

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY “HURRICANE KATRINA” FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



1ST ANNOUNCEMENT

**Postmarked Deadline:
October 27, 2006**

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Program Overview

Auburn University will award \$243,500 in USDA Forest Service funds to help Alabama communities carry out direct recovery activities as a result of Hurricane Katrina damage to Alabama's urban forest. Coastal communities will have the highest priority, however, communities in eleven counties will be considered for funding. These counties are:

- Baldwin
- Clarke
- Choctaw
- Greene
- Hale
- Mobile
- Marengo
- Pickens
- Sumter
- Tuscaloosa
- Washington

Eligible applicants are invited to submit project proposals to fund activities that replace and/or restore hurricane damaged urban trees. Added weight will be given to project proposals based on the severity of need. Emphasis will also be placed on project proposals that leverage the use of federal funds with a maximum level of local resources.

Eligible applicants must submit their project proposal to Auburn University postmarked no later than October 27, 2006. Approved applicants will have until September 30, 2008 to complete their projects.

For more information, contact your local Extension office or visit the Extension's U&CF Financial Assistance webpage at www.aces.edu/ucf.

Background

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina swept through western Alabama damaging large portions of the state's urban forest, especially along the coastal communities. The impacts from hurricane strength winds in western Alabama and storm surge along the Gulf Coast left Alabama's urban forests in need of repair and in many instances replacement. The Coastal Communities in Mobile and Baldwin Counties sustained the most damage from the combined impacts of hurricane force winds and storm surges reaching 15 feet in some areas.

Following Hurricane Katrina the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated eleven counties (Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Clarke, Choctaw, Marengo, Sumter, Hale, Greene, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa) as priority one counties by Presidential Decree to receive Public Assistance due to the proximity to the storm center and having suffered moderate to severe damage. Another eleven counties (Monroe, Wilcox, Perry, Bibb, Jefferson, Lamar, Marion, Winston, Cullman, Colbert, and Lauderdale) suffered more isolated urban forest damage and were designated as priority two counties to receive Assistance. Hurricane damage to the state's remaining urban forest was minimal.

On December 21, 2005, Congress authorized the Defense Authorization Bill (H.R. 1815), for "*urgently needed activities associated with Hurricane Katrina and Rita recovery, clean-up and restoration.*" This measure provides \$243,500 for disaster assistance to priority one and two communities designated by Presidential Declaration.

Auburn University has contracted with the USDA Forest Service to serve as the pass-through entity for this program in Alabama. This contract makes Auburn University, through the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, responsible as the final decision maker on budget and allocations of all supplemental U&CF federal funds. These funds are congressionally appropriated dollars with very specific authorities. Auburn University will maintain accountability for the use of these funds.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Purpose

These federal funds are to be used toward disaster assistance to mitigate the effect of Hurricane Katrina on Alabama's urban forest.

Authority

Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL 95-313), as amended: and, Military Construction Appropriations and Emergency Hurricane Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2005 (PL 108-287).

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Award Amount Available

A total of \$243,500 in federal "supplemental" funds is available as emergency funding to facilitate the recovery of Hurricane Katrina storm damaged urban trees. The total amount of these funds will be allotted toward project activities using the following rates.

- Up to 40% for risk management and remedial tree care on public land,
- Up to 60% for restoration including replanting on public and private land, and
- Up to 15% for inventory and assessment where FEMA funds fall short.

Eligible Project Categories

Auburn University will award funds toward direct recovery activities. Direct recovery activities are projects that if accomplished will address specific storm related urban forestry mitigation needs. The four (4) fundable direct recovery activities are:

- **(HIA-1) Urban Tree Replacement** – Hiring, contracting, or training personnel to plan, select, purchase, plant, and/or maintain replacement trees on public and private property. Urban tree replanting will be limited to the use of hurricane resistant trees (as said by Auburn University representative) and to sites and locations where Hurricane Katrina destroyed urban trees or caused them to be removed.
- **(HIA-2) Urban Tree Inventory** – Hiring, contracting, or training personnel to collect comprehensive information on trees in a large area. Information collected will be used to determine 1) extent of existing hurricane storm damage and 2) areas in need of mitigation and/or remediation.
- **(HIA-3) Urban Tree Assessment** – Hiring, contracting, or training personnel to skillfully examine individual urban trees for specific signs or symptoms of storm damage or related-injuries that would cause the tree to be at risk to people, places, or property. Assessments are used to locate and evaluate trees for immediate tree safety concerns and shall include treatment recommendations.
- **(HIA-4) Urban Tree Remediation** – Hiring, contracting, or training personnel to eliminate storm damage through tree repair. Priority shall be given to storm damaged trees that pose an immediate or prominent safety risk previously identified through a proper assessment.

