



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

Office of the County Administrator, Public Affairs and Communications
1 Harrison Street SE, P.O. Box 7000, Leesburg, VA 20177-7000
703-777-0113 • Fax 703-771-5841

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Media Contact: Glen Barbour, Public Affairs and Communications Officer
703-771-5086, Glen.Barbour@loudoun.gov

Conservation Easement Assistance Program Income Cap Raised to \$500,000

During its February 7, 2023, meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved changes to Loudoun County's Conservation Easement Assistance Program (CEAP) that are intended to increase 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 latest change increases the maximum allowable income amount for landowners applying to the Conservation Easement Assistance Program to \$500,000. Raising the allowable adjusted gross income requirements expands the pool of landowners who qualify for the program. This includes beneficiaries of family trusts and family LLCs.

"This increase helps protect western Loudoun's rural, historic and scenic character by making it easier for residents to decide to permanently protect their land for the benefit of future generations," said Blue Ridge District Supervisor Tony R. Buffington, who requested the adjustment along with Ashburn Supervisor Michael R. Turner.

The CEAP helps offset the initial 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.

In 2021, the Board increased the amount of the assistance award from \$15,000 to \$25,000. In addition, during that previous action, the board eliminated the top earner's income from family LLC and family trust applications.

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 easement assistance program, visit loudoun.gov/easementassistance. To learn more about conservation easements in Loudoun County, visit loudoun.gov/conservationeasements.

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