



2021 Arbor Day Tree Planting Grants

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 celebrating 2021 Arbor Day by offering twenty-one grants of \$1,000 each for tree planting and other urban and community forest stewardship activities.

While we are unable to come together in person for Arbor Day in 2021, we hope that these grants will allow our communities to celebrate trees locally. Together, we're making Vermont a shade better.

This document contains information to support grant proposal and project development.

WHO MAY APPLY

Municipalities and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations may apply for the 2021 Arbor Day grants.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

\$21,000 in grants is available for 2021; each grant will be for \$1,000. There is no cost-share (match) requirement. These funds will be distributed through a competitive grant review and selection process. Due to the administrative effort required to process grants, proposals requesting less than the maximum grant award will not be considered.

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 2020.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Projects must include planting at least one tree and take place in Vermont. Projects may consist of one or more of the following program components:

- Public outreach and engagement.
- Tree maintenance, including supporting the growing environment for long-term success.
- Increasing local capacity to manage and steward municipal trees.

To help VT UCF share the good work and extend the Arbor Day celebrations across Vermont, grantees will be asked to capture the tree planting event(s) with photos that will be shared through various media outlets, including VT UCF's social media accounts.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT GUIDELINES

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

TREE PLANTINGS

- The estimated number of trees that will be planted must be included in the project proposal. All proposals must provide information on the planting location, a species list, and a 3-year maintenance plan for the tree(s).
- While tree planting may occur at any point during the proposed project's timeline, plantings occurring during the month of May will be communicated as part of VT UCF's month-long statewide Arbor Day celebration.
- Trees can be planted on municipal public lands such as within the public rights-of-way along any road, parks and greenbelts, areas around public buildings, in town forests, or in restoration and riparian areas. Trees may also be planted on private property in the absence of adequate public spaces. If this is the case project coordinators must obtain written permission from the landowners and, to protect the investment, should also obtain a written easement from the landowners as well.
- If the tree planting is occurring in an area that fits the definition of "public ways" or "public places" in the newly [amended tree warden statutes](#), note that it will by its nature become a "shade tree" under the jurisdiction of the municipal tree warden. **Public place** is defined as municipal property, including a municipal park, a recreation area, or a municipal building. **Public way** is defined as a right-of-way held by a municipality, including a town highway.
- If planting street or ornamental landscape trees, planting stock should be at least 1 ½ inches in caliper and no larger than 3 ½ inches. Balled and burlapped or bare root stock are the preferred stocking materials. Please refer to the VT UCF factsheet [Planning to Purchase a Tree](#) for guidance on selecting high quality trees.
- If the tree planting is occurring in a restoration or riparian area, the [Vermont Trees for Streams Resource Guide](#) and [Tree Species for Riparian Planting](#) should be used to design, guide species selection, and implement a successful planting. Tree protection in the form of tree shelters, tubes, or mats should be incorporated into the project.
- The '[Vermont Tree Selection Guide](#)' should be used as a reference for site assessment and tree selection.

PUBLIC OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Project funds may be used to improve awareness of the importance of and benefits provided by community trees, including any specific stewardship or management initiatives occurring within a given municipality. This includes printing and mailing costs, signage, online and print newspaper ads, and development of outreach materials.

TREE MAINTENANCE

Project 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 materials or activities to support a tree or group of trees' growing environment for long-term success, such as applications to increase available soil volume and tree protection. Other eligible activities include structural pruning/training of young trees, crown cleaning and corrective pruning of mature trees, deep root feeding, cabling/bracing, and soil compaction mitigation. However, removal of dead or risk trees, trees threatened by insects or diseases, or insecticide treatment of trees **are not eligible** for funding under this grant.

INCREASING LOCAL CAPACITY

Project funds may be used for grantee staff or tree board/committee member training, for grantee staff or personnel costs, or to purchase materials, supplies, or equipment to support public tree management strategy in the municipality. Applicants may also request funds to support work with regional groups or neighboring communities.

APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals will be reviewed for completeness. Proposals should respond to the following elements, which will be used by the selection committee to prioritize awards:

TREE PLANTING DETAILS

Provide basic details about the tree planting component of the project, including number of trees to be planted, site description, potential species list, and maintenance plan.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Describe the project, how it will be accomplished, and the measurable results. All project work must be completed by **December 31st, 2021**. Questions that can be answered in this section include, as applicable:

- How does the project contribute to the municipality's plans, goals, or any specific initiatives?
- What is the timeline for the project?
- Other than tree planting, what, if any, activities will be included in the project?

WHO WILL CARRY OUT THE PLAN?

In concert with the project description above, provide a bulleted list of who will be involved in the project and their role, including services provided, financial contributions, and product donations. Consider grouping the list according to the following categories:

- Project coordination: *who will coordinate the overall project?*
- Tree planting: *who will source and plant the tree(s)?*
- Tree maintenance: *who will ensure proper protection and maintenance of the newly planted tree(s)?*
- Communication: *who will communicate the project to the public and record information?*
- Coordinator and implementation of other project components

Consider the various municipal staff, boards and commissions, citizens, professionals, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that can be called upon as partners to support your efforts. Additionally, describe if and how the municipal tree warden will be involved in the project.

PRE-GRANT AND POST-GRANT REVIEW

Funded projects may require a pre-grant or post-grant review or 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

- Costs of services, supplies, planting stock, equipment, or facilities use on or for the project.
- Costs associated with public outreach and engagement.
- Salaries and fringe benefits of people working directly on the project.

TIMELINE

Applications must be emailed postmarked on or before midnight on March 26th, 2021. Grantees will be notified of funding approval by April 9th, 2021. Awarded funds in the form of signed grant agreements are anticipated to be available by the beginning of May 2021. Projects must be completed, and a final project summary and financial report submitted by December 31st, 2021.

Restrictions put in place by the State of Vermont in response to COVID-19 may alter the proposed timeline of awarded grants. Project start dates and any subsequent deliverable dates in grant agreements are subject to change. It is the responsibility of the municipality or grant awardee to ensure that any work conducted under this grant complies with State of Vermont Executive Orders.

Release Date: February 15th, 2021
Proposal Due Date: March 26th, 2021

PAYMENT PROCESS

The funds awarded are available for payment as reimbursement **upon completion of the project** and submission of an invoice, 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 2-3 weeks from the time of the payment request to receipt of the check from the State Treasurer's Office.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

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, March 26th, 2021** to Jenny Lauer at 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, March 26th, 2021** and you must send an email to jenny.lauer@vermont.gov to give notice that the application is expected by mail.

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 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

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

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

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Grant funding that supports Vermont municipalities through tree planting is one of the many resources that the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program offers to support local tree care and stewardship. Learn more at [VTCOMMUNITYFORESTRY.ORG](https://vtcommunityforestry.org).