



Virginia Trees for Clean Water **2024 Grant Request for Applications**

Through funds from Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) CB Rapp, Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) has developed the Virginia Trees for Clean Water (VTCW) Program. The program is designed to improve water quality across the Commonwealth through on-the-ground efforts to plant trees where they are needed most and to help meet the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals. Grants may be awarded to civic groups, communities, local governments, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, public educational institutions, state agencies, tribal organizations and volunteer groups. The Environmental Justice Screening (EJScreen) tool:(<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>) will be used to prioritize planting projects funded. EJScreen metrics prioritizes using indexes associated with pollution and sources, climate change data and critical service gaps. Socioeconomic indicators, such as low income, are also prioritized.

There will be approximately **\$850,000** available to fund projects during the current grant cycle. The recommended funding range for applications is **\$1,000 to \$50,000** per project. Higher funding requests may be considered so please call to discuss with the Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program contact below. **This cycle of grant funds will be used for projects occurring in the spring and fall of 2024. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until December 1, 2024, and ranked as they are submitted based on project need.** Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications must be submitted 30 days prior to the estimated planting date and an award must be issued prior to beginning the project or incurring project expenses. Some project match is expected but a 50% match is not required and can include in-kind and volunteer hours.

You must register an account through DOF's [System Access Portal](#) to apply. See the [user guide](#) for registering for an account and to complete an application.

The funds awarded under the grant are available on a **reimbursement basis** in accordance with a payment schedule agreed to in advance. **If you would like to complete a project but cannot upfront the cost for the grant, please call to discuss with Urban and Community Forestry program contact. DOF can directly pay costs on a limited basis and can also provide technical assistance on the project.**

Providing some match (including in-kind) is recommended for all projects, but not being able to match the grant project by 50% will not affect your ability to receive funding under this cycle. Please describe any match, including in-kind, you will be able to provide in both your narrative and budget. All applicants applying for a federally funded award must have BOTH a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI); applicants applying for a state funded award must have a FEIN.

Objectives of Virginia Trees for Clean Water

- Plant trees that restore and improve the waters for the benefit of current and future citizens of the Commonwealth.
- Achieve long-term improvements in water quality through long-lived tree cover and increased public involvement.
- Raise public awareness about the benefits of planting trees for the health of our citizens, streams, wildlife and rivers.
- Help the Commonwealth meet Phase III WIP goals.

Application Categories

Projects funded through the program include tree-planting activities of all types. A long-term maintenance plan **must be included** with the grant application. **Both trees and shrubs are allowable.** Projects are not limited to the following examples:

- **Riparian tree planting** in non-Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) areas, including urban areas and private lands. A maximum of 435 seedlings per acre will be paid for by the grant on a 10-foot by 10-foot spacing.
- **Community tree planting** projects including any tree plantings on public lands.
- **Street tree planting** projects including planting strips and cutouts. Proposed projects with planting strips or cutouts less than 3 feet wide will not be considered.
- **Neighborhood or NeighborWoods tree plantings** may be organized by local civic groups or neighborhood associations or by the community government. Projects should be located on common grounds or within 35 feet of the roadway.
- **Turf to Trees (T2T) projects** include conversion of regularly mowed lawns greater than 0.1 acres to trees, usually using tree seedlings, saplings or small potted trees. The cost of tree protection is an allowable expense. Annual mowing between the seedlings is also allowed.
- **Tree Giveaways** using seedlings or small potted trees are eligible. Supplies like mulch are also eligible.

Application Format

You must register an account through DOF's [System Access Portal](#) to apply. You will be asked to provide short responses to the following:

- Brief Description of Project
- Scope of Work
- Partnerships and Participants
- Community Engagement
- Desired Tree/Shrub Planting List

- Tree Maintenance Plan
- End Product/Deliverables
- Project Budget

Attached Documentation Required

- Photos of site and/or site plan
- Virginia W9 ([W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification](#))

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Eligible Reimbursable Costs

The only costs eligible for reimbursement are those associated with one or more of the following:

- Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants
- Purchase of essential supplies and materials
- Purchase and planting of trees (2 inches in caliper or less) and shrubs
- Costs associated with site preparation and soil amendments
- Maintenance expenses, including watering, are eligible for reimbursement during the grant period; however, DOF cannot reimburse until after all deliverables/activities have been completed. Maintenance costs will be ineligible if submitted outside the approved grant period.

Eligible Non-Reimbursable Costs (Applicant's Share or Match)

The following costs are NOT reimbursable BUT are allowed to meet the encouraged match for the project.

