



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 25, 2024

DATE: May 23, 2024

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Brian Beffort, Sustainability Manager
(775) 447-0856, bbeffort@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Eric Brown, County Manager

SUBJECT: Recommendation to accept the Inflation Reduction Act - Urban & Community Forestry sub-award from the State of Nevada, Division of Forestry in the amount of [\$275,000.00; \$25,000.00 indirect; no county match required], effective from the date of acceptance through March 31, 2027 to support the launch of a County Community Forestry Program; authorize the Manager's Office and Community Services Department to execute the subaward; direct the Comptroller's office to make the necessary budget amendments; and authorize the creation of 0.52 FTE Community Forester (effective and contingent on JEC review and approval) funded 100% by the Inflation Reduction Act - Urban & Community Forestry sub-award for three years. As such, if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the position will be abolished accordingly unless additional funding is secured; and direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments as evaluated by the Job Evaluation Committee. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

The Washoe Board of County Commissioners must accept grant awards and must approve amendments to the adopted fiscal year budget and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget amendments. These funds will support the creation of a 0.52 FTE Community Forestry position (effective and contingent on JEC review and approval), who will help launch the County's Community Forestry Program as envisioned by the Green Recovery Plan and will complete the following tasks:

- Update and expand the GIS inventory of trees in Washoe County, then develop future tree-planting projects targeting Disadvantaged Communities and monitoring and assessment protocols.
- Oversee the development of a Community Forest Management Plan to guide the management of County trees in our forest parks, along the Truckee River, and throughout our communities.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

- Participate with partners (Reno, Sparks, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Washoe County School District, Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation), other stakeholders and citizens to plant +/- 4,800 trees in EPA Disadvantaged Communities.
- Coordinate with regional partners and stakeholders to develop a Community Forest Program to guide the planning, planting, public education and management strategies to ensure the long-term health of all trees and forests in Washoe County.

The grant period is for three years, ending on March 31, 2027. The outcomes of the Community Forestry Program will be focused on planting trees in EPA-identified low-income disadvantaged communities (LIDACs) and will include the following:

- Improved air quality
- Reduced urban heat
- Improved stormwater management
- Enhanced quality of life and equity, by ensuring all community members have equal access to the mental, physical, and social benefits that trees provide.
- A regionally shared, data-informed forest and tree-management system
- Stronger community connections and shared commitment to manage our region's community forests and trees.

If the County is unable to fill the 0.52 FTE position with a qualified candidate, staff will utilize consultant services and/or independent contractors for program delivery utilizing the funding for the Urban Forester position.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Economic Impacts: Support a Thriving Community.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On May 23, 2023, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the Green Recovery Plan, which includes the goal, "Establish an urban forestry program."

BACKGROUND

For several years running, Reno has ranked as the fastest warming city in the nation,¹ with the most extreme areas of urban heat in the Truckee Meadows affecting EPA-identified low-income disadvantaged communities (LIDACs)²

Washoe County is currently responsible for the care and management of our forests in Davis Creek, Galena and Bowers Mansion parks; for trees in our parks and along the Truckee River; and at County facilities. The County has a GIS-based inventory of all trees along the Truckee River and in regional parks. However, because of programmatic cuts in response to the economic downturn in 2008, this inventory has not been updated since 2011. There has never been a formal Forest Management plan for the County's forested parks. A Forest Management Plan will help protect all trees under the County's

¹ [Earth Day: Warming & Solutions | Climate Central](#)

² [EJScreen \(epa.gov\)](#)

care from the risks of wildfire, disease and storm damage, while maximizing the benefits our forests and trees provide to our communities.

In 2016, the City of Reno launched the ReLeaf program with the goal of expanding the City's urban tree canopy from 5.2% to 15%.³ Reno's Arborist Matt Basile leads this program and is a consultant in the development of the County's Community Forestry Program.

In 2022, Impact-NV (a Las Vegas-based nonprofit organization) launched a 10-year plan to plant 100,000 trees across the state.⁴ They secured grant funding in 2023 to provide 4,800 trees to be planted in LIDACs in Washoe County. LIDACs are identified statistically by poor economic indicators (poverty, unemployment, and low access to vehicles) and environmental justice challenges (pollution, limited green spaces, and extreme heat exposure). In Washoe County, the EPA identifies areas of Sun Valley, the north valleys, Hungry Valley, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation and a section of Incline Village as LIDACs.

Washoe County's Sustainability Manager will partner with Community Services Department to implement this subaward. Sustainability will guide support the overall strategic design of the program. CSD will manage the day-to-day activities of the 0.52 FTE Community Forester. Sustainability and CSD will coordinate with regional partners to map and plan tree plantings.

