

Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Grants



Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture

Application Deadline:

May 2, 2008

**Urban and Community Forestry Program
Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture
#1 Estate Lower Love
Kingshill, VI 00850
Telephone: (340) 778-0997 Or 0998 Ext. 233
Fax: (340) 778-7977**

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Introduction

The Virgin Islands Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program is designed to encourage citizen involvement in creating and supporting long-term and sustained Urban and community Forestry Programs throughout the Territory. Through the competitive Challenge Cost-share Grant Program, the U&CF Program builds local capacity for Urban and Community Forestry activities. The U&CF Program seeks proposals for project funding from local government, non-profit organizations, civic and/or educational organizations, including but not limited to schools, homeowners' associations, service clubs, and environmental organizations. Organizations with projects in line with the listed priorities for this program (see page 4) are strongly encouraged to apply.

Background

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

Program Goal

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

OVERVIEW

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

Available Funding: The recommended range of funding for proposals is between \$1,000 and \$20,000. Please note: the total amount of funds available changes on an annual basis, as will the amounts awarded to individual projects. A 50% match is mandatory for U&CF funds requested. That is, if the total project cost is \$5,000, a request for fund to the U&CF can only be \$2,500 with a match from your organization of \$2,500 in cash or kind.

Ineligible Proposals: Funding for any grant cycle is intended for programs, projects, or activities not currently being funded and cannot be used to substitute for existing funds. Also, keep in mind that U&CF grants are NOT intended solely for beautification and planting projects.

Matching Fund Requirements: All federally granted funds must be matched at least 50% (50/50) with non-federal source funds. This match may include in-kind donations, volunteer assistance, and private and public (non-federal) monetary contributions. All matching funds must be specifically related to the proposed projects(s). The source of the matching funds must be identified and grantees must comply with all applicable federal regulations. In addition, federal dollars generally cannot be used to pay for meals or refreshments, unless the meals or refreshments are served during a working meeting (see OMB Circular A-122 for exact definitions).

Cash purchases are direct, out-of-pocket expenditures for eligible project activities that are supported by paid invoices, cancelled checks, signed receipts, or official payroll records.

In-kind contributions include on-hand supplies, third party donations of supplies and equipment, the value of time (including fringe benefits), professional services, and time spent by employees or volunteers on eligible project activities. Volunteer time/hourly rates should be consistent with established local and national standards. Assistance provided by federal employees cannot be claimed as part of the match.

Administration: Grant proposals will be reviewed by natural resource professionals from each island who will make recommendations to the Urban and Community Forestry Council. The Council and the State Forester (Commissioner of Agriculture) will decide which projects receive funding based upon these recommendations.

Grant Period: Grantees will be given one year to complete their projects. The grant period begins when award letters are issued. Grantees will be required to sign a contract with the VI Department of Agriculture once awards have been made. It is possible to extend the contract period under certain circumstances. If the project cannot be completed in the time frame allotted, grantees are required to inform the U&CF Coordinator of the circumstances at least 30 days before the project end date to request an extension.

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

Recognizing Funding Sources: All printed materials, signs, and other products resulting from this grant must recognize the source of funding. The following statement must be displayed on any written materials produced from this grant: *The Urban and Community Forestry Program of the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service, International Institute of Tropical Forestry provided funding for this project.*

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

PROGRAM PRIORITIES:

