



Urban Trees Grant Program

FY27 Request for Proposals



Chesapeake Bay Trust | 108 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 974 - 2941 | www.cbtrust.org

Introduction and Program Goals

The [Chesapeake Bay Trust](#) (Trust) is a nonprofit, grant-making organization dedicated to improving the bays, streams, rivers, forests, parks, and other natural resources of our local systems, from the Chesapeake to the Coastal Bays to the Youghiogheny River. Since 1985, the Trust has awarded over \$190 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Urban Trees Grant Program, called for by the Maryland General Assembly as a component of a 5,000,000-tree goal by 2031, welcomes requests for tree planting projects in urban, underserved communities. The goal of the Urban Trees Grant Program is to green communities; enhance quality of life, human health, and community livability by improving air quality and reducing urban heat island effect; and mitigate some of the effects of climate change. This initiative will empower communities that have felt disenfranchised to gain better access to resources that support local improvements.

The Trust has a mission to empower all people to participate in the restoration and protection of our region's natural resources through its award-making. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages applications directly from or that engage communities underrepresented in the environmental space. For more about the Trust's commitment to engage underrepresented groups, see our strategic plan at www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan and [https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/](http://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/).

The Trust recognizes that application processes can be complicated and time-consuming; the Trust continues to work to simplify our application processes where possible. New applicants, new organizations, small organizations, or any group that is experiencing capacity challenges or other barriers to applying, is eligible to receive guidance on the application process. Please contact the Program Officers for assistance.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Trust staff to discuss applications *at least* two weeks prior to the deadline. The Trust cannot guarantee availability of site visits or project development assistance within two weeks of the deadline.

At a Glance

Program Summary:

The Urban Trees Grant Program will support urban tree planting projects that enhance livability in underserved communities.

Deadline:

Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 4:00 PM EST

Eligible Project Locations:

This program will fund projects in urban underserved communities across Maryland that meet key criteria outlined below:

<https://legiscan.com/MD/text/HB991/id/2416376/Maryland-2021-HB991-Chaptered.pdf>

Request Amounts:

There will be no maximum request; however, requests will generally be at the following scales:

- Up to \$15,000 for projects serving a single small neighborhood (on the order of 25 to 100 trees)
- Up to \$45,000 for projects serving multiple neighborhoods within a community (on the order of 75 to 300 trees)
- Up to \$200,000 for projects serving multiple communities (on the order of 300 to 1,000 trees)
- Up to \$1,000,000 for projects serving communities across an entire county-scale (on the order of 2,000 to 6,000 trees)

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions at:

<https://cbtrust.org/grants/urban-trees/>

Contact:

Lianna Gomori-Ruben, (410) 974-2941 ext. 112,
lgomori-ruben@cbtrust.org

Eligible Applicants

The Trust and our funding partners welcome requests from the following applicants:

- Nonprofit organizations
- Schools
- Community or neighborhood associations
- Service, youth, or civic groups
- Institutions of higher education
- Counties and municipalities
- Forest conservancy district boards

As per statute, grant applications from qualified organizations located in the underserved areas where the proposed tree planting projects will be implemented will be prioritized.

If your organization type is not listed above, contact the Trust to verify eligibility prior to submitting your application. All applicants, but particularly new applicants, are encouraged to contact the Trust for assistance.

Eligible Project Locations

Tree planting projects proposed as part of this program must occur in urban, underserved areas, defined in Section 8-1911 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland as:

- An urban area, as delineated by the United States Census Bureau AND
- An area that meets ONE or more of the following criteria:
 - **Historic disenfranchisement:** A neighborhood that was, at any point in time, redlined or graded as “hazardous” by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation; OR
 - **Unemployment:** A census tract with an average rate of unemployment for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available that exceeds the average rate of unemployment for the State; OR
 - **Household income:** A census tract with a median household income for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available that is equal to or less than 75% of the median household income for the state of Maryland during that period; OR
 - **Housing project:** A housing project as defined in Section 12-101 of the Housing and Community Development Article.

To determine if a community is eligible, view this online map produced by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources:

<https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4258d3e39f6a47fca146b854c0f01e31>.

Trees funded through this program must fall within the orange areas on the map or fall within proximity to a housing project. The map is updated regularly to reflect the most recent Census data. Your project must be in an eligible area in the year in which the application window opens or closes to be considered eligible for these funds. The applicant is ultimately responsible for site eligibility. If you have questions about your site’s eligibility, contact your Program Officers for assistance.

Eligible Project Types

Projects selected for funding must be fully or significantly focused on planting trees. Tree planting projects can occur on sites including, but not limited to:

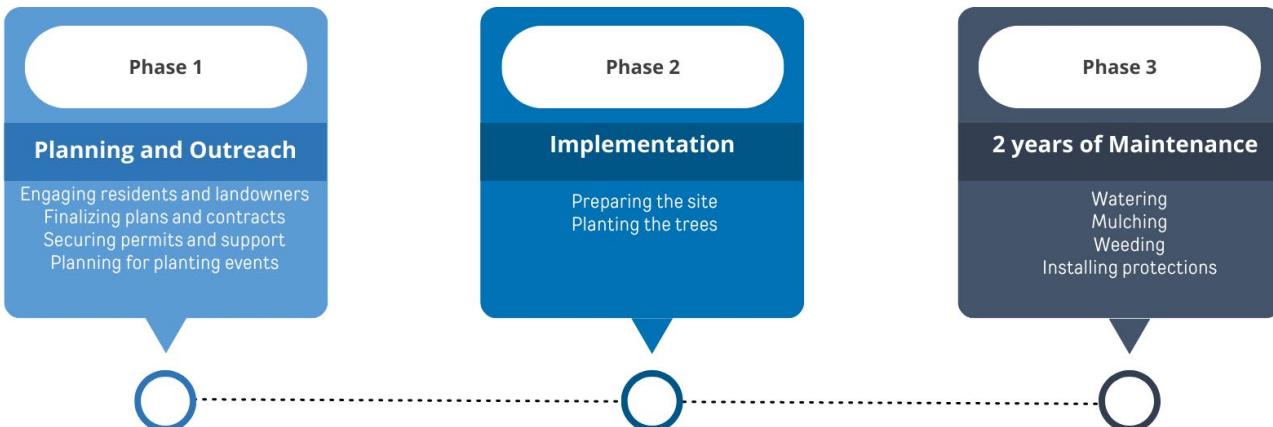
- Streets and rights of way
- Vacant lots
- Institutional grounds
- Open space

Some of these sites require permissions and present critical considerations related to infrastructure, utilities, regulations, and community buy-in. Ensuring that the relevant stakeholders are on board with the project and want the trees is important for a successful project. More information about planning and site selection can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Proposed trees to be planted **must not** be required as mitigation for new or re-development, regulatory offset, or for any other regulatory reason.

