

City of Bellingham



RFA INFORMATION

Purchasing Telephone: 360-778-7750
Issue Date: March 28, 2024
Contact Email: sahavill@cob.org

CLOSING INFORMATION

Date: August 1, 2024
Time: 5:00 PM
Submit to: sahavill@cob.org, or
via online form at cob.org/tree-coupons

In an effort to comply with City of Bellingham waste reduction policies, we request that any hardcopy responses be submitted on recycled paper, printed in black and white (no color), copied on both sides of the page, no laminated sheets, no wire/comb binding, and no cardstock. Responses shall be stapled in the upper left-hand corner only.

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1. REQUEST FOR APPLICATION PROCESS

1.1 Inquiries

All respondents are requested to review this invitation carefully and to submit any questions concerning this Request for Application (“RFA”) or the City’s requirements to the following email address sahavill@cob.org

Questions about the program will be answered directly as they are received.

1.2 Closing Date

Proponents that are interested in being involved in the Tree Coupon Program for the 2024-2025 planting season must submit applications to be received at the latest by 5:00 p.m., Pacific time on August 1, 2024. Applications will be accepted any time before this closing date. To apply, complete the online form at cob.org/tree-coupons or send an email to sahavill@cob.org.

1.3 Late Applications

Late applications will be collected for participation in a 2-year contract starting in the next planting season 2025-2026. The City will contact the Proponent in spring or summer 2025 to begin the contracting process.

1.4 Eligibility Determination

Applications will be reviewed to confirm the Proponent meets the Eligibility Criteria identified in this RFA (Section 6). The City’s intent is to enter into a contract with all Proponents meeting the Eligibility Criteria.

1.6 Estimated Time Frames

The following timetable outlines the anticipated schedule for the RFA and contract process for acceptance into the 2024-2025 Tree Coupon Program. The timing and the sequence of events resulting from this RFA may vary and shall ultimately be determined by the City.

EVENT	ANTICIPATED DATE
Application Acceptance	April 2024 - August 1, 2024
Contracting	April 2024 - September 2024
2024-2025 Tree Coupon Plant Availability	October 2024 - March 2025

2. APPLICATION PREPARATION

2.1 Proponents’ Expenses

Proponents are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing an application and for subsequent negotiations with the City, if any. If the City elects to reject all applications, the City will not be liable to any Proponent for any claims, whether for costs or damages incurred by the Proponent in preparing the application, loss of anticipated profit in connection with any final Contract, or any other matter whatsoever.

2.2 Application Validity

Applications will be open for acceptance based on eligibility criteria on a rolling basis.

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2.3 City Business Registration

Application shall include a statement to the effect the Proponent understands its obligation, and agrees, to obtain/maintain a City of Bellingham business registration as a requirement for performing these services/work. Access to the City's registration process can be found at: <https://www.cob.org/services/business/pages/business-registration.aspx>

2.4 Public Disclosure Notice

All materials provided by the Proponent are subject to State of Washington public disclosure laws. Marking the entire application as proprietary or confidential, and therefore, exempt from disclosure will NOT be accepted or honored and may result in disclosure of the entire application or disqualification of the application solely at the discretion of the City of Bellingham. Documents identified as confidential or proprietary will not be treated as such if public disclosure laws take precedence, the information is publicly available, the information is already in the City of Bellingham's possession, the information is obtained from third parties without restriction on disclosure, or the information was independently developed without reference to the confidential information.

3. ADDITIONAL TERMS

Where applicable, the names of approved sub-contractors listed in the application will be included in the Contract. No additional subcontractors will be added, nor other changes made, to this list in the Contract without the written consent of the City.

3.1 Acceptance of Applications

This RFA should not be construed as an agreement to purchase goods or services. The City is not bound to enter into a contract with the proponent who submits the lowest priced application or with any proponent. Applications will be assessed in light of the eligibility criteria. The City will be under no obligation to receive further information, whether written or oral, from any proponent.

Neither acceptance of an application nor execution of a contract will constitute approval of any activity or development contemplated in any application that requires any approval, permit, or license pursuant to any federal, state, or municipal statute, regulation, or by-law.

3.2 Definition of Contract

Notice in writing to an applicant that they has been identified as successful applicant and the subsequent full execution of a written contract and or City purchase order will constitute a contract for the goods or services, and no proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the goods or services until the occurrence of both such events.

3.3 Liability for Errors

While the City has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation of information in this RFA, the information contained in this RFA is supplied solely as a guideline for proponents. The information is not guaranteed or warranted to be comprehensive or exhaustive. Nothing in this RFA is intended to relieve proponents from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this RFA.

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3.4 Modification of Terms

The City reserves the right to modify the terms of this RFA at any time at its sole discretion. This includes the right to cancel this RFA at any time prior to entering into a contract with any successful proponents.

3.5 Ownership of Applications

All documents, including applications, submitted to the City become the property of the City.

3.6 Contract Term

The term of the contract resulting from this RFA shall be 24 months with options for three 12-month extensions, unless otherwise extended or ended by mutual consent.

