



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 18, 2025

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Celia Parker, Chesapeake Bay Trust: cparker@cbtrust.org, (410) 974-2941 x142

Maryland's Historically Underserved Urban Communities Receive \$8.6 Million to Plant Over 28,000 New Trees

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (Bay Trust) continues to empower everyday people to restore nature, this time through local grants for community-led tree planting efforts to strengthen their own neighborhoods. With funding from the State of Maryland and BGE, over \$8,677,000 was awarded to 26 community organizations to plant over 28,000 new trees in urban, historically underserved areas across Maryland. The Urban Trees Program was created by the Maryland General Assembly's Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021, which calls for five million trees to be planted across Maryland by 2031, 500,000 of them targeted to urban, underserved areas. The Bay Trust, known for managing funds from the "Protect the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays" vehicle license plate program and other sources, has long empowered local communities through its grantmaking 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 unwavering commitment to fighting poverty, building more economically-vibrant neighborhoods, and advancing the work of repair requires intentionality—not only in the policies we craft, but also in the partnerships we uplift," said **Gov. Moore**. "Tree planting is critical to keeping our state resilient and healthy for all Marylanders. In partnership with the 5 Million Trees Initiative, we will continue our push for clean air, clean water, and thriving communities in every zip code, including those that have been historically left behind."

This is the fourth year of grants awarded through the Urban Trees Program to enhance quality of life, human health, and community livability. Funding over nine years will be distributed by the 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.

In addition to thousands of new plantings, new this year is a focus on the maintenance of these critical trees. Currently, there is no consensus about how much tree maintenance maximizes the ultimate

number of mature trees. To determine how to optimize resource investment, the Bay Trust is implementing a study to compare the survival outcomes of trees that receive two years of maintenance with trees that receive five years of maintenance to determine optimal, cost-effective maintenance plans.

“BGE is proud to support the Urban Trees Grant Program, as it ensures long-term, sustained solutions for communities across our State,” said **Valencia McClure, Senior Vice President of Governmental, Regulatory and External Affairs, for BGE.** “Enhancing Maryland, while empowering the public to help beautify and protect their own communities, is a fantastic reminder of the power of people to come together for the benefit of all.”

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.

“This program provides the opportunity for everyday people to lead on-the-ground greening efforts for their own communities,” said **Dr. Jana Davis, president of the Chesapeake Bay Trust.** “We are proud to empower local groups to design tree plantings that strengthen their communities, inspire other residents to get involved, and create a ripple effect for a lasting impact.”

Urban Trees Grant Program 2025 Awardees:

Baltimore Tree Trust, Baltimore City - \$1,092,536 to plant 1,456 trees throughout west and southwest Baltimore City.

Prince George's County Department of Environment, Prince George's County - \$1,000,000 to plant 2,143 native trees in public spaces (such as parks, schools, open spaces of homeowners' associations (HOAs), and churches) across the County.

Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation, Prince George's County - \$1,000,000 for the Right Tree, Right Place Program to facilitate 4,000 native tree installations and follow-up maintenance.

Casey Trees, Prince George's County and Montgomery County - \$936,023 to plant 2,000 trees over three years on public and private lands to reduce surface temperatures, lower utility costs, mitigate stormwater runoff, and increase access to outdoor recreation.

Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Montgomery County - \$719,750 to plant 1,200 urban shade trees on Montgomery County Public School (MCPS), Montgomery County Government, HOA, and private single-family and multi-family residential properties.

Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County - \$673,560 to transform an abandoned golf course into a public green space by planting over 10,000 trees.

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County and Prince George's County - \$525,000 to partner with the Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) and the Patapsco Heritage Greenway (PHG) to plant 700 trees at faith-based institutions, schools, and other public spaces.

City of Frederick Urban Forestry Division, City of Frederick - \$494,500 to plant 1,150 trees along streets, shared-use paths, and in parks to mitigate air pollution, reduce urban heat islands, and decrease the impacts of a changing climate.

Blue Water Baltimore, Baltimore City - \$300,000 to enhance water quality by planting 400 street trees in neighborhoods vulnerable to flooding and stormwater pollution.

Harford County DPW, Harford County - \$237,845 to plant 1,077 trees in the Aberdeen and Edgewood communities in collaboration with the 755 Alliance Inc. The project will reduce stormwater runoff, provide environmental stewardship experiences for students, and enhance local community aesthetics.

The 6th Branch, Baltimore City - \$204,163 to plant 300 new trees and remove non-native trees in vacant lots across five East Baltimore neighborhoods.

Global Health and Education Projects, Inc., Prince George's County - \$201,286 to plant 320 native trees and develop a community-hosted tree-care education program.

Audubon MidAtlantic, Baltimore City - \$200,000 to implement forest restoration projects and plant 402 trees in Lakeland Park and Farring Baybrook Park in partnership with the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks' Forestry Division.

Greater Remington Improvement Association, Baltimore City - \$200,000 to team with adjacent neighborhoods that share a "walkshed," to increase canopy on streets with bicycle infrastructure and streets with little-to-no existing tree cover by planting 325 trees.

Joe's Movement Emporium/World Arts Focus, Prince George's County - \$200,000 to create more green jobs and plant 600 trees in Capitol Heights, District Heights, Bladensburg, Mount Rainier, Cheverly, Cottage City, and Colmar Manor.

City of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County - \$192,877 to plant 549 trees across three parks to improve air quality, enhance soil health, and reduce greenhouse emissions and to enable the City to reverse a 6% decline in tree canopy coverage from 2009 to 2020.

Howard EcoWorks, Baltimore region - \$129,775 to plant 500 native understory and canopy trees with maintenance and educational efforts to ensure long term sustainability and success of the plantings.

Seton Hill Association, Inc, Baltimore City - \$99,660 to plant 186 trees to improve neighborhood appearance, reduce air pollution, reduce stormwater runoff, and mitigate the urban heat island effect.

Live Peace Tech Corporation, Prince George's County - \$66,750 to plant 125 native trees in the Town of Cheverly and Camp Springs to promote environmental sustainability, improve local biodiversity, and foster a greater appreciation for nature.

Black Landscapers Alliance, Baltimore City - \$60,796 to plant 100 trees in East Baltimore, where canopy coverage is critically low.

City of Hagerstown, Washington County - \$50,000 to plant 130 trees at various locations throughout the City and to augment existing plantings in the various City parks.

Town of Cheverly, Prince George's County - \$25,346 to plant 50 native trees within Town of Cheverly by working with residents to plant native trees on private property within underserved areas.

York Corridor Business Improvement District Management Authority, Inc., Baltimore City - \$19,782 to plant 36 new street trees to improve air quality, public health, and neighborhood resilience. This initiative involves partnerships with Loyola University Maryland, TreeBaltimore, and local businesses to ensure long-term tree survival.

Morgan State University, Baltimore City - \$19,561 to plant 33 trees on a section of its campus to help green a currently tree-less portion and to increase awareness of the role of trees in urban areas.

MedStar Harbor Hospital, Baltimore City - \$15,000 to replace 25 trees in Harbor Park West that have succumbed to Dutch Elm disease. MedStar Harbor's green infrastructure helps to remediate stormwater and impacts thousands of individuals including patients and their families, hospital staff, and local residents.

Backyard Basecamp, Inc, Baltimore City - \$13,490 to plant 27 trees and combine site maintenance, monitoring, community outreach and workforce development into a single comprehensive tree planting program around food forests.

###

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (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 Bay Trust empowers about 400 groups by providing grants and technical assistance to accomplish environmental education, community outreach, and local watershed restoration projects. The Bay 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 Bay 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.