

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM GRANT



DIVISION OF FORESTRY VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The Virgin Islands Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program Grant is designed to encourage citizen involvement in creating and supporting long term and sustained Urban and Community Forestry Programs throughout the territory. Through the competitive Challenge Cost Share Grant Program, the U&CF Program works to build local capacity for Urban and Community Forestry activities. The U&CF Program seeks proposals for project funding from local government, non-profit organizations and civic and/or educational organizations. Groups with projects in line with the listed priorities for this program (page 3-4) are strongly encouraged to apply.

BACKGROUND

The U&CF Program represents a collaborative effort between the U.S. Forest Service and the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture. A 16-member advisory Council supports the U&CF, with membership from public and private sectors within the territory. The Council works to promote education, leadership, technical support and policy development.

PROGRAM GOAL

The primary goal of the U&CF Program is to encourage citizen involvement in creating and supporting long term and sustained Urban and Community Forestry programs throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands.

OVERVIEW

Eligible Applicants: Any non-federal organization operating within the United States Virgin Islands may apply for a Challenge Cost-Share Grant (e.g. communities, non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, civic groups, educational institutions, volunteer groups, local government., etc.). Projects must be in line with U&CF Program Priorities (page 3-4). Collaboration with federal agencies is encouraged. However, a federal agency may not receive funding through this grant program (conflict of interest issues will be addressed appropriately).

Available Funding: The recommended range for proposals is between \$1,000 and \$20,000. Please note: the total amount of funds available changes on an annual basis, as will the amount allocated to any one project. A 1:1 match is required for all U&CF funds requested; that is, if your organization is awarded \$20,000 for a project, the organization must match that with \$20,000 worth of donations or volunteer time.

Ineligible Proposals:

- Funding for every grant cycle is intended for programs, projects, or activities not currently being funded and cannot be used to substitute for existing funding needs.
- Urban and Community Forestry grants are not intended *solely* for beautification plantings.
- This is **NOT** a program that funds strictly agricultural projects such as community gardens. Every submitted project **MUST** have a forestry component to be considered for funding, as the funds for this program come from the US Forest Service.

Matching Fund Requirements: All federally granted funds must be matched at least 1:1 with non-federal source funds. This match may include in-kind donations, volunteer assistance, and private and public (non-federal) monetary contributions. All matching funds must be specifically related to the proposed project(s). The source of matching funds must be identified and grantees must comply with all applicable federal regulations. In addition, Federal dollars cannot be used to pay for meals or refreshments.

- Cash purchases are direct, out-of-pocket expenditures for eligible project activities that are supported by paid invoices, cancelled checks, signed receipts or official payroll records.
- In-kind contributions include on-hand supplies, third party donations of supplies or equipment, the value of time (including fringe benefits), professional services, prison labor and time spent by volunteers on eligible project activities. Volunteer time/hourly rate should be consistent with established local and national standards. Assistance provided by federal employees cannot be claimed as part of the match.

Administration: An appointed subcommittee of the U. S. Virgin Islands Urban & Community Forestry (U&CF) Council, Inc., will review applications and make recommendations to the Council and the Territorial Forester for final approval.

Grant Period: Grantees will be given one year to complete their projects. The grant period begins when the contract between the VI Department of Agriculture and the grantees is signed by the Territorial Forester (the Commissioner of Agriculture).

Reporting and Payment of Funds: Payments are allocated on a quarterly basis. Quarterly payments are contingent on sufficient accomplishment reporting from grantees and the subsequent recommendation of the Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator. Failure to submit prompt and proper reports will result in the withholding of funds by the Urban and Community Forestry Program. Grantee reporting is imperative as it is the primary source of grant tracking by the U&CF Coordinator. Please notify the U&CF Coordinator if there are any delays and/or problems so they can be discussed and remedied in a timely manner.

Recognizing Funding Sources: All printed material, signs and other products resulting from this grant must recognize the source of funding (“This publication is made possible through a grant from the USDA Forest Service.”). In addition, any publications resulting from the project must include language that complies with federal Civil Rights laws. Publications or outreach materials must, at the very least, include the following statement: “This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

Grant Preparation Assistance: Assistance in developing proposals is *strongly encouraged* to all potential applicants of the Urban and Community Forestry Program Grant. The Coordinator will provide site consultation and writing assistance as well as provide guidance as to a project’s suitability under this grant program. Previous and experienced applicants are also encouraged to discuss potential projects with the program coordinator before proposal submittal.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES:

- Information, communication, and the dissemination of technical knowledge are keys to strengthening urban forestry programs and empowering communities and urban forestry professionals.
- As part of a long-term plan for healthy urban and community forestry projects in the Virgin Islands, it is important to assess the values, perceptions, and needs of our growing multicultural population with respect to urban and community forestry. The development of multilingual educational

materials will be a key to reaching these populations with an urban and community forestry message.

