

Richmond Urban Tree Canopy Initiative

Request for Proposal

Through funds from the USFS Chesapeake Watershed Forestry Program, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and Altria, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Department of Forestry have developed the **Richmond Urban Tree Canopy Initiative** program which is designed to improve water quality across the Commonwealth through on-the-ground efforts to plant trees where they are needed most.

Projects include urban tree planting activities of all types: community and neighborhood tree plantings, riparian buffer tree planting, etc. Native trees and shrubs are preferred for the program but not required. Winning proposals will demonstrate the merit of the project and how the trees will be maintained in perpetuity. The objective is to use on-the-ground accomplishments to increase urban tree canopy cover and obtain clean water in the Richmond Regional PDC service area. Grant funds will be reimbursed at the conclusion of the project and funding is available on a 70/30 match basis. For example if your budget for the complete project is \$5,000.00 you can request \$3,500.00 under the grant program but are required to match these funds with \$1,500.00. In-kind match including volunteer time and year one maintenance is permissible.



Grants are awarded through this program to encourage local government and citizen involvement in creating and supporting **long-term** and **sustained** canopy cover while also addressing local goals to reduce heat island effect and improve air and water quality in the greater Richmond area. This cycle of grant funds will be used for planting projects occurring in the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016.

OBJECTIVES of Richmond Urban Tree Canopy Initiative

The specific objectives of the program are to:

- To plant trees that restore and improve Virginia's 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
- To raise public awareness about the benefits of planting trees for the health of our streams and rivers
- Reduce impervious surfaces and improve air and water quality in urban areas



Altria



ELIGIBLE GRANT PROPOSALS AND CATEGORIES

Grants may be awarded to local units of government, approved non-profit organizations, community civic organizations, educational institutions or private citizens. There will be approximately **\$80,000** available to fund projects during the current grant cycle. The recommended funding range for proposals is **\$1,000 to \$10,000** with the typical proposal in the **\$5,000 to \$10,000** range. All proposals must meet a minimum **\$1,000** requirement.

Proposal Categories

The following project work areas are examples, projects are not limited to these:

- **Community tree planting** projects include tree plantings on any public lands. A long term maintenance plan must be included with the grant application.
- **Urban Orchards** includes planting projects that incorporate fruit and nut trees into our urban landscape. A long term maintenance plan with the added attention to maintenance of fruit and nut trees must be included with the grant application.
- **Neighborhood Tree plantings** may be organized by the local civic association or home owners association or by the community government. Projects should be located on common ground or within 35 feet of the road way on private land.
- **NeighborWoods tree plantings**, where citizens in a neighborhood organize themselves for a volunteer focused community tree planting.
- **Turf to Trees projects** include conversion of regularly mowed lawns greater than 0.5 acres to trees, usually using tree seedlings or small saplings.
- **Riparian tree planting** in non-Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) areas, including urban areas and private lands. These plantings should be an average of 35 feet wide or greater. For riparian plantings we require a minimum of a 35 foot buffer which is usually 3-4 rows of seedlings. Seedlings are generally planted at 10 -15 ft. centers or 195 to 435 per acre. A maximum of 435 seedlings per acre will be paid for by the grant. Riparian plantings generally need tree protectors as well, because of the deer browse and destruction. The accepted rate per seedling for a full turnkey planting project including; providing the seedling, planting labor, using a tree protector, mulch, all together is \$9.00/seedling total. This may not be your cost as project needs and requirements differ. When budgeting please use your anticipated real cost.

Proposal Format: Items that should be included in the grant narrative

- Background of project area and description of need
- Organization's experience in completing similar projects.
- List of partners
- Project Description/Scope of Work
- Design plan drawing and Species list
- Deliverables / Expected Outcomes
- Application form, attached
- Budget on attached form
- Long Term Maintenance Plan

The proposal should not exceed 4 pages, plus the application and budget pages. Applicants are encouraged to include photos of the project site with the proposal. All projects must have written approval from the landowner or an authorized representative of the landowner in the form of a letter as a part of the grant application and prior to funding approval, this letter should also designate the organization responsible for the long term maintenance of the project.

