

Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation Grant Application Cover Sheet

Date of application: March 2, 2018

Application submitted to: Jeff Turtinen

Organization Information

Tree Trust

Name of organization

2231 Edgewood Ave S

Address

St. Louis Park, MN 55426

City, State, Zip

41-1291626

Employer ID Number (EIN)

952-767-3880

Phone

952-767-3650

Fax

treetrust.org

Web site

See footnote below¹

Name of top paid staff

Executive Director

Title

952-767-3891

Phone

E-mail

Kim Lawler

*Name of contact
for this application*

Director of Development

Title

952-767-3881

Phone

kim.lawler@treetrust.org

E-mail

Is your organization an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit? Yes No

If no, is your organization a public agency/unit of government? Yes No

Proposal Information

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of request: Tree Trust respectfully requests your support through a grant in the amount of \$15,000 to support year two of the Tree Trust "Green Teens" program. This program launched in November 2017 to introduce teenagers who have shown an interest in working outdoors to a multitude of careers in the green sector – including landscaping and arboriculture. In collaboration with partners, this program will provide hands-on and educational activities to help nurture these youths' interest in green industry work.

Geographic area served: Youth participants in this program will primarily reside in Hennepin County, MN, however, program activities may take place throughout the Twin Cities metro.

Funds are being requested for (check one) *Note: Please be sure funder provides the type of support you are requesting.*

Research program support Support Funds

Project dates (if applicable): Summer 2018-Spring 2019 Fiscal year end: December 31, 2018

Budget

Dollar amount requested	\$15,000
Total project budget	\$20,959
Total annual organization budget:	\$5,215,680

Authorization

Name and title of top paid staff: (see footnote) Executive Director Date: March 2, 2018

¹ Executive Director Norm Champ retired on Feb 28. The Tree Trust Board is conducting a search for his successor. Interim Executive Director is Tree Trust Board Member Michael Huntington (not a staff member.)



2018 Request to Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation

Title

Support for the “Green Teens” program by Tree Trust

Abstract (250 words)

Tree Trust requests a Support Funds grant of \$15,000 to continue and expand the “Green Teens” program launched in November 2017. This program is targeted at 15-18 year olds who have successfully participated in our summer Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and have expressed an interest in continued exploration of the green sector.

Each summer for the last 41 years, Tree Trust has fostered the development of hundreds of teenagers as they’ve worked outdoors on crews in our YCC program. These teens work in teams for eight weeks to do landscape improvement projects in public parks. Prior to YCC program involvement, the vast majority of these youth have spent very few consecutive hours outside – and most have never worked with the land.

By the end of their summer work experience, many youth discover that they enjoy spending time outdoors, working with their hands, connecting with nature, and improving the landscape. The Green Teens program provides an opportunity to capture the enthusiasm of these youth and nurturing it so they will grow to enjoy and appreciate this type of work even more.

We believe that by developing their interest and teaching them about the variety of jobs in the green sector, we can yield a higher probability of youth considering careers in the green industry; which is in dire need of a pipeline for bringing the next generation into the outdoor workforce.

Rationale for Project

Landscaping and property maintenance companies have cited significant labor shortages as the main barrier to growth since the industry began recovering from the 2008 financial crisis. A January 2018 article of the Star Tribune states, “Minnesota is on the verge of not having enough workers.” This seems to be a fact that every industry and company is well aware.

In the 2017 Lawn & Landscape State of the Industry Report, it is cited that “Finding and keeping labor continues to be a problem...” and we are certainly hearing first-hand accounts of that from parks supervisors and other green industry employers with whom we interact. In the 2016 L&L State of the Industry Report, 45% of industry leaders cited a “skilled workforce shortage” as their primary concern for the future². This shortage is projected to continue to grow as the existing workforce either ages out or is restricted due to the unpredictable future of the H-2B visa program, increased minimum wage, and new regulations regarding payment of overtime wages.

