

Policy and Procedure 17-2

Ash Removal and Replacement Cost-Share Program

Issued By:	Robert W. Farrell, State Forester
Effective Date:	August 3, 2020
Codes/Mandates:	N/A
References:	Find an Arborist Ash Removal and Replacement Cost-Share Program Approved Tree Species List
Forms:	Form 17.6 Ash Removal and Replacement Cost-Share Program Application Form 17.6 Optional Supplement – Ash Removal and Replacement Cost-Share Application Form W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number(s) and Certification

CONTENTS

PURPOSE	1
POLICY	1
DEFINITIONS	1
PROCEDURES	2
Cost-Share Incentive for Organizations	2
Eligibility	2
Reimbursement Payment	2
<i>Maximum Allowance</i>	2
Application Process	3
Application	3
Canceling a Project	3
Completion of Project	4
<i>IRS Requirements</i>	4
Final Approval for Cost-Share Disbursement	4
AUTHORITY	4
INTERPRETATION	4
APPROVAL	5

PURPOSE

To provide instructions for administering the Ash Removal and Replacement Cost-Share Program, which enables organizations to remove dead and dying ash trees and replace the trees with other native species, therefore improving the forest health of Virginia and maintaining the urban tree benefits for communities.

POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Virginia Department of Forestry to manage the Ash Removal and Replacement Cost-Share Program in accordance with the requirements of the program.

DEFINITIONS

“Agency” and “VDOF” means the Virginia Department of Forestry.

“Commonwealth” means the Commonwealth of Virginia.

“Federal fiscal year” means the 12-month accounting period observed by the US government which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30.

“Organization” means an entity seeking cost-share incentives on public lands, such as: municipalities, non-profit organizations, schools and universities.

PROCEDURES

Cost-Share Incentive for Organizations

Eligibility

- ◆ Ash (*Fraxinus*) species must be green, white, black, pumpkin, Carolina or blue ash.
- ◆ Tree(s) must be at least 17 inches DBH.
- ◆ Estimated percentage of live crown must be less than 70 percent (greater than 30 percent canopy loss).
- ◆ Only removals of dead/dying ash on public lands will be cost-shared.
 - An insured ISA-Certified Arborist must conduct all removal projects approved for the cost-share.
- ◆ Each ash tree removed must be replaced with an appropriate native species approved by VDOF.
 - The organization is responsible for purchasing and planting all replacement trees and reporting each tree planting on VDOF’s Community Tree Survey¹²³ application.
 - Replacement trees need not be planted in the exact same location as the removed ash tree.

Reimbursement Payment

- ◆ Cost-share payment is a reimbursement up to 50 percent of direct project costs for the removal of approved ash trees. Also included will be an incentive payment for purchasing and planting a replacement tree of an appropriate native species (one replacement tree for every ash tree removed).
 - Department of Forestry services or outside consulting fees will not be considered as part of project costs for purposes of calculating cost-share.
- ◆ Cost-share payment will not exceed 50 percent of the quote submitted with the application prior to removal. If select trees in a quote do not qualify for cost-share, an adjusted allotment will be detailed in the approval letter and cost-share payment shall not exceed that allotted amount.
- ◆ Receipts and/or invoices with a balance of \$0.00 must be submitted with the final application in order for the reimbursement payment to be disbursed.
- ◆ One payment will be computed upon completion of the project. This payment will include cost-share for ash removal and incentive payment for tree replacement.

Maximum Allowance

- ◆ Approved organizations will be reimbursed 50 percent of the direct project costs for proper removal of the approved ash tree(s) not to exceed:
 - \$6,150 per organization, government agency or tribal lands per federal fiscal year; matched by organization for a total project cost of \$12,300.
 - Up to \$30 per diameter inch in cost-share; matched by organization for a total removal cost of \$60 per diameter inch.
- ◆ Approved organizations will be issued an incentive payment funded by Virginia Water Quality Improvement Act Funds managed by the U&CF Program for the purchase and planting caliper sized replacement tree(s) not to exceed:
 - \$200 per removed ash tree or a total of \$1,200 per organization, government agency or tribal lands per federal fiscal year.

