**Section 1538.70 Evaluation Priorities**

a) Awarding of urban and community forestry grants will be determined by a competitive application process. The following criteria will be used to evaluate and select projects from qualified Urban and Community Forestry Project Proposals for grant funding. No special priority is given to any of the following items.

1) The need for the development of a Comprehensive Urban and Community Forestry Management Plan as indicated by documented public support.

2) The need for the project outlined in the proposed Urban and Community Forestry Project Proposal as documented by a Comprehensive Urban and Community Forestry Management Plan or other long-range planning document.

3) The need for the Urban and Community Forestry Project Proposal as indicated by public support. Public support must be documented by evidence of citizen participation in urban and community forestry programs, especially participation in the Urban and Community Forestry Project Proposal or copies of residents' requests for urban forestry assistance.

4) The commitment of individuals, businesses and other local organizations to the Urban and Community Forestry Project Proposal, as demonstrated by attendance at local participation meetings, volunteer service, funds raised or other in-kind contributions (based on population).

5) The need for assistance based upon the receipt of grant funds from the Department for implementing Urban and Community Forestry Projects within the past five fiscal years.

6) The facilitation of improvements to the quality of the environment in forests and green space areas within the applicant's jurisdiction through the improved management and preservation of the urban/community forest resources for the common good, health, welfare and safety of the citizens of this State.

7) Increase public awareness.

8) Increase participation of local citizenry and volunteers.

9) Establishment and commitment to the management and improvement of the forest resources of the community.

10) Past grant performance, if the applicant has previously received funding under this program.

11) Applications from local units of government previously not benefiting from the Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program, unless the previous funding provided evidence of high risk trees.

12) Inner city projects that provide a highly visible change in the urban environment.

b) Special consideration will be given to those Urban and Community Forestry Project Proposals that address:

1) Joint efforts between two or more local governments that may have regional implications.

2) Reduction in energy consumption.

3) Utilization of waste wood materials, i.e., logs, brush, wood chips, etc.

4) Full or part time employment opportunities in urban and community forestry and related activities.

5) The development of a new urban and community forestry program as defined by not being an active part of the municipality's programs within the past five years.

6) The community's development, appreciation, and continued awareness of the importance of the urban and community natural resource.

7) The establishment of tree boards for facilitating and improving management of urban and community forest resources.

8) Control, mitigation and eradication of insect and disease epidemics in urban/community public forest lands.

9) Reduction of scientifically documented cases of extreme tree risk conditions that could be detrimental to citizens.

10) Development of tree preservation demonstration sites showing accepted tree protection measures.

11) Development of tree/utility conflict resolution partnerships.

12) Improvements to inner city reforest and tree resources.

(Source: Amended at 27 Ill. Reg. 18977, effective December 4, 2003)