

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Department of Agriculture Announces Availability Of Grants For 2016 Urban Forestry Program

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The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture's Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Assistance Program announced today the availability of grants for the 2016 urban forestry program.

According to the release, organizations and agencies in the territory may apply for grants of up to \$20,000. Grants require a 1-to-1 match to the amount requested, however, matches usually can be met through in-kind donations and volunteer time.

Grant awards will be made on a competitive basis, and the deadline for proposal submissions for this cycle is Monday, November 7, 2016, according to the release.

Proposals may be mailed or delivered to the Department of Agriculture offices on St. Croix, St. Thomas, or St. John, however a preferable method is email: marilyn.chakroff@doa.vi.gov.

"Trees, properly planted and managed in our parks, along our road ways, in backyards, playgrounds, and other public spaces are invaluable in enhancing and improving the quality of life for our community," said D.O.A. Commissioner Carlos Robles.

The UCF Program is designed to encourage citizen involvement in urban and community forestry projects throughout the territory. The Program seeks proposals for project funding from local government, nonprofit organizations, civic and/or educational organizations, including but not limited to schools, churches, homeowners' associations, service clubs, and environmental organizations.

The UCF program does not fund strictly agricultural projects, although projects must have a forestry component to be eligible for funding.

D.O.A. says it's looking for projects in the following areas: education and public outreach about urban forests; protecting and publicizing heritage and remarkable big trees; reducing health risks due to invasive species; identifying and managing hazardous trees; collecting data on wildlife use of urban forests; planning for and planting urban trees; training to become arborists; developing and implementing management plans for developed areas with urban forests; and writing tree guidelines for communities.

For an application packet, contact Marilyn Chakroff, Urban and Community Forestry Program coordinator at 778-0997 ext. 233 or via email at: marilyn.chakroff@doa.vi.gov. Ms. Chakroff is available to help with writing proposals and with identifying the types of projects that may be funded, according to the release.