



Preservation Trust Fund Locality Easement Assistance

Overview

Established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1997 and administered by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), the Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (PTF) provides grants for acquisitions, easements, rights of way, and other methods of protecting open space for farming, forestry, recreation, wildlife, water quality, and more. In most cases, a right, privilege, or interest in real estate must be conveyed to either VOF or a locality, pursuant to Virginia’s Open-Space Land Act.

Opportunity

In 2023, VOF dedicated funding to expand the PTF-Easement Assistance program to provide income-based cost-share assistance for the conveyance of an easement to a locality. These easements may be co-held by an eligible non-profit partner. In support of locally led land conservation, VOF will provide funding to offset costs related to donating an easement.

Eligibility

Any locality may participate in the PTF-Easement Assistance for Localities Program. A two-year signed Locality Agreement, indicating the locality’s willingness to receive funding from VOF is required before any award is made within that locality.

Landowners conveying easements as part of a development proposal or as a proffer are not eligible.

Costs associated with the conveyance of an easement may be eligible for reimbursement. These may include an appraisal, survey, mortgage review, title work, baseline documentation report (BDR) as well as legal and accounting fees.

Easement Terms

Landowners will work with the locality to determine appropriate land protection measures and easement terms.

Reimbursement Rates

Costs will be reimbursed on an income-based cost-share assistance rate, with per easement awards not to exceed the easement assistance limit listed below. Exceptions may be granted for extenuating circumstances.

| Landowner Annual Income | Reimbursement Rate | Eligible Due Diligence | Easement Assistance Limit |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Up to \$95,000 | 100% | All Due Diligence | \$20,000 |
| \$96,000 - \$110,000 | 75% | All Due Diligence | \$15,000 |
| \$111,000-\$125,000 | 50% | All Due Diligence | \$10,000 |
| \$125,000-\$200,000 | Up to 50% | Survey Work* | \$10,000 |
| Over \$200,000 | Not Eligible | N/A | Not Eligible |

*If determined by the locality to be necessary for the protection and stewardship of the conservation project.

Funds must be disbursed from VOF to a locality.

Application Process

Once a signed Locality Agreement is in place, a landowner or a locality may submit an application for easement assistance through the VOF grant portal at <https://vaoutdoors.webgrantscloud.com/index.do>. Awards up to \$20,000 are approved administratively on a rolling basis. Contact grants@vof.org with questions.