- Information, communication, and the dissemination of technological knowledge are keys to strengthening urban forestry programs and empowering communities and urban forestry professionals.
- As part of a long-term plan for healthy urban and community forestry projects in the Virgin Islands, it is important to assess the values, perceptions, and needs of our growing multicultural population with respect to urban and community forestry. The development of multi-lingual educational materials will be a key to reaching these populations with an urban and community forestry message.
- Taking a holistic view of urban and community forestry, it is clear that both people and natural systems are part of every urban forest. A holistic view reveals a continuum of urban and community forestry related issues and concerns from inner city greening to wildfire and pest programs in rural interface areas. And finally, a holistic view of urban and community forestry shows that a concern for urban trees cannot be entirely separated from concerns about urban air quality, storm water runoff, wildlife and fish habitat, and other related ecosystem concerns.
- Educating people about the importance of urban and community forests or marketing the value of urban and community forestry projects is a necessary part of a long-term strategy to develop and preserve healthy urban and community forests.
- Tools and techniques are needed for restoring ecosystems to a more natural state after they have been damaged by construction, storms, and invasive species. Restoring (urban) ecosystems to a more natural state includes planning for species diversity in both plants and wildlife, and using indigenous species where appropriate. Using these same tools and techniques on new projects can prevent many problems in the future.
- Understanding and practicing good urban forestry can benefit many small communities that are struggling to retain businesses or bring businesses back to a newly revitalized downtown area. Healthy urban forests give communities a more livable image and can therefore assist in improving the economy.
- Stimulating the development of additional funding through unique partnerships or non-traditional sources, as well as cultivating private sector partnerships. are key for a long term sustainable urban forest.
- An ethic that recognizes the value of trees, forests, and other related natural resources in protecting ecosystem functions must be instilled in land development and city revitalization efforts.

GRANT CATEGORIES

1. Local government program development or improvement
2. Demonstration or site-specific projects
3. Information and education

Examples of fundable projects within each category include:

Local government program development or improvement:

- Ordinance development or revision
- Tree inventories
- Urban forest management plans
- In-house training
- Tree board development
- Tree inventory computer equipment and software
- Student internships

Demonstration or site specific projects:

- Demonstration planting projects
 - Planting site analysis
 - Utility line compatibility
 - Utility line tree removal and replacement with appropriate species
 - Energy conservation
 - Street trees
 - Park trees
 - Economic development
- Demonstration maintenance projects
- Site improvement around existing trees
- Planting plan design

Information and education:

- Cooperative Extension Service programs
- Arbor Day programs
- Nursery directories
- Workshops/training sessions
- Conferences/seminars
- Youth programs
- Environmental Education/ Eco-Camps
- Public service materials (PSA development)
- Volunteer training
- Technical support
 - Ordinance development
 - Tree inventories
 - Plan development
- Resource directories
- Insect and disease diagnosis
- Planting site analysis
- Student internships
- Brochures
- Exhibits/video/slide shows

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Please submit your proposals according to the format on page 8 to following address::

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

Full proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. the designated due date listed at www.viucf.org. No facsimiles will be accepted. Successful applicants will be notified of funding by the Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator.

PAYMENT PROCESS

The funds awarded under the grant are available on a reimbursement basis after verification of match and in accordance with a payment schedule agreed to in advance by all parties. Grantees must file a request for payment and send records of expenditures along with documented costs to the Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture, Forestry Branch. In certain cases it is possible to obtain an advance of funds, however the U&CF Coordinator will evaluate the progress of the project to determine eligibility for receipt of funds.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

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

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

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

Cost Principles

OMB Circular A-21
OMB Circular A-122
OMB Circular A-87
FAR, Part 31

Type of Organization

Educational Organization
Nonprofit
State and local governments
Profit Organizations

Federal Management Standards/USDA Regs.

OMB Circular A-110
OMB Circular A-102

Type of Organization

Profit, educational, nonprofit
State and local government

Federal Audit Requirements/USDA Regs.

OMB Circular A-133
Cognizant agency

Type of Organization

Educational, nonprofit, state and local govt's
Profit organizations

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

OMB Circulars

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

FAR

<http://www.gsa.gov/far/90-37/html>

CFR's

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

Grantees must certify that they are not debarred from this grant program. Grantees should not conduct business with individuals or organizations debarred from Federal grant projects. Applicants must document project approval by the authorized representation of the local governing body, organization or institution applying for the grant.

