

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

<b>* 1. Type of Submission:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Preapplication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application <input type="checkbox"/> Changed/Corrected Application	<b>* 2. Type of Application:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Revision	<b>* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):</b> _____ <b>* Other (Specify):</b> _____
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<b>* 3. Date Received:</b> 01/11/2024	<b>4. Applicant Identifier:</b> _____
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<b>5a. Federal Entity Identifier:</b> _____	<b>5b. Federal Award Identifier:</b> 24-DG-11010013-002
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**State Use Only:**

<b>6. Date Received by State:</b> _____	<b>7. State Application Identifier:</b> _____
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**8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:**

**\* a. Legal Name:** City of Billings

<b>* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):</b> 81-6001237	<b>* c. UEI:</b> <del>XXXXXXXXXX</del> Edit Text: FAEFYK4YL4M1
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**d. Address:**

**\* Street1:** ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Edit Text: 210 N 27th ST  
**Street2:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**\* City:** Billings  
**County/Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**\* State:** MT: Montana  
**Province:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**\* Country:** USA: UNITED STATES  
**\* Zip / Postal Code:** ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Edit Text: 59101-1938

**e. Organizational Unit:**

<b>Department Name:</b> Parks and Recreation	<b>Division Name:</b> _____
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**f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:**

**Prefix:** \_\_\_\_\_ **\* First Name:** Steve  
**Middle Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**\* Last Name:** McConnell  
**Suffix:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** City Forester

**Organizational Affiliation:**  
Employee

**\* Telephone Number:** 406-257-6227 **Fax Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Email:** mcconnells@billingsmt.gov

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

**\* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

C: City or Township Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

\* Other (specify):

**\* 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

USDA

**11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:**

10.727

CFDA Title:

**\* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

USDA-FS-2023-UCF-IRA-01

\* Title:

FY 2024 Inflation Reduction Act- Urban & Community Forestry

**13. Competition Identification Number:**

Title:

**14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):**

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

**\* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

FY 2024 Inflation Reduction Act- Urban & Community Forestry Billings Urban Forestry Grant for Disadvantaged Areas

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

**16. Congressional Districts Of:**

\* a. Applicant

\* b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

**17. Proposed Project:**

\* a. Start Date:

Edit Text: execution date

\* b. End Date:

**18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

* a. Federal	<input type="text" value="1,000,000.00"/>
* b. Applicant	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* c. State	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* d. Local	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* e. Other	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* f. Program Income	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="1,000,000.00"/>

**\* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on
- b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

**\* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

- Yes
- No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

**21. \*By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications\*\* and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances\*\* and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)**

\*\* I AGREE

\*\* The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

**Authorized Representative:**

Prefix:  \* First Name:  Edit Text: Bill

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:  Edit Text: Cole

Suffix:

\* Title:  Edit Text: Mayor, City of Billings

\* Telephone Number:  Edit Text: 406-657-8296 Fax Number:

\* Email:  Edit Text: coleb@billingsmt.gov

\* Signature of Authorized Representative:

\* Date Signed:

**BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs**

OMB Number: 4040-0006  
Expiration Date: 02/28/2025

**SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY**

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. Urban and Community Forestry	10.727	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$	\$	\$	\$ 1,000,000.00
2.						
3.						
4.						
<b>5. Totals</b>		\$ 1,000,000.00	\$	\$	\$	\$ 1,000,000.00

**SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES**

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
	Urban and Community Forestry				
a. Personnel	\$ 350,000.00	\$	\$	\$	\$ 350,000.00
b. Fringe Benefits	140,000.00				140,000.00
c. Travel	0.00				0.00
d. Equipment	0.00				0.00
e. Supplies	265,000.00				265,000.00
f. Contractual	245,000.00				245,000.00
g. Construction					
h. Other					
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	1,000,000.00				\$ 1,000,000.00
j. Indirect Charges					\$
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$	\$	\$	\$ 1,000,000.00
7. Program Income	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

**SECTION C - NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES**

(a) Grant Program		(b) Applicant	(c) State	(d) Other Sources	(e)TOTALS
8.	Urban and Community Forestry	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
9.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
10.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
11.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
12. TOTAL (sum of lines 8-11)		\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>

**SECTION D - FORECASTED CASH NEEDS**

	Total for 1st Year	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
13. Federal	\$ <input type="text" value="450,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="50,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="50,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="250,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="100,000.00"/>
14. Non-Federal	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
15. TOTAL (sum of lines 13 and 14)	\$ <input type="text" value="450,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="50,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="50,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="250,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="100,000.00"/>

**SECTION E - BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT**

(a) Grant Program	FUTURE FUNDING PERIODS (YEARS)			
	(b)First	(c) Second	(d) Third	(e) Fourth
16. Urban and Community Forestry	\$ <input type="text" value="150,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="250,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="100,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="50,000.00"/>
17. <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
18. <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
19. <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
20. TOTAL (sum of lines 16 - 19)	\$ <input type="text" value="150,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="250,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="100,000.00"/>	\$ <input type="text" value="50,000.00"/>

**SECTION F - OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION**

21. Direct Charges: <input type="text" value="\$1,000,000"/>	22. Indirect Charges: <input type="text" value="0"/>
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23. Remarks:

## **GRANT CATEGORY**

Inflation-Reduction-Act-Urban-and-Community-Forestry: Inflation Reduction Act - Urban and Community Forestry

## **PROJECT TITLE**

Billings Urban Forestry Grant for Disadvantaged Areas

## **PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION**

### Primary Contact:

**Dr. Steven P McConnell**

City of Billings, PRPL, Forestry Division

City Forester

4848 Midland Road

Billings, MT 59101

Phone: (406) 237-6227

Cell Phone: (509) 868-8277

Email: mcconnells@billingsmt.gov

### Secondary Contact:

**Mr. Mike Pigg**

City of Billings, Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands Park Superintendent

