



SUPPORTING VERMONT MUNICIPALITIES THROUGH ASH TREE MANAGEMENT

Grant Overview

The [Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program](#) (VT UCF), a partnership between the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation and University of Vermont Extension, is seeking applicants needing financial assistance for municipal ash tree management and emerald ash borer (EAB) preparedness. This grant program will support:

- ash tree removals and tree planting on public and publicly managed lands in municipalities,
- effective and/or innovative collection and use of ash wood from public lands, and
- ash tree management on other high-use municipally owned land such as at trail heads, along trails, and at parking areas.

With special funds from the US Forest Service, VT UCF was selected to work with municipalities to implement ash tree and EAB management strategies within public ways and places, including along road right-of-ways and in town forests. This funding is intended for **municipalities that are prepared to manage the impacts that EAB will have on their public ash trees.**

This document contains information to support grant proposal and project development.

WHO MAY APPLY

All Vermont municipalities may apply for an Ash Tree Management grant. Municipalities can consult the map of the [EAB Infested Area](#) (both Confirmed and High Risk Areas) as of May 28, 2020 to determine their proximity to known infestations. VT UCF will consider the proximity of a community to a known EAB infestation when ranking eligible projects; however, with the anticipation of the spread of EAB, all Vermont municipalities are encouraged to apply. Eligible municipalities should have an active tree warden in support of the application.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

VT UCF is seeking municipal partners to each receive a grant award **between \$5,000 and \$15,000**, for a total of \$50,000 in cost-share grants available for 2020-2021. These funds will be distributed through a competitive grant review and selection process.

Funding for this program is available from the US Forest Service under Code of Federal Domestic Assistance 10.664, Cooperative Forestry Assistance, Federal Fiscal Year 2020.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Projects should focus on managing the threat of EAB to public ash trees and the urban and community forest, focusing on trees in the road right-of-way and on municipally owned land including town forests. Applications will be assessed based on three focus areas and projects must include **one or more** of the following components:

1. removal of ash trees on municipally owned or managed land **and** replacement tree plantings of species other than ash
2. development and implementation of effective and/or innovative management techniques and use of ash wood from public trees
3. assessment, management planning, and active management of ash trees in high-use areas, such as parking areas and trails in municipally owned forests and natural areas.

Although not required, projects **may** also include one or more other components directly related to managing public ash trees locally, including:

- increasing municipal staff capacity to plan for and manage ash trees and the impact of EAB
- public outreach
- engaging property owners and the public

Project funds may **not** be used to support insecticide treatment of ash trees, a long-term commitment not adequately supported by a one-year grant. However, the costs associated with protection of public ash trees through insecticide treatment could be used as applicant match. Applicants are encouraged to review the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program's [emerald ash borer management webpage](#) prior to submitting a proposal. The page contains educational, planning, budgeting, and implementation resources that may be helpful in preparing a project proposal.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT GUIDELINES

Below are general guidelines for each of the required and eligible project components.

REMOVAL OF ASH TREES

Project funds may be allocated for the removal of ash trees in the municipal road right-of-way or other municipal public land, including town forests.

- These funds may exclusively be used for removal of ash (*Fraxinus*) trees; Vermont's three native ash species are green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), and black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*).
- These funds may exclusively be used for the removal of public ash trees; removal of trees on private land is not eligible for funding.

Release Date: August 6, 2020

Proposal Due Date: October 30, 2020

- All ash tree removals and disposal of wood waste must adhere to the State of [Vermont's Slow the Spread](#) recommendations. The project description should outline how ash wood will be managed or addressed and describe any unique or innovative ways that the municipality will use ash wood from public trees.
- For funding of public ash tree removals, eligible municipalities must have completed an ash tree inventory or survey of the project location. Additionally, the municipality must submit with this application a municipal emerald ash borer management plan (draft or final) or a documented management strategy for publicly managed lands, including a town forest. The ash removal strategy must should align with this plan or management strategy.
- The estimated number and approximate size class distribution of ash trees to be removed must be included in the project proposal. Recommended size classes are <12" diameter at breast height (DBH), 12"-24" DBH, and >24" DBH.

REPLACEMENT TREE PLANTINGS

If the project includes removal of ash trees, replacement tree plantings are a required. Replacement tree plantings may occur at the site of ash tree removal or at another location.

