

## TreeVitalize Metros Sub-Grant Program Guidelines

**Purpose:** TreeVitalize Metros proposes to increase tree canopy cover in the metropolitan areas of Pennsylvania. Research has repeatedly shown a direct link between the presence of trees and the quality of life for urban residents. Trees help to capture storm water and reduce runoff, improve water quality, improve air quality, reduce urban heat island effects, beautify communities, increase property values, reduce heating and cooling costs and improve human health. The program seeks to target heavily populated areas with low tree canopy cover within the metropolitan areas of the state.

DCNR's goals for TreeVitalize are to:

- plant 1,000,000 trees through this and other programs,
- train community volunteers to assist in the planting and early care of trees; and
- build community capacity for the long term management of urban forests.

The program provides technical assistance and matching grants to communities for tree-planting to help establish urban forest management programs.

**Program Description:** Tree Vitalize is a partnership of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Community Forests, Penn State Extension Urban Forestry, and local municipalities. The program was initiated in Philadelphia in 2004 and has since been expanded to include the five-county metropolitan area surrounding Philadelphia as well as the City of Pittsburgh. "TreeVitalize Metros" was launched in Fall 2008 and is intended to expand the program to the other twelve metropolitan areas of the state. A map showing the "metropolitan areas" as defined by the US Census Bureau can be found in **SD-B-"Metro Areas Map"**.

**Regions eligible to participate in TreeVitalize Metros are:**

- Erie Metro Area (Erie County)
- Johnstown Metro Area (Cambria County)
- Altoona Metro Area (Blair County)
- State College Metro Area (Centre County)
- Williamsport Metro Area (Lycoming County)
- Harrisburg-Carlisle Metro Area (Cumberland, Perry, and Dauphin counties)
- Lebanon (Lebanon County)
- York Metro Area (York County)
- Lancaster Metro Area (Lancaster County)
- Reading Metro Area (Berks County)
- Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton Metro Area (Lehigh, Carbon, and Northampton counties).
- Scranton-Wilkes Barre Metro Area (Wyoming, Luzerne, and Lackawanna counties)

### **Who can apply?**

Funds can be awarded only to **municipalities** (city, borough, incorporated town, township, or home rule municipality), **municipal agencies** (official agency created by a municipal government under the laws of the Commonwealth such as municipal authorities, councils of government, and intergovernmental organizations). Trees may be planted within the public right-of-way (along streets, between sidewalk and curb generally) or within parks and greenways open to the public.

### **What is the application process?**

Communities seeking TreeVitalize grants must apply through the appropriate **Metro Partner**. **Information may be found in SD-C-“Metro Partner Contacts” and apply using the “TreeVitalize Metros Sub-Grant.”** The community is to provide **one copy** with original signature, along with any supporting documents, to the **Metro Partner**.

### **Who do we contact with questions?**

For **questions regarding the grant application process**, contact your Metro Partner or Christine Ticehurst, DCNR TreeVitalize Program Administrator at 717-346-9583.

For **questions regarding the selection of appropriate tree species, planting practices, or project design**, contact the appropriate Bureau of Forestry Service Forester or Extension Urban Forester. Contact information may be found in **SD-D-“DCNR and PSU Forester Contacts”**.

**If the planting involves replacing poor quality trees growing beneath powerlines**, it may be helpful to contact your local utility forester. A list of regional utility forestry representatives is available in **SD-E-“Electric Utility Forester Contacts”**. The utility forester may be able to help in selecting suitable species for planting beneath powerlines, and possibly also with the removal of poor quality trees interfering with lines.

**Before finalizing planting sites, applicants are required by law to notify PA One Call at 1-800-242-1776 to locate underground utilities at each site.** For frequently asked questions about PA One Call, check the website at <http://www.pa1call.org/POCS/index16.aspx>

**Program Criteria:** A committee of natural resource professionals will review each **“TreeVitalize Metros Sub-Grant”** using the following rating system to score and prioritize projects for funding:

1. Demonstrated need for additional tree cover. (10 points)
2. Regional Impact – connection with or implementation of regional or local efforts. (10 points)
3. Evidence of municipal support (staff and resources) (15 points)
4. Evidence of a plan for community involvement in the project (15 points)
5. Commitment by municipality and volunteers to Tree Tender and Tree Management Training. (15 points)
6. Evidence of progress toward development of a long term sustainable urban forest management program. (i.e. a tree ordinance, an active shade tree commission, a street tree inventory, management plan, etc.) (15 points)
7. Community is currently recognized as Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation. (10 points)
8. Street tree planting (5 points) versus park or greenway planting (0 points)
9. Adequate project budget. (10 points)