- Cash or in-kind donations and services
- Salary and fringe costs for paid staff
- Volunteer labor, machinery and equipment
- Overhead and/or indirect costs

Ineligible Costs (NOT allowed for this grant)

- Purchase of machinery or equipment
- Construction of any kind (e.g., sidewalks or roads)
- Purchase of food, snacks or beverages
- Purchase of land or land charges
- Purchase of plant material classified as invasive species
- Purchase and planting of ash species (*Fraxinus* sp.) due to the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*)
- Costs that are not incurred during the grant award period
- Costs not approved by the U&CF program manager during the award phase or by grant modification
- Tree removals
- Indirect costs

Additional General Criteria

- All projects should include a site plan, plant list, tree planting specs, site photos and a commitment to the project's long-term success from specified personnel or individuals.
- Applications should include a letter of permission/support for the planting if the project is not on the applicant's personal property. This letter should designate the organization responsible for the long-term maintenance of the project.
- All projects must have a direct community engagement component. Please describe how you have engaged or are going to engage with the residents or the local community where the tree planting is going to occur. Community engagement must be completed prior to tree installation to receive funding in hopes of empowering local citizens to take an active role in the development and maintenance of their urban forest. This engagement can take many forms such as virtual town halls, volunteer training, educational outreach or distributing flyers to name a few. Please reach out if you have any questions on this requirement.
- Projects should educate participants of the water quality benefits of tree planting.
- We require local DOF staff to review the project prior to application submission. The local DOF forester should provide a letter of recommendation for the project, to be submitted with the application. Use the "Find a Forester" feature on the DOF website (www.dof.virginia.gov) to find the appropriate staff to assist with your project.
- A detailed tree maintenance plan must be included with each grant application. All projects must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years. Awardees must sign a maintenance agreement.
- Grant funds will not be approved for projects that are initiated as a requirement of zoning, mitigation, etc.
- All eligible reimbursement costs listed above must be deemed reasonable, necessary for the project and be approved by the U&CF program manager during the award phase.
- Successful applicants cannot commence work or incur any expenses against the grant until an agreement between DOF and the authorized agency/organization has been signed. Expenses incurred outside the agreement period shall be deemed ineligible for reimbursement.
- Trees for riparian projects should generally be seedlings; other projects may be funded for trees up to 2-inch caliper.
- Any street tree planting should provide the square footage of planting space, such as the dimensions of the tree pit or planting strip for each site.
- NeighborWoods projects must be carefully planned and technically sound, and involve the assistance of qualified technical experts, agencies or organizations.

- NO large shade trees shall be planted under power lines.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or want to discuss a potential project, please contact:

Lara Johnson, U&CF Program Manager
900 Natural Resources Dr.
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(804) 239-0813
Lara.Johnson@dof.virginia.gov

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The funds awarded under the grant are available on a **reimbursement basis** in accordance with a payment schedule agreed to in advance. Funds awarded under the grant are available once satisfactory work has been completed within the contract period as described in the original scope of work, and after verification of expenditures and match. Grantees must submit a claim in **DOF's System Access Portal** and upload records of expenditures along with documentation of all costs. A user guide is available on the [VTCW webpage](#).

In addition, a planting quality inspection must be conducted before the final reimbursement will be issued and the grant closed. The U&CF program manager will evaluate the progress of the project to determine eligibility for full funding. A final report with photographs of the completed project is also required for all entities receiving a grant before reimbursement can occur. The entity receiving the grant must keep all expenditure records for up to 5 years and submit copies as part of the reimbursement request.

Guidelines for Budget Categories

Project Budget Form

The Project Budget Form summarizes the project budget. For approved projects, in addition to the application, this form is an element of the grant agreement. This form is used to record a summary of all expenditures and matching funds. Guidelines for budget categories for project expenses are below. **Indirect expenses are not allowed for this opportunity.**

- **Personnel and Fringe:** Up to 10% of the total project costs can be applied to personnel and fringe expense. Please provide the number of individuals, hours and hourly rate for each person assigning time to the grant.
- **Travel:** Mileage directly related to the project are allowed. Travel reimbursements are for actual travel costs based on organization policies and are not to exceed those included in the *Commonwealth of Virginia Policies & Procedures, Topic No. 20335, State Travel Regulations*. A vehicle mileage rate of \$.67/mile is used. Describe the type of travel mileage, fuel, per diem, etc. Homestays, such as Airbnb, are not eligible.

- **Supplies:** List your desired trees/shrubs for the project including amounts for each, tree protection needs, mulch, soil amendments, etc. Describe any other supplies needed for the project here. Be specific so we can determine if they are reasonable and allowable.
- **Contractual:** Services rendered by a third party to assist or complete tree installation and maintenance labor such as watering services are allowable. Costs associated with site preparation and soil amendments are also allowable. We recommend that applicants obtain quotes for the cost of installation and/or site prep so estimated budgets are more accurate. However, **do not** disclose names of contractors. If contractor names are included, your application will be rejected automatically. Maintenance expenses, including watering, are eligible for reimbursement during the grant period; however, DOF cannot reimburse until after all deliverables/activities have been completed. Maintenance costs will be ineligible if submitted outside the approved grant period.
- **Other Expenses:** Any expenses not captured in other categories.
- **Match:** Anticipated expenses not reimbursed under the grant including donated services or volunteer time.

The use of volunteer hours as an in-kind match is acceptable and encouraged. However, volunteer hours must be appropriately documented. You must use the [Time and Activity Log for Staff and Volunteers](#) contained in this package or a form constructed in a similar format. It is essential that we have the date and times for the volunteer's service and his or her signature. If the form is compiled by the volunteer supervisor, then it should be **signed** by that person at the bottom. Volunteer hours are valued at the current rate established by the Independent Sector, which is \$31.80 per hour.