- Integrative and successful urban and community forestry programs can enhance urban air quality, decrease storm water runoff, improve wildlife and fish habitat, and aid in other related ecosystem concerns.
- Educating people about the importance of urban and community forests or marketing the value of urban and community forestry projects is a necessary part of a long-term strategy to develop and preserve healthy urban and community forests.
- Innovative tools and techniques are needed for restoring ecosystems to a more natural state after they have been damaged by construction, storms, and invasive species. Restoring urban ecosystems to a more natural state includes planning for species diversity of flora and fauna, and using indigenous species where appropriate. Using these same tools and techniques on new projects can prevent many problems in the future.
- Understanding and practicing good urban forestry can benefit many small communities that are struggling to retain businesses or bring businesses back to a newly revitalized downtown area. Healthy urban forests and green infrastructure give communities a more liveable image and can therefore assist in improving the economy.
- Stimulating the development of additional funding through unique partnerships or non-traditional sources, as well as cultivating private sector partnerships, is key to sustaining a long-term urban forest.
- An ethic that recognizes the value of trees, forests, and other related natural resources in protecting ecosystem functions must be instilled in land development and city revitalization efforts.

GRANT EXAMPLES

Instances of fundable projects include:

- **Public Education:** create educational materials for public awareness to increase understanding about the importance and benefits of urban and community forests
 - Grants used to develop and distribute newsletters, brochures, videos, or websites that advocate native urban trees and healthy management of our community forests
 - Grants used to write and distribute educational books about urban forestry such as:
 - mitigation of hazardous trees
 - identification of local, native tree species
 - mitigation of invasive species
- **Public Outreach:** events that provide an opportunity for the community to participate in an urban and community forestry event to volunteer or learn
 - Earth Day environmental education booth
 - Arbor Day tree planting event
 - Participate or present in a sustainability fair
- **Demonstration Tree Planting:** plant trees as a public educational tool for a large community audience to show how to achieve specific outcomes pertaining to urban and community forestry (*must contain an public education campaign aspect*)

- Planting trees for:
 - green infrastructure
 - energy conservation
 - wastewater treatment
 - dispersal of runoff or stormwater
 - wildlife habitat areas
 - stream bank stabilization and water shading
 - low water use landscape tree demonstrations
 - overhead utility line compatibility
 - social and psychological benefits
- **Green Infrastructure:**
 - Planting trees as part of a:
 - bike/walking path development
 - historic landscape
 - business district
 - conversion of impervious surface
 - erosion control

This list is by no means definitive and we hope that you integrate your own innovative ideas into your own grant application. These are also NOT grant categories and you can feel free to use any combination of ideas/projects into one grant proposal.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Please submit your proposals via email to:

Louis Hilgemann
louis.hilgemann@vi.gov

You may also submit your full proposal by mail to:

Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator
VI Department of Agriculture
RR 1 Box 10345
Estate Lower Love
Kingshill VI, 00850

Proposals may also be sent or delivered to the St. Thomas and St. John offices of the VI Department of Agriculture.

Proposals can be emailed to the Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator. Applicants will be notified of the results by the Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator via regular mail, or by email if the address is provided. Results are normally available six weeks after the due date of the proposals.

PAYMENT PROCESS

The funds awarded under the grant are available on a reimbursement basis after verification of match and in accordance with a quarterly payment schedule, beginning with the start date of the project. Grantees must file a request for payment and send records of expenditures along with documented costs to the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture, Forestry Division. In certain cases it is possible to obtain an advance of

funds, however the U&CF Coordinator will evaluate the progress of the project to determine eligibility for receipt of advance of funds.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Grantees must comply with all Federal regulations pertaining to Federal grants. Federal requirements apply to different types of organizations that are awarded grants. Requirements include:

1. Federal Cost Principles
2. Federal Management Standards
3. Federal Audit Requirements
4. USDA implementing regulations

Requirements are defined through Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars, Federal Acquisition Regulations (FARs), and Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs). The following provides the applicable regulations and requirements by organization type.

