



STATE OF ARKANSAS
**Department of Finance
and Administration**

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September 1, 2023

Senator Jonathan Dismang, Co-Chair
Representative Frances Cavanaugh, Co-Chair
Performance Evaluation & Expenditure Review Committee
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol Building
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: FY 24 Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act of 2021

Dear Co-Chairs:

Pursuant to Section 37 (01) of Act 796 of 2023, I am forwarding the attached Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act request(s) that have received my approval as Chief Fiscal Officer of the State.

- Department of Agriculture – Nursery and Tree Orchard Improvement - \$160,000
- Department of Agriculture –State Forest Action Plan - \$681,000
- Department of Agriculture –State Forest Fire Assistance Response - \$343,323

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Hudson'.

James L. Hudson
Secretary

Attachment(s)

**INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT & JOBS ACT OF 2021
 APPROPRIATION AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
 SECTION 37 OF ACT 796 OF 2023**

E.1

Agency: Arkansas Department of Agriculture Business Area Code: 0400
 Program Title: Arkansas FY22 Nursery and Tree Orchard Improvement Project
 Granting Organization: USDA-Forest Service CFDA #: 10.664
 Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 7/1/2023 Ending: 6/30/2024

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):
 \$160,000 has been additionally awarded to support modernization efforts at Baucum Nursery by purchasing a tractor, make repairs and upgrades to the storage coolers and irrigation systems. Reliable equipment and automated irrigation system will improve overall nursery operations efficiencies and output.

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act Program Funding

Func. Area: COMM Fund Code: FII4000 Continuation of Existing Program: _____
 Funds Center: BC7 Internal Order/WBS Element: _____ Change in Existing Program: X
 New Program: _____

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: 590:00:46	160,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 160,000

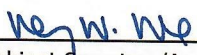
Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 11/7/2021-11/6/2026


DFA IGS State Technology Planning	Date
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.	

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by:  7-31-23 Date
 Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director
 Robert Brech 8/30/23 Date
 Office of Budget
 Office of Personnel Mgmt Date


 8/10/2023

Description: The purpose of this project is to support modernization efforts at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Forestry Division's (formerly known as the Arkansas Forestry Commission), Baucum Nursery by purchasing one new tractor, make repairs and upgrades to the storage coolers and modernizing the irrigation systems. Reliable equipment and an automated irrigation system will improve overall nursery operational efficiencies and output.

Scope of Work:

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Forestry Commission's Baucum Nursery grows and sells hardwood and pine seedlings for reforestation, specializing in native Arkansas trees, and a variety of genetically improved species. The nursery covers about 220 acres and has been operating since the 1950s.

Nursery operations require labor intensive activities. Unfortunately, workforce turnover continues to cause limitations on seedling production. Improvements of operational efficiency and mechanization will help reduce the limiting factor of personnel shortages and increase nursery capacity.

A major improvement needed is modernizing the outside irrigation system. Currently several labor hours each day are spent manually adjusting the system. With an upgraded computerized system, these labor hours can be used for more productive activities and seedling survival rates will improve with benefit from a consistent computerized irrigation schedule. Plans are to complete the irrigation upgrades for field sections as the crops are rotated. Upgrades will be

made in stages over the next three years. Additional equipment improvements are the repairs/upgrades of storage coolers and the purchase of a new farm tractor which will reduce labor hours used for equipment repairs and maintenance and increase production due to more modern and reliable equipment.

The purchase of a new farm tractor, storage cooler upgrades, and the initial irrigation system modernization will help improve capacity to carry out present and future reforestation needs.

Deliverables:

BIL Revegetation Funding Criteria:

1. Inadequate Capacity

- i. Increased capacity of seedlings produced ("nursery capacity") and/or
 - a. Examine current nursery property for consideration of expanding production field size to create extra nursery bed space.
- ii. Improvement of operational efficiency (reducing the cost per seedling) and/or
 - a. Update equipment to reduce the number of breakdowns and repairs.
 - b. Update existing irrigation system to help better mitigate manpower shortages and improve when and how we use water.
- iii. Improved quality of seedlings as a result of new investments (survival rate)
 - a. Upgrades to storage cooler to ensure reliable storage conditions.
 - b. Update existing irrigation system so we can have the ability to irrigate at night which will improve the quality of seedlings and conserve water.

**INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT & JOBS ACT OF 2021
 APPROPRIATION AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
 SECTION 37 OF ACT 796 OF 2023**

E.2

Agency: Arkansas Department of Agriculture Business Area Code: 0400
 Program Title: Arkansas Fiscal Year 2022 State Forest Action Plan Funding
 Granting Organization: USDA-Forest Service CFDA #: 10.664
 Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 7/1/2023 Ending: 6/30/2024

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):
 \$681,000 has been additionally awarded to provide technical and financial assistance to local governments and others to plan urban forestry programs, and to plant, protect, improve urban forests, and associated natural resources. The goal is to improve quality of life, environmental health, and community resilience by encouraging and empowering Arkansas communities to develop sound urban forestry management practices.

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act Program Funding

Func. Area: COMM Fund Code: FII4004 Continuation of Existing Program: _____
 Funds Center: BD8 Internal Order/WBS Element: _____ Change in Existing Program: X
 New Program: _____

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other: 590:00:46	681,000
Other:	
Total	\$ 681,000

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 07/01/2021-06/30/2027

DFA IGS State Technology Planning	Date
Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.	

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

State funds will not be used to replace federal funds when such funds expire, unless appropriated by the General Assembly and authorized by the Governor.

Approved by: *Weg H. MP* 7-31-23 Robert Brech 8/30/23
 Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date Office of Budget Date Office of Personnel Mgmt Date

JM 8/10/2023

Purpose:

The Urban and Community Assistance Program was authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (PL 95-313), Section 9, and amended by PL 113-79, effective February 7, 2014. The Program is intended to provide technical and financial assistance to state forestry agencies for the purpose of encouraging states to provide technical and financial assistance to local governments and others to plan urban forestry programs, and to plant, protect, improve urban forests, and associated natural resources.

The goal of the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program in Arkansas is to improve quality of life, environmental health, and community resilience by encouraging and empowering Arkansas communities to develop sound urban forestry management practices.

The Urban and Community Forestry Program of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture – Forestry Division (hereafter, the Forestry Division), which achieves its mission through a variety of programs, is a priority due to the many benefits urban and community forestry can provide for all Arkansans.

Seventy-five percent of Arkansans live in urban areas. Northwest Arkansas was the 13th-fastest-growing urban area in the United States between 2010 and 2019 (US Census Bureau, 2020). These changes in the landscape are placing demands on our forests and are resulting in reduced canopy, fragmented forests, and loss of buffers in our watersheds. The quality of life in urban centers is directly influenced by the presence of urban trees and natural areas. Researchers have determined that time spent outside and more connected with nature can improve personal health. Retention and restoration of the urban forest canopy is difficult and requires

community involvement, therefore community planning efforts need to include elements related to trees. Urban and community trees are relatively more susceptible to mortality pressures, such as disease, invasive species, carbon starvation, storm damage, and mechanical damage. Public outreach and tree care professional development are needed to mitigate tree health concerns. With a 15% poverty rate (US GSA 2018-2019 data), Arkansas has the fourth-highest number of citizens living in poverty in the nation. Economic pressures are impacting the amount of tree planting and tree care occurring in communities; tools, education resources, and expertise are needed to demonstrate the implementation of best community tree management practices in the most resourceful manner.

The Arkansas 2020-2029 Forest Action Plan identified seven primary threats to forestland, and while two of them (urbanization and urban forestry) specifically are addressed through Urban and Community Forestry efforts, the remaining five threats (unmanaged forest property, water supply protection, climate challenges, community wildfire protection, and forest pest issues) are also impacted by work done through Urban and Community Forestry activities. The Arkansas 2020-2029 Forest Action Plan lists objectives specific to the Urban and Community Forestry strategy (Objective 8.1 and Objective 8.2, pages 46-47).

