

2024 Community Tree Planting Grant

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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1. How will the Community Tree Planting Grant be administered?

The CTPG program will be a competitive grant award process with two rounds.

- Round 1 funding amount (2024): \$315,000. Any unused funding will roll over to Round 2, in 2025.
- Round 2 funding amount (2025): \$315,000.

After the application deadline for each round, a review committee will review all submitted applications utilizing the CTPG program's scoring criteria. The committee will grant awards to applicants whose applications best meet the priorities of the program (see the [scoring criteria](#)).

2. Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is administering this block grant. Are applicants outside of Chittenden County eligible to apply?

Yes. This is a state-wide program and any eligible entity may apply for a project located in Vermont. Note that applicants from within Chittenden County generally will not need to use CCRPC as a grant agent / administrator, since CCRPC is administering the full block grant.

3. Can I submit an application for both Round 1 and Round 2?

Eligible entities may apply for either round of funding. Entities that have received funding under the first round may apply for additional funding in the second round. Applications from eligible entities that have not yet received VT UCF funding will be prioritized in both rounds. The maximum individual award amount for each round of funding is \$75,000.

4. I applied for the 2024 round of annual UCF grants but did not receive an award. Can I submit the same application for the Community Tree Planting Grant, and does that give us priority status?

Prior UCF applicants are strongly encouraged to apply to the CTPG, and several applicants to the 2024 UCF grants were not awarded because UCF staff felt they were a better fit for the forthcoming CTPG. While that does not convey any formal priority status during the review process, competitive projects are likely to be funded. You may have to adjust your application slightly to fit this program.

5. How much of the grant funding can go to administrative costs?

Administrative costs (including both direct and indirect costs) can be no more than 10% of the total budget. Administrative costs include activities such as managing contracts and procurement, invoicing and reporting, and general coordination. These are distinct from staff salaries for direct planting activities, which can be up to 100% of the project budget.

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6. Can this grant be combined with other funding from federal sources?

No. This program is funded by federal dollars and cannot be combined with other federal funds. Details of the funding source for this program are as follows:

CFDA Title	Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Fund
CFDA Number	21.024
Award Name	American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Vermont State Recovery Fund
Award Number	SLFRP4407
Award Year	2021
Federal Granting Agency	U.S. Department of the Treasury
SFR Program	COVID19 Public Health & Economic Impacts
SFR Expenditure Category	EC 5.6 – Clean Water: Stormwater
SFR Project Name	Urban Tree Planting Block Grant Program
SFR Project ID No.	Urban Tree Planting Block Grant program (Act 185 of 2022, Section G.600(a)(8))

If you are using this program as match or leverage for another grant (or vice versa), you should check the specific requirements of other programs. For example, the Vermont Greening Schools Initiative does not allow other ARPA State Recovery Funds for Clean Water to be used as local match or leverage.

7. Are pre-award costs eligible under this grant?

Unfortunately not. Only costs incurred starting on the date the award contract is finalized will be eligible expenses. You may still make plans, obtain quotes, or start your contractor procurement process before the award contract date, but any administrative costs such as staff time before the contract date will not be reimbursed.

8. Since RPCs can only act as agents for municipalities, can a nonprofit (including a non-municipal school) still apply if their project is under \$25,000?

Yes. Any eligible entity can submit an application for a project under \$25,000 (though municipalities with small projects are strongly encouraged to work through their RPC). In addition, a municipality may submit a project on behalf of a nonprofit, which may allow for the RPC to serve as the project agent.

9. If an RPC is acting as agent for multiple municipalities, should they submit a single consortium application, or separate applications for each municipality? And will there be multiple grant contracts, or only one?

It depends. A consortium application should be used for a project with a single, cohesive scope and budget that takes place in two or more municipalities. For example, planting trees in mobile home parks in several towns, or hosting a regional Arbor Day Celebration and tree planting.

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However, if planting projects in each municipality have distinct scopes and goals, a separate application should be submitted for each project.

Regardless, projects within a region may be bundled under a single contract with an RPC if the municipalities and RPCs agree to do so, as indicated on the application and supported by letters or resolutions.

10. My municipality would like to use our Regional Planning Commission as grant agent. Whom should we contact for a letter of support?

See the table below for the CTPG point of contact at each RPC. To find the RPC that serves your town, [use this map](#) from the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies.

