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## Maryland's Historically Underserved Urban Communities Receive \$7.5 Million Dollars to Plant Over 17,500 New Trees

The Chesapeake Bay Trust, in partnership with the State of Maryland and BGE: An Exelon Company, announce \$7.5 million in funding for 28 community organizations to plant 17,694 new trees in urban, historically underserved areas across Maryland. Part of the Urban Trees Grant Program, this effort was created by the Maryland General Assembly's Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021. The Act calls for five million trees to be planted across Maryland by 2031, with 500,000 of them targeted to urban, underserved areas. The Chesapeake Bay Trust, the distributor of funds from the Protect the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays vehicle license plate program and other sources, has long empowered local urban communities through grant-making and was tapped in the Act to serve as the administrator of the urban component.

Urban trees have significant benefits to human health, climate, the economy, and the environment. Yet some urban communities are severely lacking in greening, contributing to heat island effect, exacerbating asthma and other health issues, and reducing quality of life. Providing resources through ground-up, community-based grants empower people to own this piece of community improvement, leading to sustainability.

"Our administration believes that those closest to the challenge are closest to the solution. And by uplifting local Maryland organizations, we can both advance climate justice and also empower communities historically left behind," said **Gov. Moore**. "With each new tree planted in neighborhoods across our state, we will reduce air pollution, combat climate change, and boost quality of life for Marylanders. This is what partnership looks like – and I want to thank the Chesapeake Bay Trust, BGE, and all of our partners for getting us here."

This is the third year of the Urban Trees Grant Program to green communities and enhance quality of life, human health, and community livability. Funding over nine years will be distributed by the Chesapeake Bay Trust to communities, neighborhoods, civic groups, schools, and others who commit to planting trees in underserved regions as defined in the legislation. Awards are reserved for urban census tracts with low median household income levels, with high unemployment, or that were historically red-lined or for public housing projects.

"These new trees will be critical for absorbing carbon dioxide to mitigate the effects of climate change across our State," said **Maryland Energy Administration Director Paul Pinsky**, who was a sponsor of the Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021 when he served in the Senate. "This significant investment ensures local

groups who have historically lacked access to resources, have the opportunity to lead their own tree planting projects to fight climate change and strengthen their communities.”

In addition to resources from the State, this year’s awards are also supported through funding from BGE: An Exelon Company. BGE’s contribution to the program will allow communities to request support for other elements they may need to create successful tree planting projects which extend beyond the costs for the trees themselves allowable with the State funds. Examples include benches, safety-related project components, or litter reduction project components to allow or encourage the use of new green spaces, and other vegetation to complement trees.

“The Urban Trees Grant Program advances environmental justice to promote the health of all our communities,” said **BGE Senior Vice President of Governmental, Regulatory, and External Affairs Alex Núñez**. “We are proud to support this initiative that gives resources to local organizations that lead on-the-ground actions to improve their own communities.”

Studies show that trees planted in urban communities improve the physical and mental health of people within their proximity, and that increasing urban canopy can reduce asthma and respiratory-related emergencies during heat wave-related events in under-treed areas. For these reasons, many urban communities have adopted urban tree canopy goals, including Baltimore City, which has set a goal of 40% canopy by 2037.

Communities will begin planting trees supported through this round of funding this fall, concentrating on areas such as vacant lots or streets where native trees and resources are scarce. These trees will help to reduce the urban heat island effect, filter polluted stormwater, mitigate the effect of carbon emissions, reduce energy consumption and therefore energy bills, and improve air quality. Increasing tree quantity and quality in urban areas is a cost-effective way to strengthen the health of the Chesapeake Bay, provide urban wildlife habitat, help mitigate flooding issues, and stimulate local green jobs markets enabling families to work where they live and play.

“For two years I have seen the incredible impact of this program in bringing communities together and empowering local champions to lead this greening work for their neighbors, families and friends,” said **Dr. Jana Davis, president of the Chesapeake Bay Trust**. “I’m thrilled that 28 new awardees will join these efforts, planting even more trees to ensure we all have access to a green and healthy environment.”