**What costs can the Tree Vitalize grant to communities cover?** Eligible expenses include trees, tree supplies (e.g. stakes, ties, mulch, watering/gator bags, etc.), site preparation and tree-planting costs. Signage recognizing DCNR and Metro Partner support is required and is also an eligible grant expense. Standard signage has been developed and must be ordered by the applicant upon notice of a grant award. Please complete and mail-in the Recognition Signage Application found on page 12 of the TreeVitalize Sub-Grant Application.

**What can't communities use grant funds for?** All costs must be directly related to project implementation. Funds may not be used for administrative, overhead or general staff costs of the applicant, or purchase of equipment or materials and labor not expended during the grant agreement period. (Administrative costs MAY be used as part of the community match).

**What is the maximum grant available to communities?**

The maximum grant that will be awarded to a municipality in any one year is \$15,000. In addition, **no more than \$150 per tree** will be awarded in grant funds. For example, for a project that will plant 100 trees, no more than \$15,000 will be awarded per year.

**A dollar for dollar match is required, of which.**

- **at least 25% must be cash match AND**
- **at least 25% must be volunteer in-kind contributions**

**Responsibilities under the Grant Program:**

The applicant agrees to abide by these requirements if selected for a grant award:

- A local **project coordinator** who assumes fiscal responsibility for grant administration and day-to-day operations of the project must be appointed for each project. The project coordinator assumes responsibility for ensuring that each step of the project has been satisfactorily completed.
- **Tree Tender Training Workshops** must be completed prior to planting by one (1) group member for every ten (10) trees to be planted. These may be Shade Tree Commission members or other volunteers, community staff responsible for tree care, or elected officials. The project coordinator must be a trained Tree Tender.
- *For communities having received one or more previous TreeVitalize grants,*
  - *a **Tree Tenders® training workshop** must be completed prior to planting by: at least **one additional volunteer**, municipal staff person responsible for tree care, or elected official.*

**OR**

- *the **Community Tree Institute** must be completed prior to planting by:*
- *the project coordinator or at least one municipal staff persons responsible for tree care*
- The names and titles of municipal staff and volunteers who will be attending the Tree Tenders® training must be provided in the grant application.

- **NOTE:** Any changes in those who are to attend the training are to be provided to the Metro Partner prior to the actual training date.
- Projects must be **on public property**, including the public right of way for street trees, public parks, greenways open to the public. Proof of ownership or a long-term lease may be required.

**Planting Plan:** must be reviewed and approved by a TreeVitalize Program Forester before submission of grant application to Metro Partner.

- The planting plan must address the long-term maintenance of the trees and must specifically detail what care will be provided for the first three years.
- If technical assistance is needed, the Foresters are available for assistance. However, they MAY NOT develop YOUR planting plan. Please see **SD-D-“DCNR and PSU Forester Contacts”**.
- The planting plan need not be professionally drawn, but must include:
  1. A city map (or photocopy) that delineates each general area in which the project activities will be performed.
  2. A spreadsheet including
    - The addresses of all approved planting sites
    - The presence of overhead utilities or other above ground obstructions (lamp posts, fire hydrants, etc.), and any known underground obstructions near each planting site.
    - The width of the tree lawn if present, or the size of the sidewalk opening where the tree is to be planted if no tree lawn.  
**NOTE: 5’ x 5’ or 3’ x 10’ sidewalk openings recommended, and REQUIRED when grant funds are utilized for sidewalk cuts.**
    - The tree species to be planted.
  3. 3. For **Residential/Commercial public right of way plantings**, include signed & completed **“Property Owner Tree Request”** form for each address where a tree is to be planted.
  4. For **Parks/Other Public plantings** fill out one **“Property Owner Tree Request”** form for each park.
  4. 5. Signed **“Forester & Municipality Approval”** form.
- **Projects MUST be completed within 1 planting season**
- Grantees will receive 70% of the grant award upon submission of the approved planting plan. The final 30% of the grant will be held until all project close-out requirements are met.

**Tree Selection:** Tree species selected must be listed in **SD-F- “Acceptable Tree Species”**. Selection should be based on site limitations, including overhead and underground utilities, planting space available, and soil type.

