

Scoring Guide for 2025 Tree Maintenance & Removal Grants

Page 1: To be completed by VT UCF staff

Applicant: _____

Project Eligibility

Project takes place in or directly serves at least one disadvantaged community. [View eligibility map](#). For the purposes of the 2025 Tree Maintenance & Removal Grants, funded through the Inflation Reduction Act, the term disadvantaged community is defined as a census tract included in one or more of the following datasets:

- The federal Council on Environmental Quality's Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool
- The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Opportunity Zones dataset
- The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's dataset for low to moderate income areas

Yes

No

Projects that Include High-Risk Tree Removal

Removal of dead trees (no live canopy) or ash trees does not require any documentation beyond the grant application. If the applicant is applying for funds to remove live trees other than ash trees, see below.

For all trees with any degree of live canopy (leaves on branches during the previous growing season) to be considered as eligible for high-risk tree removal, a written recommendation is required as an attachment with the application. The recommendation must:

- be from a professional arborist, preferably one that is a Tree Risk Assessment Qualified professional,
- be based on at least one site visit to the tree(s),
- include the method and threshold by which the trees(s) are defined as high-risk, and
- include the contact information of the arborist.

Is a written recommendation included with the application? Or are all proposed removals dead and/or ash trees?

Yes

No

Does the application acknowledge and appear to comply with procurement policies of the applicant's organization or municipality?

Yes

No

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Page 2: To be completed by all grant review and selection committee members. There are 5 categories that will be used to evaluate applications, with 3 points possible in each category, for a total of 15 points maximum. Within each category, there are sub-criteria. Use the sub-criteria to assign points most applicable to the application; ½ points okay.

Applicant: _____

Reviewer: _____

Total Points Assigned to Application: _____

Points	3	2	1	0
Project Need	<p>Reviewer judges that the project addresses critical tree maintenance or removal needs that enhance safety or protect public resources.</p> <p>Without grant funds, an unsafe situation will worsen over time.</p>	<p>Reviewer judges that the project addresses maintenance or removal needs, though urgency is less clear. Significant risk to public resources or safety will be reduced.</p> <p>Without grant funds, an unsafe situation will remain in place.</p>	<p>Reviewer judges that the project addresses maintenance or removal needs, though urgency is low. Minimal risk reduction to public resources or safety.</p> <p>Without grant funds the work could have been achieved in time, but grant funds somewhat accelerate.</p>	<p>Reviewer cannot discern the relevance or need of the project.</p> <p>Without grant funds the project will still occur, or there is little impact if it does not occur.</p>
Project Importance	<p>Reviewer judges the project to be high priority within urban & community forestry, as well as in relation to other municipal or organizational priorities.</p> <p>Project is the most urgent next step in the town or organization's canopy management.</p>	<p>Reviewer deems project moderately high priority within urban & community forestry but competes somewhat with other municipal or organizational priorities.</p> <p>Project is reasonably sequenced within overall goals and responsible forest management within community. But value can be gained by tackling other goals first.</p>	<p>Reviewer deems project minimally aligns within urban & community forestry, and competes directly with other municipal or organizational priorities</p> <p>Project is not appropriately sequenced within overall goals and responsible forest management within community and the project may interfere with other forestry goals.</p>	<p>Low priority project within both urban & community forestry and compared to other local goals.</p>
Public Access	<p>Project scope focuses on areas of full public access that are critical to daily life in the community (including important corridors in the community) and are free to access for all Vermonters regardless of any identity they hold, or other protected status.</p> <p>Project area is in nearly constant use.</p>	<p>Project scope focuses on areas of full public access that are critical to life in the community some of the time or may have limited impact on the whole community.</p> <p>Project area is in frequent use.</p>	<p>Project area includes less critical public locations and the location of the project seems less central to overarching project scope.</p> <p>Project area is in infrequent use.</p>	<p>Project is located on private or restricted access land (may cost to access).</p> <p>Project area is rarely in use.</p>
Budget	<p>Budget is comprehensive, realistic, and optimizes the use of grant funds by achieving valuable goals at a very cost-effective rate.</p>	<p>Adequate budget but may require clarification or more detail. Project achieves valuable goals at a standard rate.</p>	<p>Budget lacks detail or is not realistic. Project achieves its goals at an above average cost.</p>	<p>Budget is not complete or is inconsistent with project scope. Or achieves goals at an unacceptably high cost.</p>
Equity & Engagement	<p>Reviewer judges that the project will meaningfully benefit or improve conditions for a disadvantaged community and includes engagement with affected community.</p>	<p>Reviewer judges that the project may benefit a disadvantaged community, but these benefits may be somewhat indirect.</p> <p>Project does not include engagement with affected community.</p>	<p>Reviewer judges that the project has little impact on a disadvantaged community.</p>	<p>Reviewer judges that the project does not address equity or engagement and may worsen tree inequity.</p>