



COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING GRANTS

First round of applications closed. Next round due January 17, 2025.

vtcommunityforestry.org/treegrant



Program Goals

- **Environmental Stewardship – plant 2,000 trees in Vermont’s urban areas to:**
 - Mitigate climate change impacts
 - Conserve energy
 - Manage stormwater
 - Enhance public spaces
 - Improve public health
 - Provide food
- **Community Engagement**
 - Foster partnerships & empower local stakeholders
 - Start or scale up local urban forestry programs
- **Equity and Inclusion**
 - Ensure equitable access to benefits of trees
 - Create lasting pathways for prosperity in underserved communities

Awards Overview

\$5,000 minimum
to \$75,000
maximum

No cost-share
required

VT UCF offers
technical support

Two rounds of
competitive
funding (May
2024 & Jan. 2025)

All projects must
be completed by
July 31, 2026

How Much Money is Available



Funding Allocation: \$315,000 total available for grant awards in 2024, with an additional \$315,000 in 2025.



Award Range: \$5,000 minimum – \$75,000 maximum to scale around local needs and priorities.



Municipal Projects under \$25,000 are encouraged to work through their Regional Planning Commission

Round 1 Timeline

April 2, 2024: Applications Open

April 19, 2024: Deadline to submit questions for Q&A

May 1, 2024: Suggested deadline to coordinate with RPCs if serving as agent

May 17, 2024: Applications Due

June 2024: Grant Awards Announced

July 2024: Award Contracts Finalized

December 2025: Grant Closeout (may be extended upon request)

Round 2 Timeline

November 1, 2024: Applications Open

November 22, 2024: Deadline to submit questions for Q&A

December 31, 2024: Suggested deadline to coordinate with RPCs if serving as agent

January 17, 2025: Applications Due

February 2025: Grant Awards Announced

March 2025: Award Contracts Finalized

July 2026: Grant Closeout (no extensions available for this grant round)

Who Can Apply



Municipalities



Public educational institutions



Non-Profits
(including schools)



RPCs (on behalf of municipalities)

What You Can Do with Grant Funds

Plant trees! Where Exactly?

- **On public streets**
 - State roads: Vtrans 1111 permit required – we can help!
- **In public places**
 - Parks
 - Municipal offices
 - Community centers
 - NOT municipal forests
- **At schools (public and non-profit)**
- **On Non-Profit Properties**
 - Public housing
 - Churches
 - Community centers
- **On private property**
 - Easement / maintenance agreement required

What You Can Do with Grant Funds

Pay for Tree Planting Work!

- **Personnel Costs**
 - Direct tree planting / site prep: unlimited
 - Administrative: up to 10%
 - Can be in-house or contracted
- **Trees and planting materials**
 - Nursery stock
 - Watering bags / tanks
 - Mulch
 - Stakes
 - Tree protection
- **Costs of services, supplies, or facilities**
 - Delivery costs
 - Equipment rental
 - Site preparation (especially impervious removal)
- **Outreach & Engagement**
 - Staff time & volunteer stipends
 - Printing / mailing / marketing
 - Public meetings & program accessibility



Questions to Consider during Project Design

- **Purpose.** What purpose will the tree(s) serve on this site?
- **Site Conditions.** Consider both above and below ground.
- **Space.** Is there enough soil volume for the tree(s)?
- **Maintenance.** What will be needed? How can it be minimized by avoiding conflicts with human activities?
- **Right Tree, Right Place.** What species are suitable for this site? Consider multiple alternatives.
- **Co-Benefits.** What else can this tree provide to the community? How can this be maximized?

Community Tree Planting Grants Scoring Guide

Applicant: _____

Reviewer: _____

Instructions

There are 5 categories that will be used to evaluate applications, with 20 points possible in each category. Within each category, there are 4 sub-criteria; these repeat on a spectrum of 0-5 points within the category. Check the boxes most applicable to the application, using no more than 4 checks per category, then multiply the checks by the "points" column to get a total score. For example, "Project area has <20% canopy cover" earns 5 points, but "20-25 trees planted" earns only 3 points.

