



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Virginia Department of Forestry Offers Cost-Share to Remove Ash Trees from Public Property

(Charlottesville, VA) In response to the statewide decline of ash trees due to the introduction of the emerald ash borer (EAB), the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) is offering financial assistance to remove dead or dying ash trees from the public landscape. Municipalities, local government agencies, non-profit entities on public lands, and/or tribal communities are eligible to apply to receive funding through this 50 percent cost-share program. No private companies or landowners are eligible.

To qualify for this program, the tree(s) must have a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 17 inches or greater and exhibit greater than 30 percent canopy loss. All applications must have a removal quote or bid attached from an International Society of Arboriculture-certified arborist. The cost share will cover 50 percent of total removal costs as a reimbursement (up to \$6,150 per organization or \$30 per diameter inch) and will include an incentive payment of \$200 for replacement of every tree removed under the cost-share (up to \$1,200).

“It’s important to maintain the tree canopy on our public lands. Cost-share programs like this can support land managers who may need to remove trees but want to keep the overall canopy intact by replacing removed trees,” says Molly O’Liddy, VDOF’s Urban & Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator.

To qualify for the replacement tree incentive, removed ash trees must be replaced with an appropriate caliper-sized native species on VDOF’s approved species list (<https://dof.virginia.gov/forestry/community/VDOF%20Approved%20Replacement%20Species%20List.pdf>). The organization is responsible for purchasing and planting all replacement trees then reporting each tree planted on VDOF’s Trees Count survey application. Replacement trees do not need to be planted in the exact same location as the removed ash tree.

Ranking of applications will be based upon a community’s need. Trees already removed do not qualify for this program. Ash trees in decline as a result of something other than EAB also do not qualify. VDOF

program staff will complete a site visit upon receiving application for funding to ensure the trees meet the basic program requirements.

This ash removal and replacement cost-share program is the first of its kind offered by VDOF and is very limited short-term funding. Open enrollment begins today, August 3, 2020 and will close Friday, September 18, 2020. Ranking of applications and awards will be completed the week of September 21, 2020.

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The Virginia Department of Forestry protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$21 Billion annually.

Headquartered in Charlottesville, the Agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. VDOF is an equal opportunity provider.