Project Timeline

Most projects will follow a three-year timeline. The planning and implementation phases of projects will typically be completed within 12 months upon receipt of the award followed by a required two years of maintenance. We recommend fall planting when possible to maximize survivorship. Applicants may request funds for multiple planting seasons that extend over multiple years. In those cases, if awarded, applicants may receive funds for the first year as part of an initial award, with future years' funding contingent upon availability.



Are you planning to plant street trees?

Contact the department of planning and/or public works in the jurisdiction in which the project is located (either for the city/town if the project is in an incorporated area within a county or the county if not).

Are you planning to plant trees in a right-of-way?

Contact the Maryland Forest Service about roadside tree planting via information found at:

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/programapps/newrtlaw.aspx>.

All projects must check for the presence of underground utilities.

Maryland Law Title XII requires that any project intended to perform excavation or digging must contact Miss Utility to ensure the project can proceed and to map out any specific areas to avoid.

For more information about Title XII and Miss Utility visit:
<https://www.missutility.net/>.

Phase I: Planning and Outreach

For projects to be successful, the people who live in, work in, own property around, and need access to the sites should welcome the trees and help ensure their long-term sustainability. Trees planted in areas in which they are not welcomed face higher risk of vandalism, lack of maintenance, and even removal. Leads of projects involving work on a small number of sites must have landowner support for the project prior to application, such that funding is not allocated to projects that risk not being able to be completed. Leads of projects involving work on multiple properties will ultimately need numerous permissions and approvals.

Coordinating with many stakeholders can be time-consuming and therefore costly. Project leads of these types of projects are encouraged to obtain general buy-in from community or neighborhood leaders prior to the application submission phase, but do not need to have all landowner permissions in hand at the time of application. Applicants working on these types of projects are allowed to ask for, within reason, costs to support the landowner/stakeholder buy-in phase. Proposals should explain what buy-ins have already been secured and provide an action plan to obtaining the additional support needed.

Projects that include plans for engaging individuals, organizations, or businesses located in underserved areas to implement and maintain tree planting projects in their communities will be prioritized (as per statute).

Phase II: Implementation (Tree Planting)

Because trees in the ground is the key metric of this grant program, all project proposals must include a tree planting implementation phase. Your project may include site preparation activities such as stump removal, soil amendment, installation of tree guards, and the removal of trash and invasives. More information about site preparation can be found in [Appendix B. All trees planted with funds from the Urban Trees Grant Program must be native](#). See [Appendix C](#) for more information about Native Tree Species Selection.

NEW THIS YEAR: FREE TREES FROM LESS COMMONLY AVAILABLE SPECIES

Increasing the diversity of tree species in the urban tree canopy leads to greater resilience against pests and disease, feeds a broader range of wildlife, and expands the provision of ecological benefits. Through partnerships with local nurseries, the Trust is providing over 7,000 1-inch caliper trees across 36 less commonly available species for fall 2026 and spring 2027 tree plantings.

The chart below lists the native tree species that are available for Urban Trees projects with the approximate quantity available and a brief description. For assistance to select species, see [Appendix C](#) or contact your Program Officers. To request trees for your project, complete the table in your Application Narrative Questions and Supporting Documents available in [Appendix F](#) and downloadable on the website.

Projects that request and receive free trees will support the Urban Trees Program's goals to fund cost-effective projects and to plant a diverse suite of native trees. Cost-effective budgets and diversified planting plans can result in more competitive grant applications, but requesting free trees is optional. Due to limited availability, projects that request free trees are not guaranteed to receive them, and project leads may be offered tree species other than those requested based on availability.

Table 1: Free 1-inch Caliper Trees From Less Commonly Available Species for Fall 2026 and Spring 2027 Planting

Scientific Name	Common Name	Approximate Quantity Available	Description
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sugar maple	1400	Large slow-growing tree with autumn colors for streets, parks, and lawns.
<i>Aesculus flava</i>	Yellow buckeye	50	Large slow-growing tree with rich autumn colors and showy flowers in the spring for streets, parks, and lawns.
<i>Alnus serrulata</i>	Hazel/smooth alder	330	Small fast-growing tree; supports the harvester butterfly larvae; great for stabilizing riverbanks.
<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Common/downy serviceberry	50	Small tree with moderate growth rate; edible berries; showy flowers and leaves.
<i>Betula lenta</i>	Sweet birch	200	Medium fast-growing tree; golden autumn colors; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; heat stress resistant.
<i>Carya glabra</i>	Pignut hickory*	160	Medium slow-growing tree; golden fall colors; excellent wildlife value; good for parks and lawns.
<i>Carya ovata</i>	Shagbark hickory*	140	Large slow-growing tree; golden fall colors; excellent wildlife value; intolerant of flooding.
<i>Cladrastis kentukea</i>	American yellowwood	53	Medium tree with moderate growth rate; large fragrant blooms; flowers for pollinators; nesting for birds.
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Alternate leaf/pagoda dogwood	50	Small tree; elegant branch structure, white spring flowers; berries attract birds; burgundy autumn leaves.
<i>Crataegus viridis</i>	Southern hawthorn	52	Small tree with moderate growth rate; key host plant for pollinators; good for streets, parks, and lawns.
<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	Kentucky coffee tree	250	Large tree with moderate growth rate; notable winter profile; used by nesting birds; drought tolerant.
<i>Halesia carolina</i>	Carolina silverbell	50	Small tree with moderate growth rate; white flowers in early spring; good for streets, parks and lawns.
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	American witch-hazel	400	Small tree with moderate growth rate; good for parks, lawns, buffers, and bioretention.
<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American holly	500	Slow-growing medium tree; red winter berries for birds and small animals; trunk cavities host endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	American hop-hornbeam	50	Slow-growing medium tree; catkins eaten by birds and small mammals; good future climate adaptability.
<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	Sourwood	50	Slow-growing medium tree; early brilliant red autumn foliage; midsummer nectar and pollen.
<i>Pinus taeda</i>	Loblolly pine	200	Fast-growing large evergreen; shelter and food for birds and mammals; good future climate adaptability.
<i>Pinus virginiana</i>	Virginia pine	200	Fast-growing medium evergreen; shelter and food for birds and mammals; dry sandy soils.

