



MDOT Urban Tree Program Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers to commonly asked questions for the MDOT Urban Tree Program. If you do not see your question in the FAQs please reach out to Nick Kurtz at nkurtz@mdot.maryland.gov.

OVERVIEW

Q: What is the Urban Tree Program?

A: The MDOT Urban Tree Program (UTP) is a grant program that provides funding for tree planting in communities that had trees removed from the construction of transportation facilities or transportation projects.

Q: Who is eligible to apply?

A: Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, schools, community/neighborhood associations; community business associations; homeowners associations; business service, youth, and civic groups; institutions of higher education; counties; municipalities; and forest conservancy district boards.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements of the program?

A: Applications must be submitted by an eligible organization and include planting sites that are within an urban area (as defined by the most recent US Census) and take place in communities impacted by current or past transportation facility projects. Additionally, projects are prioritized if they support environmental justice initiatives, reduce the Urban Heat Island effect, and/or support the urban tree canopy.

Q: How can I know if my community is in an urbanized area?

A: To check if your project site is an urban area, please visit [HERE](#).

Q: How do I know if my project location is near a transportation facility?

A: To identify if your project site is in close proximity to a MDOT transportation facility, see the definition for eligible transportation facilities ([Transportation - § 3-101](#)). Online mapping layers are available via the Maryland.gov Open Datasets page [here](#). Click on one of the various maps of MDOT facilities to determine if your project location is near a transportation facility. If you are unsure if your site is eligible, we can provide an initial location check ahead of submission. Please reach out if you have any questions on this component. MDOT accepts projects that are within a mile of a state transportation facility (two miles for larger projects such as the Purple Line), with the understanding that during the construction of transportation projects trees were likely removed, and that the benefit of trees can extend beyond the immediate vicinity of the planting.

Q: What planting material can I plant?

A: MDOT and MUCFC will only fund native plant species. Additionally, applications are allowed to include up to 35% shrub-trees and up to 15% of true shrubs. A list of the State Highway Administration preferred plants can be found [HERE](#).

Q: What are eligible funding requests?

A: Eligible requests include plant material, materials to support planting (mulch, stakes, deer guard, etc.), maintenance expenses, outreach materials (limited to 5% of total budget), site preparation costs, and tool rentals.

Q: Are there any ineligible funding requests?

A: There are a few items MDOT is unable to fund, including snacks and waters for volunteers, outreach costs beyond the 5% cap, and any sort of giveaways for volunteers.

Q: Do I need to develop a maintenance plan?

A: Yes, each project must provide a one-year maintenance plan to help the survival of the trees. Maintenance-related costs are an eligible expense under the program, if you would like funds to support maintenance activities, please include these in the budget request. An example maintenance plan is in the sample application found [HERE](#).

Q: Is there a minimum or maximum funding requests?

A: There is no minimum funding request, however awards are capped at \$5,000.00 for tree planting projects. For a pocket forest project, additional funding is available.

Q: What is a pocket forest?

A: A Pocket Forest is a small, high-density, native-shrub and tree planting project in an urban environment that recreates or restores layers of forests, including a canopy layer comprised of taller trees, a mid-height shrub layer, and ground cover. These projects can also include soil augmentation and other restoration techniques to encourage low maintenance in urban spaces. Pocket Forests are designed to integrate forests into the urban environment.

Q: Can projects be funded on private or public land?

A: Projects can take place on both public and private land.

Q: Do I need my application to be signed off by the local county forestry board?

A: Yes, all applications must receive sign off by the local county forestry board. To identify the correct forestry board contact, please use this [guide](#). There is a section in the application where you will add in the contact information and the system will automatically send your application to the forestry board member when you submit the application. If you need any support with the forestry board approval, please contact Nick Kurtz at nkurtz@mdot.maryland.gov.

Q: Do I need to be a PLANT Award Program participant to apply?

A: No, at the time of application you do not need to be a PLANT award program participant. If you receive an award and are not a participant, you will need to submit a PLANT Program application. The People Loving and Nurturing Trees (PLANT) award is recognition for communities who care for their trees and is sponsored by the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee and the Department of Natural Resources. For more information on the program, visit [HERE](#).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Q: When can I apply for funding?

A: The application will be open year-round on a rolling basis to provide greater flexibility for communities to apply. There will be two application review periods, one for spring plantings and one for fall plantings. All applications received before January 15 and July 15 of each year will be considered for the spring and fall planting seasons, respectively.

Q: Where do I apply for UTP funding?

A: The application is available on the Maryland OneStop portal, accessible [HERE](#). Search MDOT Urban Tree Program. “MDOT Urban Tree Program.”

Q: Do I need an account on the OneStop Portal to apply?

A: Yes, applicants will need an account with OneStop to apply. To register for an account, you can use the link [HERE](#), and there is no fee to register for an account. If you have applied to other applications via the OneStop portal, you should already have an account.

Q: Is there a fee to apply to this opportunity?

A: No, there is no fee to apply.

Q: What information do I need to include in the application?

A: Applications are required to include a site plan or project design, including a photo or map of the proposed planting site; a list of the proposed plants (including species, size, and quantity); description of any permits; and a maintenance plan, including expected maintenance costs, who is responsible for maintenance, and the maintenance activities.

Q: How much detail should I provide when filling out the application?

A: Please provide as much detail as possible. This will help reviewers to better understand the scope of the project.

RESOURCES/SUPPORT

Q: How can I receive support in developing a planting plan and application?

A: DNR is available to help develop tree planting projects and support your application. If you would like DNR support for your application, please reach out to Daniel Coy at daniel.coy@maryland.gov. If you have any questions on the application or the program requirements, please reach out to Nick Kurtz at nkurtz@mdot.maryland.gov.

Helpful Resources

- [UTP How to Apply Guide](#)
- [UTP Example Application](#)
- [UTP Application](#)