

GREENSPACE EQUITY PROGRAM FY28 WORKSHOP

DNR Land Acquisition and Planning (LAP) Unit

July 15, 2026

Workshop Agenda



- Program Overview
- Eligibility Parameters
- Allowable Expenses
- Application Review
- Accompanying Document Checklist
- Contact Information

Program Overview



- The Greenspace Equity Program is designed to provide and administer grants to eligible applicants for enhancing the public health and livability of overburdened communities and/or underserved communities by implementing projects to preserve, create, and enhance community greenspace.
 - Makes conservation more equitable
 - Meets community needs for greenspace
 - Supports on the ground partners
- Legislation outlining the program: HB0503
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2023RS/bills/hb/hb0503T.pdf>

Eligibility



- Who is eligible to apply?
 - A land trust or nongovernmental organization located or working in an overburdened community or an underserved community where a project is proposed to be implemented
 - A county or municipality
 - Land acquisitions apply to counties, municipalities, and land trusts only
- Where can these projects occur?
 - In an overburdened community
 - In an underserved community
 - On a property owned by an eligible applicant, or for which the applicant holds a conservation easement, located in a census tract adjacent to an overburdened community or an underserved community
- Use the [MDEnviroScreen Tool](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/e4148f01acf743bf8ac1d2aa2dc0947f/page/MarylandEJ3_0) to determine whether a property is located in an overburdened community or an underserved community.
https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/e4148f01acf743bf8ac1d2aa2dc0947f/page/MarylandEJ3_0

MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

The screenshot shows the MDEnviroScreen - EJ Score web application. The main map displays Maryland's census tracts color-coded by EJ Score. A sidebar on the left contains instructions and a legend. A panel on the right shows the Maryland EJ Score legend and a disclaimer.

MDEnviroScreen - EJ Score
VERSION 3.0
MDE Home Page

EJ Indicators | **Child Poverty** | **Climate Vulnerability Score** | **About**

Find address or place

MDEnviroScreen identifies communities with environmental justice concerns in Maryland. The tool identifies overburdened and underserved areas and assigns a percentile EJ Score, and a Climate Vulnerability Score by census tract. Read the methodology [here](#).

Instructions:

1. Navigate the map by clicking with your mouse or touchpad
2. Search for areas by address or census tract number
3. Zoom to communities using your mouse wheel or touchpad
4. Click a census tract for more score details
5. Collapse this menu using the white icon to the side
6. Download a pdf report of a map area and its breakdown using the 'Report by Location' button

Legend:

- Toggle map layers
- Report by Location
- Filter by EJ Score
- Share to social media
- Measure distances
- Add other data layers
- Switch between basemaps

Maryland EJ Score (Right)

Percentile by 2020 Census Tract

- > 75 - 100
- > 50 - 75
- > 25 - 50
- 0 - 25

Overburdened and Underserved* (Left)

Community Status

- Overburdened and Underserved
- Only Overburdened
- Only Underserved

Read the project disclaimer [here](#)

Eligibility: Types of Projects



➤ **Acquisition Project**

- An eligible applicant may apply for funding to purchase property that will be used for an eligible purpose (Stewardship). The property must be held in fee-simple or with a perpetual conservation easement. If the lead applicant is a Land Trust, co-ownership with a governmental agency is recommended.

➤ **Stewardship (Development) Project**

- Develop a property for public use AND improve the conservation value of the property.
- Maintain for a minimum of 15 years.
- Specific examples: Community garden, community gathering open space area, community woodland, a green network (a system of greenspaces that are interconnected by linear corridors that facilitate the movement of people and wildlife); a park; a trail; an urban farm.

Allowable Expenses



➤ **Acquisition Projects**

- Cost of acquiring the land in fee simple or through a perpetual conservation easement
- Related due diligence expenses, such as appraisals, environmental assessments, surveys, title work, etc.
- Administrative costs related to program compliance for easement monitoring, if applicable (not to exceed 1.5% of the grant amount requested)

➤ **Stewardship (Development) Projects**

- Cost of clearing the site or developing it for use as community greenspace
 - Project cannot be design only
- Administrative costs related to implementing the project
 - Administrative costs not to exceed 3% of the grant amount requested for the development (will be included as part of the total grant)

Allowable Expenses



➤ **Stewardship (Development) Projects**

- Structures
 - Open structures – shade structures, pavilions, etc.
 - Enclosed structures – restrooms, may consider others within reason
 - Goal is to connect people to the outdoors
 - Avoid excessive concrete/paving of green space
- Accessibility
 - Ramps, inclusive playground equipment, signage (cannot be the sole project)
- Supplies/Other Items
 - Seeds, other consumables, gardening tools, community/volunteer stipends, workshop expenses – may be eligible under administrative fee only (up to 3% of the grant amount requested for the development)

➤ **Not Allowable**

- Artwork, sculptures, temporary pavilions, and items of similar categories are not eligible
- The grant cannot support maintenance or programming fees

Application Review



- Applications for both Acquisition and Stewardship (Development) projects are available on the DNR website:
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/Greenspace-Equity-Program-Grant-Application-Project-Agreement.docx>
- Submission deadline is September 1, 2026 at 3 p.m.
- Applications will be initially reviewed by DNR staff and then shared with Greenspace Equity Advisory Board
- After application submission and review, selected eligible projects will be submitted to the Maryland State Clearinghouse for review and comment, and are subject to Board of Public Works approval prior to receiving funding.