### **Urban Trees Grant Program 2024 Awardees:**

**Broadway East Community Development Corporation, Baltimore City** - \$184,722 to plant 324 trees in Broadway East, Fort Worthington, Darley Park, East Baltimore-Midway, Oliver and South Clifton Park. These communities have the worst health profiles in Maryland with the number 1,2 and 3 cause of death is cardiovascular disease, cancer, and stroke respectively. These confluence of facts makes increasing and maintaining tree canopy cover in these communities of utmost importance.

**Chartley Homeowners Association, Inc., Baltimore County** - \$15,000 to plant 30 trees along roadways in the Chartley neighborhood where trees have been removed to help improve the environment and beautify the corridors traveled by residents and visitors.

**Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC)**, (formerly Essex Community College), *Baltimore County* - \$37,784 to plant 207 trees to improve the quantity and quality of the urban forest on CCBC's Essex Campus, which is located within Baltimore County and adjacent to some of the County's most socially and economically vulnerable neighborhoods.

**Fusion Partnership, Inc., c/o Baltimore Gift Economy**, *Baltimore County* - \$62,179 to plant 139 trees to support the reforestation of the Maidens Choice stream bank, an urban creek running through Baltimore's Irvington neighborhood.

**755 Alliance Inc.**, *Harford County* - \$41,700 to plant 74 trees to beautify and empower communities in the Edgewood area that are recognized as a blighted neighborhood to raise expectations, promote pride and create aesthetically pleasing communities.

**Hampstead Tree Commission**, *Carroll County* - \$2,908 to plant 30 trees around the tot lot off of Wellesley Court to increase the tree canopy, provide shade and enhance the beauty of the lot.

**City of Brunswick**, *Frederick County* - \$15,600 to plant 120 trees on steep hillsides on Cumming Drive and East Potomac Street. The two areas will help with shade for residents.

**Resilience Authority of Charles County, Maryland, Inc.**, *Charles County* - \$79,822 to plant 451 trees at Waldorf's Thomas Stone High School and Waldorf Senior Recreation Center. The Resilience Authority Youth and Youth Adult Corps (RAYC) will provide two years of tree maintenance and paid green jobs for local high school students and young adults, advancing climate resilience grounded in racial and socio-economic equity.

**Vestry Salisbury Parish - Parsons Cemetery**, *Wicomico County* - \$6,300 to plant 18 trees at the Parsons Cemetery.

**Catonsville Rails to Trails**, *Baltimore City* - \$15,000 to plant 100 trees on the Catonsville Short Line Trail within the Baltimore City neighborhood of Beechfield.

**The Mayor and Council of Rockville**, *Montgomery County* - \$181,720 to plant 954 trees at RedGate Park. The long-term goal of the reforestation of RedGate Park project is to plant up to 10,000 trees and shrubs over multiple years to revert the former golf course back to a natural habitat and help improve the environment.

**Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection**, *Montgomery County* - \$663,494 to plant 1,112 trees through the County's Tree Montgomery program on Montgomery County Public School (MCPS), Montgomery County Government, HOA, and private single-family and multi-family residential properties.

**Notre Dame of Maryland University**, *Baltimore City* - \$76,796 to plant 183 trees on the Notre Dame of Maryland University campus located in Baltimore City on approximately 60 acres.

**Baltimore Tree Trust**, *Baltimore City* - \$2,625,000 to plant 3,500 trees throughout the west side of Baltimore City.

**Global Health and Education Projects, Inc., Prince George's County** - \$164,940 to plant 298 trees as part of the Urban Environmental Stewardship: Empowering Minority and Underserved Communities through Family Tree Adoption Program (FTAP). FTAP will conduct on-the-ground native tree planting and adoption; community-hosted tree-care education and demonstrations; and digital outreach and communication to result in the installation of native trees.

**SOUTH WEST COMMUNITY COUNCIL INCORPORATED dba Citizens of Pigtown, Baltimore City** - \$28,263 to plant 38 trees in the Pigtown neighborhood to promote clean, beautiful, and attractive public spaces for the neighborhood's revitalization.

**Live Peace Tech Corporation, Montgomery County** - \$29,653 to plant 49 trees in under-served areas of Takoma Park and surrounding areas in Montgomery County. The project's main goal is to cultivate a sustainable and verdant environment while instilling a deeper reverence for peace and nature.

