

Georgia ReLeaf Grant

2026 Request for Proposals

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, under the authority of 16 USC 2105 and Public Law 117-169, Subtitle D, Sec. 23003(a) State and Private Forestry Conservation Programs, has allocated funding to the Georgia Forestry Commission for statewide distribution in partnership with the Georgia Tree Council. \$150,000 is available for the 2026 funding cycle.



Program Objectives

The objectives of the Georgia ReLeaf Program are to:

- Improve the urban tree canopies of Georgia communities.
- Help sustain the health of Georgia's community forests.
- Incorporate tree planting into planning efforts of city administrators, municipal tree departments and tree boards.
- Increase access to the health benefits provided by community forests for Georgia residents.

Program Overview

Applicants may apply for funding for a:

- tree planting
- tree giveaway
- tree planting and tree giveaway

Tree Planting Projects

Tree planting projects fund tree installations in public spaces, including parks, schools, playgrounds, greenspaces, rights-of-way, business districts, parking lots, downtown areas, and other municipal property.

Some private property *may* qualify with legal documentation of long-term unrestricted public access; in this situation, prior approval should be obtained from the Georgia Tree Council before beginning the application.

Funds can be used to purchase:

- trees (including delivery fee)
- staking materials
- mulch (natural, undyed)
- watering aids (gator bags or tree diapers)
- equipment rental
- professional tree installation

Tree Giveaway Projects

Tree giveaway projects fund events that provide trees to community residents, along with information about tree selection, planting, and maintenance. Giveaway events can provide up to two 1-gallon to 7-gallon containerized trees per participant.

Funds can be used to purchase:

- trees (including delivery fee)
- mulch (natural, undyed)
- watering aids (gator bags or tree diapers)

Ineligible Projects

- projects utilizing predominantly ornamental trees (such as crape myrtles or Bradford pears) will not be considered
- community orchards/food forests are not eligible projects. However, native, low-maintenance fruit species can comprise up to 15% of tree species in a project. Please see the Georgia Forestry Commission [Urban Fruit Guide](#) for eligible fruit species.
- landscaping for areas undergoing construction or grading at the time of application or scheduled for construction/grading projects.

**See the Project Proposal Requirements section below for project planning information and documents required for applications.*

Eligibility

For the 2026-2027 funding cycle, only projects serving a qualified community are eligible to apply for funding.

Eligible communities include:

1. Communities listed as “match waiver qualified” on the [Georgia TAG and ReLeaf Match Waiver Map](#). This geospatial mapping tool identifies census tracts that are overburdened by projected natural disaster risk, pollution, canopy health, and other factors.
2. Under-resourced communities with a documented environmental and/or public health need that can be addressed through increased canopy cover. Applicants may use a combination of economic data, public health data, canopy cover reports, land use history, municipal comprehensive plans, or other relevant sources to justify need.

Municipalities, government agencies, 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions may apply.

Other organizations, such as community tree volunteer groups, neighborhood associations, or civic groups can apply in partnership with a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization or with their local government.

All applicants must have both a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Funding

The maximum grant award is \$15,000. Recipients are not required to provide a funding match.

If awarded, funds will be dispersed as a reimbursement with documentation of approved project expenditures.

Grant Timeline

The 2026 grant application will be available in [Submittable](#) from March 13, 2026, to July 15, 2026. All applications must be submitted through the online grant portal; no paper applications will be accepted. Recipients will be notified in August 2026. Georgia ReLeaf projects must be completed before March 31, 2027.

Project Proposal Requirements

Tree planting applications must include:

- Three-year maintenance plan
- Planting plan:
 - Aerial photo of the planting location with each tree to be planted clearly marked and labeled by species.

- Area of the planting site
- List of tree species to be planted
- Letter of endorsement required:
 - If the landowner is not the applicant, provide a letter from the landowner stating support of the project and permission to plant
 - For all municipal projects, include a letter stating long-term support of the project and permission to plant
 - If planting on a state right-of-way, provide a letter from the Georgia Department of Transportation stating the project complies with state regulations
 - Provide a letter of support from any partner organization listed in the application whose support is essential for project implementation

Tree giveaway applications must include:

- Project details:
 - How will the event be promoted?
 - How will recipients be selected?
 - How will planting locations be collected (zip codes)?
 - How will educational materials be distributed (materials will be provided upon request)
 - What is the plan for distributing trees remaining after the initial event (ideas include a second giveaway date or planting on public property)
- Event details:
 - Event date
 - Event location
- Provide a letter of support from any partner organization listed in the application whose support is essential for project implementation (for example, if a partner is providing volunteers for the giveaway event or if the event will be held on property not owned by the applicant)

Project Proposal Evaluation

Project proposals will be evaluated on whether the information provided about the project:

- Projects that will benefit community areas in need of increased canopy cover
- Meets Georgia ReLeaf program objectives
- Has a realistic time frame for completion
- Is cost-effective
- Has documented cash and in-kind matching commitment if applicable
- Has a planting plan with appropriate tree species
- Has a 3-year maintenance plan for plantings
- Increases community involvement and local support for community forestry
- Involves strong partnerships
- Utilizes ISA certified arborists to complete planting activities
- Incorporates public relations and awareness
- Enhances environmental, social, cultural, historical, psychological and economic values
- Shows demonstrated ability of the applicant to follow through on project completion
- Certified Tree City USA cities will receive additional consideration on their application score

[Project Planning Resources](#)

Questions?

Contact [Alicia Holloway](#),
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