Email: piggm@billingsmt.gov

### Designated Signing Authority

**Chris Kukulski**

City Administrator

Email: kukulskic@billingsmt.gov

### Designated Grant Administrator/Writer

**Ted Wilson**

Grants Administrator

Email: wilson@billingsmt.gov

## **PROPOSAL ABSTRACT**

(100 word maximum)

The goal is to move Billings, Montana to a new paradigm in urban forestry which recognizes the vital benefits trees bring to quality of life and city infrastructure. The work will begin in the CJEST-designated disadvantaged areas of Billings, with a massive investment in tree planting and existing tree care so tree equity with the rest of Billings is achieved. This work delivers immediate change to the disadvantaged areas, trees by the hundreds, and a hopeful future of programmatic change. The City of Billings and Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council, a grassroots citizen advocacy group, are collectively advancing this work.

## **FUNDING REQUEST AND MATCH**

(Non-Federal Matching Funds MUST be equal to or greater than the Federal Funds Requested unless the applicant has requested a Non-Federal Funds Match Waiver.)

REQUESTED: **\$1,000,000.00** + MATCHING: **\$0.00** = TOTAL PROJECT: **\$1,000,000.00**

## PROJECT NARRATIVE

### 1. Project Scope Alignment:

This project focuses entirely on tree equity and climate mitigation in CEJST designated disadvantaged areas in Billings, Montana (see Figure 1). In the short term we plan to plant trees and implement tree care work to dramatically transform the project area. Over the longer, 5-year term of this project, we plan programmatic actions to change the city of Billings' objectives and goals around urban forestry and expand the area in which the city actively manages trees (e.g. boulevard strips).

Programmatic outcomes will include a first-ever comprehensive management plan for the city (paid for by the City of Billings, NOT by IRA funds) clearly defining the city's aspirations for a well-treed city that equitably distributes trees across the city, values trees for the green infrastructure they provide, and explicitly recognizes the tangible benefits and quality of life amenities trees provide. An additional outcome is increasing civic involvement and stewardship in urban forestry through outreach to residents, organizations, and schools.

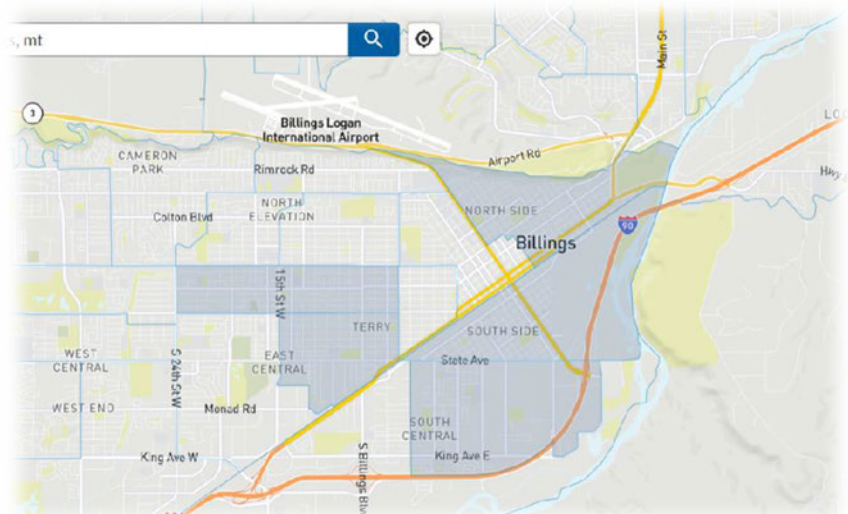


Figure 1 – Areas designated as disadvantaged by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. The grey areas are “disadvantaged” and represent the work area for this project.

On the ground outcomes will include hundreds of newly planted trees intermixed with an existing forest of well-pruned mature trees accounted for on a comprehensive inventory - providing quantifiable benefits to a greener, healthier, happier, more equitable city well-prepared for the trials a changing climate might bring.

Management changes driven by environmental justice imperatives are articulated in contemporary documents defining the culture of this environmental moment. The Justice40 initiative, for example, requires that “federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved ....” The federal Ten-Year Urban and Community Forestry Action Plan hits on several points critical to this project; in particular, support for: 1) “inclusion of trees and forests as elements of all community comprehensive and master planning efforts,” and 2) “integration of urban forestry into all scales of city, regional and state-scale master plans,” and “engage underserved communities in urban and community forestry.” The Ten-Year plan also references the importance of leveraging “volunteer civic stewards and the organizations that support them” alongside highlighting “natural resources careers” among youth. The Montana Forest Action Plan recognizes the important role trees play in mitigating the effects of a changing climate, specifically recommending cities “Promote the use of urban tree canopy cover as a tool to mitigate the impacts of climate change and urban heat islands.”

Like most American cities, Billings settled with divergent paths for neighborhood infrastructure based on the socioeconomic conditions of people moving in. Generally, as cities were settled, desirable infrastructure surrounded the affluent while less investment was made elsewhere. As affluence often

coincided with race and ethnicity, demographics also differed by neighborhood as shown in Figure 2.

One of the most visible differences in neighborhoods is the abundance and condition of trees, an important determinant of the quality of life. When trees of the “right species” are abundant and well-distributed, well-documented benefits to humans and the environment accrue. The cooling effect of tree shade and evapotranspiration is among the most important. Billings is HOT in the summer, dangerously so at times, and trees can literally mean the difference between life and death on long, hot summer days, especially for those experiencing homelessness. Trees make a critical difference in whether a neighborhood is pleasant, or if living there is an ordeal to be endured.