<i>Quercus falcata</i>	Southern red oak	250	Large tree; moderate growth rate; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; key host plant for pollinators.
<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	Shingle oak	250	Large tree; slow-growing; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; key host plant for pollinators; acorns for animals.
<i>Quercus laurifolia</i>	Laurel oak	50	Medium-sized fast-growing tree; good for parks and lawns; host plant for larvae of imperial moth and numerous butterflies.
<i>Quercus lyrata</i>	Overcup oak	50	Slow growing medium tree; key host plant for pollinators, acorns for animals; good for wetland restoration.
<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Bur oak	250	Large slow growing tree; key host plant for pollinators; acorns for animals.
<i>Quercus marilandica</i>	Blackjack oak	50	Large tree; moderate growth rate; expanded habitat available; hosts 400+ species of caterpillars; acorns for animals.
<i>Quercus michauxii</i>	Swamp chestnut oak	1250	Large slow-growing tree; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; key host plant for pollinators; acorns for animals.
<i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>	Chinquapin oak	250	Medium slow-growing tree; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; key host plant for pollinators; acorns for animals.
<i>Quercus nigra</i>	Water oak	103	Large fast-growing tree; drought, salt, and pollution tolerant; good for streets, parks and lawns, buffers and bioretention.
<i>Quercus pagoda</i>	Cherrybark oak	102	Large fast-growing tree; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; key host plant for pollinators; acorns for animals.
<i>Quercus prinoides</i>	Dwarf chinquapin oak	50	Small slow-growing tree; gold in fall, foliage shape; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; good for smaller yards.
<i>Quercus shumardii</i>	Shumard oak	50	Medium slow-growing tree; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; key host plant for pollinators; acorns for animals.
<i>Quercus stellata</i>	Post oak	50	Large slow-growing tree; hosts 400+ caterpillar species; acorns for animals; expanded habitat available.
<i>Rhus copallina</i>	Winged sumac	50	Small fast-growing tree; brilliant autumn colors; fruit for birds; drought, air pollution, salt tolerant.
<i>Rhus glabra</i>	Smooth sumac	200	Small fast-growing tree; brilliant autumn colors; fruit for birds; drought, air pollution, salt tolerant.
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Northern white cedar/arborvitae	200	Medium sized evergreen; moderate growth rate; low maintenance; tolerates clay soil and juglone.
<i>Tilia americana</i>	American linden/basswood	1300	Large tree with a moderate growth rate; important food source for bees; tolerates drier soils.
<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	Blackhaw viburnum	700	Small tree with moderate growth rate; fruit for birds; host plant to specialist moths/butterflies.

*Available for Spring 2027 planting only.

Phase III: Maintenance

Because tree planting projects that are not maintained, especially urban tree planting projects, are at risk of not persisting into the future, all requests to the Urban Trees Grant Program must include a **written maintenance plan** that describes at least two years of maintenance by the project leads. If project leads are doing work on land owned by someone else, permission and support for the maintenance phase by the landowner must be demonstrated in the proposal. If you do not have the capacity to provide maintenance for two years, you may either work with a partner who will take on the two-year post-planting maintenance, or find a partner to submit the proposal and take the lead on the project with you as a partner. Contact your Program Officers for assistance to find those partners. More information about the required elements for the two-year maintenance plan are in [Appendix D](#).

Eligible Project Expenses

Proposals to the Urban Tree Grant Program may request costs from two categories of funding detailed below.

Costs Associated Directly with Tree Planting Activities

Funds in this category may be used for supplies, site preparation, personnel costs, and other expenses and materials related to planning, implementing, and maintaining tree planting projects in underserved areas (as per statute), and elements of all three of those stages (planning, implementing, and maintaining) must be included in each project proposal. Specific eligible expenses in this category include those in the categories of project readiness (outreach and engagement activities to identify sites and engage residents/landowners); site readiness (tree pit creation, stump removal, etc.); tree planting (costs of trees, labor to plant the trees, tree shelters, mulch, and other materials); and tree maintenance. Funds in this category cannot be used for food or other plant material. If you plan to sub-contract work (e.g., hire an entity to plant or water the trees), the Trust recommends that you solicit estimates from at least three consultants or contractors. There is no maximum request for funds in this category. Funds in this category are provided by the State of Maryland and governed by statute.

Funding Availability: The amount of funding available for the Urban Trees Grant Program will be determined by the State of Maryland's Fiscal Year 2027 budgeting process.

Cost Per Tree

To attempt to accomplish the ultimate goal of planting 500,000 trees in underserved urban areas within nine years, we ask that applicants limit their costs wherever possible (though request enough for a successful implementation project).

Generally, street tree project requests should result in a budget averaging \$600 or less per tree (especially if tree pits need to be created or expanded), though if higher costs are required, they can be justified in the proposal. Other types of tree projects may be closer to \$100 per tree if less site preparation is required and smaller trees can be used.

The Trust at present is aiming for an overarching goal of an average of \$180 per tree in the overall program. However, individual applicants do not need to aim for that goal if their sites or projects do not allow.

Applicants are encouraged to include requests for free trees to reduce project costs and diversify planting plans. See [Phase II: Implementation \(Tree Planting\)](#) for details about available species.

