



# COMMUNITIES CARING FOR CANOPY

## CARING FOR CANOPY GRANT OVERVIEW

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The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's Urban & Community Forestry Program (VT UCF), in partnership with the University of Vermont Extension, is offering grants to support the development of sustainable municipal tree management programs. **This document contains information to support grant proposals and project development.**

These grants should be considered seed money to help communities care for tree canopy by taking the necessary actions to developing and sustaining a community-wide tree program. These grants allow for multiple program components (e.g., tree planting, tree inventory, tree maintenance, plan development, public outreach, and program development) to be merged into one grant application for ease and flexibility.

## GRANT OPTIONS

There are two grant categories:

1. **CARING FOR CANOPY**
2. **CANOPY MINI.**

An applicant may only apply for one grant per year, i.e., one Canopy for Canopy or one Canopy Mini grant proposal.

### CARING FOR CANOPY

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The **CARING FOR CANOPY** grant category is for projects focused on helping a community move their tree management program towards a sustained level. This could include street and park tree inventories; management, protection, and streetscape plan development; public policy development; training opportunities for staff and volunteers; tree planting; and tree maintenance.

**Grants range from \$500 to \$5,000 and require a 50–50 match; total project cost range at least \$1,000–\$10,000.**

### CANOPY MINI

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The **CANOPY MINI** grant category is for smaller projects that a community wants to accomplish to help them move their tree management program forward. This could include Arbor Day activities, tree purchase, training opportunities, promotional material, equipment, or reference materials.

**Grants are up to \$500 and require a 50–50 match; total project cost of at least \$1,000.**

## WHO MAY APPLY

Municipalities and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations may apply for a Communities Caring for Canopy grant. Nonprofit organizations will need to provide a written letter of support from the municipality(ies) where the work will occur.

## AVAILABLE FUNDS

\$40,000 in cost-share grants are available for 2017; VT UCF anticipates awarding 90% of the available funds in the Caring for Canopy category and 10% in the Canopy Mini category. The maximum funding for proposals is \$5,000 for the Caring for Canopy category and \$500 for the Canopy Mini category. These funds will be distributed through a competitive grant review and selection process within each grant category. Proposals requesting less than the maximum grant amount will be considered.

## ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPONENTS

Projects must relate to urban and community forestry, take place in Vermont, and may consist of one or more of the following five program components:

- Tree planting
- Tree maintenance
- Tree inventory
- Plan development
- Public outreach
- Program development & staff training

## ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPONENTS GUIDELINES

Below are general guidelines for each of the eligible project components.

### TREE PLANTING

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- All proposals that include tree planting must provide a site plan, species list, and a 3-year maintenance plan.
- Funds can be used to purchase and/or plant trees. Planting stock should be at least 2 inches in caliper and no larger than 3 ½ inches. Balled and burlapped and bare root stock is the preferred stocking material. Please refer to the VT UCF factsheet [‘Planning to Purchase a Tree’](#) for guidance on selecting high quality trees.
- [‘Vermont Tree Selection Guide’](#) should be used as a reference for site assessment and tree selection.
- Trees and other plants can be planted on public lands such as public rights-of-way, parks and greenbelts, and areas around public buildings. Trees may also be planted on private property in the absence of an adequate public right-of-way.

- Funds can also be used to support the growing environment of a tree or group of trees for long-term success. This includes applications to increase available soil volume and tree protection.
- Applications that allow for trees to act as green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff are encouraged.
- Strategically planting trees to maximize their long-term benefits is encouraged. For example, planting trees to conserve energy, improve public health, or increase business patronage will receive special consideration.

## TREE MAINTENANCE

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Funds can be used for the maintenance of public trees. Tree maintenance should focus on a prescriptive approach to long-term tree health and structural improvements. This could include structural pruning/training of young trees, crown cleaning and corrective pruning of mature trees, deep root feeding, cabling/bracing, and compaction mitigation. However, this **does not** include dead/hazard tree removal.

## TREE INVENTORY

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Funds can be used to support a street tree inventory, roadside vegetation assessment, urban tree canopy assessment, and/or purchase of tree inventory and management systems.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

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Funds can be used to develop plans to guide future efforts. These could include an urban forest management plan, invasive tree pest preparedness plan, tree planting plan, forest conservation plan, town forest plan, or other planning efforts to support a community-wide tree program.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

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Funds can be used to support forming a tree board/committee, writing a tree ordinance or policy, staff and/or volunteer training, or to improve awareness and education of the importance of community trees and their management.

## REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals will be reviewed for completeness; in addition, CARING FOR CANOPY grants will be evaluated by the selection committee using the following criteria to prioritize awards:

### WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING? (25 POINTS)

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Describe what you plan on doing and indicate, in list form, the measurable results such as the number of trees planted and maintained, people trained, support group(s) formed, assessment completed, and policy or plan developed. *Example: 17 street trees planted, 1 tree board formed, 1 management plan developed, 5 public works staff trained.*

## HOW DO YOU PLAN TO DO IT? (25 POINTS)

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What is your plan for getting it done? What steps will you take and when?

## WHY ARE YOU DOING IT? (25 POINTS)

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Describe how the project will meet the needs of the community(ies) and help to further develop your municipal tree program. How were local urban forestry need(s) identified?

## WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT? (25 POINTS)

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Identify who will be involved in the project and their role(s), including services provided, financial contributions, and product donations. Consider the various municipal staff, boards and commissions, tree warden, citizens, professionals, and NGOs that can be called upon as partners to support the project and long-term program success. Do not forget to include community members who have participated in VT UCF trainings such as Stewardship of the Urban Landscape (SOUL) Tree Stewards and Forest Pest First Detectors.

## PRE-GRANT AND POST-GRANT REVIEW:

Funded projects may require a pre-grant or post-grant review with a VT UCF staff member to support grant success. VT UCF will notify each award recipient if a pre-grant or post-grant review is required in the grant award announcement.

## ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible costs are those necessary for completing the project. Costs must be documented, reasonable, and consistent within the scope of the project. Examples include

- Cost of services, supplies, planting stock, equipment, or facilities used on the project.
- Value of labor, services, supplies, equipment, or facilities donated to the project by third parties.
- Salaries and fringe benefits of people working directly on the project.

## COST SHARE REQUIREMENTS

Funds will be awarded on a 50–50 (State/local) match basis. The match may be in the form of cash, services, or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions include the cash value for volunteer assistance in planning and all labor, as well as the donation of professional services or materials. Example: The value of volunteer time assisting in a street tree inventory or tree planting are considered an in-kind contribution and an eligible match.

## VALUE OF IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

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- Adult volunteers: \$23/hour
- Youth volunteers up to age 16: \$8/hour
- Donated professional services: use customary rates for services provided
- Donations of materials: use customary retail rates
- Personnel/staff: use hourly wage rates (may also include fringe benefits)

- Equipment: use established rates per hour, per mile, etc.

## TIME TABLE

Applications must be postmarked on or before Friday, April 14th, 2017. Grantees will be notified of funding approval by mid-May 2017. Awarded funds will be available by July 1, 2017. Projects must be completed and budget documentation submitted by June 30, 2018.

## PAYMENT PROCESS

### CARING FOR CANOPY:

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The funds awarded under this grant category are available for payment on the following schedule: 50% payable upon written request after the signing of the grant agreement, and the balance upon completion of the project with verification of payment of all expenses. Please note that grantees will be required to pay for contracted services before final reimbursement from the State. The Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation reserves the right to make partial payment upon non-compliance of conditions in the grant agreement. Allow 4–6 weeks from the time of the payment request to receipt of the check from the State Treasurer's Office.

### CANOPY MINI:

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The funds awarded under this grant category are available for payment on the following schedule: 100% payable upon written request after the signing of the grant agreement and upon completion of the project with verification of payment of all expenses. Allow 4–6 weeks from the time of the payment request to receipt of the check from the State Treasurer's Office.

## HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL:

### TO EMAIL YOUR APPLICATION:

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Email completed application and any other required documents as attachments to: Jenny Lauer at [jenny.lauer@vermont.gov](mailto:jenny.lauer@vermont.gov)

### TO MAIL YOUR APPLICATION:

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Mail the completed application form and any other required documents to the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation's main office. The application **must be postmarked no later than Friday, April 14th, 2017**.

#### MAILING ADDRESS:

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation  
Urban & Community Forestry Program  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05620

**Applications will not be accepted past the deadline date.** VT UCF is not responsible for e-mail delivery that fails, or mail not postmarked on the day of deadline.

## HELP

For more information or assistance, contact the VT UCF staff listed below.

**Grant Application Questions:** Danielle Fitzko, (802) 598-9992 or [danielle.fitzko@vermont.gov](mailto:danielle.fitzko@vermont.gov)

**Project Development Questions:** Elise Schadler, (802) 651-8343, ext. 508 or [elise.schadler@uvm.edu](mailto:elise.schadler@uvm.edu)

**Grant Submission Questions:** Jenny Lauer, Administrative Assistant, (802) 828-1531 or [jenny.lauer@vermont.gov](mailto:jenny.lauer@vermont.gov)

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The Communities Caring for Canopy Grant is one of the many tools the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program offers to support local tree care programs.

Visit our website to learn more: [VTCOMMUNITYFORESTRY.ORG](http://VTCOMMUNITYFORESTRY.ORG)