² http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/fileuploads/file/2016/11/SOI_PDF_2016.pdf

A 2014 study funded by MNLA³ indicated there were 42,132 full and part-time employees in Minnesota's garden and yard industry – but that the shortage of qualified workers may be nearly 20,000 positions. Despite these labor shortages, the industry continues to see significant growth in Minnesota and in the Twin Cities specifically and is expected to continue to grow through 2020.

An additional challenge for the green sector in Minnesota is the impending destruction of millions of ash trees due to the invasive pest emerald ash borer (EAB). Property maintenance, landscaping, and tree care companies will need a workforce that is capable of assessing, treating, and removing infested and dead trees from private and public land to address the issues that will be caused by these losses.

Coincidentally, Tree Trust's JobPrep programs provide ~200 youth and young adults with employment training in property maintenance, tree care, and outdoor construction projects each year. At Tree Trust, young people learn how to work, earn industry-specific vocational credentials, and truly excel in the outdoor work opportunities provided by our programs. Some of these young employees are eager to continue their work outdoors once their program ends, and Tree Trust believes our Green Teens program can provide youth a bridge leading them to a green industry career.

Participants who enroll in the Green Teens program will continue to build their skills and gain greater awareness about the green sector industry as they participate in activities led by Tree Trust and our partners during the school year. Activities include workshops, field trips, and work days during the program year; and in the following summer, youth may have an opportunity to complete an internship with a green industry partner.

Benefits of project to turf and grounds managers

New Workforce Pool: Green Teens will recruit and select youth applicants from our YCC program which employs ~150 young people ages 14-21 to work on landscape improvement projects at local parks in the summer.

Of all youth served in YCC in 2017, 32% were female and 61% were from communities of color. Our programs successfully work with a population of youth that are of interest to landscaping and tree care companies and we hear from these partners that they would like to diversify their workforce and create a talent pool of young people who have potential to be groomed toward green sector careers.

Over a quarter of our summer youth workers had perfect attendance and several received Governor's Awards for Excellence for outstanding performance. Youth who excel in our summer crew program will be invited to apply to the Green Teens program.

Connection to a New Program in an Early Phase: We launched this program last November upon receiving funding for the pilot program from the Sundance Family Foundation. This

³ <http://www.auri.org/2014/11/nurseries-landscape-businesses-add-3-5-billion-in-green-to-minnesota-economy/>

particular foundation has an interest in Youth Social Entrepreneurship (YSE) programs, which includes youth-led businesses and community social initiatives. They have launched the Wunderkammer movement to create more hands-on interactive job fairs that help youth better understand what is involved with different types of jobs.

By getting involved now, MTGF and turf and grounds managers have an opportunity to become a partner to this program and help influence activities while we are still in the early phases of planning and development for the second year.

The first year support from Sundance allowed Tree Trust to introduce a pilot Green Teens program in November. We recruited teenagers from the 2017 YCC program and have 11 youth currently participating. To date, we have engaged the youth in two successful events. The first was an orientation at the Tree Trust office with activities that introduced green careers. Staff also integrated some team building to help the youth get to know each other and surveyed the youth regarding their overall interest in the program and knowledge of green careers.

The second event took place at Eureka Recycling where the youth learned about green careers in waste management and toured the recycling facility. Eureka Recycling staff shared that there are a wide variety of green careers in waste management and the amount of education and training needed is very broad. When asked after the session what they learned, all youth agreed they had a better understanding of the necessity of recycling and what could be recycled, and one of the participants commented that it was good to know there are so many types of green careers.

Opportunity to Get Involved: As the Eureka Recycling tour demonstrates, another benefit of this program to turf and grounds managers is the opportunity to not only host a similar type of tour and education session to introduce the youth to careers in the turf and grounds industry – but the program also offers the opportunity for companies to partner with Tree Trust to host an intern from Green Teens during the summer. The opportunity for youth to gain hands-on experience in an actual green career setting different from the experience they have already had by working on a Tree Trust Conservation Crew is one of the main benefits of the program for youth – and for companies in the green sector.