<i>Cost Principles</i>	<i>Type of Organization</i>
OMB Circular A21	Educational Organization
OMB Circular A122	Non-profit
OMB Circular A87	State and local governments
FAR, Part 31	Profit Organizations

<i>Federal Management Standards/USDA Regs.</i>	<i>Type of Organization</i>
OMB Circular A110	Profit, educational, non-profit
OMB Circular A102	State and local government

<i>Federal Audit Requirements/USDA Regs.</i>	<i>Type of Organization</i>
OMB Circular A133	Educational, non-profit, state and local govt's
Cognizant agency	Profit organizations

Copies of these documents can be accessed on the World Wide Web via the Internet at:

OMB Circulars

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OMB/html/circular.html>

FAR

<http://www.gsa.gov/far/9037/html>

CFRs

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara.cfr>

Grantees must have a current DUNS number to receive funds. Grantees must certify that they are not debarred from this grant program. Grantees should not conduct business with individuals or organizations debarred from Federal grant projects.

Applicants must document project approval by the authorized representation of the local governing body, organization or institution applying for the grant.

All Projects must have a work plan and tree planting projects also require a maintenance plan approved by the Territorial Forester (Commissioner of Agriculture) or his/her designee. Plant materials used in tree

planting projects must, at a minimum, meet the American Standard for Nursery Stock, and tree protection and maintenance must meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards.

Record Keeping Requirements

Records will be maintained according to all Federal Regulations. The financial management system of the grantees shall meet the following standards:

- Records shall comply with generally accepted accounting principles
- Records will document allowable costs
- Records will be supported by source documentation, such as cancelled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, contracts, etc. Invoices must be marked paid and be referenced as to how payment was made (i.e. check number). Records will be maintained for three years following final payment.

Proposal Format

Submitted proposals are required to be clear and concise as well as address an urban and community forestry need and meet the objectives of the U&CF Program. Please use the *Grant Application Form* found on our website, or contact our office for a copy. Examples of eligible projects are listed on page 4-5.

Information to be Submitted Includes:

1. **A Completed Grant Application PDF** – A descriptive narrative of the project’s benefits to the local urban and community forestry program, public relations and educational benefits as well as potential for continuation of the project should be included.

A detailed project budget should include financial assistance, sources and description of match, administrative costs, materials, maintenance costs, and costs of professional services. It is strongly encouraged that applicants use the budget worksheet contained in this request for proposals. A budget worksheet example is given on page 8.

2. **All Additional Information Attached as Separate Documents (If Applicable)** - If the project involves tree planting, complete the tree application form plus include (Page 4 of the *Grant Application Form*):
 - i. A detailed three-year maintenance plan that specifies the entity responsible for maintenance.
 - ii. A resolution of endorsement from the appropriate government agency if planting is on government property (federal or local).
 - iii. Compliance with the Department of Public Works if planting is done on territorial rights-of-way.
 - iv. Consultation with WAPA to determine whether water or sewer lines are present.

3. **Letter(s) of Support** - A letter of support is required from each individual, agency, or organization listed as a cooperator, collaborator, or provider of in kind or financial support to the project.

Note: The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture is not responsible for any contractors, volunteers, or local government employees working on a project. Projects will be evaluated on need, cost effectiveness, sustainability, environmental merit, visibility, partnership/volunteerism, demonstrated commitment, and vital communities reached.

SAMPLE BUDGET

Applicant: Green Island, USVI

Project: Inventory and Management Plan

Project Description: Green Island, USVI has received a grant to do an urban forestry inventory and management plan of roadside trees. They plan to conduct the inventory with help from in house staff and volunteer help. They will contract with a consultant and use in-house staff to write the management plan.

Amount Requested from U&CF: \$9,650

Amount of Local Match: \$14,140

Total Cost: \$23,790

		Local Match				
EXPENSE (include hourly wages and descriptions here)	Grant Share (Money Requested)	Cash	In-Kind	Volunteer	Donated	Total
Personnel/Labor Staff - 310 hrs \$25/hr		\$7,750				\$7,750
Contract Labor/Services 28 hrs @ \$75/hr	\$2,100					\$2,100
Trees						
Materials						
Equipment Inventory Software	\$1,550					\$1,550
Travel Use of Truck - 160 hrs @ \$9/hr			\$1,440			\$1,440
Volunteers 160 hrs @ \$24.69*				\$3,950		\$3,950
Signage						
Watering						
Other: Consultant: Tree People, LLC - 120 hrs @\$50/hr	\$6,000					\$6,000
Other: Printing		\$1,000				\$1,000
Other:						
Total	\$9,650	\$8,750	\$1,440	\$3,950		\$23,790

*federally accepted rate for volunteers, 2018 update