- The replacement component may include restoration or riparian plantings of saplings, shade tree plantings, or some combination of both.
- The estimated number of replacement trees that will be planted must be included in the project proposal. All proposals must provide a site plan, species list, and a 3-year maintenance plan for the replacement trees, including provisions for replacing trees that have not survived.
- Trees can be planted on municipal public lands such as within the public rights-of-way along any road, parks and greenbelts, areas around public buildings, in town forests, or in restoration and riparian areas. Trees may also be planted on private property in the absence of adequate public spaces. If this is the case project coordinators must obtain written permission from the landowners and, to protect the investment, should also obtain a written easement from the landowners as well.
- If planting shade trees, planting stock should be at least 2 inches in caliper and no larger than 3 ½ inches. Balled and burlapped or bare root stock are the preferred stocking materials. Please refer to the VT UCF factsheet [Planning to Purchase a Tree](#) for guidance on selecting high quality trees.
- If the tree planting is occurring in a restoration or riparian area, the [Vermont Trees for Streams Resource Guide](#) and [Tree Species for Riparian Planting](#) should be used to design, guide species selection, and implement a successful planting. Tree protection in the form of tree shelters, tubes, or mats should be incorporated into the project.

Release Date: August 6, 2020

Proposal Due Date: October 30, 2020

- The [‘Vermont Tree Selection Guide’](#) should be used as a reference for site assessment and tree selection. **No ash trees** should be included in the replacement planting efforts.

INNOVATIVE USE OF ASH WOOD

Project funds may be used to establish a local ash wood utilization program for ash wood not claimed by private landowners within a public right-of-way or for ash wood obtained from the felling of public trees on municipal land, including in town forests. Ash wood can be distributed and used as firewood; project funds may support effective ways of distributing ash firewood at a municipal level. However, applicants are also encouraged to find ways to utilize the ash wood for furniture, flooring, outdoor art installations, recreation equipment, or any other use. Learn more about wood utilization, in particular ash wood, at vtcommunityforestry.org/wood-utilization.

ASH TREE MANAGEMENT ON MUNICIPALLY OWNED LAND

Project funds may be used to support ash tree inventories or assessments and to achieve management objectives, such as ash tree removal or tree planting along trails, at trail heads, in parking lots, or other high-use areas in town forests or other municipally owned land.

INCREASING MUNICIPAL STAFF CAPACITY

Project funds may be used for grantee staff training, for grantee staff or personnel costs, or to purchase materials, supplies, or equipment to support an EAB and ash management strategy in the municipality. Applicants may also request funds to support work with regional groups that encompass the municipality.

PUBLIC OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Project funds may be used to support landowner and public engagement regarding a municipality’s proposed EAB management strategy, particularly in town forests and other outdoor public recreation areas. This includes printing and mailing costs, signage, online and print newspaper ads, and development of outreach materials.

APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals will be reviewed for completeness, eligibility, and applicability to the three project focus areas listed in the Required and Eligible Project Components section on page 2 (ash tree removal and tree replacements; effective and innovative uses of ash wood from public trees; assessment and management of ash trees in high-use areas of municipally owned land). Additionally, priority may be given to municipalities in or proximal to known EAB infestations or to municipalities that fulfill a variety of project foci. Proposals should respond to the following elements, which will be used by the selection committee to prioritize awards:

STATEMENT OF NEED

Explain your municipality's current situation regarding ash tree management on municipally owned or municipally managed land. Provide a succinct statement of need for funding, identifying the opportunities and desired outcomes of this municipal initiative. Include any information about your ash tree population (e.g. inventory or survey results), your municipality's management strategy, and who has been or would like to be involved in making decisions about EAB management. Show that your town's tree warden is active in the community through a letter of support or other documented input into the application.

WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING AND HOW WILL YOU DO IT?

In table format using action steps and a timeline, provide a list of what your municipality plans on doing, describe how it will be done, and list the measurable results. All project work must be completed by **January 15, 2022**. Questions that can be answered in this section include, as applicable:

- How many public ash trees do you estimate will be removed through the project, what approximate size are they, and where are they located?
- How many replacement trees will be planted, where, and of what size and species?
- What will happen to the ash wood, both from the public right-of-way if it is rejected by the landowner and from municipally owned ash trees? Will any person or organization partner with the grantee or to distribute or utilize ash wood?
- What planning or management goals will you address in high use areas of town forests or other municipally owned trails or parking areas?

WHO WILL CARRY OUT THE PLAN?

In concert with the action items entered above, identify who will be involved in the project and their role including services provided, financial contributions, and product donations. Consider the various municipal staff, boards and commissions, citizens, professionals, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that can be called upon as partners to support your efforts. If municipal staff will be performing ash tree removals, provide details about their qualifications and experience. Additionally, describe how the municipal tree warden will be involved in the project. Questions that can be answered in this section include:

- Who will coordinate tree removal efforts, including contacting and securing a contractor?
- Who will coordinate the efforts and who will ensure proper planting, protection, and maintenance of the planted trees?
- Who will manage the distribution of ash wood and, if applicable, the record of its innovative use in the community?
- Who will identify and assess specific sites within town forests or other municipally owned lands for potential ash management?
- Who will communicate the project to the public and record information for future budget planning or land use planning efforts?

