



# 2023 COMMUNITIES CARING FOR CANOPY

## *Grant Overview*

The [Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program](#) (VT UCF), a partnership between the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation and University of Vermont Extension, is now awarding financial grants to support the development of community tree planting and tree care programs.

*Communities Caring for Canopy* grants provide seed funding to help communities develop and sustain community-wide programs for trees and forests in public places and right-of-ways. These grants allow for multiple program components (e.g., tree planting, tree maintenance, tree inventory, plan development, emerald ash borer or other pest preparedness, public outreach, staff training, and program development) to be merged into one grant application.

This document contains information to support grant applications and project development. Please note that there are two grant categories in 2023: *Communities Caring for Canopy* and *Growing Urban Forests in the Face of Emerald Ash Borer*. This overview document pertains to the former. There is a common application for both grant categories; applicants may apply for both grant categories but must submit separate applications.

### WHO MAY APPLY

Municipalities, public educational institutions, and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations may apply for a *Communities Caring for Canopy* grant. Nonprofit organizations will need to include with their application a written letter of support from the municipality(ies) where the work will occur.

### AVAILABLE FUNDS

Grant awards will be **between \$1,000 and \$5,000**, for a total of \$30,000 in 1:1 cost-share grants available in 2023. These funds will be distributed through a competitive grant review and selection process.

Funding for this program is available from the US Forest Service under Code of Federal Domestic Assistance 10.664, Cooperative Forestry Assistance, Federal Fiscal Year 2023.

### PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Projects must relate to urban and community forestry in public ways and places as defined in [24 V.S.A. § 2501a](#) or at public educational institutions, take place in Vermont, and may consist of one or more of the following program components:

- Tree planting
- Tree maintenance
- Removal of public ash trees

*Release Date: 8/31/22*

*Application Due Date: 12/30/22*

- Tree inventory
- Plan development
- Emerald ash borer or other pest preparedness
- Public outreach
- Staff or tree warden training
- Program development

## ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPONENTS GUIDELINES

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

### TREE PLANTING

---

- The estimated total number of trees that will be planted must be included in the project proposal. All proposals must provide an anticipated species list and a maintenance plan for all planted trees, including provisions for replacing trees that have not survived.
- Funds can be used to purchase and/or plant trees. Planting stock should be at least 1 ½ inches in caliper and no larger than 3 ½ inches. Balled and burlapped and bare root stock is the preferred stocking material; VT UCF cautions that large (>1" DBH) container-grown trees may lead to root binding or girdling. Please refer to the VT UCF factsheet [Planning to Purchase a Tree](#) for guidance on selecting high quality trees.
- The [Vermont Tree Selection Guide](#) should be used as a reference for site assessment and tree selection.
- Trees can be planted on public ways and places such as public rights-of-way, parks and greenbelts, and areas around public buildings, including public schools. Trees may also be planted on private property in the absence of an adequate public right-of-way; if this is the case, to protect the investment project coordinators should obtain a [written agreement](#) from the property owner.
- Funds can also be used to support the growing environment of a tree or group of trees, including those grown in a municipal tree nursery, for long-term success. This includes activities to increase available soil volume, irrigate trees, and for 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 or expand recreational space, or increase business patronage will receive special consideration. Refer to the US Forest Service's [Vibrant Cities Lab](#) for resources and ideas.

**Release Date: 8/31/22**

**Application Due Date: 12/30/22**

- Strategically planting trees to increase equitable distribution of tree canopy cover across a community is encouraged. Learn more about [Tree Equity here](#).

## TREE MAINTENANCE

---

- Funds can be used for the maintenance of trees in public ways and places or at public educational institutions. If hiring a professional arborist, refer to the International Society of Arboriculture's [Certified Arborist database](#).
- 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 soil compaction mitigation.
- Funds can be used for equipment to maintain and care for trees, including hand and pole pruners, pruning saws, mulch, watering bags or tanks, and staking materials.
- Project funds may **not** be used to support insecticide treatment of ash trees, a long-term commitment not adequately supported by a one-year grant. However, the costs associated with protection of public ash trees through insecticide treatment may be used as applicant match.

## REMOVAL OF PUBLIC ASH TREES

---

Due to the presence and spread of [emerald ash borer in Vermont](#) and the eminent threat to ash trees, grant funds may support ash tree removal, following these guidelines:

- Project funds may be allocated for the removal of ash trees in public ways and places or at public educational institutions. Removal of ash trees on private land is not eligible for funding.
- If the project includes ash tree removal, we encourage applicants to include planting trees of other species to offset the loss of the ash trees. Replacement tree plantings may occur at the site of ash tree removal or at another location and must follow the guidelines in the tree planting section above.
- Project funds may exclusively be used for removal of ash (*Fraxinus*) trees; Vermont's three native ash species are green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), and black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*).
- All ash tree removals and disposal of wood waste must adhere to the State of [Vermont's Slow the Spread](#) recommendations.

**Release Date: 8/31/22**

**Application Due Date: 12/30/22**

- The estimated number and approximate size class distribution of ash trees to be removed must be included in the project proposal. Recommended size classes are <12" diameter at breast height (DBH), 12"-24" DBH, and >24" DBH.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit supporting documentation regarding emerald ash borer planning including ash inventory or survey results and adopted strategies for mitigating the impact of emerald ash borer.