Project Period

The project period for this award begins November 17, 2006 and ends September 30, 2008.

III. APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants

Local Governments -- County, municipality, city, town, township, local public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, councils of governments, any other regional or interstate government entity, or any agency or instrumentality of a local government. The following federal regulations apply:

- Sections 3015, 3016, and 3017 of the Code of Federal Regulations
- OMB Circular A-87

Nonprofit Organizations -- Any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; is not organized primarily for profit; and uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand its operations. Auburn University requires nonprofit organizations to have tax-exempt status under Section 501 © (3) or other sections of the Internal Revenue Service Code. The following federal regulations apply:

- Sections 3015 and 3017 of the Code of Federal Regulations
- OMB Circular A-122

Educational Institutions -- Universities and colleges where major functions are instruction, organized research, sponsored activities, and other institutional activities. Each institution, possessing its unique combination of staff, facilities, and experience, should be encouraged to conduct research and educational activities in a manner consonant with its own academic philosophies and institutional objectives. The following federal regulations apply.

- Sections 3015 and 3017 of the Code of Federal Regulations
- OMB Circular A-21

Cost-Share Matching

This federal grant requires no cost sharing and will fund 100% of an approved proposal's total project budget.

IV. HOW TO SUBMIT APPLICATION

Selection of Project Category

Applicants must first select one or more of the allowed four (4) project activities before writing their project proposal(s). Applicants cannot combine two or more project activities in a single application. If more than one project activity is desired, then a separate application must be completed for each activity.

The four (4) project activities are further divided into two groupings.

Group I includes *Tree Replacement* only. Auburn University will issue a contract with each approved Group I applicant. The applicant is then responsible to fulfill activities in their approved proposal.

Group II includes *Tree Inventory*, *Tree Assessment*, and *Tree Remediation* project activities. Auburn University will not issue a contract with each approved Group II applicant unless the applicant receives prior permission from Auburn University to apply under the Group I criteria.

Under Group II, Auburn University will solicit bids from qualified contractors to provide services that will address the needs of the approved Group II applicants. Auburn University will conduct all procurement transactions in a manner that provides, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Awards will be made to bidder(s) or offeror(s) whose bid or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to recipient, price, quality, and other factors considered.

Group I Application (*Tree Replacement*)

Each Group I project proposal should include a cover or transmittal letter and accompanying text that shall consist of no more than ten (10) pages (single-sided) which must include:

- *Application Form.* Complete the “HURRICANE KATRINA” U&CF APPLICATION FORM. Check *Tree Replacement* in box 6.
- *Summary Statement.* Provide a clear, concise, and specific description of the proposed project. It should be no more than 3-4 paragraphs.
- *Problem Statement or Assessment of Need.* Tell why Hurricane Katrina is causing your organization to submit a *Tree Replacement* project proposal. Do not describe the needs of your organization or even the lack of money needed to replace urban trees. Tell how Hurricane Katrina created a need to replace urban trees in your community.
- *Project Proposal Objectives.* List specific, measurable outcomes that will result from this project proposal if completed. Objectives should be directly linked to the problem statement.
- *Project Methods.* What steps will your organization take to fulfill each project objective? Be sure to indicate what will be done, who will do it, and when it will be done. A flow chart will help reviewers better understand your project method. It should list and sequence each key activity, the use of resources and personnel, and any expected result.
- *Post Planting Maintenance.* Describe how new trees will be maintained for 3-year period following installation.
- *Budget.* How will your organization use the federal funds to meet the project’s objectives? It is highly recommended that you provide a table of itemized expenses by category for both federal funds requested and local matching. Also, be sure to include a detailed description of the total project cost by category, matching expenses to proposed objectives.
- *Documentation.* All proposals must include a location map of planting site, detailed planting plan, and written approval from proper authorities (i.e. Alabama DOT, property owner, and local government authority).

Group I Activity Minimum Requirements

Tree Replacement

- Tree species must be approved by Auburn University representative prior to purchase as having a high resistance to wind damage.
- Minimum tree size is 1 ½ - inch caliper and maximum of 3”.
- Selected tree must be hurricane resistant species approved by Auburn University representative
- Planting must not conflict with existing utilities, structures, line-of-sights, or other structures deemed necessary for public safety or use.
- Tree installation must follow established standards and procedures for selection, handling, planting, and early maintenance.
- Federal funds may be used to purchase and plant trees on private urban property (i.e. residential yards, church property, “common areas”) if it serves a greater public good and if the funds are awarded through a sponsoring local government, educational institution, or non-profit entity.