While one way to reduce cost per tree would be through matching resources, because the Trust aims to engage underserved communities for which providing matching funds could be a barrier, the program will not be requiring match. That said, applicants are encouraged to consider other resources that can bear some of the costs of their project. For example, several programs exist that will provide trees at reduced or no cost, depending on type of applicant and geographical location. Many counties offer discounted trees to certain landowner types. The Maryland Forest Service offers free tree planting on private land of one acre or more: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/I-want-to-plant-trees-in-my-county.aspx> and their Tree-Mendous Maryland program offers discounts for native trees that are to be planted on certain types of property. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/treemendous/default.aspx>

Costs Associated with Community Needs that Indirectly Support Greening Activities

Applicants pursuing tree planting projects through this grant program may request a limited amount of funds for expenses not directly related to tree planting activities as listed above but for activities related to community needs associated with the spaces that cannot be supported by State funds. A wide range of activities may fall into this category. Examples include:

- Costs needed to convene people and groups that cannot be covered by State funds such as food;
- Community revitalization elements to restore open spaces, install benches, and incorporate other plant material;
- Costs associated with community meetings around public safety; and
- Youth education needs associated with the physical space identified for tree planting.

Communities will have unique needs and aspirations, so requests should be tailored accordingly.

The maximum request for funds in this category is \$2,000. BGE, an Exelon company, has committed funding to cover these costs. You can request these funds in your Application Narrative Questions and Supporting Documents ([Appendix F](#)), and by including your request as a line item(s) on your application budget in the Financial Management Spreadsheet.

How to Apply

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. To apply for an award, go to <https://cbtrust.org/grants/urban-trees/> and click on “Start a New Application” to begin a new application. This will open a new window asking you to log in or create an account on our online system. If you have applied in the past, use your existing username and password (if you have forgotten either of these use the ‘forgot password’ feature). If you have not used our online system before, click on “New Applicant” and follow the instructions.

By submitting an application to this program, applicants acknowledge that: 1) they are compliant with federal employment and non-discrimination laws and 2) they have not been debarred, convicted, charged or had a civil judgment rendered against them for fraud or related offense by any government agency (federal, state or local) or been terminated for cause or default by any government agency (federal, state, or local). In addition, all final products will be provided to the funding partners for use and distribution at the sole discretion of the funding partners.

Deadline

Applicants must submit applications in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System** by **4:00 PM EST on March 5, 2026**. Application details can be found in [Appendices E and F](#). Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close automatically and promptly at 4:00 PM EST. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit at least a few days prior to the deadline given the potential for high website traffic on the due date. The Trust cannot guarantee the availability of technical assistance for our online system on the deadline date.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by reviewers to score your proposal:

Scoring Criteria	Description and Scoring Guidance	Scoring
Completeness of Application		
Application Components	Are all required application components included? 1. Narrative 2. Budget 3. Supporting documentation (Planting plan, letters of landowner permissions and/or partner commitments, 2-year maintenance plan)	Scale of 1 to 5
Project Plan and Likelihood of Success		
Phase I: Outreach	Does the project include plans for engaging individuals, organizations, or businesses located in underserved areas to implement and maintain tree planting projects in their communities?	Scale of 1 to 10
	Are the relevant stakeholders on board with the project (neighbors, landowner, rights of way owners, etc.)? Has the applicant obtained landowner permission, if necessary?	Scale of 1 to 10
Phase II: Implementation (Tree Planting)	Is the project planting plan sound - species, locations, timeline? Does the project planting plan include a diverse suite of native species appropriate for the site?	Scale of 1 to 15
Phase III: Maintenance	Has the applicant proposed a relevant and robust 2-year maintenance plan that incorporates the maintenance requirements? What is the likelihood that the trees survive and thrive after the 2-year maintenance plan proposed by the applicant? Will the project persist and not be threatened by various types of disturbance (e.g., flooding, storms, insect outbreaks, trampling and vandalism)?	Scale of 1 to 15
Budget		
Cost-Effectiveness	Is the budget cost-effective?	Scale of 1 to 10

	<p>Costs will be compared to the standard of \$100-\$600 per tree planted, which includes the trees themselves, supplies, labor, two years of maintenance costs, and tree pit work when necessary.</p> <p>Projects are encouraged but not required to include requests for free trees to reduce their project costs and increase their cost-effectiveness (see Phase II: Implementation (Tree Planting) for more information about the available free trees). Due to limited availability of trees, all project budgets should include costs for tree procurement, and provide an explanation in the application narrative as to how costs would be reduced if the project is selected to receive free trees.</p>	
	<p>Is the budget appropriate and justified in the application?</p> <p>Eligible expenses include supplies, site preparation, personnel costs, and other expenses and materials related to planning, implementing, and maintaining tree planting projects in underserved areas.</p>	Scale of 1 to 10
Geographic Location (to be completed by Trust staff using the urban, underserved eligibility mapping tool)		
Urban and underserved	<p>Historic disenfranchisement: A neighborhood that was, at any point in time, redlined or graded as “hazardous” by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation.</p> <p>Unemployment: A census tract with an average rate of unemployment for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available that exceeds the average rate of unemployment for the State.</p> <p>Household income: A census tract with a median household income for the most recent 24-month period for which data are available that is equal to or less than 75% of the median household income for the state of Maryland during that period.</p> <p>Housing project: A housing project as defined in Section 12-101 of the Housing and Community Development Article.</p> <p>Applicant is located within the area where the tree planting project(s) will be implemented.</p>	0 or 5
	Total Score Possible	100

What Happens Next

Application Review Process

Each application is reviewed by a Technical Review Committee (TRC) composed of individuals who are experts in the fields supported by this RFP and represent communities served by projects funded by this RFP. The TRC ranks and scores all applications based on the criteria listed in the “Evaluation Criteria” section above, then meets to discuss the application merits. The TRC then recommends a suite of applications to the Trust’s Board of Trustees.

The funding partners reserve the right to fund projects and budget items that advance their missions and meet specific funding priorities and criteria.

