

N.C. Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program Guidance and Instructions for U&CF Project and Application Development



All successful projects have a clear needs statement, a goal to address the needs, objectives to achieve the goal, a work plan with the tasks to achieve the objectives and a project budget detailing the cost to complete each objective. The following provides guidance on developing and writing your project and completing a Financial Assistance Program (FAP) application. Financial assistance applications will be measured against this guidance.

- Documents for Project and FAP Application Planning
 - FAP Eligible Practices & Activities Fact Sheet
 - FAP Project Planner
 - FAP Work Plan
 - FAP Budget -- Cost Share Workbook or
 - FAP Budget -- Match Share Workbook or
 - FAP Budget -- No Cost Share Workbook

- Needs and Opportunities Statement
 - This statement establishes the urban and community forestry (U&CF) needs and rationale for a project by clearly identifying the gap or problem, the place, and if applicable, the audience or demographics impacted. Unique opportunities that facilitate addressing the U&CF needs can also be presented. Addressing these U&CF needs and opportunities will be the focus of the project. This is the only place you will discuss needs and opportunities.
 - To make sure your needs statement is clear, comprehensive and compelling, include these elements.
 - What are the primary urban or community forestry problems, challenges and opportunities?
 - Use studies, data and trends that identify, quantify and qualify the problem, challenge or opportunity. Local, published if available, and/or based on your investigation.
 - Briefly paint a picture with no more than four sentences.
 - Example:
 - *The town values the benefits our tree canopy provides and wishes to conserve and enhance our tree canopy cover. However, we lack urban forestry inventory and assessment data to develop urban forestry and community goals and objectives to identify and prioritize where to plant trees to meet those goals and objectives.*
 - *The town's canopy cover assessment revealed the canopy cover in A, B and C neighborhoods is 7% below the town's 40% canopy cover, and there are opportunities to plant street and park trees.*

- Project Goal
 - Goal statement
 - A broad statement of what major U&CF practices and/or activities will be accomplished to address the needs and capitalize on the opportunities.
 - Make sure your goal links back to your needs statement. One sentence that uses words such as decreased, delivered, developed, established,



improved, increased, produced and provided the major practices and or/activities that will be accomplished and how it addresses the needs statement.

- Example:
 - *Obtain a professional tree canopy cover assessment of the town, findings report and tools to facilitate the development of urban and community forestry policy, tree-planting objectives and tree-planting plans.*
 - *The residents of A, B and C neighborhoods are educated on the benefits of the urban forest to their community, engaged in their planting and care, and participated in the planting of 400 street and park trees.*

➤ Project Objectives

- An objective is a statement that summarizes the accomplishment of project deliverables (practices/activities) and completion of a project phase/milestone. The completion of these deliverables must be completed before the next phase of a project can begin.
- The collection and order of completion of the objectives illustrates how the goal is going to be achieved. Therefore, your objectives are listed in the order in which they are completed.
- An objective is narrow, precise, tangible, concrete and measurable. An objective statement is a single sentence and ends with a completion by date.
- Writing an objective statement
 - Use the S.M.A.R.T. method of writing your objectives; Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound.
 - An objective should be a single sentence and have a completion time by project quarter.
 - State your objectives in terms summarizing the accomplishments of outcomes/deliverables, **not process**. Process is detailed in your Work Plan.
 - The outcomes/deliverables completed in the objective are complimentary and logical to complete together and mark the completion of a project phase/milestone.
 - Guidance: (Use our Objective Building Tool)
 - Write a list of each deliverable that will be completed as part of your project using the U&CF Practices and Activities terms and their definitions and then write a description of the deliverable.
 - Number the deliverables in order of completion and then sort the list in order of completion.
 - Then, group the deliverables together that are logical and complimentary to complete together to help formulate your project phases/milestones, and write your objectives.

- Examples:



- *A contract for services to complete a tree canopy cover assessment is developed, advertised and secured by the end of the first quarter.*
- *A professional tree canopy cover assessment, findings report, and inventory and assessment software tools are secured by the end of the second quarter.*
- *Outreach and educational program plans and products to educate and engage the community are developed by the end of the first quarter.*
- *The tree planting site inventory, and tree planting and post planting care plans are completed by the second quarter.*

➤ **Work Plan**

- **Work Plan** – The list of all project tasks required to accomplish each project objective, and its respective practices and activities, from the start of the project to the end, by project quarter (3-month duration).
- Here is where you are providing the process, the details of how a deliverable (practice or activity) and the objective will be completed that are not explained in your objective statement.
- **FAP Work Plan Guidance**
 - You will submit a completed PDF copy of this spreadsheet as your Work Plan as part of an FAP application.
 - The spreadsheet is designed based on our program structure and utilizes the same terminology and terminology definitions.
 - **Adding a Task record**
 - **Objective** – Enter the Objective # the task will be addressing.
 - **Practice/Activity** – Select the specific practice or activity from the dropdown list this Task will be addressing from the dropdown List.
 - This dropdown list is a truncated version of the FAP Eligible Practices & Activities Fact Sheet. Definitions of these practices and activities can be found by clicking the Practice/Activity tab at the bottom of the worksheet.
 - **Tasks to be completed**
 - Tasks are specific actions or processes that need to be taken to complete project deliverable (practice/activity). They should be specific, and each task should explain: what will occur and who will complete it.
 - A Suggested Task Checklist tab has lists of tasks that should be considered for completion by Practice/Activity category to assist you in your planning process.
 - Example task descriptions:
 - *Develop tree canopy cover assessment request for proposal specifications.*
 - *Solicit bids from qualified urban forestry firms.*
 - *Review, award and execute a contract for tree canopy cover assessment services.*



- *Develop educational post-planting care instructions publication for landowners.*
 - *Order trees and tree-planting supplies.*
 - Will be completed by
 - Enter the team members who will be completing the task from your task member list.
- Budget – an itemized list of all expenses required to complete each objective and the practices and activities of the objective.
 - Costs must be actual costs based on research.
 - Services and products – Research at least one vendor and provide their name.
 - During implementation you will be required to follow federal, state and local cost threshold requirements regarding the procurement of products and services.
 - Staff Time – salary and fringe
 - Existing staff – provide their name and job title.
 - New staff – Job title and proposed salary and fringe.
 - FAP Budget Worksheet Guidance
 - You will submit a completed PDF copy of the appropriate budget worksheet as part of an FAP application.
 - For each objective, collect all the expenses to complete each objective task.
 - Enter each of the expenses in the budget worksheet beginning with Objective 1 and then the remaining objectives.
 - Objective # -- your objective number.
 - Budget Item Category – select the most appropriate Budget Item Category based on the definition provided on the Budget Item Category tab.
 - Description -- description of product, service or staff, practice/activity/tasks worked. How units and unit cost are assigned.
 - # of Units/Hours – the only case where a 1 can be used here is if a service provider has agreed to provide the service or services described in your description for a lump sum.
 - Unit Cost – unit cost or hourly rate.