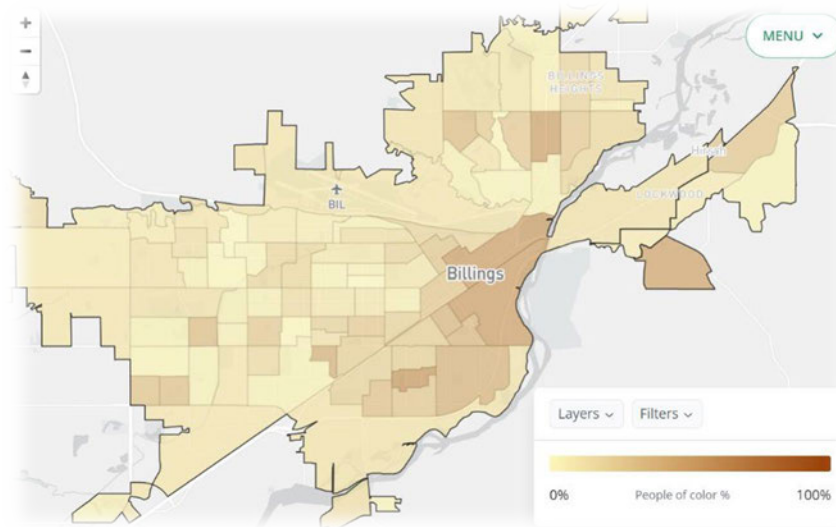


Figure 2 – Population diversity in Billings. Note that more diversity in darker tan and brown areas are generally within CEJST designated disadvantaged areas.

Billings’ disadvantaged neighborhoods typically have fewer trees. Of the trees present, many are undesirable species (e.g. difficult and expensive to maintain; shed detritus; have the potential for “branch drop” causing injuries, death, or damage; grow excessively large; attract undesirable insect pests; are invasive; or cause extensive damage to sidewalks, curbs, and streets). Our goal is to provide trees that will help people love where they live regardless of their income or perceived status in the community and to make all neighborhoods across Billings

equal in terms of the quality and quantity of trees and the tree care service they receive.

The starting point for this project differs from most cities as urban forestry has been a neglected aspect of infrastructure development in Billings. Billings has a highly successful Urban Forestry program - a Forestry Division (FD) within the Parks, Recreation and Public Lands (PRPL) Department, but its responsibility extends only to City Parks and a cemetery (Mountview), collectively accounting for about 10,500 trees. Boulevard strips and other public properties are managed by the Streets and Traffic Division in the Public Works Department (PW-S&T).

The division in tree authority has resulted in highly disparate circumstances for trees. For Parks and Mountview Cemetery, trees have been inventoried and entered into the TreeWorks tree care management software program with detailed records on origin of trees (stock type, nursery from which it was purchased) and management activities (date planted, weather conditions at planting, and subsequent pruning dates) for each tree. All trees are pruned and visited regularly. Parks are for the most part “full” of diverse species of trees in excellent condition.

In contrast, there is no inventory of boulevard trees and anecdotally/observationally, many of the trees in boulevard strips could benefit from pruning for aesthetic and safety purposes. The City keeps limited records about boulevard trees and performs only emergency tree care. Removal of branches impeding views of signs or encroaching into roadways and sidewalks is through a “complaint-driven” process.

Billings, the largest city in Montana, is the only major city in Montana without either an Urban Forestry Management Plan or an inventory of all publicly owned (park AND boulevard strip) trees. In the 1990s, the federal government recognized the need for dedicated attention to urban and community forestry and provided funding to support an Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program in every state. In Montana this program was housed in the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). Each state's obligations for this program were modest, requiring only that each state have a full-time Community Forestry Coordinator and a State Community Forestry Council made up of representatives from across the state and multiple interest groups, serving as an advisory board to the State Forester, usually by interaction with the UCF Program Manager.

Important tasks assigned to the UCF were ensuring each community in Montana collected inventory data for trees on city property and each city wrote an urban forestry management plan. In most communities, tree management was assigned to a single entity and a complete inventory and city-wide management plan were natural next steps, especially while the DNRC had funding and technical assistance to provide help with this effort. This developed differently in Billings with two city entities each managing a portion of publicly owned trees - the PRPL/Forestry Division managing trees in parks and Mountview Cemetery and the PW&ST controlling boulevard strips but deferring tree management to adjacent landowners.

Trees managed by the PRPL (<https://www.billingsparks.org/forestry/>) were mainly viewed as "ornaments" in parks, providing some additional value for shade in hot summer months. Providing park trees was considered a low-level technical function, forestry staff were low on organizational charts and there was no understanding of how the "urban forester" skill set could transform city life or how urban forestry could be a difference-maker in terms of quality-of-life. On the flip side, Public Works viewed trees mainly as "in-the-way" and only recently added the landscaping work they do in some places, including maintaining some boulevard trees, to their website (<https://www.billingsmtpublicworks.gov/194/Street-Traffic-Repairs-Maintenance>).

Public Works in the past preferred boulevard areas be treeless to simplify their work on public utility "grey infrastructure" elements like streets, curbs, piping, and street signs. In their view existing trees were someone else's responsibility and they provide the bare minimum of assistance to fulfill requirements of City Code to issue permits to allow planting, pruning or removal of boulevard trees, and did not promote tree planting in boulevard strips and discouraged it whenever possible. The PRPL has calculated boulevard trees have an asset value of over \$100 million yet Public Works does not include this in their reported assets despite a transformative push made two years ago to emphasize their work in "asset management." For the upcoming effort, Public Works has expressed their support for the planting of boulevard trees and providing for their care.

