

Request for Proposals
Management of the Urban & Community Forestry Program
Department of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawaii

I. BACKGROUND

The Urban and Community Forestry program is a U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) federal assistance program authorized as part of the Forestry Title of the 1996 Farm Bill passed by the 101st Congress. The purposes of the Urban and Community Forestry Program are to: 1) improve understanding of the benefits of preserving existing tree cover in urban areas and communities; 2) encourage owners of private residences and commercial properties to maintain trees and expand forest cover on their properties; 3) provide educational programs and technical assistance to States and local organizations (including community associations and schools) to maintain forested lands and individual trees in urban and community settings as well as identify appropriate tree species and sites for expanding forest cover; 4) implement tree planting programs to complement urban and community tree maintenance and open space programs; 5) promote the establishment of demonstration projects in selected urban community settings to illustrate the benefits of maintaining and creating forest cover and trees; 6) promote the understanding and practice of technically sound urban forest and tree maintenance; and 7) expand existing research and educational efforts intended to improve understanding of urban tree growth and maintenance, tree physiology and morphology, species adaptations, urban forest ecology, and the economic, environmental, social, and psychological benefits of trees and forest cover in urban and community environments.

The State of Hawaii, Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) administers the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program (www.kaulunani.org) for the State of Hawaii with assistance from the USFS. The Kaulunani program as administered under DLNR has been successful in fulfilling the overall goals of the federal program through grants to community organizations that promote urban tree care and improve the urban forest environment for the residents of Hawaii. To continue to promote program, allow for growth beyond the current program, as well as to better administer the Kaulunani program, DLNR is seeking competitive sealed proposals from eligible Applicants to oversee and implement all aspects of the Kaulunani program in conjunction with DLNR and USFS.

II. PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR HAWAII

- A. The overall program objective is to successfully implement the Urban and Community Forestry Program (UCF) in Hawaii (<http://www.kaulunani.org/>) by developing and maintaining an outreach / volunteer program and coordinating the technical assistance component of the program to enhance on-the-ground project establishment and maintenance.

- B. Direct the outreach and volunteer program to support existing and new non-profit business and governmental interest in urban and community tree planting in cities and communities in Hawaii.
- C. Direct and coordinate the Tree City USA Program.
- D. Assist communities with arboriculture and educational components of the program; and provide technical assistance with tree planting and/or tree care in urban communities statewide.
- E. Provide expertise and technical guidance relating to urban tree planting projects to the State Urban and Community Forestry Council.
- F. Administer the development and implementation of the State Urban and Community Forestry Strategic Plan (Exhibit 1). The primary purpose of this plan is to describe the statewide actions necessary to accomplish urban and community forestry objectives. The strategic plan is update every five years.
- G. Work with DLNR to continue oversight of existing projects related to the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program under DLNR's jurisdiction, provide the necessary budget supervision of existing funds and new funds, and ensure accountability of all funding through audits, reports, and other requests for information.
- H. Seek innovative funding sources that will facilitate growth of the program by expanding educational outreach and awareness of urban forestry issues, increasing the number of urban projects, and collaborating with various partners to expand the scope of projects that integrate with and have impacts on lands beyond the urban interface.

III. PROPOSAL SCOPE OF SERVICES

DLNR is seeking a partner entity/organization that has sufficient knowledge about local urban and community forestry needs and that is capable of providing the following services:

- A. Work directly with DLNR and Kaulunani grantees to facilitate the completion and expenditure of existing UCF grant funds on projects authorized prior to the issuance of this Request for Proposal (RFP). This includes accounting for cost-share responsibilities related to open grants as required by USFS. Selected Applicants will be responsible for taking over the principle administration for this program (as detailed in this section) that is currently managed under DLNR including all newly obtained and remaining funds.
- B. Work with DLNR to track all budgetary aspects of the program, write bi-annual reports, respond to USFS and DLNR requests for programmatic information, and remain informed on all National urban forestry issues that need to be included in Hawaii Urban Forest Strategic Plan.
- C. Implement and revise the State Urban and Community Forestry Strategic Plan (Exhibit 1) every 5 years to reflect new goals and objectives of the State and

national program. The Plan shall specifically identify statewide urban forestry challenges and opportunities for each island, as well as propose actions to promote the expansion and improvement of urban forestry landscapes in Hawaii.