Points	Equity (20 pts)	Likelihood of Success (20 pts)	Co-Benefits (20 pts)	Planning Goals (20 pts)	Project Metrics (20 pts)
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Project planning, implementation, or maintenance authentically led by an underserved community <input type="checkbox"/> Maximizes the co-benefit of each tree to disadvantaged communities by mitigating dust, noise, heat, traffic. The largest possible tree is selected for all sites. <input type="checkbox"/> Creates multiple lasting pathways for future benefits in an underserved community through food security, climate resilience, youth engagement, workforce development, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant hasn't interacted with VT UCF or does not have an arborist on staff and would greatly benefit from technical assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has history of multiple successful planting projects <input type="checkbox"/> Trees will require minimal watering (fall planting) and pruning. <input type="checkbox"/> Includes full list of species to be planted that are correctly matched with each site <input type="checkbox"/> Existing subsurface conditions are ideal and require no improvement for trees to thrive.	<input type="checkbox"/> Removes pavement, adds trees, and provides infiltration that controls both stormwater flow and quality (phosphorus) <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes new recreational opportunities for all community members <input type="checkbox"/> Provides deep shade, cooling, or shelter in a heavily trafficked area <input type="checkbox"/> Provides food, cultural or aesthetic value and invites in new community members.	<input type="checkbox"/> Project has clear and specific objectives and strategies to reach overall goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Project advances town plan with no tradeoffs <input type="checkbox"/> Project has express support from multiple entities, including municipal legislative body <input type="checkbox"/> Project is located in a state-designated center	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 75 trees planted <input type="checkbox"/> Project area has <20% canopy cover <input type="checkbox"/> Census tract has 5 or more flags on VT Social Vulnerability Index <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality ranks 80-100% in Vermont Community Index
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Project planned, implemented, or maintained collaboratively with an underserved community <input type="checkbox"/> Maximizes the co-benefit of some trees to disadvantaged communities. The largest possible tree is selected for some sites. <input type="checkbox"/> Creates a single lasting pathway for future benefits in an underserved community. <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has interacted with VT UCF, but hasn't received technical or financial assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has at least one successful past planting project <input type="checkbox"/> Qualified professionals are committed to maintenance (watering / pruning) of trees. <input type="checkbox"/> Includes a full list of sites and criteria that will be used to determine appropriate species <input type="checkbox"/> Root growth is enabled through cost-effective subsurface improvements (structural soil, silva cells, suspended pavement Stockholm method, etc.); infrastructure is protected from roots	<input type="checkbox"/> Removes pavement, adds trees, and controls stormwater flow but not quality (phosphorus) <input type="checkbox"/> Enhances existing recreational opportunities for all community members <input type="checkbox"/> Provides deep shade, cooling, or shelter in a moderately trafficked area <input type="checkbox"/> Provides food, cultural or aesthetic value to most community members	<input type="checkbox"/> Project has clear but non-specific objectives and strategies to reach overall goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Project advances town plan with minimal tradeoffs <input type="checkbox"/> Project has express support from the municipal legislative body. <input type="checkbox"/> Project is located in a state-designated center	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-75 trees planted <input type="checkbox"/> Project area has 20-40% canopy cover <input type="checkbox"/> Census tract has 4 flags on VT Social Vulnerability Index <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality ranks 60-80% in Vermont Community Index
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant consulted affected community and paid them as part of project planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Project has considered tree equity and equitable access to trees in site selection, but project does not specifically provide tree co-benefits to disadvantaged communities. <input type="checkbox"/> Creates multiple temporary pathways for future benefits in an underserved community. <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has received VT UCF technical OR financial assistance, but still demonstrates need	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has demonstrated success managing similar non-planting projects <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant is committed to maintenance but does not have qualified professionals to do it. <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies planting sites but not a method by which to select appropriate species. <input type="checkbox"/> Root growth is enabled through subsurface improvements, but at high cost.	<input type="checkbox"/> Removes pavement, adds trees, but has no net effect on stormwater management <input type="checkbox"/> Enhances existing recreational opportunities for some community members <input type="checkbox"/> Provides some shade, cooling, and shelter benefits to some people <input type="checkbox"/> Provides food, cultural or aesthetic value to some community members	<input type="checkbox"/> Project identifies clear goals but no objectives and strategies to reach them. <input type="checkbox"/> Project is consistent with town plan and/or involves some tradeoffs <input type="checkbox"/> Project has general support from municipality <input type="checkbox"/> Project is located in an urban area, but not in a state-designated center	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-50 trees planted <input type="checkbox"/> Project area has 40-60% canopy cover <input type="checkbox"/> Census tract has 2-3 flags on VT Social Vulnerability Index <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality ranks 40-60% in Vermont Community Index
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant consulted with affected communities (i.e., provided avenue for input). <input type="checkbox"/> Application doesn't reference tree equity; disadvantaged communities are unintentionally excluded from tree co-benefits . <input type="checkbox"/> Creates one temporary pathway for future benefits in an underserved community. <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has received VT UCF technical AND financial assistance, but still demonstrates need	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has no history of similar projects <input type="checkbox"/> No clear commitment to tree maintenance but trees are likely to survive on their own. <input type="checkbox"/> Planting sites identified, but proposed species are inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Below OR above ground space is restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> No removal of pavement; planting site is currently a lawn <input type="checkbox"/> Has no impact on recreational opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Does not provide useful shade, cooling, or shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Project has no impact on cultural or aesthetic resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Project goals are vague with no objectives or strategies. <input type="checkbox"/> Project may interfere town plan or require significant tradeoffs <input type="checkbox"/> No clear support from municipal bodies <input type="checkbox"/> Project is located in an urban area, but not in a state-designated center	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-25 trees planted <input type="checkbox"/> Project area has 60-80% canopy cover <input type="checkbox"/> Census tract has 1 flag on VT Social Vulnerability Index <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality ranks 20-40% in Vermont Community Index
1	<input type="checkbox"/> No consultation with affected community and/or assumptions made about affected community in project planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Project reduces tree equity; disadvantaged communities are intentionally excluded from tree co-benefits. <input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't create benefit pathways in an underserved community. <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant has no need of technical or financial assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Past planting projects have failed to meet goals <input type="checkbox"/> No clear commitment to tree maintenance and tree survival is questionable. <input type="checkbox"/> No planting sites identified <input type="checkbox"/> Below AND above ground space is restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> No removal of pavement; trees planted in forest, forest edge, or meadow <input type="checkbox"/> Reduces recreational opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Negatively impacts nearby buildings, sidewalks, or other infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Project will negatively impact cultural or aesthetic resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Project does not set goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Project will actively hinder town plan <input type="checkbox"/> There is opposition to the project from community or affected entities <input type="checkbox"/> Project is located outside an urban area	<input type="checkbox"/> Fewer than 10 trees planted <input type="checkbox"/> Project area has >80% canopy cover <input type="checkbox"/> Census tract has 0 flags on VT Social Vulnerability Index <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality ranks 0-20% in Vermont Community Index

