

NEWS RELEASE

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Board Broadens Eligibility 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 will be implemented in the coming weeks.

The Conservation Easement Assistance Program helps offset the costs of placing land under conservation easement by providing funds to land trusts who represent landowners 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 CEAP regulations were revised to be more inclusive for family trusts and LLCs interested in working with a land trust to protect a portion—or all—of their private undeveloped land in Loudoun County.

The recently adopted revisions further broaden the types of entities eligible to receive CEAP funding, to include family General Partnerships, family Limited Liability Partnerships and family Limited Partnerships.

- The assistance award can be granted for up to \$25,000 to accommodate 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, provides an additional incentive to landowners considering placing an easement on their property.
- The maximum allowable income amount for landowners applying to the Conservation Easement Assistance Program is currently \$500,000; the top earner's salary is eliminated from family LLC, family trust, family LLP and family LP or GP applications.

A countywide total of \$150,000 in funding is 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. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the calendar year.

For more information about conservation easements in Loudoun County, visit loudoun.gov/ConservationEasements.

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