All Projects must have a work plan and tree planting projects also require a maintenance plan approved by the Territorial Forester (Commissioner of Agriculture) or his/her designee. Plant materials used in tree planting projects must, at a minimum, meet the American Standard for Nursery Stock, and tree protection and maintenance must meet American Standards and Institute (ANSI) standards.

Record Keeping Requirements

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

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

Proposal Format

Submitted proposals are required to be clear and concise as well as address an urban and community forestry need and meet the objectives of the U&CF Program. Examples of eligible projects are listed on pages 4 and 5.

Information to be presented includes:

1. A completed grant application form. **This form only requires a signature and must be mailed!**
2. The purpose, objective or mission statement of the applying organization as well as the purpose and objectives of the project. The project's single purpose should be explained in one or two sentences. Objectives can be multiple, **however, multiple projects should be submitted in separate applications.**
3. A narrative of no more than one page detailing how the project will be accomplished should include these elements:
 - i. Activities
 - ii. Participants (project personnel, volunteers, corporate sponsor, etc)
 - iii. Administration
 - iv. Facilities and equipment
 - v. Timetable
 - vi. End result: description of finalized project.
 - vii. Letter(s) of Support

Distinct project components must be itemized for ease of monitoring interim project status.

4. A descriptive narrative of the project's benefits should be limited to one page. Benefits to the local urban and community forestry program, public relations and educational benefits as well as potential for continuation of the project should be included. Corporate, volunteer and citizen involvement should be identified in the narrative.
5. A detailed project budget should include financial assistance, sources and description of match, administrative costs, materials, maintenance costs, and costs of professional services. It is strongly encouraged that applicants use the budget worksheet contained in this request for proposals.
6. If the project involves tree planting, complete the tree application form plus:
 - i. A detailed three-year maintenance plan that specifies the entity responsible for maintenance.
 - ii. A resolution of endorsement from the appropriate government agency if planting is on government property (federal or local).
 - iii. Compliance with the Department of Public Works if planting is done on territorial right-of-ways.
 - iv. Consultation with WAPA to determine whether water or sewer lines are present.
7. Letters of Support – A letter of support is required from each individual, agency, or organization listed as a cooperator, collaborator, or provider of in-kind or financial support to the project.

Note: The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture is not responsible for any contractors, volunteers, or local government employees working on a project.

Projects will be evaluated on **need, cost effectiveness, sustainability, environmental merit, visibility, partnership/volunteerism, demonstrated commitment, and vital communities reached.**

For Further Information

Contact:

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Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture
#1 Estate Lower Love
Kingshill, VI 00850
Phone: (340) 778-0997 ext. 233
Fax: (340) 778-7977

SAMPLE BUDGET

Applicant: Green Island, USVI

Project: Inventory and management plan

Total Cost: \$19,822

Amount Requested from U&CF: \$6,750

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

| Item | Grant Share | Applicant | In-kind | Cash Donations | Total |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|---------|----------------|--------|
| Component: Inventory | | | | | |
| Personnel | | 672 | | | 672 |
| Staff- 310 hrs @ \$16/hr | | 5,120 | | | 5,120 |
| Volunteers- 160 hrs @ \$14.30* | | | 2,288 | | 2,288 |
| Consultant Services | 1,550 | | | | 1,150 |
| Computer | | 1,400 | | | 1,400 |
| Use of truck- 160 hours @ \$9 | | | 1,440 | | 1,440 |
| Inventory software | 1,200 | | | | 1,200 |
| Supplies and/or equipment (specify) | | | | | |
| Component: Management Plan | | | | | |
| Personnel: Staff 48hrs @\$24 | | 1,152 | | | 1,152 |
| Consultant: Tree People, LLC | 4,000 | | | | 4,000 |
| Printing | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Total Cost: | 6,750 | 8,344 | 3,728 | 1,000 | 19,822 |

* Federally accepted rate for volunteers