4. PROJECT OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Purpose and Background

The City of Bellingham (“City”) is seeking applications from nurseries or other entities (Proponents) interested in supplying trees in support of a new Tree Coupon Program the City is launching in 2024. The Tree Coupon Program will provide coupons to Bellingham residents to receive discounts on trees purchased at participating nurseries. The goal of this program is to increase trees planted on private property within the city limits and is in support of the City’s efforts to create an Urban Forest Plan, increase tree canopy cover citywide, and expand tree benefits to all community members. Proponents participate in the Program by allowing customers to purchase eligible trees at a discounted price upon presentation of a Tree Coupon Program coupon. The City will reimburse the Proponents for the cost of the coupon, upon receipt of invoices.

Bellingham residents can apply for tree coupons between September to February and coupons can be redeemed at participating nurseries between October and March to maximize tree planting during the recommended planting season (October-March). Eligible Bellingham households can receive up to three tree coupons. Each coupon provides \$30 off one tree, tax included. If the total cost of a tree, including tax, is less than the coupon’s value, then that tree is free to the resident purchasing it. Each coupon can be redeemed for only one tree, coupon values cannot be combined. The City will reimburse the participating nurseries for the cost of the coupons including sales tax. Receipts must be provided to the City for reimbursement.

The City invites all interested parties to respond to this Request for Application (RFA) by submitting an Application. Disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned entities are encouraged to respond.

Background

The Bellingham community has long valued trees and the numerous benefits they provide for our quality of life. Bellingham is a proud Tree City USA, recognized nationally for its community-based effort to protect forests. To build upon these efforts, the City is investing in additional programs in 2024 to help grown our urban forest on private property and in neighborhoods as part of our Community Tree Programs. These programs aim to increase tree canopy cover across Bellingham, expanding the many benefits trees provide for our community. These programs will help Bellingham make progress towards the goals set in our first ever Urban Forest Plan, currently under development.

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5. PROJECT SCOPE

5.1 Project Scope

Proponents would redeem coupons for eligible trees, to be reimbursed by the City of Bellingham. Eligible trees were selected to provide a variety of native and non-native options, that mature at or above 20 feet in height, to maximize tree canopy cover benefits.

Eligible Trees:

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Abies grandis</i>	Grand fir
<i>Acer davidii</i>	David's maple
<i>Acer glabrum</i>	Rocky mountain maple
<i>Acer griseum</i>	Paperbark maple
<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	Big leaf maple
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sugar maple
<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> "autum brilliance"	Apple serviceberry
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern redbud
<i>Cornus</i> "Eddie's white wonder"	Eddie's white wonder dogwood
<i>Cornus kousa</i>	Flowering dogwood
<i>Cornus kousa</i> "Chinensis"	Chinese dogwood
<i>Cornus mas</i>	Cornelian cherry dogwood
<i>Parrotia persica</i>	Persian ironwood
<i>Picea stichensis</i>	Sitka spruce
<i>Pinus contorta</i> var. <i>contorta</i>	Shore pine
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	Douglas fir
<i>Quercus garryana</i>	White (garry/Oregon) oak
<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>	Cascara
<i>Styrax japonica</i>	Japanese snowdrop
<i>Thuja plicata</i>	Western red cedar
<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	Western hemlock

Nurseries that participate in the program will be expected to:

- A. Have supply of at least some of the trees in the eligible tree list
- B. Have an onsite location for tree sale and pick-up
- C. Verify tree eligibility at time of sale
- D. Provide discount at time of sale

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- E. Provide invoices to City for reimbursement at least two times during the plant availability season, once in December and once in May, as detailed in the Agreement, in attachment A (a separate document). Invoice must provide the following information per tree purchased using a Tree Coupon:
 - a. Coupon number (each coupon will have a unique number)
 - b. Tree species (scientific name)
 - c. Tree size (container size or height)
 - d. Discount amount (up to total of \$30 value of coupon)

- F. Have tree coupon promotional materials on display or available to notify customers about the program and how to sign up for coupons online. The City will provide these materials.

5.2 Budget

The project is anticipated to be paid with City funds. The project is not anticipated to include state or federal funds. Funding amount will be based on the number of coupons to be reimbursed and number of applications. Contracts are expected not to exceed \$2,000. Additional services of the same nature and type may be added to the contract at the direction of the City's project manager pending availability of other funding and as identified within the City's Scope of Work.

6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Proponents must include their Nursery Dealers License. Proponents shall also include a statement to the effect the Proponent understands its obligation, and agrees, to obtain/maintain a City of Bellingham business registration as a requirement for performing these services/work. Access to the City's registration process can be found at:

<https://www.cob.org/services/business/pages/business-registration.aspx>

The City of Bellingham reserves the right to reject any or all applications, and to waive any irregularities or information in the evaluation process. The final decision is the sole decision of the City of Bellingham.

7. APPLICATION FORMAT

The following format and sequence should be followed in order to provide consistency in proponent response and ensure each application receives full consideration. Proponents can choose to apply using an online form on the City's website at [cob.org/tree-coupons](https://www.cob.org/tree-coupons), or send an email to sahavill@cob.org that contains the information below:

- a) Subject Line: Tree Coupon Program Application
- b) Proponent name, address, phone number, email address, point of contact
- c) Statement to the effect the Proponent understands its obligation, and agrees, to obtain/maintain a City of Bellingham business registration as a requirement for performing these services/work. Access to the City's registration process can be found at: <https://www.cob.org/services/business/pages/business-registration.aspx>
- d) City Nursery/Garden center/wholesalers license number