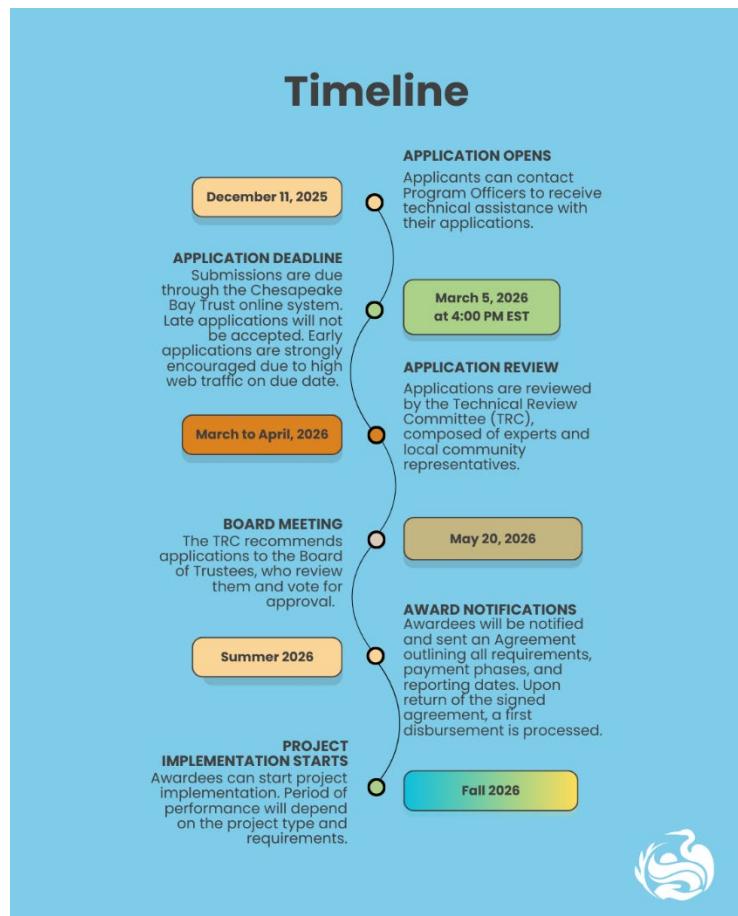
Awards and Notifications

The FY27 Urban Trees Grant Program awards will be announced by August 2026.

All applicants will receive a letter stating the funding partnership's decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the Trust will send an award agreement with award conditions and due dates of status, progress, and final reports. The Trust will mail the first award payment to the requesting organization following: satisfaction of any phase one payment award contingencies, including upload of the signed award agreement. Ten percent of the total award will be held until the final report is submitted and approved. In cases where the awardee fails to submit a status report, progress report, final report, or other requirement by the due date, the Trust reserves the right to terminate the award agreement and require a refund of funds already transferred to the awardee.

When the project is complete, awardees are required to complete final reports that may include but are not limited to submission of all receipts for supplies, invoices for subcontractors/contractors, and copies of timesheets for personnel time used (timesheets must include date, name, time worked per day, and coding to tie the time worked to the award).

All financial back-up documentation will be grouped and numbered to correspond to the budget line item reported as spent. Organizations with outstanding final, progress, or status reports, or pending refunds, may be declined or if awarded funding will be required to submit all outstanding items prior to receiving additional award funds.



Appendix A: Planting Site Selection

To ensure that the tree plantings will be successful in the short and long-term, project leads must take precautions and involve the relevant stakeholders in the planning process. The following sections provide examples of important considerations for planning different types of urban tree planting projects.

1. Streets and Rights of Way



- a) Do any local governments or utilities have rights of way, allowing them access and sometimes putting responsibility for trees on those entities? If so, permission, possibly permits, and support must be obtained from those entities.
- b) Does your selected planting site(s) have underground utilities such as cable, water & sewer, gas lines, etc.? Proposals must address in-ground precautions taken.
- c) Are there overhead powerlines that put constraints on the size of trees that should be planted underneath? If so, choose the proper tree species (see Appendix C: Native Tree Species Selection).
- d) Do neighbors (residents, businesses, landowners) immediately adjacent want the trees? Proposals must address current level of support for the project and any efforts to increase it. Requests for personnel costs for this outreach work are allowed.
- e) Is there enough permeable space in the form of a tree pit in a sidewalk, for example, to plant the trees without risking tree mortality and/or buckling sidewalks with growing roots? Will tree pits need to be created or expanded, and will stumps need to be removed? Proposals must address the site conditions, and any work needed to prepare the site(s) for tree(s).

2. Vacant Lots

Projects in which tree planting is the focus for greening a vacant lot are eligible for this grant program. Costs for non-tree elements of vacant lot projects can be requested, but they should be used and framed as a way to enable tree planting at those sites and a relatively small portion of the total budget request. Project leads proposing vacant lot tree planting proposals must apply with permission in writing from the entity owning the vacant lot. For a list of vacant lot owners in Baltimore visit: <https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/vacant-property-resources-and-information-page>

Example Vacant Lot - Before and After



3. Institutional Grounds

A way to plant trees at scale and at lower cost per tree is to plant many trees at once on one property. Schools, faith-based institutions, health institutions, businesses, and other institutions can offer that opportunity.

Project leads seeking to green institutional grounds must include permission and support from the landowner for both the installation of trees and the maintenance afterwards.

4. Open Space

Areas that are currently “open space” can provide an opportunity to increase tree canopy in urban areas.

Project leads seeking to plant in these areas must consider how the land is currently being used and by whom, and who might be affected if the area changes from open space to a treed area. Open space can also have positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals in communities, so consider:

- a) Is the open space a designated play area for the youth and families in the community?
- b) Do residents, businesses, landowners utilize the open space for social events (e.g., sports, weddings, festivals)?

Proposals must address tradeoffs between tree plantings in the proposed space and existing land use.