**Gunpowder Valley Conservancy, Baltimore County** - \$14,963 to plant 35 trees. The Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (GVC) will partner with the Miramar Landing Homeowners Association (MLHOA) to mobilize volunteers to plant and maintain trees at Miramar Landing, a townhome community in Middle River, MD with over 2,000 residents.

**Greater Remington Improvement Association, Baltimore City** - \$168,000 to plant 325 trees in Charles Village, Harwood, and Barclay, emphasizing streets with bicycle infrastructure and streets with little-to-no existing tree cover. These trees are part of the Remington Greening project to complete Remington's urban tree canopy to provide cleaner air, reduced traffic speeds, safer walking environments, lessen storm water impacts, lower urban air temperatures, and add value to adjacent homes and businesses.

**Joe's Movement Emporium/World Arts Focus, Prince George's County** - \$185,333 to plant 487 trees with GreenWorks – Urban Trees. Joe's GreenWorks Urban Tree Team will plant trees in Capitol Heights, District Heights, Bladensburg, Mount Rainier, Cheverly, Cottage City, and Colmar Manor to expand the region's tree canopy coverage and contribute to canopy conservation.

**Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Statewide** - \$306,210 to plant 408 trees part of the Trees for Sacred places and HBCU Campus Trees program at faith-based institutions in Maryland and at HBCU campuses. This project is a partnership between the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, Patapsco Heritage Greenway, 8 congregations from across the state, and Bowie State University.

**Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection & Sustainability, Baltimore County** - \$1,390,001 to plant 2,409 trees with the Operation ReTree and Street Tree Replacement Program. These two programs utilize different implementation strategies in order to plant trees in the urban areas of Baltimore County.

**Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation, Prince George's County** - \$926,667 to plant 3,707 trees through its "Right Tree, Right Place" (RTRP) program to mitigate climate change and transform neighborhoods. This project will target street and residential tree plantings to benefit residents in underserved, economically and socially disadvantaged communities.

**City Center Residents Association, Baltimore City** - \$15,000 to plant 25 trees for the Downtown Baltimore Tree Planting Project, a collective effort between the Market Center Coalition, City Center

Residents Association and the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore to build capacity for improving the tree canopy in Downtown Baltimore.

**Ashburton Area Association, Baltimore City** - \$14,948 to plant 30 trees and work with Callaway-Garrison neighbors on tree care, particularly watering with a Bucket Brigade - a team of neighbors willing to give a single tree a bucket of water. With the SKS Forest Group, they will develop a user-friendly mobile application to serve as a nature exploration and education resource. They will also partner with Temple X Schools.

**City of Salisbury, Wicomico County** - \$148,267 to plant 835 trees to enhance water quality and flood resilience and mitigate the urban heat island effect. The "Terrascaping Plan" leverages underutilized city-owned streets to plant trees, creating a harmonious balance between urban infrastructure and nature.

**Grace Foundation, Baltimore City** - \$43,553 to plant 58 trees and shrubs across four distinct zip codes and three legislative districts. Strategically selected locations aim to beautify public spaces, improve air quality, and promote biodiversity in these marginalized areas.

**Defensores de la Cuenca, Statewide** - \$926,667 to plant 1,857 trees primarily in Prince George's County and the surrounding areas and will train 20 Embajadores through a series of virtual and hands-on workshops to build their base of knowledge on the importance of trees, in order to share it to the broader community.

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### **About the Chesapeake Bay Trust**

The Chesapeake Bay Trust ([www.cbtrust.org](http://www.cbtrust.org)) envisions a restored and protected Chesapeake Bay watershed and other natural resources in our area, from the Coastal Bays to the Chesapeake to the Youghiogheny River. We empower local community-based groups on the ground with the resources they need to take on a meaningful and measurable role in restoring forests, streams, rivers, bays, wildlife, and more in their own communities. Every year, the Trust empowers about 400 groups by providing grants and technical assistance to accomplish environmental education, community outreach, and local watershed restoration projects. The Trust is supported by the sale of the Protect the Chesapeake & Coastal Bays license plate; donations to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund on the Maryland State income tax form; donations made by hunters, fishers, and boaters in the Maryland online natural resource licensing system; donations from individuals and corporations; and partnerships with private foundations and federal, state, and local governments. The Trust has received the highest rating from Charity Navigator for over two decades. On average, 90 cents of every dollar are directed to the Trust's restoration and education programs.