as establishment and maintenance of trees in a manner leading to their long-term health and survival.

Educational Value and Student Involvement (*Bonus: 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.

H. Program Participant Reporting Requirements and Additional Information

Grantees will be required to complete and submit the following plans, permissions and reports using the online Trees for Schools grant portal. Primary contacts for awarded grants will be able to access online forms requesting this information as they become available. To do so, primary contacts will sign into their grant portal account, which was used to submit the initial grant application. Notifications to submit this documentation will be emailed to the primary project contact at least 30 days in advance of the submission deadline.

Submit by November 22, 2023:

- Signed detailed planting and maintenance plan including:
 - location map, site preparation, number, species, and location of trees to planted; maintenance plan; and final budget (See [Section E, Phase 2](#) for more detail),
- Report of expenditures to date charged to the grant with supporting documentation (e.g., invoices, financial ledger).
- Letter or memo of permission from municipal, county, or federal government on whose property trees will be planted as part of the project, *if applicable*.

Submit by July 31, 2024:

- Post-planting report, including:
 - location map; site preparation accomplished; number, species and location of trees planted; two or more photos of each site
- Report of expenditures charged to the grant with supporting documentation (e.g., invoices, financial ledger).

Submit by July 31, 2026

- Final report that documents completion of the project described (project scope finished and all funds spent) in the approved detailed planting plan. The final report shall include:
- map showing location of all living trees planted by the project, numbers of trees planted by species, condition of the trees, two or more photos of each site (see [Section E, Phase 4](#))
- summary of expenses charged to the grant with supporting documentation
- Conservation restriction(s) for all project sites

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
1304	Asbury Park City	MONMOUTH	3
102	Atlantic City	ATLANTIC	11
901	Bayonne City	HUDSON	10
701	Belleville Township	ESSEX	10
702	Bloomfield Township	ESSEX	10
204	Bogota Borough	BERGEN	3
1308	Bradley Beach Borough	MONMOUTH	1
601	Bridgeton City	CUMBERLAND	5
408	Camden City	CAMDEN	19
1201	Carteret Borough	MIDDLESEX	5
717	City Of Orange Township	ESSEX	12
206	Cliffside Park Borough	BERGEN	5
1602	Clifton City	PASSAIC	13
1409	Dover Town	MORRIS	5
902	East Newark Borough	HUDSON	1
705	East Orange City	ESSEX	20
212	East Rutherford Borough	BERGEN	2
213	Edgewater Borough	BERGEN	2
1205	Edison Township	MIDDLESEX	19
2004	Elizabeth City	UNION	38
211	Elmwood Park Borough	BERGEN	5
218	Fairview Borough	BERGEN	3
219	Fort Lee Borough	BERGEN	6
1316	Freehold Borough	MONMOUTH	2
221	Garfield City	BERGEN	6
414	Gloucester City	CAMDEN	3
903	Guttenberg Town	HUDSON	1
223	Hackensack City	BERGEN	8
1603	Haledon Borough	PASSAIC	2
904	Harrison Town	HUDSON	6
2007	Hillside Township	UNION	6
709	Irvington Township	ESSEX	12
906	Jersey City	HUDSON	43
1323	Keansburg Borough	MONMOUTH	2
907	Kearny Town	HUDSON	7
2009	Linden City	UNION	9
230	Little Ferry Borough	BERGEN	2
231	Lodi Borough	BERGEN	6
1327	Long Branch City	MONMOUTH	8
232	Lyndhurst Township	BERGEN	3
237	Moonachie Borough	BERGEN	2

