



**Press Release – December 26, 2021**

**CUFC Announces 1<sup>st</sup> Round Recipients of Urban Forestry Climate Change Grants**

The Connecticut Urban Forest Council will be awarding funding to five applicants through its Urban Forestry Climate Change Grant program. The five recipients and the amount of funding to be awarded are:

- Groundwork Bridgeport - \$33,942
- The Greenwich Tree Conservancy - \$37,000
- The Urban Resources Initiative (New Haven) - \$37,000
- The Town of Stratford - \$37,000
- The Town of Windsor - \$34,720

The Urban Forestry Climate Change Grant Program was initiated over this past year to fund urban forestry projects throughout Connecticut that improve the urban forest and increase local tree canopy cover. Projects must also have a role in mitigating the local impacts of climate change and addressing issues relating to social equity and environmental justice.

Funding for this Grant Program is provided by the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Heather Dionne, Chair of the CUFC and City Forester for the City of Hartford stated “This is major! Trees mean so much to a community when they are chosen well and planted right. This is especially true in those parts of our cities and towns where, in so many ways, the opportunities are just not the same as they are elsewhere. The cities, towns and non-profits within Connecticut are willing to address these issues. They just need the resources and maybe some technical advice to go along with it. We are glad for this chance to contribute.”

CUFC is currently soliciting a second round of grants, with applications due by February 2, 2022. More information is available via <https://cturbanforestcouncil.org/grants/climate-change-grants/>.

Summaries of the projects funded through this grants program follow:

**Groundwork Bridgeport - \$33,642**

“Growing Our Forest Together” will plant 60 trees from eight genera in three public parks in Bridgeport, engaging community volunteers to plant the trees and to maintain them through their Adopt-A-Tree Program. The locations for tree planting include Beardsley Park, Old Mill Green, and Seaside Park. Planting in these parks will recover some canopy lost due to emerald ash borer, may mitigate some risk related to stormwater runoff and urban flooding, and will be planted near urban neighborhoods affected by industrial pollution and with low tree equity scores. The parks are essential recreation areas for these neighborhoods.

### **Greenwich Tree Conservancy - \$37,000**

“Adapting to Climate: Increasing the Urban Canopy in Greenwich’s EJ Census Tracts” will plant 51 trees from at least seven genera in Environmental Justice communities (Byram, Chickahominy, and Pemberwick neighborhoods), as identified as those census blocks with the highest minority population, highest proportion of the community living in poverty, and with low-ranking tree equity scores. An unusual aspect of this proposal was an effort to strategically remove concrete in locations to plant trees where they could provide the greatest benefit. Tree planting will be in spaces close to the living areas of communities, which has the greatest potential to alleviate urban heat island effects and to provide the most direct health and quality of life benefits to the neighborhoods. The proposal was strongly supported by letters from elected representatives of the affected communities recognized the benefits that will accrue to their constituents from the planted trees.

### **Urban Resources Initiative, Inc. (New Haven) - \$37,000**

“Solving Inequities in New Haven’s Tree Canopy Distribution and Planting Trees for Cool Communities,” involves planting 75 trees from approximately nine genera in areas of the city identified in 2016 through LIDAR assessment as having less than 20% tree canopy, and are identified as Environmental Justice communities, having high proportion minority populations living in poverty. The planting will involve training of high school students and formerly incarcerated persons, through the GreenSkills and EMERGE programs, respectively. A bilingual campaign for tree planting will take place in the targeted neighborhoods, to elicit requests from residents for trees to be planted on their properties.

### **The Town of Stratford - \$37,000**

“Street Tree Replanting” will plant 100 trees in the two areas first identified as Environmental Justice Community census blocks, prior to the entire town being so designated. These neighborhoods have tree canopies of only 14 – 15%, and are adjacent to industrial areas. Locations within these census blocks suitable for tree planting having been identified by the Tree Warden, the trees of suitable species will be purchased through contracts, planted by the Public Works Department, and then maintained by the Town Gardener. Two community meetings will inform residents of the areas to be planted about tree biology and benefits, tree law, and to garner support for residents to help maintain the planted trees.

### **The Town of Windsor - \$34,720**

“Taking Root in Windsor” will plant 91 trees and shrubs from fourteen genera in three public parks in the Deerfield and Wilson neighborhoods, ultimately improving shade, lowering urban heat island effects, and providing more livable space for recreation. These neighborhoods were selected based upon their high minority population (66 – 89%), proximity to interstate highways, high level of impervious surfaces, and overall poor health indicators as evident from the CDC Places Dataset. Town efforts in the STEP program supports training of local high school youth in tree care.

---

The Connecticut Urban Forest Council is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Its membership includes individuals from throughout the state of Connecticut who are engaged in urban forestry in a variety of ways. Among its ranks are arborists, landscape architects, tree wardens, state and local public officials, representatives of various non-profit organizations, researchers, educators and general tree enthusiasts.

For further details regarding the Council or the Urban Forestry Climate Change Grant program, please visit the CUFC web site at <https://cturbanforestcouncil.org>. Council Chair Heather Dionne may also be contacted for further information either on the Council or the grant program via [Heather.Dionne@hartford.gov](mailto:Heather.Dionne@hartford.gov).