Application Review



<https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/Greenspace-Equity-Program-Grant-Proposal-Guide.pdf>

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/Greenspace-Equity-Program-Grant-Application-Project-Agreement.docx>



Maryland's Greenspace Equity Program FY 2028 GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDE

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Land Acquisition and Planning
Tawes Office Building, E-4
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401

Stephanie Benavides | stephanie.benavides1@maryland.gov | 443-510-4572
Greenspace Equity Program Administrator

Visit our website for more information and up-to-date news:
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/Greenspace-Equity-Program.aspx>

For general questions or project submissions, please send email to: laplocalgrants.dnr@maryland.gov



GREENSPACE EQUITY PROGRAM Fiscal Year (FY) 2028 Application and Project Agreement

GREENSPACE EQUITY PROJECT # _____
DNR Use Only

A. PROJECT INFORMATION: Please fill out all sections of the form completely unless otherwise indicated.

Type of Project: (check one) ☐ Acquisition ☐ Development ☐ Combination

Project Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/Town: _____ County: _____ Zip: _____

County Tax Map: _____ Grid: _____ Parcel: _____ Lot: _____

SDAT Account Identifier: _____
District-Subdivision-Account Number or Ward-Section-Block-Lot (as applicable)

MD Legislative District: _____
Click [here](#) to find the 2022 Legislative District (Number 1-47)

Confirm the project location is eligible for Greenspace Equity Program Funding:
[Click here for map to verify](#) (check one)

☐ Overburdened ☐ Underserved ☐ Both Overburdened and Underserved

☐ Adjacent Projects on a property located in a census tract that is adjacent to an overburdened or an underserved community may be eligible if the eligible applicant holds a conservation easement or owns the property in fee simple.

Project Period From: _____ Date of Letter of Acknowledgement (DNR Use Only)
To: _____ Estimated Date of Completion

Application Review



➤ Grant Proposal Guide

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/FY27-Greenspace-Equity-Program-Grant-Proposal-Guide.pdf>

- Site Control and Legal Authority (section A.8.5)
 - Joint-Use Agreement
 - Fee-simple
 - Conservation easement
- Acquisition (sections A.8.6)
 - Applicants must provide documentation such as a letter of intent with the property owner to purchase the property.
 - At least two independent appraisals performed by certified general real estate appraisers are required. A third appraisal or more may be needed if the spread between the appraisals exceeds 20%.

➤ Stewardship projects where applicant cannot demonstrate adequate site control may be considered incomplete or ineligible.

Application Review



NEW application for FY28

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/Greenspace-Equity-Program-Grant-Application-Project-Agreement.docx>

➤ Section A

- Project Information – address, area, project period/timeline

➤ Section B

○ Budget Details

- Section 1 – Acquisitions only: land costs and incidental costs
- Section 2 – Development costs: capital costs associated with implementation of a stewardship project
- Section 3 – a. Administrative Costs – b. Program Compliance
- Section 4 – total costs and funds requested from the Greenspace Equity Program
- Green Sections for short narrative and inclusion of match funds

Application Review



➤ Section C

- Project Details – 11 questions about the project – **2-3 sentences** each.
Additional narratives can be included in a separate document.

➤ Section D

- Property Acquisition/Easement Section – acquisition details, zoning, potential conflicts, and interim use.

➤ Section E

- Applicant Information and Authorization – only the primary applicant is eligible for reimbursement, secondary applicant will assume responsibility of maintaining project should the primary applicant be unable to do so.

➤ Application also serves as project agreement.

Accompanying Document Checklist



- All Projects
 - Area map, site plan, deed/property SDAT, evidence of partnership and support, pre-project photos
- Acquisition Projects
 - Two independent appraisals, current deed, succession plan
- Nongovernmental Organizations
 - Articles of incorporation, bylaws, business SDAT (must be in good standing), how applicant is organized, examples of other projects completed
- Attached Documents
 - Letters of support from Local Government, organizations, AND residents

Contact Information



Program Administrator

Stephanie Benavides

Stephanie.benavides1@maryland.gov

410-260-8433 (o)

443-510-4572 (m)