



GROWING URBAN FORESTS IN THE FACE OF EMERALD ASH BORER

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, seeks applicants needing financial assistance for tree planting and reforestation efforts in consideration of the impact of the invasive forest pest emerald ash borer (EAB). This grant program will support:

- Tree planting in the public right-of-way or on public places such as parks and village greens and
- The establishment or enhancement of municipal community tree nurseries

With special funds from the US Forest Service, VT UCF was selected to work with municipalities to support more resilient urban and community forests, with a focus on Vermont’s most populated areas. This funding is intended for **municipalities that are prepared to plant trees to offset the loss of public ash trees due to EAB.**

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

WHO MAY APPLY

Municipalities included within a U.S. Census-defined urban area or urban cluster are eligible for funding. Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, eligible municipalities* are:

Barre City	Jericho	Rutland City	Waterbury
Barre Town	Lyndon	Shaftsbury	Weathersfield
Bennington	Middlebury	Shelburne	Westminster
Brattleboro	Milton	South Burlington	West Rutland
Burlington	Montpelier	Springfield	Williamstown
Castleton	Newport City	St. Albans City	Windsor
Essex Junction	Northfield	St. Johnsbury	Winooski
Fair Haven	Norwich	Swanton	
Hartford	Rockingham	Vergennes	

This list is consistent with the [Vermont 2010 Population and Housing Unit Counts Report](#), issued July 2012 by the U.S. Census Bureau. Click for more information on [Census definitions](#) and reference maps for [urban areas and urban clusters](#).

*As 2020 [U.S. Census](#) information and data are released, the eligible municipalities list may change. If you would like to discuss your municipality’s eligibility, please contact elise.schadler@vermont.gov.

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AVAILABLE FUNDS

Grant awards will be **between \$3,000 and \$15,000**, for a total of \$60,000 in cost-share grants available for 2021-2022. 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 2021.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Projects should create and foster more resilient urban forests by diversifying species planted in public rights-of-way and public places, specifically addressing the loss of public ash trees due to the invasive emerald ash borer. Projects **must** include components of **one or more** of the three following focus areas:

1. Tree planting in public rights-of-way or on public places in proximity to prior ash tree removals;
2. Interplanting species other than ash within public rights-of-way or on public places, in preparation for the eventual removal of ash trees; and/or
3. The establishment or enhancement of a municipal tree nursery to grow trees that will eventually be planted within public rights-of-way or on public places to replace or offset removed ash trees.

Although not required, projects **may** also include one or more other components directly related to EAB and resilient urban forests, including:

- increasing municipal staff capacity to plan for and manage public trees,
- public outreach and engagement, and
- ensuring the establishment and success of any trees planted through the proposed project.

Project funds **may not** be used to support:

- tree removal
- stump grinding
- insecticide treatment of ash trees.

However, the costs associated with these activities could be used as project match. Applicants are encouraged to review the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program's [emerald ash borer management webpage](#) prior to submitting a proposal. The page contains educational, planning, budgeting, and implementation resources that may be helpful in preparing a project proposal.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT GUIDELINES

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

REPLACEMENT TREE PLANTINGS OR INTERPLANTING BETWEEN EXISTING ASH TREES

Project funds may be used for the purchase, delivery, and planting of public trees. Tree planting components of proposed projects should be explicitly related to a municipal strategy to address the loss of ash trees due to EAB. Eligible projects should adhere to the following guidelines:

- All trees planted using project funds must occur on **publicly managed land**, which includes public rights-of-way in downtowns and neighborhoods, parks, village greens, and other municipal properties.
- Replacement tree plantings may occur at the exact site where ash tree(s) have been removed, or at another location.
- Interplanting (planting between two existing trees) should occur in areas with high existing populations of public ash trees, where there is adequate space to plant new trees to eventually replace the ash once they are removed.
- The estimated total number of trees that will be planted must be included in the project proposal. All proposals must provide a site plan, species list, and a 3-year maintenance plan for all planted trees, including provisions for replacing trees that have not survived.
- Trees planted using project funding should be a minimum of 1 ½ inches in caliper and no larger than 3 ½ inches in caliper. 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.
- The [Vermont Tree Selection Guide](#) should be used as a reference for site assessment and tree selection.
- **No ash trees** should be included in the replacement planting or interplanting efforts.

ESTABLISHMENT OR ENHANCEMENT OF A MUNICIPAL TREE NURSERY

Project funds may be used to establish a new municipal tree nursery or to enhance an existing municipal tree nursery. Tree nursery project components of proposed projects should be related to a municipal strategy to address the loss of ash trees due to EAB by growing trees locally to eventually be planted in publicly managed places. Eligible projects should consider the following:

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- There are many resources and examples of municipal tree nurseries; applicants should consider local situations and capacity in designing a project that would establish a new nursery. Refer to VT UCF's [Community Tree Nurseries webpage](#) for a list of resources.
- New tree nurseries may be established as a long-term municipal investment to grow trees locally or may be considered a short-term project in direct response to the loss of ash trees due to emerald ash borer.
- Any trees purchased with project funds to be planted in a municipal tree nursery should be eventually planted in a publicly managed location, such as in a public right-of-way, a park, or a village green.
- Trees planted through the project in a municipal tree nursery may be of any size appropriate for the given nursery project.
- Project funds may be used to purchase trees, for nursery site preparation, and/or for supplies to ensure tree nursery success, including irrigation and tree protection.