Application Process

Application

- ◆ Use Form 17.6 Ash Removal and Replacement Program Cost-Share Application to apply.
- ◆ To be considered for cost-share, the organization must provide the following to a VDOF (Forest Health/Urban & Community Forestry) program staff by the application deadline.
 - Complete and submit Form 17.6 with sections 1, 2 and 3 completed.
 - Description of Work (Section 2) – This should include as much detail as possible about the organization’s need for support, location of trees to be removed, and proposed replacement species.
 - Attach an estimation of costs (i.e., a removal quote or bid) from an ISA certified arborist.
 - Use Form 17.6-Supplement if additional space is needed for Section 2 or 4.
- ◆ The program specialist or local staff must visit or have visited the parcel for which an application is being submitted to ensure it meets the requirements of the program. Trees that have already been removed will not be allowable. If removal is performed prior to visitation, the application will be automatically rejected. In order to approve the application, the VDOF staff member must sign and deliver Form 17.6 to the program staff at the Headquarters Office for ranking and assignment of a cost-share application number.
- ◆ Sign-up will occur in batching periods until funds are depleted. The budget manager may discontinue the program and application process at any time when sufficient funding is no longer available.

- The open enrollment period will be as follows:

Application opens	August 3, 2020
Enrollment Period	August 3, 2020 – September 18, 2020
Awards Issued	September 21, 2020 – September 25, 2020
Complete documentation deadline (approved applicants only)	June 1, 2021

- The program staff will process and rank the applications, and will send approval or rejection letters, via the US Postal Service, within 10 days following each application submittal.
 - If approved, the letter will include a State W-9 form, which will need to be completed by the applicant and returned to the program staff by the “complete documentation” deadline.
- ◆ If modifications are made, the updated application must be submitted to the program staff prior to the enrollment deadline in order to be considered for cost-share funding.
- ◆ If approved by the budget manager, application will be assigned an allotted cost-share amount and will be returned to the organization agent.
- ◆ The program staff will notify the area forester of the approved application via email. At this point, work may begin on the project.
- ◆ The removal must be completed within the appropriate time frame (September 2020 through June 2021) to be eligible for reimbursement.

Canceling a Project

When canceling a project after approval, the applicant must notify the program staff via email as soon as possible so the funds may be reallocated. The original application will be marked as cancelled.

Completion of Project

- ◆ The final application (Form 17.6, Section 5) is completed by entering:
 - Date removal performed
 - Number of trees removed
 - ISA certification number
 - Final project cost
 - Final cost-share amount (VDOP or consulting fees should not be included)
 - List intended species for tree replacement
 - Organization agent must sign certifying that the project was completed as specified and approved.
- ◆ The applicant must send the application package to the program staff at the Headquarters Office containing the following:
 - Final completed Form 17.6
 - Virginia State W-9 Request(s) for Taxpayer Identification Number(s) and Certification for the landowner (SSN) or organization (EIN)
 - Receipts/invoices for removal with a balance of \$0.00 showing clearly that it has been paid
- ◆ The program staff will request a Cardinal Vendor Number for each landowner/organization and submit with final application package to the Finance Office for reimbursement.

IRS Requirements

The organization representative must complete, sign and date the State Form W9. The applicant(s) will send the Form W9 directly to the Headquarters Office where it will be held on file to comply with IRS 1099 reporting regulations. Form W9 needs to be submitted only one time, as long as the information requested remains valid.

Final Approval for Cost-Share Disbursement

The program staff will review final applications:

- ◆ Verify completion of the application (Form 17.6).
- ◆ Ensure accurate final project cost and cost-share amount.
- ◆ Calculate incentive payment due for replacement trees.
- ◆ Verify tree species listed for replacement are on VDOP's approved tree species list.
- ◆ Obtain final approval from the budget manager.
- ◆ Forward original application to the Finance Office with supporting documentation.
- ◆ Finance will then process the reimbursement payment and incentive payment.

All projects must be completed by June 1, 2021 for consideration for payment.

AUTHORITY

This policy and procedure is issued by the Virginia state forester.

INTERPRETATION

The urban and community forestry program manager is responsible for the interpretation of this policy and procedure.

APPROVAL

I certify that this policy and procedure is approved and ready for publication.

Lori Chamberlin

Forest Health Program Manager Name (Print)

Forest Health Program Manager Signature

Lara Johnson

Urban and Community Forestry Program Manager Name (Print)

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