



Alaska Community Forestry Program

2024 Grant Opportunities

Phytoremediation Grants



Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
550 W. Seventh Ave., Suite 1450, Anchorage, AK 99501 / 907-269-8466 / <http://forestry.alaska.gov/community/>

1. Introduction

The USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Fire Protection, Community Forestry Program (CFP), have Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) grant monies available to local governments, state agencies, tribal organizations, non-profits, and other non-federal entities for projects in disadvantaged or distressed Alaska communities.

Monies are available for phytoremediation projects using trees to help clean up contaminated soils and groundwater. These are 100% reimbursable grants and will be awarded on a competitive basis. No match funding is required. Grants will be awarded for up to three years. Requests for interest must be received by March 31, 2024.

1.1 Background

Phytoremediation is the use of plants and their associated microbes to clean up contaminated environments. Certain plants can remove or break down harmful chemicals from the ground when their roots take in water and nutrients from the contaminated soil, sediment, and groundwater¹. Phytoremediation is used to mitigate a variety of contaminants and can be less costly than traditional remediation techniques.

Historically, phytoremediation has been limited to areas with minor contamination because high levels of contaminants can inhibit plant growth. However, recent advancements in microbiology have improved plants' resilience to toxins and increased their ability to grow and degrade contamination safely.

Trees are particularly well suited to phytoremediation because they are able to absorb and sequester relatively large amounts of contaminants compared to other plants and their roots reach deep into the soil, enabling them to access contaminated groundwater. Trees from the *Populus* (poplars, cottonwoods, etc.) and *Salix* (willows) genera are often used for phytoremediation projects in Alaska.

The efficacy and affordability of these advancements is also creating opportunities for communities to use phytoremediation technology to not only address soil contamination but also to plant trees and increase canopy cover.

Successful applicants will have knowledge of and commitment to implementing phytoremediation projects in their communities. Project goals include remediating contaminated soils and groundwater and increasing tree canopy.

2. Requirements

2.1 Disadvantaged Community Requirement

Under USFS or state guidelines, projects funded through this opportunity must take place in communities that qualify as "disadvantaged" or "distressed" according to the U.S. Government Council of Environmental Quality Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool, the Denali Commission 2020 Distressed Communities Report, or the EPA IRA Disadvantaged Communities map.

[Explore the map - Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(geoplatform.gov\)](#)

[Denali Commission 2020 Distressed Communities Report](#)

[EPA IRA Disadvantaged Communities](#)

Virtually all Alaska communities off the road system are classified as disadvantaged. All federally recognized Tribes, including Alaska Native villages, are designated as disadvantaged although they may not be within census tracts that are designated as such.

If you are unsure if a project in your community falls within a disadvantaged or distressed area, please contact our office.

2.2 Eligibility Requirements

- Eligible groups include all **non-federal organizations, state agencies, local governments, cooperative weed management areas, soil and water conservation districts, registered non-profits, local communities, public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, Alaska Native organizations, federally recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations and villages, and Tribal organizations as defined in 25 USC 5304 (I).**
- Eligible applicants may apply for funding for projects conducted on non-federal public lands, including state lands, university lands, borough lands, local government and municipal lands, Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation lands, and land held in trust for Native American Tribes and individuals (includes Trust lands).
- Projects or activities on private property are permitted upon meeting specific requirements. If you are considering a project on private property, please contact CFP for details.
- Awardees will be responsible for submitting a mid-project report and final report.

3. How can the grant be used?

Grant funds must be used to implement phytoremediation projects in Alaska.

- Minimum Grant Request: \$10,000
For grants under \$10,000, contact CFP
- Maximum Grant Request: \$80,000

3.1 Eligible Cost Examples

The following outlines eligible activities and costs for both grant expenditures and cost share contributions.

- Purchase of materials and supplies, including trees and irrigation systems.
- Training of staff necessary to complete the funded project (training must be specified in the grant proposal and agreement).
- Project management (planning, administration, and follow-up monitoring).
- Hiring crews and/or contracting work to implement phytoremediation installments.
- Equipment rental or lease (leases must be specified in the grant proposal and agreement).
- Other items as determined by the grant review committee.

3.2 Ineligible Costs

- Activities not approved in the grant agreement (exceptions can be granted during the field season with approval from the CFP).
- Construction and capital improvements. Examples of ineligible construction costs include facilities, roads, new buildings, culverts, and boardwalks.
- Educational and research organizations proposing projects that do not show tangible, on-the ground benefit.
- Organizations seeking funding for litigation or advocacy.
- Organizations seeking general operating or programmatic support.
- Activities federal agencies are required to perform.
- Other items as determined by the grant review committee.
- Equipment purchase.

4. Application Process

The application process for these grants will be different from other grant programs. Communities, agencies or organizations that are interested in a phytoremediation project will first submit a **Request For Interest** indicating that they have a potential phytoremediation project.

As a first step DOF will need to know if your agency, community or organization is interested in participating. Please send a formal Request for Interest to our office no later than March 31, 2024.

5. Target Dates

To be determined following receipt of Requests for Interest.

6. Resources

- ¹Environmental Protection Agency – A Citizens Guide to Phytoremediation
https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-04/documents/a_citizens_guide_to_phytoremediation.pdf
- Environmental Protection Agency – Phytoremediation Resource Guide
<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-04/documents/phytoresguide.pdf>
- Alaska Community Forestry Program
<http://forestry.alaska.gov/community/index>

7. Contact

Mail or deliver proposal to:

Alaska Community Forestry
Program

550 W. 7th Ave. Ste 1450

Anchorage, AK 99501

Email proposal to:

CommunityForestry@alaska.gov

For additional information contact:

Jim Renkert, Community Forestry Program Coord.

Jim.Renkert@alaska.gov

907-269-8465

Josh Hightower, Community Assistance Forester

Josh.Hightower@alaska.gov

907-269-8466

Mission of the Alaska Community Forestry Program:

Help communities build effective, self-sustaining community forestry programs with strong local support.

Grant funds provided to the State of Alaska Division of Forestry and Fire Protection from the USDA Forest Service.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information is also available in languages other than English."