



# TREES FOR SCHOOLS

TREE-PLANTING GRANTS FOR NEW JERSEY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES

- All attendees are muted
- Ask questions in the questions box during the presentation or raise your hand at the end
- The presentation recording and slides will be posted on the Sustainable Jersey for Schools website



THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY  
SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE

# Grant Basics



- Funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with proceeds from the...
  - *Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)*
- Funds disbursed by The College of New Jersey (TCNJ)
- Program administered by Sustainability Institute (manages Sustainable Jersey)



# More Grant Basics

- All New Jersey public school districts, charters, community colleges & state colleges & universities eligible to apply
  - *except recipients of current awards*
- \$4.5 million total funds to be allocated
- Primary grant awards range from \$10,000 to \$250,000
- No match is required.



# Why Plant Trees? *Trees...*

- Provide shade, habitat, biodiversity, beauty
- Filter pollutants from air and water
- Fight climate change by pulling carbon dioxide from atmosphere
- Lower carbon emissions and costs by saving energy in buildings
- Improve resilience to rising and extreme temperature and rainfall
  - Shade lowers temperatures, particularly in “heat islands” (paved areas)
  - Canopy intercepts stormwater and slows runoff



# Why plant trees at *schools/colleges*?

- Improve equitable access to green spaces in urban & other neighborhoods lacking trees, with many heat islands (*tree equity*)
- Improve learning environment, health, & quality of life for students, faculty, staff & community
- Provide educational opportunities through student involvement in project design, tree-planting, stewardship, impact assessment, etc.
- Link project tracking & performance to campus climate action plans
- Support NJ Learning Standards for [Climate Change Education](#)
- Set an example of action & *hope!*

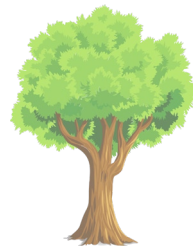
# Climate Change Education resources

- K-12 Interdisciplinary Units

[New Jersey Climate Change Education Hub](#)

- Secondary Interdisciplinary Units

[The Benefit of Trees: A 15-20 Hour Project-Based Learning Unit](#): students generate Trees for Schools proposals





# Application Information Packet



THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY  
SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE

## 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](mailto:grants@SustainableJersey.com) or call 609 771-3189

**For questions regarding the project or application content:**  
 Melanie McDermott: Email [mcdermom@tcnj.edu](mailto:mcdermom@tcnj.edu) or call 609-771-2836

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# *First, a note on terminology...*

- **“project”** = *all* components of a single school district, college or university grant proposal
- **“site”** = a single school or college/university campus or property at which trees will be planted. Projects may have multiple sites.
- **“planting areas”** = locations where trees are planned to be planted
- **“school”** = public school, college, or university (*for this webinar*)





# Project Timeline: Phases 1 & 2

## Phase 1: Grant application and award (March-July)

- Submit application with **preliminary planting plan & budget** (**May 13**)
- Grant award notification (mid-July)
- Grant recipients OK to spend funds on planning (up to **10%** budget)

## Phase 2: Project planning (August – December)

- **Detailed planting plan** development
- Mandatory webinar, focus on reporting/financial documentation (August 7)
- Mandatory project workshops (September 18-25)
- Submit detailed planting plan & final budget (November 12)
- Plans approved (early December)
- OK to invoice for planning expenses & begin expending other funds

# Grant Application

## 1. Identify **locations** for planting trees.

- Eligible areas:
  - owned by public school district, county college, state college/university
  - municipal, county, state, federal land adjacent &/or used by students
- Ineligible areas:
  - private land
  - forested areas
- Siting considerations include:
  - Permanence (maintenance responsibility, potential future building)
  - Space for trees w/o infrastructure conflicts
  - Value of **shade**+: walkways/waiting areas, playgrounds/playing fields, outdoor classrooms; buildings (**energy savings**), **heat** islands