Billings has disadvantaged areas that are "textbook" candidates for tree relief. It also has citizens advocating strongly for urban forestry now that they understand its benefits, an educational process that came about because of the excitement generated by the Inflation Reduction Act. Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council (YVCC), a local grassroots organization that serves Yellowstone County and organizes citizens around specific issues that impact the community and environment, officially took on Urban Forestry as their current campaign, meaning the time, energy, and resources of their 500+ member organization will be directed toward pressing the city to make Urban Forestry an integral part of life in Billings going forward. After an initial meeting with the City Administrator, YVCC members were told "the city was not hearing from citizens that urban forestry was important to them." YVCC responded by quickly securing at least 40 well-established environmental, community, social-justice and religious organizations, private individuals and private businesses signing on to support an expanded role for urban forestry in Billings. Signees stand ready to provide tangible (time and financial) contributions to growing urban forestry in Billings.

The current lack of a boulevard tree inventory and a management plan are dual challenges that make for a challenging start point for implementing a new paradigm in urban forestry. Yet, the situation of a disadvantaged population with a neglected treescape is exactly the context in which an infusion of resources and transformative programmatic change can make all the difference now and into the future.

It is important to note the focus of the current project does not depend on having an inventory or management plan. Our initial focus is simply to make rapid improvements in the disadvantaged parts of the city and neither an inventory nor a management plan is required. Immediate improvements to trees to be retained and an investment in planting trees will bring the disadvantaged parts of Billings to a more equitable condition. Conducting a comprehensive inventory and writing a management plan using other funding sources will soon follow and a transition to new conditions and a new paradigm will be complete.

## 2. Implementation Strategy/Methodology/Timeline:

Multiple shovel-ready projects have been identified and can be implemented immediately to change the setting on the ground even as programmatic elements take shape. Specifically, every existing tree on public property in the work area identified will be evaluated for its suitability to remain as a part of the urban forest. Trees that are hazardous or inappropriate for their site (for example tall stature trees growing under powerlines) will be removed. Trees of undesirable species or individual trees in areas with an excess of a given species may be removed and replaced with trees of different species to create a sustainable, diverse urban forest that can be maintained with regular, non-exceptional tree care.

Concurrently, a tree survey will be performed and trees planted in available planting spots in the work area. Trees will be selected for planting based on the “right tree, right spot” principle. Trees growing to large stature will be planted where boulevard strips are wide and no overhead obstacles are present. Medium or small stature trees will be planted where boulevard strips are narrow and where overhead or adjacent infrastructure preclude planting larger trees.

Tree species to be planted will be selected from a list of trees known to do well in Billings now (<https://www.billingsparks.org/wp-content/uploads/Recommended-Trees-for-Billings.pdf>) and in the future, even with anticipated climate changes. A minimum of 1,000 (target is 1,500+) trees will be planted in the first year (depending on availability) and more will be added in subsequent years after a thorough inventory of trees and planting spots has been completed.



*Figure 3- A treeless landscape in a commercial area in central Billings (this area is part of an economically disadvantaged neighborhood). Residents do use the sidewalks to access services.*

In addition to the “easy” trees to be planted in available planting spots, we will look at areas where additional planting spots could be gained by removing concrete or asphalt. It is especially desirable to add trees to these difficult, asphalt-covered spots as the greatest gains in cooling temperatures are made in these high-heat locales. The effect on “softening” the landscape to make it seem less post-industrial and more

ecologically friendly is also visibly transformative in such spots. The EBURD (East Billings Urban Renewal District) area of Billings is the best example where urban forestry investment could completely transform the look and feel of the area. The EBURD is, in fact, in the center of an area we propose significant work be directed. This work will be more expensive than other areas but will be the most transformative work we do - making a difference to the daily lives of Billings residents almost immediately after this work begins. Boulevard planting in areas such as the EBURD will provide additional opportunities to soften streetscapes, especially as Public Works looks to provide traffic calming measures and pedestrian refuges along streets in our project areas.



*Figure 4- The EBURD area is practically void of all vegetation. Urban forestry investments will aid revitalization efforts in this economically disadvantaged census*

Civic engagement is a third element of our project. With assistance from YVCC, we will reach out to local citizens and organizations to identify opportunities to raise awareness of the benefits of urban forestry and to develop citizen support of urban forestry. YVCC members have already connected with local neighborhood Task Forces in four disadvantaged communities of Billings, as well as with public educators.

**Approach:** Our approach will be to hire a project manager/community organizer who will report to the City Administrator or his designee to organize and oversee this project. The employee hired will be responsible for preparing requests for quotes (RFQ's) for the tasks required to accomplish this work (eg. inventory available planting spots in public rights of ways so a determination of the number of trees, appropriate stock size and species to be planted can be ascertained; inventory boulevard strip areas currently covered by concrete or asphalt but capable of supporting trees; ordering trees; and ordering materials to support planting trees (stakes, tree guards, mulch, etc.). A detailed "to do" list will be prepared when this position is posted. The person hired will also mobilize interested volunteers such as those individuals associated with the YVCC to undertake the inventory and planting activities.

### **3. Capability and Capacity:**

Staff and stakeholders integral to developing and implementing this project are listed below. The proposal covers both planning the project and oversight of its implementation.

**Chris Kukulski**, City Administrator, City of Billings: Experienced in managing cities with Urban Forestry Departments responsible for ALL publicly owned trees funded by assessments that enable cities to manage boulevard trees without relying on adjacent property owners. Assigned City Forester to initiate this grant opportunity. Met with YVCC to gauge community support.

**Mike Pigg**, Director, Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Department: Will provide oversight and review of grant activities. Will hire and supervise the Project Manager.

**Steve McConnell**, City Forester, PRPL Department, Forestry Division: Primary author of grant proposal. Will provide expertise on tree ordering and selection, tree storage and care prior to planting and proper planting technique. Will help write the Forest Management Plan and design the boulevard tree inventory.

