



COMMUNITIES CARING FOR CANOPY GRANTS

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 the development of sustainable municipal tree management and stewardship programs.

Community Caring for Canopy Grants act as seed funding to help communities care for their publicly managed trees and forests 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 maintenance, tree inventory, plan development, emerald ash borer preparedness, public outreach, and program development) to be merged into one grant application for ease and flexibility.

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

WHO MAY APPLY

Municipalities and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations may apply for a Community Caring for Canopy grant. Non-profit organizations will need to include with their proposal a written letter of support from the municipality(ies) where the work will occur.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

\$25,000 in cost-share grants are available for 2020. The minimum funding for proposals is \$1,000 and the maximum funding for proposals is \$5,000. 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 2019.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPONENTS

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

- Tree planting
- Tree maintenance
- Tree inventory
- Plan development
- Emerald ash borer preparedness
- Public outreach
- Program development and staff or tree warden training

ELIGIBLE PROJECT COMPONENTS GUIDELINES

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

TREE PLANTING

- 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.
- The [‘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. To protect the investment, project coordinators should consider obtaining a written easement from the landowners.
- 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 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.

TREE MAINTENANCE

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 ones, crown cleaning and corrective pruning of mature trees, deep root feeding, cabling/bracing, and soil compaction mitigation. However, dead/hazard tree removal projects **are not eligible** for funding under this grant.

TREE INVENTORY

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

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Funds can be used to develop plans to guide future efforts. Examples include an urban forest management plan, tree planting plan, roadside vegetation management plan, forest conservation plan, town forest plan, or other planning efforts to support a community-wide tree program.

EMERALD ASH BORER PREPAREDNESS

Funds can be used towards preparing for the impacts of the emerald ash borer (EAB). Examples of supported activities include development of a town EAB management plan, developing a public awareness campaign, ash tree health assessments, and monitoring and surveying efforts including establishing trapping systems or trap trees and scouting for signs and symptoms of the pest.

PUBLIC OUTREACH & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Funds can support forming a tree board or committee, writing a tree ordinance or policy, or training or professional development for town staff, tree warden, or volunteers. Grants 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, Caring for Canopy grant proposals will be evaluated by the selection committee using the following criteria to prioritize awards:

WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING? (25 POINTS)

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. *Examples: 17 streets planted, 1 tree committee formed, 1 management plan developed, 100 posters hung, 5 road crew members trained.*

HOW DO YOU PLAN ON DOING IT? (25 POINTS)

Describe how you plan on accomplishing the items identified above including timeline and action steps.

WHY ARE YOU DOING IT? (25 POINTS)

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

WHO WILL CARRY OUT THE PLAN? (25 POINTS)

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 warden, citizens, professionals, and NGOs that can be called upon as partners to support your efforts. Do not forget to include community members who have participated in other VT UCF programs such as Stewardship of the Urban Landscape (SOUL) Tree Stewards and/or Forest Pest First Detectors. Consider working with nearby towns; there is always strength in working collaboratively.

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, 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 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 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. 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

- Adult volunteers: \$25/hour
- Youth volunteers up to age 16: \$9/hour
- Donated professional services: use customary rates for services provided

Release Date: 10/25/19

Proposal Due Date: 1/17/20

- Donations of materials: use fair market value customary retail rates
- 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, January 17th, 2020. Grantees will be notified of funding approval by early February 2020. Awarded funds in the form of signed grant agreements are anticipated to be available by the end of March 2020. Projects must be completed, and a final financial report submitted by March 2021.

PAYMENT PROCESS

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

- 50% payable in advance, 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.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

BY EMAIL:

Email completed proposal and additional required documents as attachments by no later than midnight on Friday, January 17th, 2020 to Jenny Lauer at jenny.lauer@vermont.gov.

BY MAIL:

Mail the completed proposal and additional required documents to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's main office. The proposal **must be postmarked no later than Friday, January 17th, 2020**.

MAILING ADDRESS:

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

Proposals 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.

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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

The Communities Caring for Canopy Grant 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