# Grant Application (*con't.*)

2. Obtain authorization for application & commitment to maintain trees: School Board resolution or signed memo (fiscal authority).
  - Due **June 13** (up to 4 weeks after grant deadline, if needed)
  - Obtain MoA or letter of permission to plant on public property, if relevant
  - **Conservation restriction** (10-year tree protection) due by project end (2028)
3. Form a team, including project manager, facilities/grounds, business office
  - **Schools!** Partner w/ municipal Shade Tree Commission, Env. Commission, non-profit (e.g., watershed, conservation) organizations, colleges/universities
4. Develop a preliminary planting plan

# Eligible Expenses / Budget categories

## A. Planting material & planting cost

- Trees: balled & burlapped (1.5-3.0" caliper; min. #10 container, 7' bareroot)
- Only tree species (no shrubs); native preferred; no invasives.
- Labor (sub-contracts, hired hourly)
- [*Not* staff time, which goes under E. Salaries & Wages]

## B. Site preparation

- Soil testing & amendments; structural soil
- Removal of impervious surfaces, e.g., concrete, asphalt
- Establishment tree pits & beds
- Removal of stumps & trees, *only* to prepare for replacements (justify!)

# Eligible Expenses (*con't.*)

## C. Equipment

- Purchase, rental, repair costs for tree planting & maintenance

## D. Supplies

- Mulch, compost, stakes, irrigator bags, deer tubes or fencing

## E. Maintenance & Supervision

- Non-staff labor for care of trees; project mgt/supervision by consultant

## F. Salaries, Wages & Fringe benefits

- For work by in-house staff, e.g., watering

- Indirect costs

- Administrative costs (overheads)  $\leq 10\%$  of project cost

❖ **Cost-effectiveness** (*trees (carbon) per \$*) = factor in grant selection

# Preliminary Planting Plan – Site Info

- See template spreadsheet provided in application information package.
- Instructions for schools and for colleges found on worksheet tabs.

Site Information						
Site Name	Site Physical Address	Site GPS Coordinates (Lat/Long of <u>one</u> point)	Estimated # of Small Trees	Estimated # of Medium Trees	Estimated # of Large Trees	Site Prep Needed
Little Red School House Elementary School	123 Address Lane, Ewing, NJ 08560	40.2600, 74.7909	10	20	20	remove concrete, install 20 tree pits, soil testing & amendment

**Small Trees** = species/varieties reported to reach **10-30 feet** typical mature height (e.g., redbud, crabapple)

**Medium Trees** = height **30-50 feet** (magnolias, ironwood)

**Large Trees** = shade trees & conifers, height **50+ feet** (oaks, lindens, pine)

# Preliminary Plan – Project classification

- Applications receive extra points in grant selection & access to 40% of total grant funds if trees planted at one or more schools/campus properties are located in [overburdened communities](#) (DEP).
- Use [mapping tool](#) to determine this status.

All Applicants	School District Applicants Only
Is this site located in, or partially in, an overburdened community? (Y/N)	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? (Y/N)
Y	N

- See Appendix 1: is *school district* located in a *severely impacted* municipality?
- If both answers are “Yes” then application will receive additional extra points.

# Preliminary Plan – Co-benefits

- **Co-benefits** = social, economic or environmental benefits of the project other than increased carbon sequestration.

Co-Benefits: Will the trees that will be planted at <i>this site</i> :								
Improve “tree equity” by improving access in areas lacking trees/green spaces? <i>(If yes, enter 1)</i>	Create new or improved outdoor recreation or teaching/learning space? <i>(If yes, enter 1)</i>	Provide shade in paved areas & reduce the heat island effect? <i>(If yes, enter 1)</i>	Provide shade to buildings, saving energy & money? <i>(If yes, enter 1)</i>	Increase resilience: reduce impervious surfaces & improve stormwater interception? <i>(If yes, enter 1)</i>	Improve water quality by filtering rainwater? <i>(If yes, enter 1)</i>	Improve air quality by filtering the air? <i>(If yes, enter 1)</i>	Enhance habitat for birds, insects & other species? <i>(If yes, enter 1)</i>	Comments <i>(Explain highly significant or additional project co-benefits)</i>
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	

- The application provides other places to describe educational and research benefits.