Program goals will be accomplished through the Forestry Division's Urban and Community Forestry program that includes: a program coordinator; a partnership coordinator; District Urban Forestry Representatives/Arborists; a program-funded agreement between the Forestry Division and the Arkansas Urban Forestry Council; and partnerships with city and county governments, local and national non-profit organizations, educational institutions, natural resource programs, the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, watershed groups, the International Society of Arboriculture, the Arbor Day Foundation, and other federal, state, and local government agencies.

Match is provided by Forestry Division personnel expenses, along with associated indirect expenses.

Scope of Work:

The Forestry Division's Urban & Community Forestry Program intends to use a total federal portion of \$62,800 as outlined in the budget worksheet A. \$12,318 will be allocated toward the salary and fringe benefits of the Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator, Urban Forestry Partnership Coordinator, and urban forestry work by the District Urban Representatives/Arborists and other field personnel involved in the specified Urban & Community Forestry projects. \$21,400 is for supplies that will be used to expand potted tree growing operations and improve watering capabilities for tree planting projects, e.g., Shade Trees on Playgrounds. Additional nursery materials, substrate, and irrigation supplies will enable the growth of approximately 400 hardwood seedlings into potted trees. The potted trees will then be available through the Arkansas Community Trees program to municipalities and non-profit organizations for planting in public-use areas. Special consideration will be given for projects that lack the economic capacity to dedicate funds toward increasing community tree cover, thus increasing access to the multiple benefits of trees by populations which have historically been denied access or which have been unable to obtain access to those benefits. \$1,500 will be used for in-state travel to facilitate delivery of the trees and tree-planting assistance to recipients.

Newly planted community trees will encourage a healthy relationship between nature and people, and communities receiving trees will subsequently be encouraged and supported in maintaining abundant, sustainable community forests through the technical assistance offered by Urban & Community Forestry program staff to individuals and communities (Arkansas Forest Action Plan Objective 8.1). Promoting the inclusion of urban forestry in community planning, development, and sustainability will also be accomplished through the Arkansas Community Trees program (Arkansas Forest Action Plan Objective 8.2).

In the Other category, \$12,000 will be used to provide pass-through funding to the Arkansas Forestry Association's Educational Foundation (AFAEF) for the purpose of funding a Teacher Conservation Tour (TCT) focused on Urban & Community Forestry. The TCT workshop series, which has been offered by the AFAEF since 2017, is a professional development opportunity available to both formal and non-formal educators and has been approved by the Arkansas Department of Education for professional development credit for Arkansas educators. Educators will spend two to three days in a municipality or region currently practicing sound urban forestry management practices. They will learn about the benefits of community trees and the importance of advocating for and funding tree planting and tree maintenance activities. Topics covered will be presented in such a way as to allow educators to take hands-on activities and demonstrations back to their students and their communities, thus expanding the outreach of the Urban & Community Forestry program (Arkansas Forest Action Plan Objective 8.2).

**INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT & JOBS ACT OF 2021
 APPROPRIATION AND PERSONNEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
 SECTION 37 OF ACT 796 OF 2023**

E.3

Agency: Arkansas Department of Agriculture Business Area Code: 0400
 Program Title: State Forest Fire Assistance Response Funding for Arkansas IJJA for FY22
 Granting Organization: USDA-Forest Service CFDA #: 10.664
 Effective Date of Authorization: Beginning: 7/1/2023 Ending: 6/30/2024

Purpose of Grant / Reason for addition or change (include attachments as necessary to provide thorough information):
 \$343,323 is being requested to purchase tablets for field personnel to help utilize training and mapping capabilities and to replace 100 P25 radios throughout the state to update our communication capability with local and state government.

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act Program Funding

Func. Area: COMM Fund Code: NEW Continuation of Existing Program: _____
 Funds Center: New Internal Order/WBS Element: _____ Change in Existing Program: _____
 New Program: X

	Program Funding Amount
Regular Salaries	
Extra Help	
Personal Services Matching	
Operating Expenses	
Conference & Travel Expenses	
Professional Fees	
Capital Outlay	
Data Processing	
Grants and Aid (CI: 04)	
Other:	343,323
Other:	
Total	\$ 343,323

Anticipated Duration of Federal Funds: 07/01/2022-06/30/2027

Gary Zhou 08/21/2023

DFA IGS State Technology Planning Date
 Items requested for information technology must be in compliance with Technology Plans as submitted to DFA IGS State Technology Planning.

Positions to be established: (list each position separately)

Org Unit	Pers Area	Pers SubArea	Cost Center	Position Number	Cmnt Item	Position Title	Class Code	Grade	Line Item Maximum *

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Approved by: Meg W. McP 7-31-23 Robert Brech 8/30/23
 Cabinet Secretary/Agency Director Date Office of Budget Date Office of Personnel Mgmt Date

JM 8/18/2023

Scope of Work:

The Forestry Division gears its activities toward meeting the fundamental requirement of detecting, suppressing, and preventing wildfires. Keeping the numbers of fires and the acres burned below the five-year average is the leading indicator of accomplishing the program's objectives. Our forest fire protection activities must be programmed to cope with these periods of intense fire activity. Each year as the competition for tax dollars increases, the Forestry Division must develop and expand methods of suppressing wildfires with less money.

The Forestry Division fire protection plan is reviewed periodically to determine its effectiveness and plan for the future. Utilizing up to date computer-aided technology, information, the Forestry Division continues to gather and process wildfire, weather, smoke management and prescribed fire information/data. This information is used in analyzing and planning fire control and other activities. Information is also necessary to maintain data for historical purposes and for support in providing statistical information for national programs.

The Forestry Division transmits a daily situation report and annual statistical report to the USDA Forest Service.

The Forestry Division continues to update the fire mobilization plans in each of the seven (7) districts and the state emergency operations plan to emphasize and improve cooperative and coordinated efforts of all agencies having fire or emergency responsibilities. We will update our P25 radios to assure we have communication with all state partners and fire departments.

The Forestry Division maintains a 24-hour coordination center for the safety of the Forestry Division firefighters, pilots, and radio technicians. The coordination center makes it easy for the landowners of Arkansas to notify the Forestry Division of a wildfire. The coordination center dispatches and monitors wildfire suppression and emergency response crews, SEATs, and detection aircraft for all emergency response incidents. The Forestry Division coordination center, utilizing up to date computer-aided technology, disseminates fire and weather information internally, to cooperators, and the public to enhance fire protection throughout the state.

The Forestry Division continues to train its personnel to meet National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards, as well as cooperators and fire departments, in Incident Command System (ICS) for fire and emergency operations. We will use the tablets to further their training by utilizing the Wildland Fire Learning Portal and other training that we can share virtually.

Methodology and Timeline:

Training is an ongoing project within the Forestry Division. The Forestry Division and selected partners provide basic and advanced fire training to employees to strengthen the Division's fire suppression efforts. Each year, May to June, Forestry Division personnel will be sent to participate in the Arkansas Interagency Wildland Fire Academy; a two-week scheduled training session that offers the most needed classes to ensure that personnel are properly trained in fire and other emergency incidents. With the new tablets we can further their training by them taking virtual training and utilizing the Wildland Fire

Learning Portal. The tablets will also give them better use of mapping technology such as Avenza Maps and Arc GIS field maps. The new tablets will be an ongoing project from 2022-2025.

The Forestry Division uses P25 radios to communicate with Emergency Management, other state agencies and local government on ongoing incidents. Our mobile P25 radios are out of date and need to be updated to keep up with the updated technology. We are looking to replace 100 radios throughout the state starting in 2022 and completing it by 2025 pending on the supply chain.