INCREASING MUNICIPAL STAFF CAPACITY

Project funds may be used for staff training or personnel costs. Municipal applicants are encouraged to consider training needs or support for their appointed tree warden, road crews, public works staff, and/or parks department staff. Applicants may also request funds to support work with regional groups and neighboring municipalities.

PUBLIC OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Project funds may be used to support public engagement regarding the proposed project and/or the municipality's proposed EAB management strategy. This includes printing and mailing costs, signage, online and print newspaper ads, and development of outreach materials.

ENSURING TREE ESTABLISHMENT AND SUCCESS

Project funds may be used to purchase materials to ensure that any trees planted will thrive. This includes slow-release tree watering bags or other irrigation supplies, mulch, and tree protection and staking supplies.

APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee for completeness, eligibility, and applicability to the three project focus areas. Additionally, priority will be given to:

- Municipalities within the current [Vermont EAB Infested Area](#) and
- Municipalities that can demonstrate through documented tree inventory the prevalence of ash within their public tree population.

Proposals should respond to the following elements, which will be used by the selection committee to prioritize awards:

STATEMENT OF NEED

Explain your municipality's current situation regarding its public ash tree population and the threat of emerald ash borer. Provide a succinct statement of need for funding, identifying the opportunities and desired outcomes of the proposed project. Include any information about the public ash tree population and distribution of ash trees in specific areas/neighborhoods (e.g., inventory or survey results), your municipality's management strategy (e.g., an EAB preparedness plan or any associated urban tree planting or management plans), and 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 your municipality plans on doing, describe how it will be done, and list the measurable results. All projects must be completed by **December 31st, 2022**. Questions that may be answered in this section include, as applicable:

- How many trees will be planted through the project, where, when, and of what size and species?
- What areas of the municipality will be prioritized for replacement tree plantings or interplanting efforts?
- What specific activities will lead to the establishment of a new municipal tree nursery or enhancing an existing municipal tree nursery?

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, citizens, professionals, and non-governmental organizations that can be called upon as partners to support your efforts. If municipal staff will be planting trees, provide details about their qualifications and experience. Questions that can be answered in this section include:

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- Who will coordinate tree planting efforts and who will ensure proper planting, protection, and maintenance of the planted trees?
- Who will coordinate municipal tree nursery activities? Who will maintain (water, weed, prune, etc.) any trees planted in a new or existing municipal tree nursery?
- Who will communicate the project to the public and record information for future budget planning or land use planning efforts?

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. Brief case studies will be developed on each funded project.

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 replacement trees or trees to be interplanted, site preparation, tree protection, and associated supplies necessary for successful tree planting in publicly managed places.
- Costs associated with services, supplies, or materials necessary to establish a new or enhance an existing municipal tree nursery.
- Costs associated with purchase of equipment to increase the municipality's capacity to plant trees internally and successfully manage a municipal tree nursery. Equipment is defined as tangible personal property with a per unit-cost of \$5,000 or more and a useful life of one year or more. Purchase, use, and management of equipment under this grant is subject to requirements in Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200.
- Costs of public outreach and engagement.
- Salaries and fringe benefits of people working directly on the project.

COST SHARE REQUIREMENTS

Funds will be awarded on a 1:1 match basis. The match may be in the form of cash, services, or in-kind contributions. Match may take the form of ash tree removals, additional tree plantings, or insecticide treatment of select ash trees as either a permanent or temporary measure. 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 organizing and implementing a volunteer tree planting project are an eligible source of 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

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upon agreement from the organization or agency from where those funds originate. Volunteer time 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.

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 emailed postmarked on or before midnight on **Friday, October 29th, 2021**. Grantees will be notified of funding approval by mid-November. Awarded funds in the form of signed grant agreements are anticipated to be available by mid-December 2021. Projects must be completed, and a final financial report submitted by December 31st, 2022.

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 to ensure that any work conducted under this grant complies with State of Vermont COVID-19 guidance and any related Executive Orders.

PAYMENT PROCESS

The funds awarded are available for payment on the following schedule:

- Up to one-third of the total award amount may be requested once the grant agreement is in place through submission of an invoice and a written request.
- The remaining balance will be reimbursed upon completion of the project and submission of an invoice and final report, with verification of payment of all expenses.

To receive advance payment, the municipality (grantee) will need to attest to having a written procedure outlining how they minimize the time lapse between receipt and expenditure of grant funds. We have added an optional checkbox on page 6 of the grant application to satisfy this requirement.

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.

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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, October 29th, 2021** to Jenny Lauer at Jenny.Lauer@vermont.gov.

TO MAIL:

If necessary, municipalities 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, October 29th, 2021**. If sending application by mail, please notify Jenny.Lauer@vermont.gov.

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

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

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

Grant funding that supports Vermont municipalities through urban and community 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.