**Jon Kohn**, Forestry Specialist, PRPL Department, Forestry Division. Proposal co-editor. Will help with providing communication about this project. Will provide expertise on tree selection, ordering, planting, and initial care. Will help design and collect data for the boulevard tree inventory if asked.

**Kris Glenn**, Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council Chair, and **Caitlin Cromwell**, Northern Plains Resource Council Staff. Will assist YVCC's members in their work to support the City's effort to transform the landscape and adopt urban forestry plan and approach. This includes liaising with disadvantaged neighborhood task groups, schools, and other supporting community organizations. YVCC has 500+ members and for over 40 years has actively and successfully advocated for a healthy, inviting, and sustainable community. YVCC is the local affiliate organization of Northern Plains Resource Council, a statewide conservation organization.

#### 4. **Communications Plan:**

This grant will help facilitate major changes in the operation of urban forestry using a new approach designed to create equity across neighborhoods, ameliorate climate change, provide efficiency to city operations, and create recognition of a previously overlooked component of infrastructure (trees!). These four themes will be the focus of messaging, public information and earned media coverage.

Outreach to develop stakeholder and community feedback or support for this proposal has already included meetings with neighborhood task forces, community action organizations, neighborhood business alliances and development zone offices. Similar meetings will continue to occur as connection to stakeholders and public and internal communication are key to project success.

Billings Public Information Officer Victoria Hill (<https://www.billingsmt.gov/3033/Public-Information-Officer>) is highly skilled at informing the community about planned and ongoing projects in which the city is engaged. She will provide state of the art communication about this work using all relevant media tools, including electronic social media and fixed signage at activity locations. Project information provided will uniformly include sources of funding.

The U.S. Forest Service and Inflation Reduction Act will be acknowledged as a funding source for each project funded out of this grant, according to USFS guidance and any future signage requirements. Signage and installation are included in the budget for this proposal.

#### 5. **Evidence of Disadvantaged Community Status for projects requesting Match Waiver:**

The area designated for this work was identified using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. We plan to work only in areas within the Billings city limits that are identified as "disadvantaged" by this

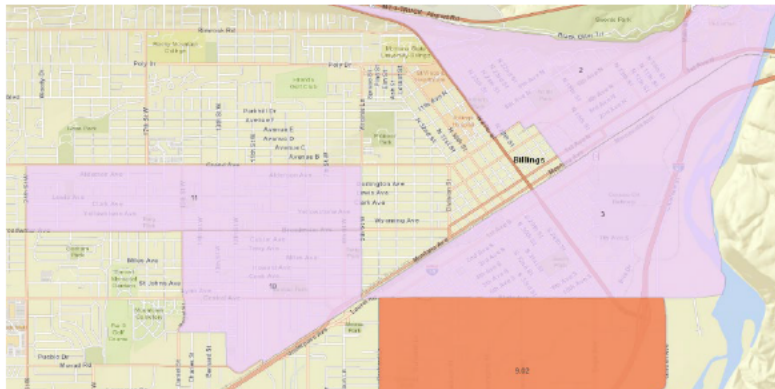


Figure 6 - Disadvantaged census tracts in light purple, historical poverty in orange.

tool. These tracts are: 2, 3, 9.02, 10, and 11 (City of Billings, Yellowstone County, Montana). We did a supplemental analysis of the disadvantaged areas and compared outcomes of several attributes to areas not included in disadvantaged areas. We found that: the average median household income in disadvantaged areas is \$43,637.80 as compared to \$71,552.07 in the rest of Billings; there are 37.50 automobile

accidents per square mile in disadvantaged areas in Billings as compared to 25.08 per square mile in the rest of Billings; and the ethnic composition of disadvantaged areas in Billings is White (72%), African American (1%), Native American (9%), Asian (1%) and Hispanic (12%) as compared to the rest of Billings with a population that is White (87%), African American (0%), Native American (3%), Asian (1%) and Hispanic (5%). These few attributes confirm demographic differences between “disadvantaged” areas and the rest of Billings and provide some insight on quality-of-life differences that exist in these areas too.