GRANT AWARD SUMMARY

Project/Program Name: *Washoe County Community Forestry Program.*

Scope of the Project: Washoe County will launch a Community Forestry Program by hiring a Community Forester, who will complete the following:

- Update and expand the GIS inventory of trees in Washoe County, then develop future planting plans targeting Disadvantaged Communities and monitoring and assessment protocols.
- Oversee the development of a Community Forest Management Plan to guide the management of County trees in our forest parks, along the Truckee River, and throughout our communities.
- Participate with partners (Reno, Sparks, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Washoe County School District, Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation), other stakeholders and citizens to plant +/- 4,800 trees in EPA Disadvantaged Communities.
- Coordinate with regional partners and stakeholders to develop a Community Forest Program with planting, public education and management strategies to ensure the long-term health of all trees and forests in Washoe County.

Benefit to Washoe County Residents: Develop a forest management plan for the County's forested parks to help County staff manage these forests to prepare for public

³ [ReLeaf Reno | City of Reno](#)

⁴ <https://impact-nv.org/statewide-10-year-100000-tree-plan/>

use, drought, storm damage, pests and wildfires; expand the tree canopy in low income disadvantaged communities to reduce urban heat, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve stormwater management and provide other social and economic benefits to communities; update the County’s GIS inventory of all trees under the County’s care; in cooperation with partners, develop a shared management plan for managing all tools in the County; and develop a skilled workforce and community culture to ensure the long-term health of community trees.

On-Going Program Support: This grant award will be used to support the up-front costs of establishing a Community Forestry Program for three years. costs of on-going programs. If so, describe how the program will be funded once the grant is complete.

Award Amount: \$275,000 (\$250,000 direct, \$25,000 indirect)

Grant Period: From date of acceptance through March 31, 2027

Funding Source: United State Department of Agriculture

Pass Through Entity: Nevada Division of Forestry

Assistance Listing #/CFDA: Code of Federal Domestic Assistance number

Grant ID Number: 23-DG-11066013-634

Match Amount and Type: No match required.

Sub-Awards and Contracts: Some of these grant funds will be used for the following sub-awards:

- \$30,000 contract with Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation to support two AmeriCorps members to complete a GIS tree inventory
- \$20,000 for a consultant to develop a Forest Management Plan
- Possible Independent Contractor Agreement if the County is unsuccessful in hiring a 0.52 Community Forester.

Indirect: Indirect costs are included in the grant budget, totaling \$25,000. No amendment is necessary for the indirect revenue. Budgeted expenditures reflect direct costs and do not include indirect.

FISCAL IMPACT

Should the board accept this grant award and approve these amendments, the FY25 Sustainability program adopted budget will be increased by \$250,000.00 in both revenues and expenditures in the following accounts:

Cost Object & Description	G/L Account & Description	Amount
IN12358 Urban Forestry Grant	431100 Federal Grant	\$250,000
IN12358 Urban Forestry Grant	701412 Salary Adjustment	\$118,853
IN12358 Urban Forestry Grant	705360 Benefit Adjustment	\$62,172

IN12358 Urban Forestry Grant	710300 Operating Supplies	\$18,975
IN12358 Urban Forestry Grant	710110 Contracted/Temp Services	\$50,000

As this award funds personnel, if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the positions abolished accordingly, unless additional funding is secured.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners accept the Inflation Reduction Act - Urban & Community Forestry sub-award from the State of Nevada, Division of Forestry in the amount of [\$275,000.00; \$25,000.00 indirect; no county match required], effective from the date of acceptance through March 31, 2027 to support the launch of a County Community Forestry Program; authorize the Manager’s Office and Community Services Department to execute the subaward; direct the Comptroller’s office to make the necessary budget amendments; and authorize the creation of 0.52 FTE Community Forester (effective and contingent on JEC review and approval) funded 100% by the Inflation Reduction Act - Urban & Community Forestry sub-award for three years. As such, if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the position will be abolished accordingly unless additional funding is secured; and direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments as evaluated by the Job Evaluation Committee. (All Commission Districts)

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: *“move to accept the Inflation Reduction Act - Urban & Community Forestry sub-award from the State of Nevada, Division of Forestry in the amount of [\$275,000.00; \$25,000.00 indirect; no county match required], effective from the date of acceptance through March 31, 2027 to support the launch of a County Community Forestry Program; authorize the Manager’s Office and Community Services Department to execute the subaward; direct the Comptroller’s office to make the necessary budget amendments; and authorize the creation of 0.52 FTE Community Forester (effective and contingent on JEC review and approval) funded 100% by the Inflation Reduction Act - Urban & Community Forestry sub-award for three years. As such, if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the position will be abolished accordingly unless additional funding is secured; and direct the Human Resources Department to make the necessary staffing adjustments as evaluated by the Job Evaluation Committee. (All Commission Districts).*

The following documents are attached:

1. Award Documents IRA23 24-007 Washoe County Forestry NOGA