Application Suggested Steps

- 1. Review Grant Guidelines and this presentation!**
- 2. Assess Community Needs.** Assess your urban forest. Identify areas for improvement. Consult any street tree inventories or management plans.
- 3. Engage Stakeholders.** Seek input to ensure that you effectively address community needs.
- 4. Develop Project Plan.***
 1. Site selection / planting plan
 2. Site preparation / details
 3. Who will do the work
- 5. Budget Development.** Include personnel, contractors, materials / supplies, & outreach costs.
- 6. Complete Grant Application.** Follow all instructions carefully and include required attachments.
- 7. Review, revise and Submit Application.**

*Contact Adam McCullough for help with a planting plan, site assessment, or species.

Resources and Links

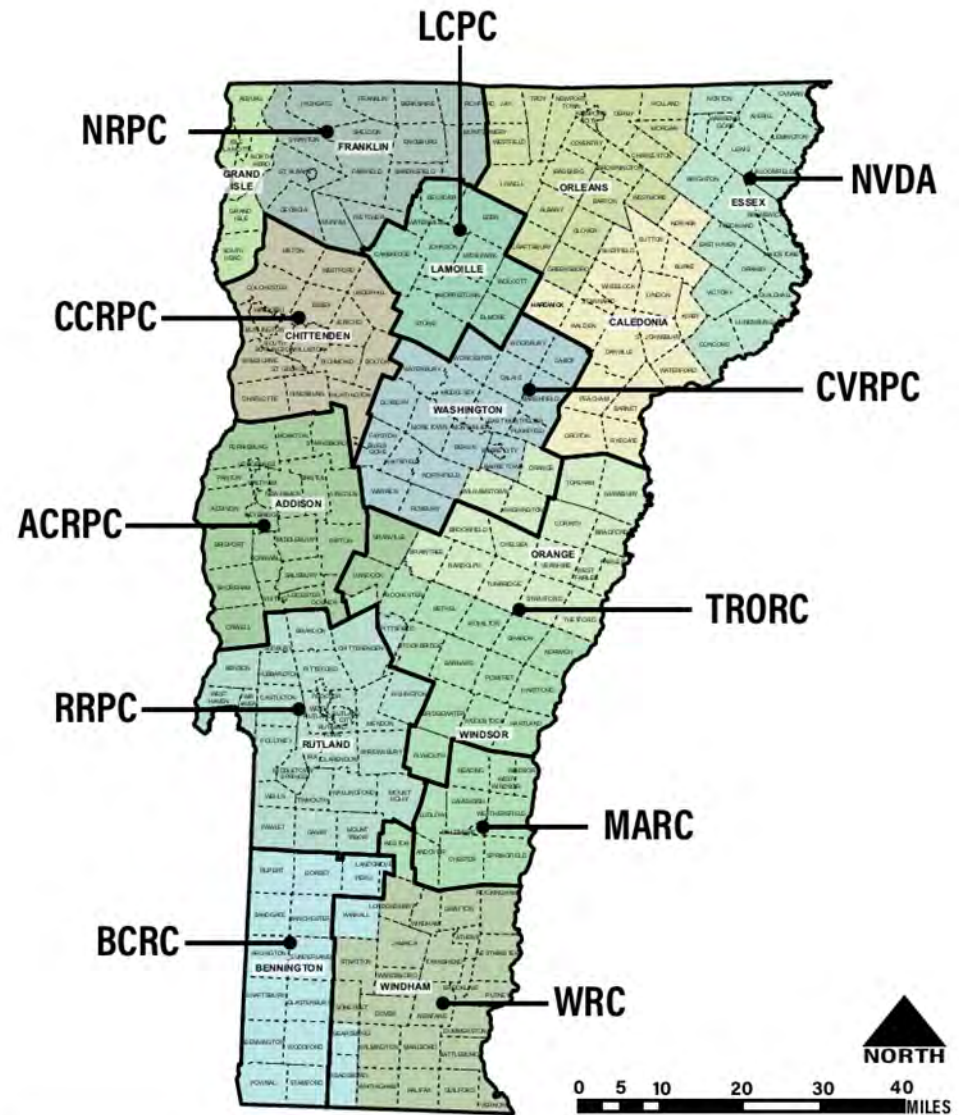
Application Materials on Website

- [PROGRAM GUIDE](#)
- [APPLICATION WORKSHEET](#)
- [Application Scoring Rubric](#)
- [Municipal Letter of Support Template](#)
- [Certificate of Good Standing](#)

Additional Documents & Guidance

- Act 154 [Certificate of Good Standing](#)
- [Grantee Insurance](#) guidance
- [Expanded Tree Table](#)
- [Planting Trees in the State ROW](#)
- How to Create Your Own Planting Map (in development)
- Frequently Asked Questions (in development)

Regional Planning Commissions



**STATE OF VERMONT
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS**

How to Get Help

Grant Application & Submission Questions:

Darren Schibler, Senior Planner, Chittenden
County Regional Planning Commission

(802) 846-4490 ext. 135

dschibler@ccrpcvt.org

Project Development Questions and Technical Assistance Requests:

Adam McCullough, Urban Forester, VT Urban
& Community Forestry Program

(802) 522-5104

adam.mccullough@vermont.gov

Some Frequently Asked Questions

Questions	Answers
Can we apply for both Rounds?	Yes. Entities that have received funding under the first round may apply for additional funding in the second round. Applications from eligible entities that have not yet received VT UCF funding will be prioritized in both rounds. The maximum individual award amount for each round of funding is \$75,000.
How much of the grant funding can go to administrative costs?	Administrative costs can only be 10% of the total budget . Administrative costs include activities such as managing contracts and procurement, invoicing and reporting, and general coordination. These are distinct from staff salaries for direct planting activities, which can be up to 100% of the project budget.