Regional Planning Commission (RPC)	Contact Name	E-mail Address
Addison Co. RPC	Deron Rixon	drixon@acrpc.org
Bennington Co. RPC	Jim Henderson	jhenderson@bcrcvt.org
Chittenden Co. RPC	Darren Schibler	dschibler@ccrpcvt.org
Central VT RPC	Lincoln Frasca	frasca@cvregion.com
Lamoille Co. RPC	Tori Hellwig	victoria@lcpvcvt.org
Mount Ascutney Regional Comm.	Allison Hopkins	ahopkins@marcvvt.org
Northeastern VT Development Agency	Kyle Dwyer	kdwyer@nvda.net
Northwest RPC	Dean Pierce	dpierce@nrpcvt.com
Rutland RPC	Greg Poelker-McKee	greg@rutlandrpc.org
Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Comm.	Geena Baber	gbaber@trorc.org
Windham Regional Comm.	Margo Ghia	mghia@windhamregional.org

11. This grant is focused on urban areas. How exactly are those defined? Are (rural) villages disadvantaged in applying?

There is no fixed definition of “urban area” for this grant. It generally includes areas with a high density of people, buildings and impervious area. In particular, the core areas of communities often included within [state-designated planning centers](#) are given priority in the [application scoring rubric](#).

12. What size of trees can be planted under this grant?

In general, planting stock should be at least 1 1/2 inches in caliper and no larger than 3 1/2 inches. Balled and burlapped or bare root stock is the preferred stocking material; VT UCF cautions that large (>1” caliper) 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. However, smaller planting stock may be used for certain types of planting sites, such as riparian buffer restoration or replanting in flood buyout properties. Please contact program staff for technical assistance if you plan to submit a proposal with unique site conditions or planting circumstances.

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13. Are shrubs eligible for funding under this grant?

Generally not. This program is intended to increase the value that trees provide to communities, specifically to increase canopy cover and manage stormwater (among other values). Shrubs generally don't accomplish those goals, at least not to the degree that trees would, so grant funds could not be used to purchase or plant shrubs. However, use of shrubs is strongly encouraged as a complement to tree planting projects.

14. What if we don't know the exact locations of tree planting until our project is in progress?

Applications can be submitted for projects without specific planting locations as long as:

- The general planting area is defined (e.g., along specific streets or in a defined geographic area like a designated downtown)
- A list of potential tree species is provided that would be suitable for the general planting area's environmental conditions, including a range of sizes for mature trees to accommodate different available planting areas.
- There is a defined process for deciding exact planting sites and tree species – checklists are recommended and should be as specific as possible.
- Someone on the project team has arboricultural experience, such as the Tree Warden.

Projects of this nature must submit a final list of planting locations and species to program staff before planting occurs. It is recommended that you reach out to program staff prior to submitting an application without specific planting locations to ensure success.

15. Can this grant be used to remove or replace trees?

This grant cannot fund tree removal; it can only be used for tree planting. While, this could include the planting portion of projects that involve tree replacement, such as interplanting around ash trees to mitigate the effects of emerald ash borer, projects that result in a net increase of canopy cover will be most competitive.

16. Will there be any weighting in favor of planting native tree species?

Use of native tree species is strongly encouraged. However, it is more important to select the appropriate species for a particular site so that the tree will survive and thrive, even if it may not be strictly native to the area. Applicants may also consider selecting trees that will be resilient to the impacts of climate change in Vermont (such as those that thrive in somewhat warmer climates and can withstand periods of drought as well as intense rain events).

Projects should also avoid using species with known susceptibility to [invasive pests](#), especially emerald ash borer. Projects including trees known to be invasive will not be funded; if you are uncertain about whether a species is invasive, consult VTinvasives.org or ask program staff.

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17. The grant guidance calls for paying residents to give input on the project. Does this happen before or after we apply? Can we use part of the grant to reimburse ourselves for that expense?

Outreach to disadvantaged communities can happen either before you apply or as a part of your project. You can use the outreach part of the budget to pay staff to conduct outreach, and/or to provide stipends for volunteers to participate, along with other expenses listed in the [grant guidance](#). If you have already conducted outreach on your project before applying, you can document that in your application to support your environmental justice impact narrative.

18. We would like submit an application to plant trees but need guidance on species selection, assessment of the site, and/or developing a planting plan. Who can help us?

A site visit will be available by request during the project development and application process in order to refine the project design. Contact VT UCF's Urban Forester, Adam McCullough, to schedule a project development site visit:

Adam McCullough, Urban Forester, VT Urban & Community Forestry Program, (802) 522-5104, adam.mccullough@vermont.gov