- Large maturing shade trees provide many more environmental and economic benefits than small trees, and are preferred wherever space permits. But never plant large-maturing species beneath powerlines.
- Trees purchased must be of the form and quality outlined in the publication provided, **SD-G-“Guideline Specifications for Nursery Quality”** by the Urban Tree Foundation. (Additional copies may be downloaded at <http://www.urbantree.org/specs.asp>)  
**NOTE:** Trees of inferior quality or unacceptable species may be rejected at the discretion of the TreeVitalize program forester at any point in the process.

**Note:** additional tree species may be considered if not listed in **SD-F- “Acceptable Tree Species”**. The use of the tree species must be approved by a DCNR Forester or PSU Extension Urban Forester.

### **Sub-Grant Closeout Checklist**

\_\_\_\_\_ Request TreeVitalize Forester review of completed project.

\_\_\_\_\_ Fill out “Community Final Payment Request Form” and obtain Forester signature, as verification of satisfactory completion of the project.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete “Final Project Budget Form” showing actual expenditures and “cash” or “non-cash” match. **Note:** you must show that:

- You have spent all your grant funds
- You have matched grant funds awarded dollar for dollar
- At least 25% of your match is cash AND 25% or more is in-kind volunteer services.

\_\_\_\_\_ Attach **ALL** related receipts or paid invoices

**Note:** include payments made with grant funds, or as part of your “cash” match

\_\_\_\_\_ Attach any documentation of "non-cash" services, such as volunteer sign in- sheets or employee pay records

**Community Final Payment Request Form**

TreeVitalize Forester Signature Page Verifying Grant Project Completion

**Project Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ Sub-Grant ID #: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if applicable) (Assigned by Metro Partner)

**Project Location:** Municipality \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Coordinator:** Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone (Office): \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

I have reviewed the above planting project and verify that it has been completed to my satisfaction. I hereby authorize the Metro Partner to release the final project payment to this community.

**Tree Vitalize Forester:** Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone (Office): \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Instructions:**

When the planting project is completely finished:

- 1) Complete the top portion of this form, and provide it to the Extension Urban Forester or Service Forester who approved your planting plan for review and approval. Refer to **SD-D-“DCNR and PSU Forester Contacts”**.
- 2) Once the Forester has verified satisfactory completion of the finished project, compile the attached “Final Project Budget Form” showing actual grant expenditures, plus any “cash” and “non-cash” contributions. Either receipts for expenditures or invoices accompanied by cancelled checks, must be provided for all material or service purchases. Employee pay rate info (name, title, rate of pay, hours worked on project), volunteer sign-in sheets, and other similar documents are required to verify labor and equipment costs.
- 3) Submit “Final Project Budget Form” and proof of expenditures along with this signed “Community Final Payment Approval Form” to your Metro Partner to receive the final payment on your grant. Refer to **SD-C-“Metro Partner Contacts”**

**Final Project Budget Form**

- Total Costs must be broken out into categories below, using the forms provided.
- The sum of the Total Cost in each category must always equal any Non Cash or Cash Matches provided by the applicant, plus the amount of Grant Funds requested (ie. Total Cost = Non Cash Match + Cash Match + Grant Funds)
- Maximum grant = (\$150) x (number of trees to be planted) or \$15,000, whichever is less.

**Section 1: Supplies & Materials-** Supplies needed to implement the project. Examples: trees, mulch, hand tools, stakes, gator bag, Recognition Sign

Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost	Non-Cash Match	Cash Match	Grant Funds (paid out of Grant funds)
<b>Total Supplies &amp; Materials</b>						

**Section 2: Equipment Costs**

Equipment	Hours Used	Hourly Rate	Total Cost	Non-Cash Match)	Cash Match	Grant Funds (paid out of Grant funds)
<b>Total Equipment Costs</b>						

**Section 3: Volunteer Services and Labor**

Number of Individuals	Hours Worked	Hourly Rate	Total Cost	Non-Cash Match	Cash Match	Grant Funds (paid out of Grant funds)
<b>Total Volunteer Services and Labor</b>						

**Section 4: Paid Services and Labor**

Individual	Hours Worked	Hourly Rate	Total Cost	Non- Cash Match	Cash Match	Grant Funds (paid out of Grant funds)
<b>Total Paid Services and Labor</b>						

**Grand Totals: Sum of Sections 1 - 4**

Total Costs	Total Non-Cash Match	Total Cash Match	Total Grant Funds (to be paid from Grant)