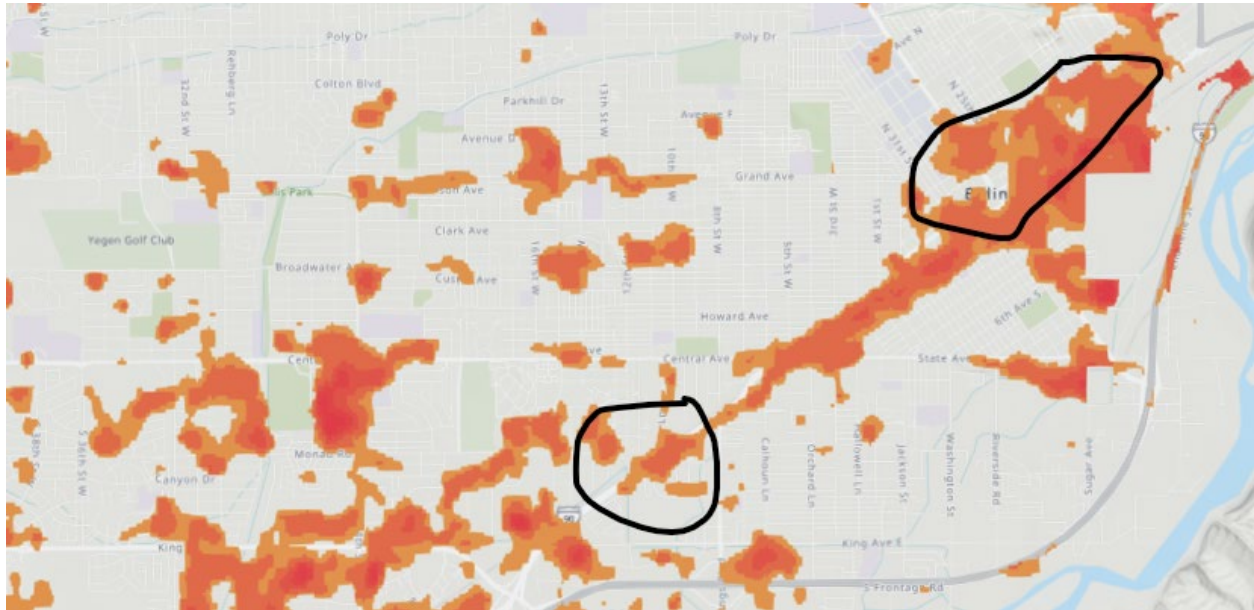


Figure 7 - Urban heat island severity for U.S. cities (<https://www.arcgis.com/home/webscene/viewer.html?layers=4f6d72903c9741a6a6ee6349f5393572>) with Moore Lane (lower center) and EBURD (upper right) circled.

**BUDGET TABLE**

**APPLICANT: City of Billings**

	Federal Funds (requested)	Non-Federal Match		Total	Source of Matching Funds
		Cash	In-Kind		
<b>Personnel</b>					
Project Manager/Community Organizer					
Salary	\$350,000.00			\$350,000.00	
Fringe Benefits	\$140,000.00			\$140,000.00	
<b>Travel</b>	\$0.00			\$0.00	
<b>Equipment</b>	\$0.00			\$0.00	
<b>Supplies</b>					
1,500 seedlings	\$150,000.00			\$150,000.00	
Signage materials	\$15,000.00			\$15,000.00	
Promotional materials	\$10,000.00			\$10,000.00	
Tree Planting Materials	\$75,000.00			\$75,000.00	
Vehicle	\$15,000.00			\$15,000.00	
<b>Contractual</b>					
Tree inventory	\$20,000.00			\$20,000.00	
Pruning and maintenance	\$100,000.00			\$100,000.00	
Cutting holes in concrete	\$50,000.00			\$50,000.00	
Tree Planting/Watering	\$75,000.00			\$75,000.00	
<b>Total Direct Costs:</b>	\$1,000,000.00		\$0.00	\$1,000,000.00	
Indirect Cost:					
<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>	

## **BUDGET NARRATIVE**

**APPLICANT: City of Billings**

**PROJECT: Transform Urban Forestry Management in Billings, Montana**

**PERSONNEL: \$490,000**

Work on the project will require eclectic skills. We aim to hire one full-time employee and have both community organizing and project management tasks they will need to accomplish. We will look for someone skilled at engaging the public and organizing community groups that can also work with contractors and manage technical aspects of this work as it proceeds. Although the job duty mix will change over the five-year life of the grant, we expect the project manager to be about 50% of the job and the community organizer to be 50% of the position.

**Project Manager:** The Project Manager will plan, direct, organize and implement this project. The Project Manager will work as a City employee, will utilize City resources and follow City processes for contracting and purchasing supplies. The Project Manager will write RFQ's to solicit the contractors we will need to accomplish some tasks. They will order trees, hire tree planting contractors, hire contractors to identify areas covered by concrete and asphalt into which trees could be planted successfully to minimize heat island effects, and hire contractors to cut concrete and asphalt to create openings for planted trees.

**Community Organizer:** This person will help us connect to people living in disadvantaged areas that are the people this grant is intended to benefit most. Many of these individuals are not organized in groups, struggle to make ends meet day-to-day and consequently do not have time to engage in activities happening in this area. There was very little community engagement over urban forestry in the preceding decades because the PRPL's focus was exclusively on city parks and Public Works did not actively engage the community regarding forestry. So, connections to community groups about trees and urban forestry are nascent. It will take time and energy to reach people and connect with them.

The YVCC has an excellent start on bringing in community organizations but so far, no connections have been established with some groups that live in the designated "disadvantaged" neighborhoods, in particular Native American groups. Somewhere around 6% of Billings population is Native American and, as they are living in a city, outside of federally designated lands allocated to them, they are classed as "Urban Indians." Urban Indians are generally recognized as one of the most disadvantaged demographic groups in the US. Many resources that are available to Native Americans living on federally designated lands are not available to Urban Indians living in cities, so they often miss out on resources intended for them. Billings has the 5<sup>th</sup> largest Native American population in the United States measured as a percent of total population of a city of 100,000 or more. Only Anchorage, Alaska and Norman, Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma have larger Urban Indian populations.

The Community Organizer will also work to engage EBURD (East Billings Urban Renewal District), METRA/FIA (Montana Entertainment Trade and Recreation Arena/First Interstate Arena) and other commercial entities that have interests or establishments in the disadvantaged area and they will build relationships with them that will allow for tree planting at each.

The Community Organizer portion of the position will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Provide education and generate support for program goals,
2. Identify possible tree planting locations, or areas to avoid for cultural, pragmatic, or other reasons,

3. Recruit youths to take jobs planting trees and doing other tree care work and, in general, support an educational, job skills development component to this work,
4. Organize volunteer events in support of trees.

**SALARY = \$350,000 @ \$70,000/year X 5 years**

**FRINGE BENEFITS = \$140,000 @ \$28,000/year X 5 years.**

**TRAVEL – \$0.00.** No travel will be paid out of the grant.

**EQUIPMENT – \$0.00.** No equipment will be purchased for this project.

**SUPPLIES – \$265,000**

Most of the expense of this project is upfront and immediate. We will spend very quickly on planting trees and providing needed care to existing trees we decide to keep.

