



# Alaska Community Forestry Program 2026 Grant Opportunities Phytoremediation Grants Round III



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/>

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## **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 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 2 years. Applications must be received by May 29, 2026.

### **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 groundwater<sup>1</sup>. 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. 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 quarterly progress reports and a final report following project completion.
- Awardees will be required to report accomplishments for the periods ending June 30 and December 31 to the public facing Trees at Work reporting dashboard.

### **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. Grant Selection Criteria**

Applications will be scored and evaluated by a grant review committee. Selection criteria will include project feasibility, demonstration of a well-organized plan and budget, anticipated benefits to ecosystem health, and location within an area of priority interest according to the 2020 Alaska State Forest Action Plan.

Grant applications that include partnerships between local governments and local or regional non-profits are encouraged.

Grants that take place in communities or areas considered “disadvantaged” or “distressed” as shown in the AK Disadvantaged Communities webmap or Denali Commission 2025 Distressed Communities Report will receive priority consideration.

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.

## **5. Application Process**

Complete the 4-page application. Proposals are **due no later than 11:59 p.m., on Friday, May 29, 2026**. Management of the grants will be conducted by the CFP. All completed proposals will be reviewed by a grant committee. The state and grantee will sign a grant agreement and funds will be paid to the grantee upon receipt of the final report.

### **5.1 Project Details and Activities**

Please submit the following information as an attachment along with your application.

- Project location.
- Area of impact.
- Project description and design plans
- Maintenance and monitoring plan.
- Any required permitting from government agencies
- Authorizations from landowners.
- Impact on fish and wildlife populations.
- Specifications for any proposed plant material, including species, source, and planting plan.
- Summary of existing contaminants and mitigation plan.
- If proposing inoculation of plants, describe.

## **6. Target Dates**

The following dates are targets for each step in the selection process. After the proposal submittal, these dates may require adjustment.

Proposals due:	<b>May 29, 2026</b>
Grant review committee reviews proposals:	<b>June 1 – June 19</b>
Projects selected:	<b>June 22 – June 26</b>
Project timelines and grant agreement finalized:	<b>June 29 – July 20</b>

## **7. Resources**

- <sup>1</sup>Environmental Protection Agency – A Citizens Guide to Phytoremediation  
[https://19january2021snapshot.epa.gov/sites/static/files/2015-04/documents/a\\_citizens\\_guide\\_to\\_phytoremediation.pdf](https://19january2021snapshot.epa.gov/sites/static/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>

## **8. Contact**

**Mail or deliver proposal to:**

Alaska Community Forestry  
Program

550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. Ste 1450

Anchorage, AK 99501

**Email proposal to:**

[CommunityForestry@alaska.gov](mailto:CommunityForestry@alaska.gov)

**For additional information contact:**

Josh Hightower, Community Forestry Program  
Coordinator

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.***

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