# Preliminary Budget

- See template spreadsheet provided in application information package.
- May use **UNIT COST SHEET** for estimated costs (see [FAQ](#)).

+

## A . TREES AND TREE-PLANTING

Assume planting material is 2-2.5" B&B or else use planned type and actual cost.

Item	Type & Size of Planting Stock	Est. Unit Cost	Qty.	Total Est. Cost
Number (#) Large Trees	2-2.5" caliper Balled & Burlapped (B&B)	\$ -		\$ -
# Medium Trees	2-2.5" B&B	\$ -		\$ -
# Small Trees	2-2.5" B&B	\$ -		\$ -
# Other		\$ -		\$ -
[Per tree cost of planting]	(all trees)	\$ -		\$ -



# Application Demo



## PSEG Cycle

> **Free Energy Technical Assistance for New Jersey School Districts and Municipalities**

**SJ-PSE&G Energy Efficiency Partnership Program**

**EmPowered Schools**

✓ **Trees for Schools**

Recipients

> **Thinking about Applying for Grants?**

> **Grant Recipient Information**

**Previous Recipients & Projects**



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

The Trees for Schools program is offering a new cycle of \$4.5 million in grants to New Jersey public school districts, county colleges, and state colleges and universities to fund the planting of trees on campuses across the state.

Competitive grants of \$10,000 to \$250,000 will fund costs associated with planning, site preparation, trees, planting, and two years of maintenance.

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 across the state. View the previous recipients [here](#).

# Frequently Asked Questions

**Link:**

[bit.ly/TreesForSchoolsFAQ](https://bit.ly/TreesForSchoolsFAQ)

FAQ will be updated periodically, so check back occasionally for more guidance

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

*Frequently Asked Questions*



*Tree-planting References*

*Last Updated: 3/5/2025*

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# Application Submitted Online

**App Link:** <https://webportalapp.com/sp/r2treesforschools>

## Deadline:

Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 11:59pm

**Login:** Note that this is not the same account used to log into the Sustainable Jersey for Schools website or other grant portals



## 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

## 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

## PRIMARY CONTACT

**MUST be a college, university or school district employee.** If working with a consultant who plans on submitting the application on behalf of the applicant, they should submit it using a grant account with a proper primary contact.

This is the primary person Sustainable Jersey will correspond with regarding this application and any subsequent award.

Homepage

Welcome, kaitlyn.vollmer@gmail.com

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.

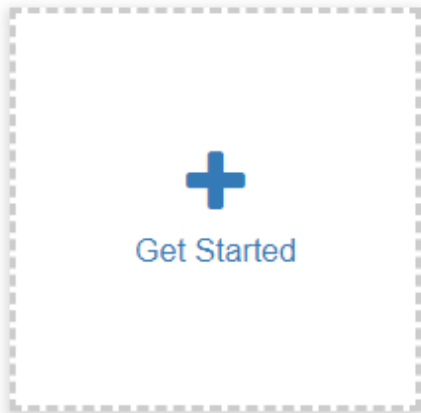
Please click "**Create a Profile to Get Started**" to begin. You can always edit your Profile by clicking "Edit".

You cannot move forward until you have completed your Profile.

[Create a Profile to Get Started](#)

## TWO PART APPLICATION

Use the Get Started button to star an application. There are two sections that must be completed and submitted. Note that you must first mark the form as completed in order for the grey submit button to turn green. You will not be able to see section two until you complete section one. Section two is not due until **6/13/25** to provide additional time for grant proposal authorization from the appropriate entity.