PRE-GRANT AND POST-GRANT REVIEW

Funded projects may require a pre-grant or post-grant review or site visit with a VT UCF staff member to support grant success. VT UCF will notify each award recipient if a pre-grant or post-grant review is required in the grant award announcement.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible costs are those necessary for completing the project. Costs must be documented, reasonable, and consistent within the scope of the project, in accordance with Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles. Examples include

- Costs associated with contracted removals of ash trees within the public right-of-way of rural municipal roads, and potentially on other public lands.
- Costs associated with purchase of equipment to increase the municipality's capacity to perform ash removals internally. Equipment is defined as tangible personal property with a per unit-cost of \$5,000 or more and a useful life of one year or more. Purchase, use, and management of equipment under this grant is subject to requirements in Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200.
- Costs of replacement trees, site preparation, tree protection, and associated supplies necessary for successful tree planting.
- Costs of wood utilization or distribution if not already included in the tree removal cost.
- Costs of public outreach and engagement.
- Costs associated with developing an ash management plan for high use areas in town forests or other municipal lands.
- Salaries and fringe benefits of people working directly on the project.

COST SHARE REQUIREMENTS

Funds will be awarded on a 50–50 (State/local) match basis. The match may be in the form of cash, services, or in-kind contributions. Match may take the form of additional ash tree removals, replacements, or other roadside vegetation and management improvements. *Example: invasive species removal along the road where ash trees are removed.* In-kind contributions can include the cash value for volunteer assistance in planning and all grantee personnel/staff labor as well as the donation of professional services or materials. *Example: The value of volunteer time organizing and implementing a volunteer riparian tree planting project are an eligible source of match.*

Costs contributed as match must be eligible as described in the preceding section, Eligible Costs. Use of federal funds from other programs as match will be approved on a case-by-case basis and is contingent upon agreement from the organization or agency from where those funds originate. Volunteer time contributed as match must be documented on a sign-in sheet to include dates, hours of work performed and signatures. The State will provide a form on which to report matching funds.

Release Date: August 6, 2020

Proposal Due Date: October 30, 2020

VALUE OF IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

- Adult volunteers: \$25.43/hour
- Donated professional services: use customary rates for services provided
- Donations of materials: use fair market value
- Personnel/staff: use hourly wage rates (may also include fringe benefits)
- Equipment: use established rates per hour, per mile, etc.

TIMELINE

Applications must be emailed postmarked on or before midnight on October 30, 2020. Grantees will be notified of funding approval by November 30, 2020. Awarded funds in the form of signed grant agreements are anticipated to be available by the middle of January 2021. Projects must be completed, and a final financial report submitted by January 15, 2022.

Restrictions put in place by the State of Vermont in response to COVID-19 may alter the proposed timeline of awarded grants. Work start dates and any subsequent deliverable dates in grant agreements are subject to change. It is the responsibility of the municipality to ensure that any work conducted under this grant complies with State of Vermont Executive Orders.

PAYMENT PROCESS

The funds awarded are available for payment on the following schedule:

- one-third payable in advance, upon written request after the signing of the grant agreement
- one-third at a mid-project point as accompanied by a progress report
- the balance upon completion of the project with verification of payment of all expenses

Please note that grantees will be required to pay for contracted services before final reimbursement from the State. The Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation reserves the right to make partial payment upon non-compliance of conditions in the grant agreement. Allow 4–6 weeks from the time of the payment request to receipt of the check from the State Treasurer's Office.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

TO EMAIL:

Due to changes in office occupation, electronic submission of applications is strongly encouraged.

Email completed proposal and all other required documents as attachments by close of business on **Friday, October 30, 2020** to Jenny Lauer at jenny.lauer@vermont.gov.

Release Date: August 6, 2020

Proposal Due Date: October 30, 2020

TO MAIL:

If necessary, municipalities may mail the completed proposal and all other required documents to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's main office. The application **must be postmarked no later than Friday, October 30, 2020**.

MAILING ADDRESS:

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
Urban & Community Forestry Program
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2
Montpelier, VT 05620

Applications will not be accepted past the deadline date. VT UCF is not responsible for e-mail delivery that fails or mail that is not postmarked on the day of mailing.

HELP

For more information or assistance, contact the VT UCF staff listed below.

Grant Application Questions: Elise Schadler, (802) 522-6015 or elise.schadler@vermont.gov

Project Development Questions: Joanne Garton, (802) 249-4217 or joanne.garton@vermont.gov

Grant Submission Questions: Jenny Lauer, Administrative Assistant, (802) 828-1531 or jenny.lauer@vermont.gov

Grant funding that supports Vermont municipalities through ash tree management is one of the many resources that the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program offers to support local tree care and stewardship. Learn more at VTCOMMUNITYFORESTRY.ORG.