- D. Attend the National Urban Forestry Conferences and/or State Coordinator's meetings annually, subject to availability of funds. Also, at least once every 2 years a representative from the Hawaii UCF program must attend the Pacific Island Committee meeting, subject to availability of funds.
(www.islandforestry.org).
- E. Provide administrative support for and leadership of the State Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council that will review and award, as appropriate, on funding grant applications, project initiatives, among others as they relate to UCF business. Through this interaction and consultation with the State Council, the selected applicant will implement program delivery accordingly.
- F. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFS and DLNR to coordinate aspects of the UCF program detailing the authorization of funding, oversight from the DLNR and USFS, role of the Kaulunani UCF Advisory Council, terms and authority for termination of agreement due to inappropriate use of funds, access to grant program generated documentation, among others.
- G. Meet the objectives and goals of the program by:
 - 1. Providing UCF information to school teachers and children, adults, property/land owners, developers, and county and state agencies to help them qualify for program funding.
 - 2. Coordinating, when appropriate, an Urban Forestry Conference to bring people together in understanding the values and benefits of urban trees in our communities.
 - 3. Developing and distributing urban forestry information through a website that must contain, but is not limited to, newsletters, grant applications, technical information, and other urban forestry related news.
 - 4. Administering the Kaulunani grant program to fund urban and community forestry projects throughout the islands of Hawaii.
 - 5. Developing grant proposals for Federal and State funding, as well as fund raising/proposals requesting local funding and support.
 - 6. Identifying appropriate UCF projects throughout the state. Ensure grant applications meet planting and funding guidelines, which includes, but is not limited to, reviewing arithmetic on budgets, acceptable percentages of trees (70%), shrubs (20%), and ground cover (10%); and project costs are acceptable, as determined by the State Council. If new percentage rates are established, ensure that these rates are appropriate or provide documentation to the State Council as to why or how they are not

- appropriate.
7. Seek eligible applicants for new enrollment into the program and maintain eligibility in current grants (e.g. match requirement, ownership status, etc.).
 8. Coordinating all aspects of the Kaulunani Program to ensure all UCF projects stay on schedule and are in accordance with approved and authorized plans.
 9. Providing assistance to existing Tree City USA projects to expand their level of involvement and promoting new projects where possible. This includes, but is not limited to, visiting university campuses, military bases and counties to explore their interest in becoming a new Tree City USA.
 10. Monitoring existing Kaulunani urban forestry projects through completion. This includes monitoring, supplying (in some cases), and documenting the cost-share match (50/50).
 11. Working with project coordinators of Kaulunani grants or other applicable projects to accurately report the number of volunteers used to complete tree planting projects.
 12. Creating GIS and other maps for existing UCF projects as well as including any new projects. Entities will be responsible for keeping supporting data about all projects that can be used to create a comprehensive GIS map that can be used for State assessment needs.
 13. Maintaining and updating a directory of organizations useful in establishing and coordinating volunteer driven UCF projects for communities throughout Hawaii.
 14. Working with public, private and chartered school teachers and students, property owners, developers, and county and state agencies to assure that trees are planted and maintained correctly and responsibly in their communities and school buildings.

IV. DLNR SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Provide assistance guidance on developing and integrating Kaulunani program goals and objectives consistent with State and national forestry management policy and direction and USFS State and Private Forestry program and policy and direction.
- B. Administer USFS grants passed through to selected applicant. Review and/or submit annual grant and reports to the USFS.
- C. Maintain a position on the UCF Advisory Council.
- D. Periodically review program budgets that provide federal funding match.
- E. Provide technical assistance as needed.
- F. Provide mapping services where needed.
- G. Partner with, where appropriate, and assist in seeking additional funding sources.

V. SUMMARY OF NEEDED EXPERTISE

- A. The applicant must be able to demonstrate its comprehensive understanding of existing mandates necessary for the implementation of the Urban and Community Forestry Program in Hawaii as authorized by the Forestry Title of the 1996 Farm Bill, Urban and Community Forestry Program of Title XII State and Private Forestry Program.
- B. The UCF functions as a fifty (50) percent cost-share reimbursement program where the awarded applicant will be required to provide fifty percent of the total program cost through cash and in-kind services. The applicant must have financial capacity to operate on a reimbursement basis. Expected reimbursement will usually take a month or more to process.
- C. The selected applicant shall provide administrative support for and leadership of the State Urban and Community Forestry Council that advise DLNR's, Division of Forestry and Wildlife on items or Legislative initiatives as they relate to UCF business. Through this interaction and consultation with the State Council, the selected entity will implement program delivery accordingly. The Applicant must demonstrate the ability to management and organize such a council.
- D. The applicant shall have demonstrated the skills, knowledge and experience to administer the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program for Hawaii. In addition, the applicant shall have knowledge of the federal Urban and Community Forestry Program mandates in order to effectively implement the state's program.
- E. The applicant shall employ staff with degrees from accredited university with specialties in Horticulture, Arboriculture and/or Urban Forestry.
- F. The applicant must have knowledge of Hawaiian and/or tropical vegetation, as well as knowledge/experience with invasive species in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific.
- G. The applicant shall possess a technical understanding about tree planting and associated projects that are reviewed for funding by the State Council with particular emphasis on planting site suitability, design, appropriate tree species selection and project maintenance requirements.