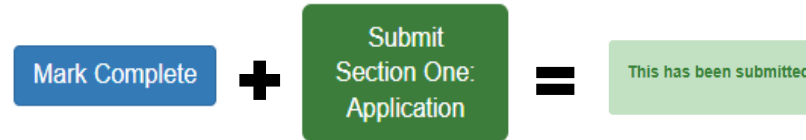


**Submit Grant Application by 5/13/25** There are 55 days remaining to submit this. Submit Section One: Application

Please complete Section One: Application. This section must be submitted by the end of the day on **May 13, 2025**.

Application Action Required Open

Complete this form to submit an application. It is recommended that you review the [Application Information Packet](#) before completing this step.

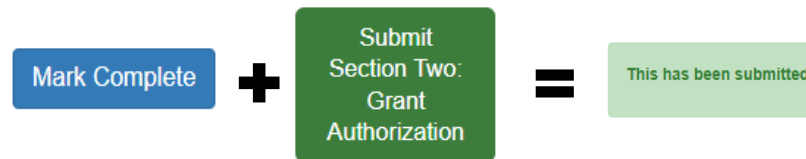


**Submit Grant Authorization by 6/13/25** There are 86 days remaining to submit this. Submit Section Two: Grant Authorization

Please complete Section Two: Grant Authorization. This section must be submitted by the end of the day on **June 13, 2025**.

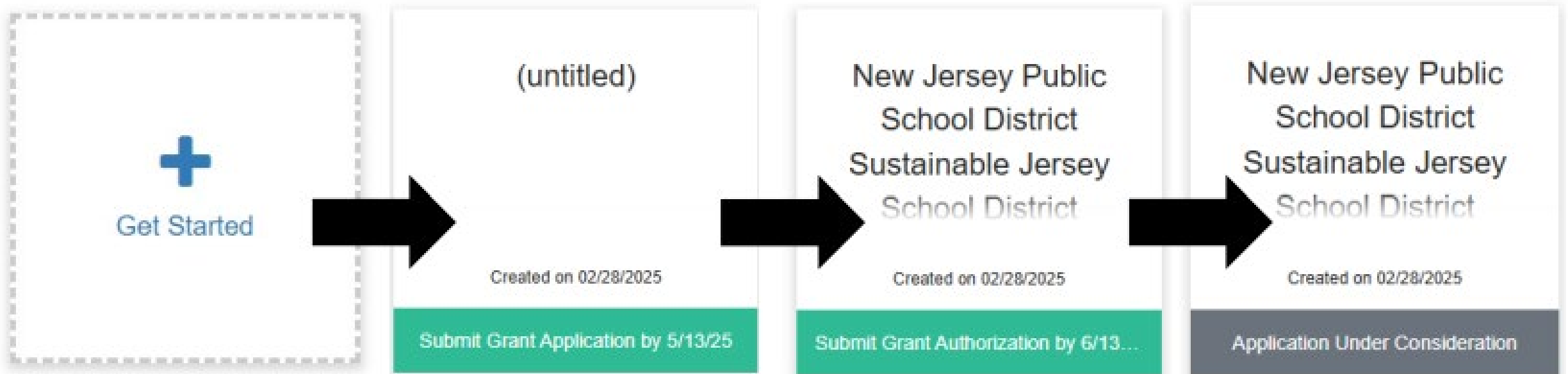
Grant Authorization Action Required Open

Complete this form requesting a signed and dated grant authorization document and additional authorization documentation, if applicable.



