



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Board of Supervisors Increases Financial Incentives for Conservation Easement Assistance Program

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has approved changes to the county's [Conservation Easement Assistance Program \(CEAP\)](#) aimed at increasing the number of landowners who qualify for financial assistance under this grant program. The changes have been implemented and the CEAP is ready to accept new applications.

The Conservation Easement Assistance Program helps offset the costs of placing land under conservation easement by providing funds to land trusts representing income-qualifying landowners (or trusts and LLCs) in Loudoun County. The funds will be applied to the landowner's conservation easement process.

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. The land use restriction often results in tax savings for landowners who can use easements to protect their farmland, preserve cultural and historic sites, sustain working farms and landscapes and maintain the natural beauty of an area.

The program changes were initiated by Blue Ridge District Supervisor Tony Buffington who brought forward a recommendation to the Board to explore revisions to the current income requirements under the CEAP to be more inclusive for family trusts and LLCs.

The revisions, adopted unanimously by the Board in September 2021, are now active for property owners interested in working with a land trust to protect a portion—or all—of their private undeveloped land in Loudoun County. The revisions to the program include:

- Increasing the amount of the assistance award to \$25,000 (up from \$15,000) to accommodate a greater share of expenses, such as attorney's services, land appraisal and survey fees, and processing and document fees. This award, which can cover up to half of the total expenses, will provide an additional incentive to landowners considering placing an easement on their property.
- Increasing the maximum allowable income amount for landowners applying to the Conservation Easement Assistance Program to \$155,938 and eliminating the top earner's salary from family LLC and family trust applications. Raising the allowable salary requirements expands the pool of landowners who qualify for the program.

A countywide total of \$150,000 in funding will be available annually and distributed to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications must be made by land trusts on behalf of a landowner, and are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the calendar year.

For more information about conservation easements in Loudoun County, visit loudoun.gov/conservationeasements or email conservationeasements@loudoun.gov.

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