**TREE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND**

**TRUSTEE DIRECTED GRANT NUMBER 17-TR-01:**

**ARBORICULTURE EDUCATION BENCHMARK REVIEW**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS, 2017 GRANT CYCLE**

**INTRODUCTION**

Tree Research and Education Endowment (TREE) Fund is a 501(c)3 charitable organization that awards grants to enhance awareness and management of tree populations in urban settings, thereby improving community health, beauty, value and sustainability. TREE Fund has awarded a total of $3.2 million to date for arboriculture and urban forestry research and education. See treefund.org/about for more information about our mission, history and programs.

TREE Fund began issuing Arboriculture Education Grants in 2009 for innovative community-based programs that could foster interest in urban and community forests among young people. We have awarded nearly $75,000 via 16 regional grants under this program to date. TREE Fund is not alone in funding such worthy endeavors. To ensure that our future grant making programs are as effective as possible, a benchmark national review of capacity, focus, and outcomes of similar grant-making activities and publicly funded programs is necessary.

Toward this end, TREE Fund’s Trustees have authorized a one-time grant in 2017 to conduct a baseline review of charitable arboriculture and urban forestry education programs in the United States. The maximum award for this project is $5,000. The ideal team would include one or more academic staff/faculty with expertise in education and horticulture/forestry to supervise the work of an undergraduate or graduate student who would actually design and execute whatever survey they deem appropriate to provide the desired information.

**PROGRAM PURPOSE AND DESIRED OUTCOME**

TREE Fund seeks a thorough analysis and report on national educational grant-making programs for arboriculture and urban forestry to guide decision-making on future grants by ensuring that (a) TREE Fund is not needlessly duplicating or competing with other similar programs and (b) programs empowered by TREE Fund can be documented and replicated beyond their original home markets, thereby furthering their utility and reach.

TREE Fund desires this report be made available to its Board of Trustees in May 2018. The successful applicant will perform and document the following tasks before that time:

* Develop a comprehensive roster of nonprofit, educational and government organizations in the United States currently making annual public grants or gifts (e.g. >$25,000/year total awards per entity) for community arboriculture or urban forestry education programs;
* Create a formal index coding the types of programs offered by these organizations from 2012 to 2017, to include such metrics as:
  + Types of providers (e.g. national charities, regional charities, municipalities, State or Federal governments, academic institutions, cooperative extension, etc.);
  + Target audiences (e.g. K-12, high school, adult, family, professionals, etc.);
  + Types of programs (e.g. awareness events, skills development, vocational training, empowering underserved communities, etc.);
* Analyze the collected data to provide qualitative and quantitative assessments of:
  + Most common types of programming;
  + Regional variances in type;
  + Areas (geographic or thematic) which may be under- or over-represented;
  + Average effective grant sizes (per grant and per organization);
  + Recommendations to the TREE Fund Board of Trustees on how (or whether) its arboriculture education programs can be most effective on a national basis.
* Develop a summary article for TREE Fund’s monthly newsletter, and be available for a potential presentation on the subject at a future TREE Fund conference, meeting or event; recipients must recognize TREE Fund support in any such activities related to this project.

**TIMELINE AND REPORTS**

Applications will be accepted only via the TREE Fund’s website (treefund.org) from July 1 to August 15, 2017. No advance letter of inquiry is required before applications may be submitted. All compliant applications will be reviewed and ranked by the TREE Fund Board of Trustees’ Research and Education Committee. A single award will be recommended by the Committee for approval by the Trustees on or before September 15, 2017. Notification of award will be made within two weeks of Trustee approval.

Recipients’ signed agreements and requested support materials must be received within two weeks of award notification. The award letter will include a contract issued to the recipient’s academic institution, which must be signed and returned within two weeks of the award notification date. Upon TREE Fund’s receipt of the signed contract and any requested supporting documentation, a first payment equaling the requested grant amount $400 in retained funds will be sent to the recipient’s Institution. A final report is due by May 1, 2018. Upon receipt and approval of the final report, the $400 retained funds will be paid to the recipient’s academic institution.

**PROJECT BUDGET**

The maximum cash award for this project is $5,000 and proposals must include at least a 10% matching component of in-kind or cash provided by others. Proposed costs must be broken down into the following categories:

* Compensation or Stipends (if benefits are included the proposal, identify them by dollar value and as a percentage of the total compensation/stipend cost);
* Travel or Transportation (specifically identify costs associated with travel beyond 150 miles of applicant’s institution, and reason for such proposed travel);
* Materials and Supplies;
* Institutional Overhead (may not exceed 10% of total requested amount)
* Matching Component (must be at least 10% of total budgeted amount; unrecovered institutional overhead may be credited toward the match).

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

Applications will be scored on the following scale:

* Proposal directly addresses each of the tasks described above (20 points)
* Methods for conducting and documenting the research are clear (30 points)
* The proposed team is qualified to conduct the requested work; for students, lead applicant has documented concurrence from a supervising academic advisor (30 points)
* Objectives are achievable within required time frame and proposed budget (20 points)

TREE Fund does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability or national or ethnic origin. Current Trustees of TREE Fund or any member of the family of any such Trustees are ineligible to receive grants from TREE Fund. As an integral part of TREE Fund’s mission, findings from this grant may be freely and widely distributed to any and all parties who may benefit from the work, with full credit provided to the report’s author(s).