Urban and Community Forestry Programs

Resources for Trees in Our Communities, Cities and Towns

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What is Urban and Community Forestry?

Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) is the management of all trees within an urban area. This even includes trees you may not think about, such as those planted along streets or within parking lots. Urban trees are an important part of the local ecosystem providing shelter, food and other benefits to nearby creatures – including us!

As populations in cities and towns continue to grow, creating and caring for green infrastructure, like trees, is increasingly important. Trees help make cities livable – providing shade, clean air, clean water and other useful benefits for human and environmental health.

VDOF's Urban and Community Forestry Program fosters partnerships between government agencies, businesses, academic institutions and non-profit organizations to ensure trees in our communities are well-cared for into the future. We provide assistance including education, community engagement, tree selection, and grants for tree planting and local program development. These resources and more are available for municipalities and local governments to promote a healthy tree canopy. There are many ways to get involved in helping your community care for its trees and green spaces.

Lynchburg's Urban Tree Canopy (UTC)

What is Tree City USA?

Tree City USA is an Arbor Day Foundation program that provides a framework for communities to manage and expand their tree canopy. The "Tree City" designation demonstrates that your community has committed to caring for its tree canopy. There are four core standards to qualify as a Tree City USA community. Learn more at: www.arborday.org

1. A Tree Board or Department
2. A Tree Care Ordinance
3. A Community Forestry Program with a Budget ≥ $2 Per Capita
4. An Arbor Day Observation and Proclamation

School campus tree planting, Richmond

Tree City USA, Abingdon

Support for Urban and Community Forestry Projects

The Virginia Department of Forestry has two grant programs that can help communities develop healthy, resilient urban tree cover – **Virginia Trees for Clean Water** and **U&CF Assistance Grants**:

Virginia Trees for Clean Water Grant Program

Overview: Program encourages the creation of long-term, sustained canopy cover to improve water quality across the commonwealth. This grant is used to fund tree-planting efforts that raise public awareness of the benefits of trees and impacts on water quality.

Funding: The recommended funding range is $2,000 – $25,000 (a typical proposal is $3,000-$10,000). The recipient is responsible for a 50/50 match, which can include in-kind and volunteer hours. Grant funds are reimbursed at the conclusion of the project.

Project Categories:

- Riparian Buffers
- Community or Street Tree Plantings
- Neighborhood-wide Projects
- Turf-to-Trees, and more!

We do fund: Cost of trees, planting materials

We don't fund: Invasive species, monocultures

Luray Hawksbill Greenway

Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Grant Program

Grant Overview: Program encourages projects that promote the protection and enhancement of urban and community forest ecosystems, tree planting, the care of trees, and education on tree issues in cities, towns and communities. This program exists to encourage local government and citizen involvement in creating and supporting long-term and sustained urban and community forestry projects and programs at the local level.

Funding: The recommended funding range for competitive proposals is $2,000 to $20,000 (a typical proposal is $5,000-$10,000). The maximum award amounts depend on the project category. Funds are available up to 50 percent of the project's total cost. This is a reimbursement grant.

Project Categories:

- Support of Local Government Programs
- Demonstration Projects
- Non-Profit Organization Support
- Planning and Development, and more!

We don't fund: Beautification plantings, research expenses

For More Information

This is basic information about our grant programs. For more details, please check with the U&CF program manager. We welcome applications from state agencies, local and regional governments, approved non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, civic groups, public educational institutions (college level) or community tree volunteer groups. Tree City USA communities are prioritized.

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