



Branching Out application

Plant trees in your community with *Branching Out*



About the program

Branching Out helps communities plant trees to save energy. It’s a team effort. You bring knowledge of your town and hardworking volunteers. Alliant Energy and Trees Forever bring our energy efficiency knowledge, tree-planting experience and funds to help purchase your trees. Annual grants are available up to \$5,000 per community and are awarded through an application process. *Branching Out* funds are for tree purchases only: not shrubs, seedlings, saplings, mulch, labor or other planting costs.

Project examples

Plant trees where they’ll save energy: at schools or public buildings or along neighborhood streets. Give special consideration to locations that will benefit underserved or low-income residents.

Who it’s for

Branching Out is just for Alliant Energy communities. Planting locations must be within the Alliant Energy service area and receive energy-saving benefits from the new trees.

Grant timing

Grants are awarded once per year.

Planting dates	Application deadline	Grants announced	Funding awarded
Fall 2020	June 1, 2020	August 1, 2020	August 1-30, 2020
Any time in 2021	November 1, 2020	February 1, 2021	April 1-30, 2021

Need help? Contact Trees Forever at 1-800-369-1269 ext. 110 or droman@treesforever.org.



Plant trees in your community with *Branching Out* (con't)

How to apply

Find application materials at alliantenergy.com/branchingout. There are three ways to apply: Choose the one that's easiest for you.

- **Online.** Apply online at alliantenergy.com/branchingout.
 - Note: Type your planting and care answers in a separate document ahead of time, so you can copy and paste answers into our form. You will be able to upload your aerial map, site plan and other documentation as attachments.
- **Email.** Complete your application and email it to droman@treesforever.org. Include additional application pieces as attachments.
- **Mail.** Send us your application form along with the other application pieces:
Trees Forever
c/o Branching Out
80 W 8th Avenue
Marion, Iowa 52302

The application has five parts – don't worry, we can help you with all of them!

1. Application form
2. Project proposal
3. Aerial map and site plan
4. Budget worksheet
5. Extra documentation

We'll contact you by the grant announcement date to ask any questions and confirm if your project has been accepted.

If your project is accepted, you'll receive a check for the grant amount, along with a project reporting form. Once your project is complete, submit the reporting form by November 1.

Application tips

- The grant process is competitive. Help your application rise to the top when you:
 - Show a clear connection between your project and energy-saving benefits. This one's important!
 - Secure and show funding from additional organizations, like other grants or in-kind donations.
 - Make sure your application includes all requested pieces and documentation. If you get stuck on something, don't skip it – contact us!
- A successful tree planting project usually takes a village. Form a community tree committee to plan the project and submit the application, plant the trees and provide ongoing tree care.

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Part 1: Application form

Date _____ Grant amount requested _____

Community _____ County _____ Population _____

Organization/committee name (if applicable) _____

Primary contact _____ Occupation/Company name _____

Address Home Business _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Home Work Mobile _____ Email _____

Community's electric provider _____ Community's natural gas provider _____ Does Alliant Energy provide electric service to the project site? Yes No

List a minimum of four other committee or community members who will assist with planning, planting and caring for your trees:

Name/Occupation/Company name _____

Address Home Business _____ Primary phone _____ Email _____

Name/Occupation/Company name _____

Address Home Business _____ Primary phone _____ Email _____

Name/Occupation/Company name _____

Address Home Business _____ Primary phone _____ Email _____

Organization grant checks should be made payable to _____

Federal tax I.D. number _____

Anticipated tree-planting event date _____

Local media contact _____
Name, business (Name of publication, radio station call letters, etc.)

Phone and email _____

I give permission to Alliant Energy and Trees Forever to reproduce and use any photographs taken at my community tree-planting event and/or that are submitted as part of our program summary report. I agree to care for our trees for no fewer than three years.

Signature _____ Date _____

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Part 2: Project proposal

The questions below will guide you through a thoughtful planting and care plan. Be sure to address each topic.

- 1. Project description.** Tell us what your project is about and why you want to do it.
- 2. Energy efficiency benefits.** Each project **must** demonstrate energy savings from the new trees. Trees help moderate our extreme seasons. In the summer, they shade streets and buildings. In the winter, they help break up and redirect cold winter winds, keeping buildings warmer inside. How will your project capitalize on the energy efficiency benefits of trees?
- 3. Care and maintenance.** Newly planted trees require significant care, including watering, mulching, pruning and sometimes staking. Who will lead the care and maintenance efforts? Describe your tree care plan for the first two years.
- 4. Planting day plans.** Tell us your plans for your planting event. What dates are you considering? How can you recruit volunteers who are broadly representative of your community? How will you promote your tree planting? How will your project involve or benefit the underserved in your community? Will you invite local media or elected officials? How will you recognize Alliant Energy and Trees Forever? Your Trees Forever field coordinator will help you nail down details, but tell us what you envision at this point.
- 5. Tree selection.** What types of trees will you plant? Choose trees from Trees Forever's Recommended Tree Species List. These are go-to varieties that grow well in our area and support biodiversity. Find the list at alliantenergy.com/branchingout.

A few tips:

- Consider your hardiness zone, soil moisture conditions, overhead powerlines, light conditions, proximity to buildings, etc. when selecting species. Remember that some trees do better when planted in the spring than the fall.
- Go with smaller/younger trees because they experience less transplant shock and begin growing more quickly. Bonus: They're also easier for volunteers to carry around! Look for shade trees that are larger than seedlings or saplings but under 1.5" caliper or 10-gallon containers and evergreens under 4' or 10-gallon containers.
- Contact at least two local nurseries for estimates for your trees. Be sure to ask about lower pricing, because it's a community project. Count any discounts they give as an in-kind donation to strengthen your application.

For assistance with the project proposal, contact Trees Forever at 1-800-369-1269 ext. 110 or droman@treesforever.org.

Part 3: Aerial map and site plan

Please provide:

- Aerial map of your community. Highlight area(s) of town where you plan to plant.
- Site plan sketch. This can be a simple hand drawing of the tree planting area. Include major roads, species and location of each tree to be planted, location of overhead power lines and a north directional arrow. Maximum size of site plan sketch is 8.5" x 11".

Need help? Contact us at 1-800-369-1269 ext. 110 or droman@treesforever.org.



Part 4: Budget worksheet

Plan out your tree costs and donated funds.

- Obtaining other grants or in-kind funding is not required but will strengthen your application.
- Get two estimates from nurseries in your area as you plan your project. Be sure to ask about lower pricing since it's a community project. Count any discounts they give as an in-kind donation.
- Remember, *Branching Out* funds can only be used for trees (not shrubs, seedlings, saplings, mulch or other planting costs).

If you need more space than is provided below, feel free to attach additional pages.

Community: _____

Planting cost

Quantity	Species	Planting location	Size	Cost/tree	Total cost
3	Bur Oak	City Hall	1.5 Caliper	\$200	\$600

_____ Total number of trees

Total cost of trees \$ _____

Requested funds for trees \$ _____

Donated funds

Item	Value/cost

Total matching funds _____

Part 5: Extra documentation

Include anything else that will help explain or support your project: Community support letters, verification of additional funding, photos, etc.

Submit your application

Online: alliantenergy.com/branchingout

Email: Send all pieces to droman@treesforever.org.

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