If an RPC is acting as agent for multiple municipalities, should they submit a single application or several?	It depends. A consortium application should be used for a project with a single, cohesive scope and budget that takes place in two or more municipalities. For example, planting trees in mobile home parks in several towns, or hosting a regional Arbor Day Celebration and tree planting.
Can this grant be combined with other funding from federal sources?	Generally not since this program is funded by federal dollars.

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Yes.

- Entities that have received funding under the first round may apply for additional funding in the second round.
- Applications from eligible entities that have not yet received VT UCF funding will be prioritized in both rounds.
- The maximum individual award amount for each round of funding is \$75,000.

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- Administrative costs include activities such as managing contracts and procurement, invoicing and reporting, and general coordination.
- These are distinct from staff salaries for direct planting activities, which can be up to 100% of the project budget.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

If an RPC is acting as agent for multiple municipalities, should they submit a single application or several?

It depends.

- A consortium application should be used for a project with a single, cohesive scope and budget that takes place in two or more municipalities. For example, planting trees in mobile home parks in several towns, or hosting a regional Arbor Day Celebration and tree planting.
- However, if planting projects in each municipality have distinct scopes and goals, a separate application should be submitted for each project.
- Regardless, projects within a region may be bundled under a single contract with an RPC if the municipalities and RPCs agree to do so, as indicated on the application and supported by letters or resolutions.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

Can a nonprofit (including a non-municipal school) still apply if their project is under \$25,000?

Yes.

- Any eligible entity can submit an application for a project under \$25,000 (though municipalities with small projects are strongly encouraged to work through their RPC).
- In addition, a municipality may submit a project on behalf of a nonprofit, which may allow for the RPC to serve as the project agent.

Some Frequently Asked Questions

Can this grant be combined with other funding from federal sources?

Generally not since this program is funded by federal dollars.

- If you are using this program as match or leverage for another grant (or vice versa), you should check the specific requirements of other programs.
 - For example, the Vermont Greening Schools Initiative does not allow other ARPA State Recovery Funds for Clean Water to be used as local match or leverage.