



Maryland's Greenspace Equity Program

GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDE 2025 Appraisal Funding Grant ONLY

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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 Grants Proposal Guide - Appraisal Funding

A. Program Description and Requirements

1. Purpose

The Greenspace Equity Program provides grant funding assistance to eligible applicants for enhancing the public health and livability of overburdened communities and underserved communities by implementing projects to preserve, create, and enhance community greenspace, which includes (i) community gardens; (ii) community gathering open space areas; (iii) community woodlands; (iv) green networks; (v) parks; (vi) trails; and (vii) urban farms.

This grant round is specifically to provide funds for obtaining independent appraisals in advance of the applicant's submission of an acquisition application for the FY 2027 Greenspace Equity Program Grant Application.

2. Source of Funds

The source of funds for this program is from Program Open Space and may be appropriated each fiscal year per Natural Resources Article §5-903(a)(2)(vi). Up to \$120,000 in FY 2025 funding is available for the 2025 appraisal grant round.

3. Administration of the Program

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the Greenspace Equity Program per Natural Resources Article §5-9D-02. DNR staff develops and distributes application materials for the program, publicizes the program, provides technical assistance to program applicants, awards grants to eligible applicants, and consults with the Greenspace Equity Advisory Board in the implementation and administration of the program.

4. General Requirements

The Greenspace Equity Program provides funding to eligible applicants for community greenspace projects located (i) in an overburdened community; (ii) an underserved community; or (iii) on a property for which an eligible applicant holds a conservation easement or owns the property in fee simple and is located in a census tract that is adjacent to an overburdened community or an underserved community. Grants may be for up to 100% of the project cost and are selected on a competitive basis. Projects must be publicly accessible.

Use the [Greenspace Equity Qualifying Census Tracts](#) to determine whether a property is located in an overburdened community or an underserved community.

5. Eligible Applicants for Appraisal Funding

- 1) A Land Trust (as hereinafter defined) located or working in an overburdened community or an underserved community where a project is proposed to be implemented.
- 2) County Government.
- 3) Municipal Government.

6. Types of Projects Funded

This grant round is specifically to provide funds for obtaining independent appraisals in advance of the applicant's submission of an acquisition application for the FY 2027 Greenspace Equity Program Grant Application. The property proposed for acquisition must meet the general requirements of the Greenspace Equity Program.

7. Specific Project Requirements

- 1) Applicants selected and approved for appraisal funding must procure and complete the independent appraisals of the proposed property in time to submit an application for the acquisition of the subject property in the upcoming FY 2027 Greenspace Equity Program Grant round.

- 2) Applicants who receive the appraisal grant funds must submit an application for the subject property in the upcoming FY 2027 Greenspace Equity Program Grant round.
- 3) Funds may only be used to obtain independent appraisals from licensed real estate appraisers with qualifications consistent with industry standards and all applicable Local, State, and Federal statutes and regulations.
- 4) Projects are within the applicant's jurisdiction or within the service area of a Land Trust.
- 5) Funds may only be used to obtain independent appraisals for property the applicant would like to acquire for public use. Land acquired (fee and easement) under a state grant from the Greenspace Equity Program must be maintained in perpetuity for public use pursuant to Natural Resources Article §5-9D-04(a). Conversion of use of land will require replacement with land of equal or greater recreational use, acreage, and equal or greater appraised value approved by the Greenspace Equity Program.

8. Additional Considerations

- 1) Under the Greenspace Equity Program, a Land Trust is defined as one of the following:
 - A qualified organization under §170(H)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and any regulations adopted under that section;
 - An organization that has executed a cooperative agreement with the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET); or
 - An organization that is an Affordable Housing Land Trust as defined in §14-501 of the Real Property Article.
- 2) Nongovernmental Organizations that are not Land Trusts are *not* eligible for acquisition projects.
- 3) Land Trusts must be in good standing.
- 4) Land Trusts are encouraged to work with County and/or Municipal governments to implement the project.
- 5) Applicant demonstrates the capacity to plan, implement and maintain the project (sufficient and qualified staff or contractor, effective administrative procedures and systems, evidence of past success, etc.)
- 6) Applicant is ready to execute the project immediately after Board of Public Works approval and complete the project in a timely manner.
- 7) It is recommended that Land Trusts co-hold the fee simple deed or perpetual conservation easement with a county or municipal government agency where the project is located. This recommendation is based on practice similar to other state land conservation programs.

B. Proposal Review and Selection

Awards will be competitive in nature. DNR staff will review complete applications. Projects will be evaluated based on consistency with Greenspace Equity Program's purpose, eligibility requirements and criteria, the applicant's responses, as well as the status of any previously awarded grants. Pursuant to Natural Resources Article §5-9D-02(e)(5), considerations will include, but not be limited to:

- 1) The extent to which the property proposed for acquisition would serve the overburdened and/or underserved community.
- 2) How the proposed property would improve the conservation value of the land and/or conservation benefits to the overburdened and/or underserved communities.
- 3) The ability to manage and maintain the property in perpetuity according to the requirements of the grant.

DNR staff will make recommendations for grant selections. The Greenspace Equity Advisory Board will also have the opportunity to review and comment on the grant applications. Recommended projects will be submitted to the Board of Public Works for final approval before funding can be made available.

C. Notification of Award

DNR will send a letter of award to the applicant for each grant approved by the Board of Public Works. Approved grant recipients may be required to submit a revised itemized budget if one is

requested. Award funds may only be used for the project as submitted and approved by DNR and the Board of Public Works.

D. Award Disbursement

Greenspace Equity is a reimbursable grant program. DNR will reimburse the applicant for the approved project costs when proper documentation is provided with the reimbursement request. Reimbursement for actual project costs will at no time exceed the Board of Public Works approved funding amount. Advance payments toward allowable costs may be considered after BPW approval on a case by case basis.

Grant recipients must procure and complete the independent appraisals of the proposed property and use the information obtained to submit an application for the acquisition of the subject property in the upcoming FY 2027 Greenspace Equity Program Grant round. It is anticipated that there will be approximately eight (8) weeks between when the funding for this appraisal grant is approved by the Board of Public Works and when the application for the upcoming FY 2027 Greenspace Equity Program Grant round is due so please plan accordingly.

E. Project Proposal and Submission Process

1. *Complete* a **Greenspace Equity Program Appraisal Funding Grant for Proposed Acquisition Projects Application and Project Agreement** for each project.
2. *Sign and date* the **Applicant Authorization**.
3. *Assemble* all accompanying documents.
4. *Contact* the Greenspace Equity Program Administrator in advance to review project eligibility and, if needed, to review the required attachments.
5. **Applications are due on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, by 3:00 p.m. and must be emailed to: laplocalgrants.dnr@maryland.gov.**

Please be advised that incomplete or late applications may not be considered for funding.

F. Anticipated Program Timeline

September 3, 2025 Issue proposal requests.

October 8, 2025 Applications due to DNR by 3:00 p.m.

October 2025 Review proposed projects.

October 2025 Share/present projects to Greenspace Equity Advisory Board.

December 2025 Schedule recommended projects for Board of Public Works approval.

NOTE: This Grant Proposal Guide is not intended to be a complete representation of the Greenspace Equity Program. Interested parties are encouraged to review Section 5-9D-01 et. seq. of the Natural Resource Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (2023 Replacement Volume, as amended), and any regulations or policies adopted by the Department of Natural Resources to carry out the Greenspace Equity Program.

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