



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 to landowners donating an open-space or conservation 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 localities to reimburse landowners to offset costs related to donating an easement.

Eligibility

Localities

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 and disburse funding to a landowner, is required before any award is made within that locality.

Landowners

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

Due Diligence

Costs associated with the donation of an easement may be eligible for reimbursement. This includes appraisals, legal services, surveys, title work, mortgage review, perk tests, baseline documentation reports (BDRs), tax assistance, and stewardship fees.

Easement Terms

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

Reimbursement Rates

Landowners will be reimbursed on an income-based cost-share assistance rate, with per easement awards not to exceed the maximum easement assistance listed below. VOF will determine eligibility based on submitted financial documentation.

Landowner Annual Income	Reimbursement Rate	Maximum Easement Assistance
Up to \$70,000	100%	\$25,000
\$71,000 - \$85,000	80%	\$20,000
\$86,000 - \$105,000	50%	\$8,500
Over \$105,000	Not Eligible	Not Eligible

Funds must be disbursed from VOF to a locality. The locality will reimburse the landowner.

Application Process

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