Group II Application (*Tree Inventory, Tree Assessment, and Tree Remediation*)

Remember: *Group II projects will be bid out to qualified contractors by Auburn University. If approved, your Group II application will supply information that can be used by Auburn University to prepare and issue a request for bids to perform work in multiple communities. Each Group II project proposal should include a cover or transmittal letter and accompanying text that shall consist of no more than ten (10) pages (single-sided) which must include:*

- *Application Form.* Complete the “HURRICANE KATRINA” U&CF APPLICATION FORM. Check (only one per project proposal) *Tree Inventory, Tree Assessment, or Tree Remediation* in box 7.
- *Summary Statement.* Provide a clear, concise, and specific description of the proposed project. It should be no more that 3-4 paragraphs.
- *Problem Statement of Assessment of Need.* Describe how Hurricane Katrina’s affect on your community’s urban trees is causing your organization to submit a project proposal. Do not describe the needs of your organization or even the lack of money needed to do direct recovery activities. Tell what Hurricane Katrina related condition would be addressed by using these funds.
- *Project Proposal Objectives.* List specific, measurable outcomes that will result from this project proposal if completed. Objectives should be directly linked to the problem statement.
- *Project Scope.* To what extent would you like a qualified contractor to perform your Group II project? To the best of your ability, indicate what needs to be done, what areas or locations need this treatment, and what resources your community can provide toward the project.

- *Documentation.* All proposals must include a location map of site and written approval from proper authorities (i.e. local government authority).

Submission Deadline

Project proposals must be received “postmarked” no later than October 27, 2006.

Submission by Mail

If you submit your project proposal by mail (i.e. U.S. Postal Service, commercial carrier), you must mail the original and five copies on or before the deadline date to:

Alabama Cooperative Extension System
ATTN: Beau Brodbeck
Baldwin County Office
302A Byrne Street
Bay Minette, AL 36507

Submission by Hand Delivery

If you submit your project proposal by hand delivery, you (or a courier service) must deliver the original and five (5) copies on or before the deadline date to:

Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Baldwin County Office
302A Byrne Street
Bay Minette, AL 36507

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Review and Selection Process

The evaluation panel will review each project proposal carefully and assess each response based on how well it addresses the criteria as outlined below. There are two types of criteria – threshold criteria and ranking criteria. Responses to the criteria will be used to determine whether to make an award and the amount of funds awarded. There is no guarantee of an award.

Group I Criteria

Threshold Criteria

- A. Applicant Eligibility
- B. Complete Application Form
- C. Transmittal Letter
- D. Complete Application

Ranking Criteria

- A. Community Need (20 points)
- B. Community Involvement (10 points)
- C. Leveraging of Local Resources (15 Points)

- D. Cost-Effectiveness (15 points)
- E. Technical Correctness (20 points)
- F. Reduction of Future Threat to Safety and Property (20 points)

Group II Criteria

Threshold Criteria

- A. Applicant Eligibility
- B. Complete Application Form
- C. Transmittal Letter
- D. Complete Application

Ranking Criteria

- A. Community Need (20 Points)
- B. Community Involvement (20 points)
- C. Potential Leveraging of Local Funds (20 points)
- D. Capacity to Work with Contractor (20 points)
- E. Reduction of Future Threat to Safety and Property (20 points)

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notice

If your organization's project proposal is approved for federal funding, Auburn University through the Alabama Cooperative Extension System will notify you by letter. Included in this letter will be information describing steps necessary for program compliance. Separate letters will also be mailed to appropriate U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators.

Reporting

Federal Administrative and Auburn University Regulations require that all approved applicants submit quarterly status reports throughout the term of their award. All approved applicants will also be required to submit a final performance report, including financial information at the end of the project period or when the project is completed, whichever comes first.

Performance Measures

The U.S. Congress and the USDA Forest have directed Auburn University to improve the effectiveness of this program through program accountability, measurable performance outcomes, and an equitable distribution of federal funds among those urban areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

The purpose of this program is to fund direct recovery activities that produce tangible results in mitigating Hurricane Katrina damage to Alabama's urban forests. All reports should clearly indicate progress toward and final achievement of measurable outcomes.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

For Further Information Contact:

Beau Brodbeck
Extension Specialist: Urban & Community Forestry
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Baldwin County Office
302A Byrne Street
Bay Minette, AL 36507
PH: (251) 937-7176
FAX: (251) 937-7285
Email: brodbam@auburn.edu

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

Electronic Access to Program Information

You may view or download documents and information concerning this program in text or Adobe Portable Document format (PDF) on the internet at the following site: <http://www.aces.edu/ucf>.

Timetable

October 27, 2006 - *Postmarked Deadline for Applications*

November 17, 2006 – *Project Period Begin*

September 30, 2008 – *Project Period Ends*

September 30, 2008 – *Period to Submit Closeout Documents End.*