Appendix B: Site Preparation

The following activities and their associated costs are eligible expenses to prepare sites for tree planting:

- **Stump removal:** Sometimes a tree pit already exists with a dead tree or stump that must be removed. Costs can be requested for such activities, but the applicant must address why the previous tree did not survive, and why the new tree will.
- **Soil amendment:** Amending soil for a newly planted tree is critical for survivorship in urban areas. Ensure that the soil at your planting site is thoroughly loosened, free and clear of stumps, debris, rocks, and competing vegetation. Aerate the soil to allow air and water to move freely. Consider adding additional nutrients such as soil conditioner and other organic matter to improve root and tree growth. If the soil is compacted with sand and clay, it may be unusable. If this is the case, consider replacing the planting site with fresh soil. When you are ready to plant, dig the hole three times wider than the root ball and mix amendments with the excavated soil. Dig the hole to the exact height of the root ball. If the hole is dug deeper, the tree will settle with the soil resulting in decreasing tree health.
- **Installation of tree guards:** In high activity areas, creating a barrier around your planting site may help protect your tree and its roots from animals, foot traffic, car and bicycle damage.
- **Removal of trash and invasives** to clear the area for planting.

Appendix C: Native Tree Species Selection

The University of Maryland Extension Burghardt Lab's Urban Tree Suitability List includes native tree species that do well when planted in urban areas in the Maryland region and provides information on tree characteristics, growing conditions, and suitable landscapes for planting. <https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/UMDExtension-MDUrbanTreeSuitabilityList-forplanters-forwebsite-v4-updated2025-9.xlsx>.

The Maryland State Archives Tree List features a wide range of native trees including tree profiles and colorful images: <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/trees.html>

Several factors are important to consider as you choose your native tree species. You may choose to do the research and address these factors yourself or contact an arborist or other expert to talk these issues through. Contact the Trust for assistance finding a technical expert to discuss.

Purposes of the Project

- Consider the main goals of your project. Is the purpose of your project to provide shade for buildings, parks, or other infrastructure? If so, choose larger trees or trees with dense canopies (e.g., Hackberry). Is the purpose of your project to produce food? If so, choose native fruit or nut trees (e.g., Pawpaw, Serviceberry, or American Chestnut). Is the purpose of your project to beautify a community? (Choose trees that meet your aesthetic). You may want to use the Chesapeake Bay Native Plant Center to help you choose which native trees work best for your site(s): <http://www.nativeplantcenter.net/>. Additionally, use the Site Constraints and Site Preparation considerations below to decide what native trees may work best for your sites(s).

Site Constraints

Below are common constraints that could affect what trees would be most appropriate for your project:

- **Power lines:** If your site has overhead power lines, you are encouraged to plant trees that will remain below a certain height. Utility companies such as BGE, Pepco, Delmarva Power, etc. provide guidance to help choose tree species for sites with immediate overhead power lines. Information can be found at: <https://www.bge.com/SafetyCommunity/Safety/Pages/PlantingTrees.aspx>
- **Salt tolerance:** Consider tree susceptibility to salt damage from de-icing streets and sidewalks during the winter. Adverse soil changes from road and sidewalk salts are unfavorable to trees, so you may want to choose trees that are salt tolerant.
- **Parking:** Many street tree projects are in areas with street parking. You will want to choose trees that have minimal bark, seed, sap, twig, and fruit litter.
- **Tree pits:** Small tree pits do not work for trees that will grow to be large. If your tree pit is 32 square feet or smaller, you will only be able to use smaller species of trees. In some cases, tree pits can be expanded to accommodate larger tree species. Contact your local government department of public works or roads office to learn more about how to enlarge existing tree pits.
- **Deer densities/access:** If you are planting near forest fragments or in parks, deer rubbing on young trunks and deer browse can quickly damage a planting. Note that choosing species that are deer resistant (i.e., unpalatable) will lower the chance of “browse” but not “rubbing.” Even resistant species

will likely need trunk protection for the first two years of planting if deer are present. For more information visit: https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/pages/hunt_trap/ddmtexclude.aspx

Aesthetics

The closer new trees align to expectations of the community, the more likely the community will invest in their care and advocate for their sustainability. For example, think about whether you want a dense canopy that will lead to lots of shade and will thus preclude understory plant growth (e.g., silver maple). Alternatively, you may choose species that provide more filtered light which will allow plant growth (e.g., honey locusts). Consider whether you want larger canopy species (e.g., Northern red oak) or smaller species (e.g., Eastern redbud). Consider whether you want trees that will grow quickly to provide benefits as soon as possible, or if you want species that might live longer, but would take longer to provide benefits. Consider whether a tiered planting (canopy, sub-canopy, and understory planting) or a guild planting (a community of plants that grow and support each other by recycling nutrients back into the soil) could be appropriate for your site(s). If the purpose of your project is to reduce stormwater or particulate pollution, choose a diversity of native trees that maximize these services. Consider as many aspects as possible of your desired final product, and make sure to choose species that are most likely to accomplish your vision.

Maintenance Needs and Care

Different species of trees often require different degrees or types of maintenance. Consider factors about each of your potential tree species that drive different maintenance needs. For example, while all trees drop leaves, not all tree species drop leaves in the same way. Some drop significant amounts in the fall and therefore need clean-up scheduled to avoid clogging nearby storm drains. Other species such as evergreens do not drop as many leaves in fall. Yet others drop leaves in the fall, but the characteristics of the leaves are such that less intensive leaf removal is necessary.

Obtaining your Trees

Applicants can find a list of nurseries and landscape service providers by county on the following page: <https://cbtrust.org/grants/urban-trees/> (Resources for Applicants). Applicants are not required to use the provided resources, and not all these nurseries will have sufficient supply to support the Urban Trees Grant Program. Please contact your local plant nursery to inquire about native trees and stock availability. The Maryland Forest Service offers free tree planting on private land of one acre or more: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/I-want-to-plant-trees-in-my-county.aspx> and their Tree-Mendous Maryland program also offers native trees for certain types of property: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/treemendous/default.aspx>.