Seedlings – we will purchase at least 1,500 over the course of this project, 1,000 in the first year. In bulk orders we anticipate getting seedlings for \$100/each, so **\$150,000** over the course of the project and **\$100,000** in the first year.

Signage materials – Signage design is yet to be developed but costs will not exceed **\$15,000.**

Promotional materials – an exact methodology for promoting the work done for this project but it will include a variety of communication tools. The IRA funded portion of promotional will not exceed **\$10,000.** We anticipate an abundance of news media coverage that will serve to promote this work.

Tree planting materials: Stakes, fencing, stem guards, mulch, twine, etc. will average \$50/tree, so  $\$1,500 \times \$50 = \$75,000$ , **\$50,000** in the first year.

Vehicles – hired staff will need to be able to get around. Lease cost will be **\$15,000** over the course of the project.

## **CONTRACTUAL – \$245,000**

### **Boulevard strip street tree and planting spot inventory – \$20,000**

A boulevard tree inventory in the disadvantaged areas (and only in the disadvantaged areas) will cost approximately **\$20,000** but will depend on bids received from a contract process. Funds left over after the inventory is complete will be put into purchasing trees, pruning trees, or cutting through concrete to create planting spots for trees.

### **Pruning and tree maintenance - \$100,000**

We will spend up to **\$100,000** on pruning, removing, or otherwise providing maintenance to existing boulevard trees. Without an inventory to tell us how many trees there are and what condition trees are in, it is not possible to provide an exact accounting for how much work will be needed. Tree conditions can also change abruptly in Billings as hail, strong winds, drought, and other change agents can make a difference in tree condition. Most of this money will be spent in the first year of this project. If there are funds left over after boulevard trees are in a safe and aesthetically pleasing condition, this money will be held in reserve for subsequent years until this fund has expired.

### **Cutting holes in concrete or asphalt - \$50,000**

A lot of the most desirable plantable spots are in areas in which asphalt or concrete has been laid. Cutting away concrete/asphalt and adding or amending soil to make it a plantable spot could cost approximately \$2,500/site, considering removal of asphalt or concrete would be \$140 to \$200 per location, extension of irrigation could be included (depending on site at highly variable cost), concrete replacement (~\$500 per 25 SF), planting, staking, etc. of the tree. Without an inventory it is not possible to know how many sites are available so we will do as many as we can for **\$50,000**. These sites make the biggest difference in reducing the adverse effects of heat islands and hence, on mitigating negative effects of climate change. These funds will be spent in the first year of the project. The expense of traffic control is also highly variable based on boulevard location and could affect how many hard surface plantings we can accomplish.

### **Tree watering – \$37,500**

Newly planted trees will require supplemental water to survive Billings' hot summers. We will pay contractors to water trees weekly from June 15 to September 15. We will contract for \$7,500 per year and establish a route that waters as many trees as we can afford. We will ask adjacent homeowners to water trees we cannot afford to water ourselves, selecting tree waterers from among homeowners who volunteer to take on that job and sign a document agreeing that they will keep trees watered. We will also appeal to the organizations that have signed on to help advance urban forestry to take on some watering as volunteers.

### **Tree planting – \$37,500**

We hope to train a legion of young adults to plant trees as part of a general education program we plan to provide to teach about urban forestry and employment opportunities that exist in urban forestry. We plan to train enough young people to plant trees that we can rely on them to plant trees, providing them with a working wage for their efforts. We will cap this effort at \$37,500, spending the bulk of it in the first year. If we are not able to plant all the trees we want with young people we recruit, we will recruit volunteers from amongst the individuals and groups that signed on in support of urban forestry when the YVCC was challenged by the City Administrator to document support for trees and urban forestry in Billings.



PUBLIC WORKS  
ADMINISTRATION  
2224 Montana Ave  
Billings, MT. 59101  
P 406.657.8230

December 18, 2023

Jacob Biar  
Urban and Community Forestry Assistant Program Manager  
3232 West Nursery Road  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

Dear Mr. Biar and others it may concern,

I am writing in regards to the USDA Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act Grant awarded to Billings, MT. We are excited to receive this grant as a City and look forward to putting the grant dollars to make a historic and a transformative difference.

Public Works cares for natural areas, some right of way landscaped areas, and boulevard strips along with some city owned areas. Public Works will work with the Parks and Recreation Department to support tree planting across the City.

Public Works supports the work and will do our best to work with project managers to enable tree planting in areas while helping them to integrate trees neatly and cleanly into the infrastructure.

As a City, we are excited to see our city blossom and grow with so many trees making a difference and setting our city apart with the high quality of life a diverse, beautiful, and highly functioning urban forest will bring.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Debi Meling, P.E.  
Public Works Director



**City of  
Billings  
Parks and  
Recreation**

**Mike Pigg  
Parks and  
Recreation  
Director**

[piggm@billingsmt.gov](mailto:piggm@billingsmt.gov)

**390 N. 23rd  
Street  
Billings, MT  
59101**

**406-657-8373**

**Website:**  
[www.BillingsParks.org](http://www.BillingsParks.org)

Mike Pigg  
390 North 23rd  
Billings, MT 59101  
406-657-8373

12/14/2023

Jacob Biar  
Urban and Community Forestry Assistant Program Manager  
3232 West Nursery Road  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

Dear Jacob and whomever else it may concern,

I am writing in regards to the USDA Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act Grant awarded to Billings, MT. We are thrilled to receive this grant and look forward to putting funds to work quickly to make a historic and transformative difference to the ambience and quality of life in Billings.

Billings has historically had a division of effort in caring for its urban forest. The Parks Department has responsibility for parks, a large cemetery (Mountview) and a golf Course (Par 3) as well as natural areas while the Public Works Department has responsibility for boulevard strips and some other publicly owned lands.