Tree Trust will be actively taking applications from companies interested in serving as host sites for the Green Teens Summer Internship Program, and would hope that there would be interest among some of the MNLA membership to host youth as we anticipate many of the youth would appreciate the types of position opportunities that MNLA companies could provide since youth were introduced to working outdoors through the Tree Trust YCC program where they learned basic landscaping principles and practices, and further experience would provide greater hands-on training. This pipeline of young workers will reflect the demographics of Tree Trust's summer program, and presumably help increase the diversity of the industry in the Twin Cities.

Workforce skilled in tree care and turf/grounds maintenance: While nationally 42% of industry revenue came from landscape maintenance (2016 State of the Industry Report)⁴ and only 3-5%

⁴ http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/fileuploads/file/2016/11/SOI_PDF_2016.pdf

of landscape services were for tree care/arbiculture, this percentage will increase dramatically in Minnesota as EAB devastates our ash population over the next five years. It is for this reason that Tree Trust is putting a specific emphasis regarding arbiculture on this program.

This spring we look forward to incorporating the charter members of the Green Teens program into the work of our Community Forestry department as they plant trees at spring plantings. We will also involve the Green Teens in the maintenance, operation, and harvesting of trees at our Gravel Bed Nursery in Eagan.

The experience of our Community Forestry and Landscape Services staff will be utilized to provide specific training in landscaping and arbiculture to the Green Teens and help demonstrate the breadth of green career opportunities in those fields. In combination with our JobPrep staff who are trained in helping youth with education and career navigation, Tree Trust has the human resources and mission-centric approach to bring the right people and tools together to implement a successful program to benefit the green sector in Minnesota.

Objectives & Timeline

- Mar-Jun 2018 – Completion of pilot phase of Green Teens program
- Jul-Aug 2018 – Placement of current Green Teens youth into “green” summer positions
- Jul-Aug 2018 – Promote Green Teens program to youth in the summer Tree Trust Youth Conservation Corps who demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment toward outdoor work.
- Aug-Sept 2018 – Invite selected youth to participate in 2018-19 Green Teens program.
- Sept-Oct 2018 – Host orientation event and first skills day for Green Teens.
- Oct 2018 – Green Teens participate in fall tree planting events.
- Nov 2018-Mar 2019 – Provide monthly activities for Green Teens (skills days, field trips, workshops, speakers, work days, etc.)
- Mar-Jun 2019 – Green Teens work on capstone project, participate in tree planting events, and apply for summer internship opportunities.
- Jun 2019 – Official 2018-19 Green Teens program end and celebration.
- July 2019 – Program evaluation and assessment.
- Summer 2019 – Youth work in green sector internships or in Tree Trust YCC

Materials and Methods

Materials needed for this project are primarily staff hours from Tree Trust to organize, lead, instruct, and coach youth in the program; and secure relationships with other green industry partners who are also willing to participate in the program. Methods of working with youth will be best practices identified by knowledgeable and experienced Tree Trust staff.

Anticipated Outcomes and Results

In fall 2018, Tree Trust would intend to enroll 20 teens between the ages of 15-18 who have successfully completed our 2018 Summer Youth Conservation Corps. Of these 20, we expect at

least 12 will complete the entire ten-month cycle of the program and will have developed a greater understanding of and interest regarding careers in landscaping and arboriculture.

Where we plan to publish information

We will share information from our project with the staff and board of the Minnesota Turf and Grounds Foundation, as well as with interested parties from the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association, Minnesota DNR, and various Minnesota colleges that have green sector training programs.

Detailed Budget and Other Funding Sources

REVENUE	
Sundance Family Fndn <i>committed</i>	5,000
MN Turf & Grounds Fndn <i>pending</i>	15,000
MN Youth Program (wages) <i>pending</i>	3,060
Total	\$23,060
EXPENSES	
Wages for youth	10,560
Incentives for youth	1,500
Training and activity expenses	5,000
Staff labor costs	8,000
Total	\$23,060