



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Application Period for Conservation Easement Assistance begins Sept. 1, 2019

Loudoun County will begin accepting a second round of applications for the Conservation Easement Assistance Program September 1, 2019.

The grant program is designed to help protect historic, cultural and environmental resources by providing financial assistance to qualified Loudoun County landowners to place their land under conservation easement. A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values.

The program helps with the upfront costs of placing land under conservation easement, including the costs of stewardship, attorney's services, land appraisal and survey fees, and processing and document fees. Funding for half of these costs or \$15,000, whichever is less, will be provided to land trusts working with landowners who qualify.

Landowners interested in the possibility of placing their land under a conservation easement should contact a land trust to begin the process. If the land trust agrees, the land trust will apply on behalf of the landowner.

Landowners must have a household income of 100% Area Median Income (currently \$121,300) or lower. The land to be placed under conservation easement must be located in Loudoun County and meet the following requirements:

- The property must be capable of being subdivided (with the exception of parcels in the Agricultural and Forestal District Program);
- The proposed use of the property as permanent open space should conform with the policies in Loudoun County's Comprehensive Plan; and
- The property must not currently be under conservation easement or otherwise restricted from development, except parcels under the Land Use Assessment program or enrolled in the Agricultural and Forestal District program.

Loudoun's Conservation Easement Assistance Program, which was launched earlier this year, established a fund of \$150,000 for calendar year 2019 with two month-long application periods: the first was in March; the second, which opens September 1, 2019, will close September 30, 2019.

If there are more applications than funding available, the county will weigh the applications against each other based on the number of development rights relinquished and the historic/cultural resources preserved. Those with the highest scores will be awarded as funding is available.

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Landowners should consult a land trust to see if their land is eligible for a conservation easement. Since easements are generally granted in perpetuity, an outside party must be responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of the easement. If the land is eligible and the land trust agrees, the land trust will apply on the landowners' behalf and will "hold" the easement for current and future property owners.

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

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