# DELAWARE'S URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

Grant program expands tree plantings and urban forestry management on publicly owned land.

## PROJECT GOALS

To engage local governments and community organizations in grant opportunities and projects that increase urban tree canopies and provide long term care for existing trees.

## COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Lowered heating and cooling costs
- Reduced harmful UV radiation
- Improved property values
- Enhanced community beautification

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Improved water and air quality
- Decreased soil erosion
- Reduced stormwater run-off and pollution entering local waters
- Mitigated flooding
- Enriched soil health
- Increased habitat for native and migratory species

## CONSERVATION PROJECTS INSTALLED

- Tree plantings
- Tree management
- Arborist certification training for public works employees
- Municipal tree care workshops

Kesha Braunskill poses for a portrait during a planting at Blackbird State Forest in New Castle County, Delaware. *(Photos by Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program)*

> **"Community forests are critical to our quality of life. Trees provide cleaner air and water, wildlife habitat, lower energy costs, natural beauty and improved property values. The Delaware Forest Service's urban grant program is designed to help communities harness these many benefits."**
>
> **- Kesha Braunskill**
> *Delaware Forest Service urban and community forestry program director*

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Delaware Urban and Forestry Program provides financial and technical assistance to local governments, non-profits, community associations and homeowners to plant and care for their trees. On the financial side, the Urban Grant Program provides competitive matching grants up to $5,000 to municipalities, homeowner associations and non-profits for tree plantings or tree management projects on public land. The Delaware Community Forestry Council judges eligible grant applicants on a competitive basis, with priority given to first time applicants that are Tree Friendly Communities or have an approved Urban Tree Canopy Goal Resolution.

Since 2015, the program has awarded 577 grants worth approximately $1.79 million and planted more than 14,000 trees in Delaware. On the technical service side, full-time forestry staff is available to assist cities, towns and communities with the management and care of their urban forestry resources. They can assist in developing management plans for publicly-owned forests, diagnose sick trees, answer questions and recommend species and placements. They also work with developers, planners and engineers to provide education on how to retrain existing trees. The program has developed additional outreach and educational opportunities for local governments and community groups such as, a yearly arborist and tree care seminar, and municipal pruning and planting workshops.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Regular check-ins on projects and follow up activities to ensure funds are effectively used.
- Maintain detailed inventories of new tree plantings and track tree management progress.
- Consider the use of GIS tools to enhance planning and strategic approaches.
- Community groups often come to the grant program with built-in volunteer networks, ensuring a ready volunteer base for planting day.
- Engage non-traditional tree planting partners such as schools and religious organizations to make tree plantings more accessible.

Caroline Dowd, center, delivers a lesson in how to plant a tree to Tatyana Favors, left, and her mother Gail Favors.

## THE PARTNERS AND FUNDING SOURCES

- U.S. Forest Service
- Delaware Department of Agriculture
- Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- Municipalities including the City of Lewes, City of Newark and Town of Smyrna
- Community organizations, such as Homeowners Associations.
- Certified 501(c)(3) non-profits in the State of Delaware, including the Seaford Historical Society, Elizabeth W. Murphy School and Rehoboth Art League

Volunteers wrap up planting on the parcel that was cleared of invasives in preparation for the event.

## CONTACTS

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