We require local VDOF staff to visit the site and review the project prior to proposal approval. The local VDOF forester should provide a letter of recommendation for the project, to be submitted with the proposal.

Overhead costs to administer the grant should be allocated as in-kind services (match) versus grant funding, which should be used to implement the project. Overhead costs that will be allowed for match can be negotiated on a project-by-project basis.

Entity receiving the grant must keep all expenditure records and submit copies as part of the reimbursement request. A final report with photographs of the completed project is also required for all entities receiving a grant before reimbursement can occur.

Time Line:

Four (4) hard copies of the application package should be mailed to the address below, such that they are received no later than 5:00 pm, September 1, 2015 for applicants hoping to receive funding for fall 2015 and spring 2016 planting projects. All projects should be planned so as to be fully completed and final reports submitted by June 1, 2016.

General Criteria

- All projects should include site plan, plant list, tree planting specs, site photos, and a commitment to the project's long-term success from specified personnel or individuals
- There is a 70/30 match requirement

- We require local VDOF staff to visit the site and review the project prior to proposal approval. The local VDOF forester should provide a letter of recommendation for the project, to be submitted with the proposal.
- Trees for all projects can be seedlings or larger caliper stock depending on the goals of your project. The accepted rate per seedling for contract planting: providing the seedling, planting labor, using a tree protector, mulch, all together is \$9.00/seedling. This may not be your cost as project needs and requirements differ. When budgeting please use your anticipated actual cost.
- Trees for riparian projects should generally be seedlings; other projects may be funded for larger caliper trees.
- A *detailed* long term maintenance plan must be included with each grant application.
- Applications should include a letter of permission for the planting, if the project is not on the applicant's personal property.
- Projects should educate participants of the water quality benefits of tree planting.
- Projects should include public outreach and engagement components to enhance the benefits of the project and promote those activities as models for others to replicate.
- 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.
- Grant funds will not be approved for projects that have been completed or materials that have been purchased prior to grant award
- Grant funds will not be approved for projects that are initiated as a requirement of landscape ordinance, zoning, mitigation etc.

It is expected that all projects will be maintained for a **minimum of 15 years**, up to forever.

Contact Information

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

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Payment Process

The funds awarded under the grant are available on a reimbursement basis after verification of match and in accordance with a payment schedule agreed to in advance. Grantees must file a *Request for Reimbursement* (included in award paperwork package) and send records of expenditures along with documentation of all costs to the Virginia Department of Forestry. The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Department of Forestry will evaluate the progress of the project to determine eligibility for full funding.

Guidelines for Budget Categories

Project Budget Form

The Project Budget Form summarizes the project budget. For approved projects, in addition to being part of the project 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.

- Trees:** This category covers the cost of the trees and woody shrubs that will be planted for the project
- Supplies:** This category includes the supplies needed to plant the trees such as tree protectors, mulch etc. These items must be listed in the financial narrative, in sufficient detail to determine if they are reasonable and allowable.
- Volunteers:** The use of volunteer hours as an in-kind match is acceptable and encouraged. However, volunteer hours must be meticulously documented. You must use the **Volunteer Assistance Time and Activity Log** 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 \$23.07 per hour.
- Personnel:** Grant funds for personnel charges should only be for staff within the project sponsors organization and for staff members who are directly actively involved in the project. This category does not include contractual staff. In-kind personnel contributions from project partners may be listed as personnel under the match funds section of the budget. Use the actual annual salary or hourly wage of project staff to determine expenditures and/or match amounts based on estimated time to be spent working on the project. Time records will need to be submitted for documentation.
- Fringe Benefits:** In the financial narrative please provide the percentage used for fringe benefits, and the types of benefits included.
- Travel:** Mileage traveled directly related to the project, travel reimbursements are for actual costs based on organization policies, and is not to exceed those included in the *Commonwealth of Virginia Policies & Procedures, Topic No. 20335, State Travel Regulations*. A vehicle mileage rate of \$.57/mile is used.
- Contractual:** Contractual costs include subcontracted work to be completed by those other than the project sponsor. This may include design and engineering services.