Appendix D: Maintenance Requirements

Your two-year maintenance plan should include and address, at a minimum, all the following elements:

- **Watering:** At least 20 gallons of water should be applied to each tree every two weeks for the first growing season (e.g., from May 1- Oct 31st). Periods of extreme drought may require additional watering. After the second year, water can be reduced to as needed.
- **Mulching:** Mulching allows trees to retain water and mitigate soil erosion, reduce climbing invasives and other unwanted weeds, and protect tree roots from sudden temperature changes. Proper mulching is key to protecting and promoting healthy root growth. Too much mulch can have the opposite effect and cause the tree to decline. To learn more about how to mulch and best practices visit: <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/mulching-trees-and-shrubs>
- **Pruning:** For young trees it will be necessary at the time of planting to remove girdling roots from the rootball, dead branches, and branches that are rubbing. These activities will shape the tree for the space and promote healthy growth. After the initial planting additional pruning is likely not needed for 2-3 years until the tree is vigorously growing again. To learn more about how to prune visit: <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/pruning-trees>
- **Pest and disease:** Monitor your trees for leaf spots, fungi, insects, and canopy bare spots. If you have concerns about your trees' health, you can send a photo to a Maryland certified professional Horticulturists at the University of Maryland Extension at: <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environment-natural-resources/program-areas/home-and-garden-information-center/ask-extension>. A horticulturist will provide information on steps needed to ensure your tree thrives.
- **Climbing invasives:** For any project that involves planting more than 50 trees on one site, the proposed maintenance plan must address climbing invasives. We recommend manual treatment at least three times per year.
- **Leaf removal:** Ensure that an appropriate leaf removal strategy, based on the type of tree, is built into your plan.
- **Care/mowing around the tree:** One of the biggest threats to new trees is not necessarily poor care of the tree itself, but incompatible maintenance of areas around the tree. For example, weed whacking activities that make contact with the trunk can kill a new tree. Make sure that the tree maintenance plan is integrated with the general site maintenance activities.

Appendix E: Online Application Form

You will be asked to provide the following information on the online application form. Refer to the online application for details.

Eligibility Quiz: This three-question quiz is meant to assist you in determining if your project meets the requirements of this award program and that your staff/organizational structure best supports a successful application.

Applicant Information Tab: Provide the organization's name, mailing address, phone number, organization type, mission, EIN number. If a MBE/WBE add certification number and state(s). Provide the Executive Officer and Project Leader's name, title, address, phone, and email address.

- Both an Executive Officer and a Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified for all applications.
- The Executive Officer and Project Leader must both be able to make decisions on behalf of the organization either as a board member, an employee, or other approved position recognized by the organization but not a contractor of the application.
- To avoid conflict of interest issues, individuals associated with for-profit entities to be engaged in the project cannot serve in either role.

Project Information Tab: Provide a project title; project abstract; the watershed, county, and legislative district in which the project is located; and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the project location.

Timeline Tab: Add the project start and end date. Provide a project timeline that includes major tasks and their associated start and end dates.

Deliverables Tab: Provide estimated metrics for your proposed project such as project participants and outreach and restoration outcomes. Disregard deliverables that do not apply to your project.

Volunteers Tab: Provide a description of volunteer activities, the number of volunteers, and total number of volunteer hours.

Project Partnerships: Provide a list of project partner organizations or contractors, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project.

Applicants are encouraged to upload a letter of commitment for the project from each partner describing in detail the partner's role or contribution to the project. Applications including strong letter(s) of commitment often receive higher scores. If not submitted with the application, letter(s) of commitment may be required prior to the

Watch our video on how to apply and how to submit an application using our online system at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/>.

Definitions

The Executive Officer is the individual that oversees the organization (e.g., Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer, Mayor, President or Vice President, Principal (for schools), etc.) and has the authority to sign/execute award agreements on behalf of the organization. The Executive Officer information is tied directly to all the organization's applications and should not vary from application to application. If the Executive Officer could be listed as the Project Leader in a future proposal, we recommend listing a Board Member or other higher-ranking position of the organization as the Executive Officer in order to reduce the variation in the Executive Officer across applications.

The Program Leader will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project. The email address entered here **MUST** be the same as the email address you used to log in to the online system. The Project Leader is the primary point of contact for the application, and the email address used to submit the application via the online system must be that of the Project Leader. Applications in which the email address associated with the Project Leader in the applicant information tab of the online opportunity does not match the email address used to submit the application will not be considered for funding. The Trust cannot conduct any official correspondence with contractors or other project partners. If at any time the Project Leader cannot continue in the position, the organization must contact the Trust and assign a new qualified Project Leader.

release of any awarded funding. To better understand the Trust's definition of and policy on letter(s) of commitment, visit our Forms and Policies webpage: <https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/>.

Narrative & Supporting Documents Tab: The required narrative questions and supporting documents can be found in [Appendix F](#) and are downloadable on the website. Complete all questions and upload the completed document as a Microsoft Word or PDF file.

Budget Tab:

1. **Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Upload** - You will be asked to upload your budget using the “Application Budget” worksheet of the Chesapeake Bay Trust’s **Financial Management Spreadsheet** (FMS), an excel file template. The template can be found by visiting <https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/> where you can watch a video with instructions on how to complete the FMS.
2. **Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Information** - This online application component will ask you to enter budget category and request totals. These totals will be automatically calculated in the FMS Application Budget, so you will only need to copy and paste the values from the FMS to the Online Application.
3. **Additional Budget Justification** - This online application component will ask you to provide a descriptive budget narrative to justify and explain costs. If the success of the work is contingent upon award of other funds, make this clear in your budget justification section.

Terms and Conditions Tab: Agree to the specified terms and conditions for the program for which you are applying.

Demographics Tab and Survey Tab (optional): Provide voluntary demographic information. Provide information about your organization’s current diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) efforts and future goals. Additionally, provide voluntary feedback on the application process.

Appendix F: Application Narrative Questions and Supporting Documents

You will be asked to upload an MS Word or PDF file (7-page limit, excluding material such as letters of permission and/or commitment, planting plans, and maintenance plans) addressing the following questions. Include any relevant information as described in the sections above that supports your project.

To ensure that you address all questions, please copy and paste the questions and use them as an outline for your narrative or download the template on the website. Additional file attachments can be uploaded, not to exceed a total of four file attachments per application. Use the additional “Upload” option in the online grant system.

1) **(Required) Detailed Project Description**

Provide a detailed description of your project, including the goals, your tree planting sites, how your sites were selected, who owns the property(ies), the degree of community/landowner buy-in, how you chose the species in your planting plan, and other pertinent information.

