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CAL FIRE ANNOUNCES APPLICATION PERIOD FOR HISTORIC FUNDING TO PROVIDE SHADE AND NATURE FOR CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Known as Green Schoolyard Grants, more than $100 million in state funding is available to provide nature-based solutions, shaded playgrounds and tree canopy to help support California's next generation where it learns and grows.

(Sacramento)— The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE) Urban and Community Forestry Program announced today that the application period for the Green Schoolyard Grants program is now open. In total, $117 million is available for educational and traditionally underserved communities throughout the state to help lessen the impacts of climate change and provide nature-based solutions where California's next generation often needs it most.

Following public comment opportunities and stakeholder discussions last year, applicants are invited to apply by April 14, 2023. Specific details about the application process can be found by browsing the Urban and Community Forestry Grants Program webpage or contacting CAL FIRE program contacts for more information.

Two different grant options are available for interested communities, providing a full spectrum of resources for project management. These include options for planning grants to design and plan projects, and then implementation grants to make planning come to life.

"CAL FIRE is delighted to be able to offer this unprecedented amount of funding and support for schoolyard greening projects," said CAL FIRE's State Urban Forester, Walter Passmore. "Schoolyard trees and greening provide shelter from extreme heat and the impacts of climate change, as well as access to nature-based learning that is often not readily accessible in urban settings."

This is the first time that CAL FIRE has secured and made funding available for improving nature and tree canopy cover on California K-12 public school campuses and nonprofit childcare facilities. California has approximately 10,000 public schools, the majority of which have very little tree canopy cover and a high degree of impervious surfaces. This leaves children, who are already disproportionately impacted by extreme urban heat, in even unhealthier environments than the surrounding urban areas. A lack of nature, exposure to extreme heat, and associated number of indoor-only days to avoid the heat do not only have negative effects on the physical activity and health of children, but to their mental health and wellbeing as well.

"Extreme heat is more dangerous for the most vulnerable among us, including children," California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot said. "These grants will enable community-led efforts to protect California's most heat-vulnerable students by replacing asphalt in school yards with shade trees, plants, and gardens. Green schoolyards benefit kids' physical and mental health, enable outdoor learning, and create habitat to help boost biodiversity."

Green schoolyard grant projects [include the planting of trees and other vegetation](#), converting pavement to green spaces, creating drought-tolerant natural areas on school grounds, and other activities that help connect children to nature while improving the immediate environment for students and improving accessibility to nature and nature-based learning. Projects are intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve functionality of urban forests, arrest the decline of urban forest resources, address climate change resilience, improve the quality of the environment in urban areas and for underserved communities, and optimize co-benefits to school children and surrounding urban residents.

For more information on CAL FIRE's Green Schoolyard Grant and Urban and Community Grant Programs visit:
- https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/urban-and-community-forestry-grants
- [Watch the Green Schoolyard Grants webinar](#)
- [Read the grants webinar Q&A](#)

For more information about the program and examples of projects underway, hear from CAL FIRE staff and community partners through the following videos in English and Spanish:

[About Green Schoolyard Grants (English)](#)
[About Green Schoolyard Grants (Spanish)](#)

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