1213	New Brunswick City	MIDDLESEX	12
714	Newark City	ESSEX	65
239	North Arlington Borough	BERGEN	3
908	North Bergen Township	HUDSON	7
245	Palisades Park Borough	BERGEN	3
1607	Passaic City	PASSAIC	18
1608	Paterson City	PASSAIC	51
814	Paulsboro Borough	GLOUCESTER	3
1708	Penns Grove Borough	SALEM	2
427	Pennsauken Township	CAMDEN	10
1216	Perth Amboy City	MIDDLESEX	13
119	Pleasantville City	ATLANTIC	7
1610	Prospect Park Borough	PASSAIC	2
2013	Rahway City	UNION	6
249	Ridgefield Borough	BERGEN	4
250	Ridgefield Park Village	BERGEN	4
330	Riverside Township	BURLINGTON	3
2014	Roselle Borough	UNION	9
2015	Roselle Park Borough	UNION	5
909	Secaucus Town	HUDSON	7
1220	South Amboy City	MIDDLESEX	1
1819	South Bound Brook Borough	SOMERSET	1
259	South Hackensack Township	BERGEN	1
262	Teterboro Borough	BERGEN	1
1111	Trenton City	MERCER	21
910	Union City	HUDSON	15
2019	Union Township	UNION	8
911	Weehawken Township	HUDSON	3
912	West New York Town	HUDSON	9
514	Wildwood City	CAPE MAY	1
1225	Woodbridge Township	MIDDLESEX	20
822	Woodbury City	GLOUCESTER	3
437	Woodlynne Borough	CAMDEN	1
269	Wood-Ridge Borough	BERGEN	1

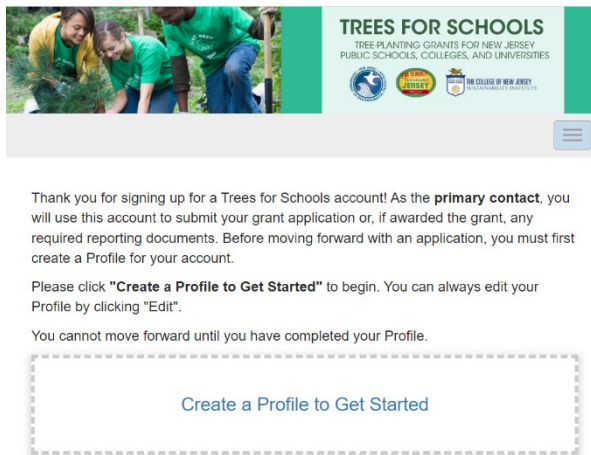
Appendix 2 – Grant Application Portal Instructions: Creating an Account

STEP ONE: First, you must sign up for an account. **Be sure to record the email address and password you used.** Grant recipients will need that information to log into the system to complete the required reports. The person signing up for the account will be considered the grant’s **primary contact**. Sustainable Jersey will direct all communications about the grant application to this person.

Applicants can submit one grant application requesting an amount between \$10,000 and \$250,000 using their grant account. Applicants will use the same grant application if they chose to submit a supplemental grant for up to an additional \$250,000.

Note: This is not the same account used to submit applications for grants affiliated with the Sustainable Jersey Grants Program. This is not the same account used to submit Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification applications. These accounts are not connected in any way. Sustainable Jersey grants do not affect eligibility.

STEP TWO: After signing up for your grant account, you must create a profile before moving forward with filling out the grant application sections. Click “Create a Profile to Get Started” to access the Profile form.



Thank you for signing up for a Trees for Schools account! As the **primary contact**, you will use this account to submit your grant application or, if awarded the grant, any required reporting documents. Before moving forward with an application, you must first create a Profile for your account.

Please click “**Create a Profile to Get Started**” to begin. You can always edit your Profile by clicking “Edit”.

You cannot move forward until you have completed your Profile.

[Create a Profile to Get Started](#)

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.

Name *

Title *

Organization *

Phone (Input numbers only, no symbols or spaces) *

Phone Number Extension

Email *

Fill out the Profile sections. **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 submit the application under an account owned by the primary grant contact.

STEP THREE: After filling out the profile form, you will be able to access the actual grant application. Click “Get Started” to access the application form. You are now ready to complete the different application sections.

Thank you for signing up for a Trees for Schools account! As the **primary contact**, you will use this account to submit your grant application or, if awarded the grant, any required reporting documents. Before moving forward with an application, you must first create a Profile for your account.

Please click “**Create a Profile to Get Started**” to begin. You can always edit your Profile by clicking “Edit”.

You cannot move forward until you have completed your Profile.

Profile Complete [Edit](#)

Thank you for filling out the profile form for your account. Below you will find buttons that will allow you to do the following:

- Use the “get started” button to create a new grant application.
- If awarded, complete the reporting requirements.