VI. DURATION

Award proposals will be for duration of twenty-four months with the possibility of extension of an additional twenty-four months.

VII. FUNDING

This program operates on a reimbursement basis and applicant is required to match (50/50) all federal funds from the USDA Forest Service. Funds for partial or full

management of this program will come from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service State & Private Forestry Program, Region Five annual base (noncompetitive) and competitive funding. (**Note:** Actual funding amounts vary annual and competitive funding is not guaranteed. Approximate range of annual base funding is between approximately \$100,000 to \$200,000, subject to availability of national funding levels. Selected applicants are expected to submit proposal and/or raise funds to support implementation of the program). The program will be conducted through a partnership and Memorandum of Understanding between DLNR, the USFS and the selected applicant. Funds are available annually beginning July 1st. Additional funds may be available through competitive grants from other sources as well.

VIII. SUBMITTAL OF PROJECT PROPOSAL

- A. This section describes the procurement process in which proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope to and state on proposal envelope:

**DLNR Division of Forestry & Wildlife
Kaulunani UCF RFP
Attn: Sheri S. Mann
1151 Punchbowl St. Rm 325
Honolulu, HI 96813**

Sealed proposals are due by **4:00 p.m. on Friday _____, 2009** at the address supplied above and as documented by the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife office time stamp. Any proposals received after the deadline date will not be considered for award and will be returned to the Applicant unopened. Please account for routing delays if submitting by U.S. Postal Service. It is the responsibility of the Offeror to ensure that all required submittals are received on time. Proposals must include **one (1) original and three (3) copies** of the entire proposal in an sealed envelop. Proposal must include a cover letter stating the intent of the proposal, contact information, as well as authorizing signature for the proposal from the appropriate entity representative.

Proposals shall be prepared in English and all financial information shall be provided in U.S. dollars. Only typed, written responses to requests regarding this RFP shall be considered official. The RFP is open to all qualified bidders, and selection will be based on a Comparative Evaluation Criteria as detailed in the State Procurement Code Chapter 3-122, HRS. The proposal shall be signed by the President or Chief Executive Officer of the entity interested in bidding for these services. It shall include the name, title, address, e-mail and telephone number.

B. Submission Requirements:

Project proposals must include the following:

1. **Statement of experience**, including information relevant to administering the Kaulunani Urban and Community Forestry Program as detailed in Section V. Applicant shall include a list of references.
2. **Program implementation plan** for at least two years. Applicants should include information on how each program goal (Section II) and the Scope of Services (Section III) will be administered under the implementation plan. Applicants should illustrate program priorities.
3. **Projected budget** for implementation of the program for two years. Project Proposals will be not awarded based on funding level as illustrated in the project budget. Funding in support of the program from the U.S. Forest Service may be limited and variable annually as detailed in Section VII. Applicants should include a detailed list of potential financial support for the program other than the base and competitive funding from U.S. Forest Service that will aid in the administration of the Kaulunani UCF Program based on the projected budget. Funding support may include other grant opportunities, fund raising, etc. Awarded applicants will be required to implement the program priorities regardless of funding level from U.S. Forest Service.

C. Evaluation Procedure:

1. *Proposal* - Each Project Proposal will be opened following the deadline date listed in Section VIII. The Project Proposal shall first be reviewed for inclusion of necessary documents and proposal requirements. Proposals that do not contain the requirement proposal documents may be marked as not acceptable. All acceptable proposals will be viewed by an Evaluation Committee for completeness, technical merit, and compliance with the general procurement requirements specified in this document.
2. *Evaluation Committee Review* - The Evaluation Committee shall conduct a comprehensive, fair and impartial review of each Proposal submitted and assign a score as described in the "Scoring Criteria," below. The Evaluation Committee will make all decisions regarding the evaluation, the acceptability of proposals for comparative evaluation, and the selection of proposal, if any. This procedure shall be attended by the Evaluation Committee, or any other parties as deemed necessary by the State. Proposals will not be publicly opened and only members of the Evaluation Committee or State personnel having legitimate interest in the RFP will be provided access to the proposals and evaluation results during the evaluation period. All proposals, evaluation worksheets and subsequent Best and Final Offer, if any, and including documentation, correspondence and meetings, will be kept confidential until after the award. All proposals will be made public only