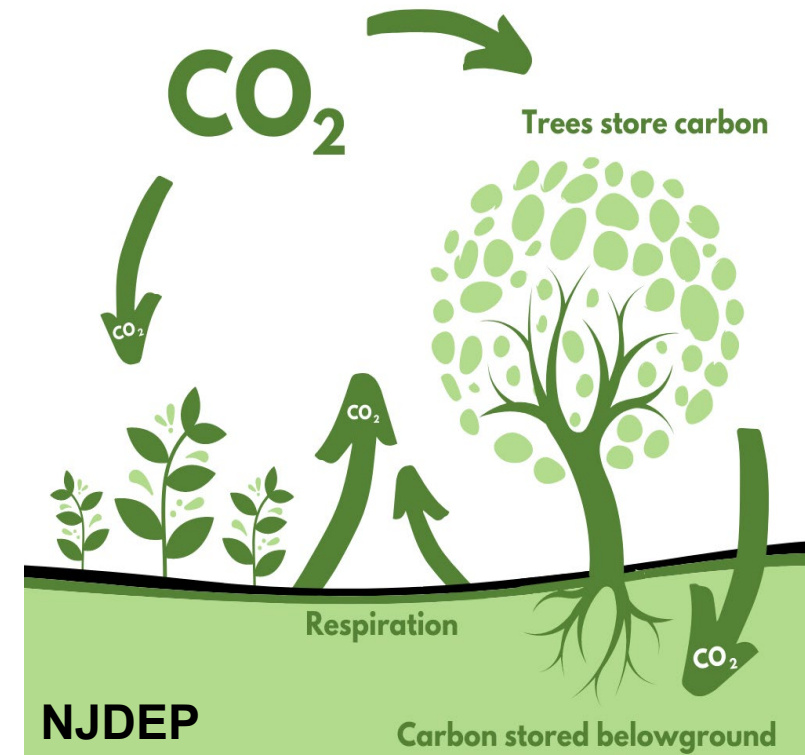
## FULLY SUBMITTED APPLICATION

An application is not considered fully submitted until both sections are submitted. You can track the status of your application by viewing the box on the homepage. Once the status says “Application Under Consideration,” your application is submitted. **Note that only section one needs to be submitted by 5/13/25.** Also, note that the name of the application will update once you start filling out section one.



# Evaluation criteria for Grant Selection

1. Carbon Sequestration Potential (up to 15 points)
  - Total CO<sub>2</sub> project is projected to sequester over 30 years
2. Cost Effectiveness (up to 15 points)
  - Preliminary budget total/carbon sequestration potential
3. Overburdened Community (OBC) (up to 10) or Impacted Overburdened Community (up to 20)
  - One or more project sites in census block group designated as an OBC by DEP
  - Impacted = above & school district (*only*) is in one of 75 “severely impacted” municipalities





# More evaluation criteria

5. Co-Benefits (up to 15 points)
6. Project Quality, Readiness & Feasibility (up to 10 points)
  - Overall, likelihood of success = long-term tree survival
7. Tree Maintenance Plan & Capacity (up to 10 points)
  - Strong maintenance plan
  - Tree maintenance track record, staff & systems; grant addresses gaps
8. Project Support (up to 5 points)
  - Internal commitment to project, long-term protection of trees
  - Partner organizations show support & add capacity to project team
9. Educational Value & Student Involvement (Bonus  $\leq 10$  points)
  - Student involvement in project; integration in curriculum



# Phase 3 – Project Installation

1. Procure materials (e.g., tree orders)
2. Site preparation (e.g., cut & remove concrete for tree pits; necessary tree/stump removal)
3. Trees are planted! March-May 2026



# Phase 4 – Maintenance & Reporting

1. Water & maintain trees
2. Submit post-planting & expenditure report. July 2026
  - Upon approval, grantees eligible to invoice for reimbursement of documented expenses up to **80%** of approved budget
3. Final report: tree survival & condition; expenditure. July 2028
  - If tree survival **< 85%** justification required or funding may be withheld.
  - Inspection of 20% of projects for tree survival.
  - Grantees receive **final payment** upon approval of report and conservation restriction.



# Thank You!

To ask questions, please either:

- Raise your hand (to ask question verbally)
  - Make sure to unmute yourself using the green microphone button
  - If calling in via the telephone, make sure you input the audio code: **136-564-173**
- Type your question in the question box



# Contact Us



**Questions about the project or grant application content?**

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609-771-2836



**Questions about the online grant portal?**

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