## **TREE INVENTORY**

---

Funds can be used to support a public or shade tree inventory, roadside ash inventory, roadside vegetation assessment, urban tree canopy assessment, purchase of data collection equipment (iPad, GPS unit), and/or purchase of tree inventory and management software systems.

## **PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

---

Funds can be used to develop plans to guide future community tree management. Examples include a [shade tree preservation plan](#), urban forest management plan, tree planting plan, roadside vegetation management plan, forest conservation plan, town forest recreation plan, or other planning efforts to support a community-wide tree program.

## **EMERALD ASH BORER AND OTHER PEST PREPAREDNESS**

---

Funds can be used towards preparing for the impacts of the emerald ash borer or other pests of concern, including spotted lanternfly, hemlock woolly adelgid, and Asian longhorned beetle. Examples of supported activities include development of a pest preparedness or management plan, developing a public awareness campaign, and health assessments or ash trees or other species of concern.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH, STAFF OR TREE WARDEN TRAINING, OR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

---

Funds can support forming a tree board or committee, developing a tree ordinance or policy, training, or professional development for town staff, tree warden, or volunteers. Funds can also be used to improve awareness and education of the importance of community trees and their management.

## **APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS**

All proposals will be reviewed for completeness. In addition, *Communities Caring for Canopy* grant proposals will be evaluated by the grant review and selection committee using the following criteria to prioritize awards. Sample applications are available on our [Grant FAQ page](#) as guidance.

## **STATEMENT OF NEED**

---

Provide a succinct statement of need for funding, identifying the opportunities and desired outcomes of the proposed project. How will the project help to further the community-wide tree program? Include any information that supports a comprehensive understanding of the municipality or applicant's

**Release Date: 8/31/22**

**Application Due Date: 12/30/22**

situation, e.g., tree inventory or survey results, planning efforts, who has been or will be involved in making decisions about urban and community forestry management.

### **WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING and HOW WILL YOU DO IT?**

---

In table format using action steps and a timeline, provide a list of what you plan on doing, describe how it will be done, and list the measurable results. Please be as specific as possible; this table should list the deliverables of your project. All projects must be completed by **March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024**.

### **WHO WILL CARRY OUT THE PLAN?**

---

In concert with the action items entered above, identify who will be involved in the project and their role including services provided, financial contributions, and product donations. Consider the various municipal staff, boards and commissions, tree wardens, citizens, professionals, and organizations that can be called upon as partners to support your efforts. If municipal staff will be planting or maintaining trees provide details about their qualifications and experience.

### **PRE-GRANT AND POST-GRANT SITE VISIT**

Funded projects may require a pre-grant or post-grant site visit 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, in accordance with Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles. Examples include

- Cost of services, supplies, 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 1:1 match basis; in other words, match provided must be at least equal to requested funds. The match may be in the form of cash, services, or in-kind contributions. Match may take the form of additional tree plantings or ash tree removals. In-kind contributions can include the cash value for volunteer assistance in planning and all grantee personnel/staff 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.*

Costs contributed as match must be eligible as described in the preceding section, Eligible Costs. Use of federal funds from other programs as match will be approved on a case-by-case basis and is contingent upon agreement from the organization or agency from where those funds originate. Volunteer time

*Release Date: 8/31/22*

*Application Due Date: 12/30/22*

contributed as match must be documented on a sign-in sheet to include dates, hours of work performed and signatures. The State will provide a form on which to report matching funds upon request.

## VALUE OF IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

---

- Volunteers: Please see our [Grant FAQ webpage](#) for recommended rates
- Donated professional services: use customary rates for services provided
- Donations of materials: use fair market value
- Personnel/staff: use hourly wage rates (may also include fringe benefits)
- Equipment: use established rates per hour, per mile, etc.

## TIMELINE

Applications must be postmarked on or before midnight on Friday, **December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022**. Grantees will be notified of funding approval by the end of January. Awarded funds in the form of signed grant agreements are anticipated to be available by the end of March 2023. Projects must be completed, and a final financial report and invoice submitted by March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## PAYMENT PROCESS

All funds awarded through the *Communities Caring for Canopy* grant program are available for payment upon completion of the project with submission of a final report and invoice. Refer to our [Grant FAQ webpage](#) for more information.

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.

## HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

### TO EMAIL:

---

**Due to changes in office occupation, electronic submission of applications is strongly encouraged.** Email completed proposal and all other required documents as attachments by close of business on **Friday, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022**, to Jenny Lauer at [Jenny.Lauer@vermont.gov](mailto:Jenny.Lauer@vermont.gov).

### TO MAIL:

---

If necessary, applicants may mail the completed proposal and all other required documents to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's main office. The application **must be postmarked no later than Friday, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022**. If sending application by mail, please give at least one week's notice to [Jenny.Lauer@vermont.gov](mailto:Jenny.Lauer@vermont.gov).

**Release Date: 8/31/22**

**Application Due Date: 12/30/22**

**MAILING ADDRESS:**

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Attn: Jenny Lauer

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 that is not postmarked on the day of mailing.

**HELP**

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

**Grant Application Questions:** Elise Schadler, (802) 522-6015 or [elise.schadler@vermont.gov](mailto:elise.schadler@vermont.gov)

**Project Development Questions:** Joanne Garton, (802) 249-4217 or [joanne.garton@vermont.gov](mailto:joanne.garton@vermont.gov)

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

---

The *Communities Caring for Canopy* grant program is one of the many tools the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program offers to support local tree care and stewardship.

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