

Guidelines for Scoring Grant Applications

America the Beautiful Tree Planting (ATB-TP) Grant

NDFS Feb 2023

Minimum Requirements:

Each grant application is screened for minimum requirements prior to submission to the Grant Review Committee for scoring. Projects which fulfill the following minimum requirements will be considered for grant funding:

1. ORIGINAL application- including photos & maps, if applicable.
2. One (1) copy of the city tree ordinance or similar document, or a pledge to develop one (NOT required for Tree City USAs, we have one on file)
3. Name of NDFS Community Forestry personnel contacted.
4. Provided legal land description for project.

Scoring Criteria and Levels:

Projects will be ranked according to the quality of the application as a whole and how well the specified scoring criteria are addressed. The committee will score from 0-4 for each criterion.

[4 Excellent] [3 Good] [2 Fair] [1 Poor] [0 Unacceptable]

1. Project Description, Purpose, Need and Scope

Excellent: Project is thoroughly described, leaving no doubt as to intention of project. Narrative indicates a well-planned project.

Good: Similar to above, but narrative could provide more detail about the project description, purpose and/or justification.

Fair: Project intent is stated, but narrative description limited, leaving some questions regarding certain aspects of the project.

Poor: Project intent is vague and poorly planned. Planning appears to have been an afterthought.

Unacceptable: Project intent is not stated. Narrative does not have specific project focus. Serious doubt as to whether applicant could successfully implement this project.

2. Public Access

Excellent: Project is accessible, free of charge to the general public. The project is beneficial and accessible to the general public for multiple uses/activities, including visual, physical, and social.

Good: Project accessible, free of charge, but accessible to fewer members of the general public or for fewer uses/activities.

Fair: Project accessible to general public but for a fee. Community still benefits due to project location.

Poor: Project accessible to the general public but for a fee. Benefits to the community are limited because of location or not clearly stated.

Unacceptable: Project is not accessible to the general public.

3. Project Innovation / Community Benefits

- Excellent: Project is unique to the community and/or provides three (3) or more types of benefits, such as economic development, beautification, wildlife enhancement, outdoor classroom, screening, or other benefits identified by community.
- Good: Project is unique to community and/or provides at least two (2) types of benefits.
- Fair: Project is not necessarily innovative or unique but provides at least one type of benefit to the community.
- Poor: Project is not unique to the community and its benefits are questionable.
- Unacceptable: Project provides no obvious community benefits

4. Project Personnel

- Excellent: Project personnel identified by name or title with duties clearly assigned. Includes personnel with knowledge of tree planting and care.
- Good: Similar to above duties not clearly assigned.
- Fair: Personnel identified but no duties assigned.
- Poor: Personnel not clearly identified and duties not assigned.
- Unacceptable: No personnel listed.

5. Use of Volunteers

- Excellent: Project provides a clear definition of the number of volunteers and the tasks they will be expected to carry out; includes a diversity of volunteer groups.
- Good: Same as above but less diversity of volunteers.
- Fair: Number of volunteers is not clear or appears inadequate. Tasks are indicated but may lack detail.
- Poor: Volunteers will be involved but number and tasks not clear.
- Unacceptable: Volunteers not included as part of project.

6. Project Planning and Implementation (Project Schedule and Plan of Action)

- Excellent: Thorough description of how the project will be implemented. Includes a detailed plan of work and timetable indicating approximately when each activity will be carried out and project completed. Includes a maintenance plan. Soil testing was completed.
- Good: Similar to above but may lack timetable, tasks that need to be completed, or other minor information.
- Fair: Includes a project implementation description but lacks detail and timetable.
- Poor: Project implementation plan and/or time table is vague. Project will probably get done but planning appears to be lacking.
- Unacceptable: Project implementation plan is unrealistic or nonexistent. Doubtful that project will be completed.

7. Species Selection (Plant Materials)

It is in the long term interest of communities to increase the genetic diversity of the trees planted.

This can be done by planting multiple genera, and multiple species within these genera.

(Examples of genera: Oak - *Quercus*, Birch - *Betula*, Linden – *Tilia*;

Examples of species: American linden - *Tilia americana*, Littleleaf linden - *Tilia cordata*)

Excellent: Five (5) or more tree species that are appropriate for the site.

Good: Four (4) or more tree species that are appropriate for the site.

Fair: Three (3) tree species that are appropriate for the site.

Poor: Two (2) tree species that are appropriate for the site.

Unacceptable: No species or only one species (monoculture) indicated.

8. Project Budget

Excellent: Project budget leaves no doubt that the associated costs are adequate and realistic to complete the project. The amount and type of match meets the project requirements.

Good: Similar to above but less detail.

Fair: Some questions regarding the use of budget funds though still a good project.

Poor: Vague detail as to the use of budget funds.

Unacceptable: Poor justification for utilization of funds.

9. Project Design Plan, Vicinity Map, Photos

Excellent: Application includes vicinity maps showing location of project within the community/ area along with a map showing the area of the project and surrounding area. Plan shows where each tree will be located and identifies each location by tree species. Plan includes a plant materials list summarizing species, size, and quantity. Photo(s) show project site and reveal need for the project.

Good: Similar to above but vicinity maps, design plans, or photos could be improved.

Fair: This is the highest rating available for applications lacking either photos or vicinity maps, but containing a design plan.

Poor: Design plan not to scale. Locations of proposed trees are vague and do not specify species. Plan indicates the project but very poorly. Design plan located on vicinity map.

Unacceptable: No design plan.