Describe the three project phases (what specifically will be done and who will do it):

- a) Phase I: Planning and outreach you have undertaken and/or still need to undertake
- b) Phase II: Implementation (Tree Planting)
 - Provide a rationale for species selection and planting timeline. If you are not planning to plant in the fall, please justify and explain why your selected planting season will lead to acceptable survivorship.
- c) Phase III: Maintenance
 - Short-term (2-years post-planting within the award period). The total cost of maintenance activities (e.g., maintenance personnel, maintenance contractor, maintenance supplies) for both growing seasons requested by the applicant must be included in the budget request and must be completed within the project period.
 - Long-term (years 3-10 post-planting after the award period).

2) **Community Context and Demographic Information**

Describe the communities (neighbors, residents, businesses, etc.) who will benefit from this project and any plans for engaging individuals, organizations, or businesses located in underserved areas to implement and maintain tree planting projects in their communities.

- (a) **(Required)** What community groups (e.g., neighboring faith-based organizations or civic associations) will be engaged in this project?
- (b) **(Required)** Provide your organization’s experience working within the specific communities you plan to engage. If you have not had significant experience within your prioritized demographic, explain how you intend to address this issue; the Trust encourages applicants to establish partnerships with local organizations that may have greater cultural competencies within the targeted demographic(s).
- (c) **(Optional)** Does this project fit into an already existing community improvement plan, urban tree canopy plan, or urban green infrastructure plan?

3) **Previous Experience:**

Describe your organization's experience in completing similar projects. You may, but are not required to, include recent photos of other tree-planting projects completed by your organization to demonstrate experience in tree-planting and maintenance.

4) (Optional) Request for free trees from less commonly available species:

- (a) What are your estimated planting dates (e.g., October 15, 2026 and April 24, 2027)?
- (b) What is your capacity to store, care for, and transport the trees if the trees are delivered prior to your planting dates? Please request assistance as needed and the Trust will do our best to coordinate.
- (c) Please complete your application budget to include costs for tree procurement. How would your budget change if you are selected to receive free trees? Projects that are selected for free trees will receive adjusted award amounts.
- (d) Please complete the table below to request free trees from less commonly available species for your project. Due to limited availability, projects that request free trees are not guaranteed to receive them, and project leads may be offered tree species other than those requested based on availability.

Table 2: Request for Free Trees from Less Commonly Available Species			
Scientific name	Common name	Approximate Quantity Available	Quantity Requested
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sugar maple	1400	
<i>Aesculus flava</i>	Yellow buckeye	50	
<i>Alnus serrulata</i>	Hazel/smooth alder	330	
<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	Common/downy serviceberry	50	
<i>Betula lenta</i>	Sweet birch	200	
<i>Carya glabra</i> - <i>Carya spp</i>	Pignut hickory*	160	
<i>Carya ovata</i> - <i>Carya spp</i>	Shagbark hickory*	140	
<i>Cladrastis kentukea</i>	American yellowwood	53	
<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Alternate leaf/pagoda dogwood	50	
<i>Crataegus viridis</i>	Southern hawthorn	52	
<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	Kentucky coffee tree	250	
<i>Halesia carolina</i>	Carolina silverbell	50	
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	American witch-hazel	400	
<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American holly	500	
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	American hop-hornbeam	50	
<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	Sourwood	50	
<i>Pinus taeda</i>	Loblolly pine	200	
<i>Pinus virginiana</i>	Virginia pine	200	
<i>Quercus falcata</i>	Southern red oak	250	
<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	Shingle oak	250	
<i>Quercus laurifolia</i>	Laurel oak	50	

<i>Quercus lyrata</i>	Overcup oak	50	
<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Bur oak	250	
<i>Quercus marilandica</i>	Blackjack oak	50	
<i>Quercus michauxii</i>	Swamp chestnut oak	1250	
<i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>	Chinquapin oak	250	
<i>Quercus nigra</i>	Water oak	103	
<i>Quercus pagoda</i>	Cherrybark oak	102	
<i>Quercus prinoides</i>	Dwarf chinquapin oak	50	
<i>Quercus shumardii</i>	Shumard oak	50	
<i>Quercus stellata</i>	Post oak	50	
<i>Rhus copallina</i>	Winged sumac	50	
<i>Rhus glabra</i>	Smooth sumac	200	
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Northern white cedar/arborvitae	200	
<i>Tilia americana</i>	American linden/basswood	1300	
<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	Blackhaw viburnum	700	
Total Requested			

*Available only for spring 2027 planting.

4) (optional) Request for costs that support community greening (up to \$2,000)

Are you requesting funds to support community greening for your project? Funds in this category can be used to support expenses that are not directly related to tree planting but are activities related to the community needs associated with the spaces that cannot be supported by State funds (see [Costs Associated with Community Needs that Indirectly Support Greening Activities](#)). Please include your request as a line item on your application budget in the Financial Management Spreadsheet as well (e.g., Community costs: Food for planting events).

(Required only if costs for consultant(s)/ contractor(s) are requested) Contractor Scope of Work and Qualifications

Will contractors/consultants be used in this project? If yes, include a detailed scope of work with specific tasks and hours, describe how you have or will identify that contractor/consultant(s), and if multiple bids or estimates will be obtained or have been obtained. Applicants are encouraged to have either already obtained cost estimates or quotes from at least three service providers prior to completing the application. Describe the qualifications of the contractor(s)/consultant(s).

Supporting Documents

1. Planting plan: On a vicinity map with address, indicate the location, species, sizes, area, and spacing for the trees.
2. Letter(s) of landowner permission and/or partner commitments: For projects planned on property(ies) other than those owned by the applicant, a letter stating landowner permission; proof of permission to plant the

trees by the landowner(s) except for street tree/neighborhood planting projects with multiple landowners/residents/stakeholders in which an engagement/outreach phase is needed. If working with local partners on elements of the project, include letters of commitment detailing their roles.

3. Maintenance plan signed by the entity responsible for maintenance and the landowner, if different. The maintenance plan must cover short-term (first growing season and year 2, which must be included in the budget request and will be completed within the project period) and long-term (years 3-10, post-award period). See p. 15 above for specific elements that must be included in the maintenance plan.