

Community Canopy Grant

Background

The City of Phoenix ("City") Office of Heat Response and Mitigation ("OHRM") Community Canopy Grant is part of the American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") Residential Tree Equity Accelerator and Trees and Shade for Schools Program.

The Community Canopy Grant is intended to improve tree canopy coverage in neighborhoods in Qualifying Census Tracts throughout Phoenix. Qualifying Census Tracts ("QCT") are a Federal Housing and Urban Development designation of underserved census tracts.

Community members in QCTs have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency and its negative economic impacts. According to a 2021 brief, nearly half of low-income families reported that they, or someone within their household, had either lost a job or received a pay cut as a result of the pandemic. Subsequently, those who experienced job loss or a pay cut, were more likely to have financial hardships, such as food insecurity and paying bills (I.e., medical expenses, rent, mortgage, etc.) (Office of Human Services Policy, 2021). Trees provide environmental benefits such as cleaning the air, providing shade, and act as habitat for wildlife, but they can also reduce utility costs within neighborhoods and generate wealth by providing career opportunities for a variety of tree related specialties (American Forests, 2023).

The term "tree equity" was developed by the national group American Forests to give a name to inequities in tree canopy coverage citywide. The term is intended to be used to identify areas of our cities with low tree coverage and high social need and to prioritize investments in these areas. Improving tree equity in Phoenix will mean providing more assistance to neighborhood associations and community members who live in areas of more need. The goal is to have a city which all people have equal access to the benefits of trees.

The City of Phoenix, through the Office of Heat Response and Mitigation, invites **neighborhood associations, community nonprofits, multi-family residential sites, non-residential sites and community members** within the City's Qualified Census Tracts to submit applications seeking trees, supplies and support for tree planting projects designed to assist communities in increasing their tree canopies and grow a more resilient, sustainable, equitable, healthy, and thriving environment.

The Community Canopy grant program will:

- Advance justice, equity, and fairness within the local urban forest.
- Promote efforts to reduce the impact of urban heat island and extreme heat on our changing climate.
- Strengthen the resiliency of our communities in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, various shocks and disruptions.