We are writing to assure you that we are aware of this grant and aware that it will involve tree planting, some removal of impervious surfaces to allow for tree planting and some other activities required to plant trees and allow for their care and maintenance over time.

We support this work and will do our best to work with project managers to enable tree planting in these areas while helping them to integrate trees neatly and cleanly into the infrastructure we need to maintain in order to keep the city running smoothly and cost-effectively.

We are all on the same team and we are excited to see our city blossom and grow with so many trees making a difference and setting our city apart with the high quality of life a diverse, beautiful and highly functioning urban forest will bring.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Pigg".

Mike Pigg  
Parks and Recreation Director  
Billings, MT



December 20, 2023

Jacob Biar  
Urban and Community Forestry Assistant Program Manager  
3232 West Nursery Road  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

Dear Mr. Biar and associates,

We are excited to support the City of Billings in implementing their grant from the USDA Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act. We believe this is an opportunity to move Billings into the 21st century in urban forest management. Our overarching goal is the use of trees to contribute to a high-quality-of-life in Billings for all residents, with special support for disadvantaged areas. We stand ready to be a source of information and a base of support for this work going forward.

Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council (YVCC) is a grassroots community organization with around 500+ members across Yellowstone County. As members, we advocate for a healthy, inviting, and sustainable community. We are a democratic organization meaning our members select the projects we work on. We first heard of our city's urban forestry needs and the grant opportunity at a members meeting a year ago. We voted unanimously to campaign in support of urban forestry in Billings.

Since that time we have taken the following steps:

1. Formed a dedicated Urban Forestry group which includes interested members, master gardeners, and several local arborists/forestry experts.
2. Easily found over 30 local organizations to join us in supporting urban forestry.
3. Presented these organizations and our own request to that the city apply for a grant to Billings City Administrator, Chris Kukulski.
4. Supported City Forester Steve McConnell in preparing the grant request.
5. Worked to educate the community and city staff about the benefits of urban forestry, including:
  - a. Presented the benefits of a healthy urban forest to several local community groups.
  - b. Developed a continuing petition for residents to sign in support of urban forestry.
  - c. Organized an urban forestry information booth at Montana Fair in August.
  - d. Spoke for 30 minutes about urban forestry on a popular local radio station in November.
  - e. Testified in support of effective use of the IRA grant at a recent City Council meeting.
  - f. Arranged an urban forestry information session at our library in December.

YVCC has over forty years of experience in advocating in Yellowstone County. We are the local chapter of Northern Plains Resource Council, a statewide conservation organization. We have

existing relationships with many local organizations and are looking forward to leveraging our skills and contacts on behalf of urban forestry. We want our community and our City departments and staff to value trees as “green infrastructure” and to embrace – and receive - all the benefits trees provide.

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to me or to our Northern Plains staff member, Michael Skinner. ([michael@northernplains.org](mailto:michael@northernplains.org) / 406-248-1154.).

Respectfully,



Kristine Glenn  
Chair - Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council  
406-530-4397

# Grants Certifications Report



## CITY OF BILLINGS

Unique Entity ID <b>FAEFYK4YL4M1</b>	Certification Validity From: <b>Mon Apr 10 17:23:38 EDT 2023</b>	Purpose of Registration <b>All Awards</b>
CAGE/NCAGE <b>5GQB0</b>	Certification Validity To: <b>Tue Apr 09 17:23:38 EDT 2024</b>	

## Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations

As the duly authorized representative of the CITY OF BILLINGS, I certify that CITY OF BILLINGS:

(1) Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial and financial capability to ensure proper planning, management and completion of any financial assistance project covered by this Certifications and Representations document (See 2 C.F.R. § 200.113 Mandatory disclosures, 2 C.F.R. § 200.214 Suspension and debarment, OMB Guidance A- 129, "Policies for Federal Credit Programs and Non-Tax Receivables");

(2) Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives (See 2 C.F.R. § 200.302 Financial Management and 2 C.F.R. § 200.303 Internal controls);

(3) Will disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass through entity in accordance with applicable Federal awarding agency policy (See 2 C.F.R. § 200.112 Conflict of interest);

(4) Will comply with all limitations imposed by annual appropriations acts;

(5) Will comply with the U.S. Constitution, all Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance in promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in the administration of federally-funded programs (See 2 C.F.R. § 200.300 Statutory and national policy requirements and 2 C.F.R. § 200.303 Internal controls);

(6) Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and public policies governing financial assistance awards and any Federal financial assistance project covered by this certification document, including but not limited to:

- (a) Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, as amended, 22 U.S.C. § 7104(g);
- (b) Drug Free Workplace, 41 U.S.C. § 8103;
- (c) Protection from Retaliation of Disclosure of Certain Information, 41 U.S.C. § 4712;
- (d) National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.;
- (e) Universal Identifier and System for Award Management, 2 C.F.R part 25;
- (f) Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information, 2 C.F.R. part 170;
- (g) OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement), 2 C.F.R. part 180;
- (h) Civil Actions for False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3730;
- (i) False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3729, 18 U.S.C. §§ 287 and 1001;
- (j) Program Fraud and Civil Remedies Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3801 et seq.;
- (k) Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, 2 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.;
- (l) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.;
- (m) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. § 3601 et seq.;
- (n) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.;
- (o) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 794; and.
- (p) Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 6101 et seq.

I have read each of the certifications and representations presented on this page. By submitting this certification, I, Sarah Lane, am attesting to the accuracy of the certifications and representations contained herein. I understand that I may be subject to criminal prosecution under Section 1001, Title 18 of the United States Code or civil liability under the False Claims Act if I misrepresent CITY OF BILLINGS by providing false, fictitious, or fraudulent information to the U.S. Government.

**(End of Provision)**