



2008 AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE For COMMUNITY TREES



OVERVIEW & GUIDELINES

The Home Depot Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, is proud to announce the opening of the application period for the Third Annual Awards of Excellence for Community Trees. The Home Depot Foundation believes that the urban forest is one of the essential building blocks for healthy, livable communities impacting our social, environmental, economic and overall well-being. In addition, we strongly believe that the simple act of planting a tree has the power to be the catalyst for significant ecological improvements and profound community change.

Accordingly, we have established the Awards of Excellence for Community Trees, the goals of which are:

- To identify, recognize and showcase outstanding, innovative work of public/private partnerships engaged in enhancing and strengthening communities through the strategic use of trees.
- To promote the exchange of best practices and encourage cities around the country to adopt and implement strategic tree planting programs in partnership with local nonprofits.
- To increase the public's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of trees and their role in creating healthy, sustainable communities.

Eligible Projects/Programs

The Home Depot Foundation recognizes that cities across the country, in partnership with local nonprofits, are achieving outstanding results in urban forestry both on a project basis and programmatic level. Awards will be given on the overall excellence of the initiative based on the work completed prior to July 31, 2007 (ongoing projects/programs will be evaluated on the work completed). Applications will be assessed based on the extent to which the initiative incorporates the following criteria:

- Demonstrated partnership between city government and one or more local nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status
- Exhibited innovation in the development and enhancement of a city's urban forest

- Demonstrated exceptional city leadership
- Established benchmark measures for evaluating the success of the program/project and an assessment of whether these measures have been achieved
- Incorporated the urban forest into community revitalization plans and infrastructure improvements
- Engaged the community and multiple partners
- Enhanced the livability of a city or targeted neighborhood
- Demonstrated the ecological function of the urban forest
- Provided clear understanding and attention to sustainability
- Provided a model that is replicable by others

Award Categories and Monetary Benefits

Awards will be presented in two population categories:

- Cities with fewer than 100,000 people
- Cities with a population of 100,000 or more

Based on the first round applications, a group of finalists will be selected. Within each category two grant awards will be made -- \$75,000 to the winning project and \$25,000 to the runner-up. Outstanding Achievement Awards of \$2,500 each will also be given in each category. All finalists will receive recognition at the US Conference of Mayors' Annual Meeting in June 2008. An independent Advisory Committee of experts will select project winners. While both the city and the nonprofit partner will be recognized, the grant will be awarded to the nonprofit partner to be used at their discretion for charitable purposes to further the goal of promoting healthy communities through tree planting and the management of the urban forest.

Other Benefits of the Awards Program

- City leadership and their nonprofit partner agency will be recognized for their outstanding accomplishment during the Annual Meeting of the Conference of Mayors in June 2008 in Miami
- A hand-crafted award suitable for public display as a symbol of the city's and nonprofit's exemplary vision and leadership
- The issuance of press releases announcing the award winners
- Publication in U.S. Mayor, the twice-monthly news publication of the Conference of Mayors, and a description of winning programs on the Conference's Internet Web site, as well as The Home Depot Foundation's website
- Assistance in planning and conducting a local ceremony, in which the Awards of Excellence will be presented again to the mayor by representatives from the Conference of Mayors and The Home Depot Foundation

Evaluation Process

The Awards of Excellence program employs a two-step process. The first step involves completing an online application, which will be reviewed by the staff of The Home Depot Foundation. Applications that demonstrate that the initiative described meets the assessment criteria will be invited to complete the second round application that will be reviewed by the independent Advisory Committee. The second round application MUST be completed online and will be available to eligible organizations at a password-protected site. No hard copies of the application will be accepted.

In addition to the second round application, before an application will be considered complete, The Home Depot Foundation must also receive hard copies of the following:

- A letter of support or recommendation from the Mayor's office (if application is being submitted from a nonprofit rather than the Mayor's office)
- Before and after photos of the project site
- Letters of support from up to three community stakeholders
- Landscape and maintenance plan (if applicable)

Winners will be recommended to The Home Depot Foundation and the Conference of Mayors by an independent Advisory Committee comprised of experts in the field of urban forestry, environment and sustainable community development. By way of example, in 2007 the Advisory Committee members were associated with organizations including: Alliance for Community Trees, National Arbor Day Foundation, Trust for Public Land, University of Washington, USDA Forest Service, Enterprise Community Partners' Green Communities Initiative, American Society of Landscape Architects, and a former mayor.

Timeline

October 19	First round application is available
December 14	Deadline for the first round application
January 11	Second round finalists announced
February 29	Deadline for second round applications
June 26	Awards announced at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Annual Meeting in Miami, FL

How to Apply

Any city or nonprofit organization interested in submitting a first-round application for the Awards of Excellence Program for Community Trees should go to https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_248?SA=SNA&FID=35032

The deadline for on-line submission of the first round application is midnight, Eastern Standard Time, December 14, 2007. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed.