

*Urban and Community Forestry Framework:
A Comprehensive Approach to Integrate Forestry into Communities Nationwide*

Control Number: 13-DG-11132544-416

COVER SHEET

**2013 U.S. Forest Service
National Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Cost-Share Grant Program**

INNOVATION GRANT CATEGORY: Category 1

PROJECT CONTACT: Mia Colson; National Association of Regional Councils
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PROJECT TITLE: Urban and Community Forestry Framework: A Comprehensive Approach to Integrate Forestry into Communities Nationwide

FUNDING REQUEST AND MATCH

REQUESTED: \$ 179,918.88 + MATCHING: \$ 183,194.96 TOTAL PROJECT: \$ 363,113.84

OUTREACH:

Is this project being developed to reach a minority or underserved population? Yes

Is this pre-proposal being submitted by a minority or underserved population (owned/operated/directed) business, organization or college/university? No

PROJECT PARTNER: Dr. Courtney Kimmel; Virginia Tech
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LETTER OF SUPPORT INCLUDED: Yes

ABSTRACT:

The *Vibrant Cities & Urban Forests: A National Call to Action*¹ report released in 2011, acknowledges a “growing awareness that making real, sustainable progress in urban forestry and green infrastructure programs requires collaboration among citizens, organizations, and industry and local, state, and federal government;” (p17); This is a challenge we have heard echoed repeatedly in our Team’s examination of the institutional landscape for green infrastructure implementation in the U.S. [and something we plan to address in our proposed project.](#) The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) and Virginia Tech’s Center for Leadership in Global Sustainability (CLiGS) ([Team](#)) are pleased to propose a one-year project to develop a [Framework to support regional councils and metropolitan planning organization alliances as catalysts and brokers of cross-sector partnerships to develop more integrated, collaborative and sustainable green infrastructure programs that include urban forests as a central element. The goal of this Framework is to introduce theory and best practices through business leadership and partnership brokering to advance the understanding and implementation of robust and multifunctional green infrastructure networks, that contribute to the economic competitiveness and vitality of cities and communities across the county.](#) The target audience for this [Framework](#) is regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations, because they are well positioned to

PROGRESS REPORT

Date: September 30, 2015

Report Period: July 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015

Grant Project Period: August 2013- September 2015

Grant Recipient: National Association of Regional Councils

Grant Number: 13-DG-11132544-416

Recipient Contact Person: Mia Colson, 202.986.1032 x218, mia@narc.org

Principal Investigator/Project Director: Mia Colson

Progress Achieve in Accomplishing Project Goals & Objectives (*Goals and objectives should correspond to the goals and objectives in the approved grant application*).

Phase I: Project Initiation & Management (Months 1-3) Planned/Completed date

- Establishing contracts and submitting reports. **Completed: October 2013**
- Establishing a PAC. **Completed: October 2013**
- Development of project work plan to detail key deliverables, timeframe for completion and Team contacts. **Completed: September 2013**

Phase II: Research and Compose Toolkit (Months 3-9) Planned/Completed date

- Completion of literature review and distribution to PAC and other stakeholders. **Completed: May 2014**
- Completion of initial review of urban and community forestry tools and platforms and screening of potential case studies for further analysis. **Completed August 2014**
- Completion of up to three case studies. **Completed October 2014**
- Completion of project reporting requirements on time.
- Completion of Framework, including research and feedback from PAC and additional stakeholders. **Completed December 2014**

Phase III: Outreach, Technology Transfer and Professional Development (Months 9-12)

- Two or more national conference sessions. **Completed: Workshop at NARC Annual Conference in June 2014 Completed. GI session (35 attendees) & RCE session (25 attendees); information attendance and presentation at the Forestry Partner's Conference; Presentation at NARC's environmental committee at the National Conference of Regions in February 2015.**
- Two or more webinars. **Completed: GIFT highlighted in Park Squeeze webinar hosted by NARC in March 2015; GIFT Launch webinar on June 24th.**
- Extensive web presence successfully established by 10th month of project. **Completed: Highlighted on NARC (<http://narc.org/environment/green-infrastructure-and-landcare/>) and related organization's websites.**
- PAC, USFS and NUCFAC review of the Framework. **Completed December 2014**
- Executive summary of the Framework created and distributed (printed and electronic) to stakeholders and policymakers. **Completed: June 2015**
- Selection of *Regional Centers of Excellence* and launch of coordinated outreach strategy. **Completed: April 2014; Launched website: www.NARC.org/RCE**

Difficulties Encountered: No difficulties were encountered during the reporting period.

Attachments:

None

Signature of Authorized Official

 _____ **Date** 11/9/2015



NARC

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NARC is very grateful to work with the National Urban Forestry Advisory Council on the *Urban and Community Forestry Framework: A Comprehensive Approach to Integrate Forestry into Communities Nationwide* project. Over the years, NARC has been working with its regions to produce positive changes and facilitate discussions regarding the vast benefits of green infrastructure and urban forestry. Regional councils have long been a trusted voice in their communities and are able to gather local elected officials, planners, and other local government personnel in the same room, and get them interested in adopting green infrastructure practices.

This grant has made a strong impact on the visibility of the role regional councils can play in promoting and establishing green infrastructure policies and procedures. The [Green Infrastructure & Forestry Toolkit](#) (GIFT) website features key resources and case studies of how other regions and local governments have championed green infrastructure and urban forestry practices. The grant also allowed NARC to fund two [Regional Centers of Excellence](#), a NARC program promoting green infrastructure planning and projects at the regional level. The awardees are very proud of this designation and the funds are crucial components for supporting their communication and peer-exchange activities as demonstrated below:

“Having been selected as one of two Regional Centers of Excellence in this year’s program is quite an honor,” said John Getchey, Executive Director, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments. “We look forward to increasing our efforts to address green infrastructure in our region and working with NARC in promoting sustainable planning practices.”

“We at the SWFRPC are thrilled to expand our partnership with NARC to drive our green infrastructure program forward. This project emerged from public participation and potentially holds the key to effective and beautiful stormwater conveyances that better replicate natural processes. The Regional Centers of Excellence program is the perfect match for this work and will provide us with opportunities to transfer our findings to other regions.” – Lisa Beaver, Director, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

The grant also funded green infrastructure and forestry experts to hold sessions at NARC and partner conferences, enabling the team to further the spread of information on the benefits of urban forestry and green infrastructure. NARC plans to continue to seek funding to maintain and grow GIFT, as well as participate in future NUCFAC funding opportunities.