



Sustainable Communities Grant Program Funded by Pepco

2024 Application Information Packet

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Sustainable Communities Grant Program Funded by Pepco

Announcement Date: Wednesday, May 1st, 2024
Application Due Date: Friday, July 12th, 2024
Questions: Email SMGrants@umd.edu

General questions regarding the Sustainable Maryland Program should be directed to Liv Pierce at opierce@umd.edu or 301-405-9424.

A. Overview

Pepco values the environment and is always working toward delivering a cleaner and brighter future for communities. That is why it is contributing another \$125,000 to support municipal environmental stewardship and resiliency projects in its service territory. With this contribution, Pepco has provided \$600,000 in funding for the Sustainable Communities grant program.

For Pepco and its parent company Exelon, diversity, equity, and inclusion are core foundational values both in the workplace and in outreach to the people it serves. The company strongly encourages underrepresented communities to apply for the Sustainable Communities grant. Prospective applicants are encouraged to consider collaborating with neighboring municipalities and/or local nonprofit organizations to propose projects with regional implications and benefits.

The **Environmental Stewardship Grants** are intended to help municipalities and nonprofits plan for, protect and improve public spaces such as local parks, natural areas, and recreation resources. In addition, grants can be used in combination with other funding sources to cover a portion of the expenses associated with developing and/or supporting their open space programs not otherwise covered by state or county programs.

The **Community Resiliency Grants** will be awarded for projects that enhance the capacity of municipalities and nonprofits to prevent and respond to catastrophic events and emergencies.

Environmental Stewardship Grants	Community Resiliency Grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awards up to \$10,000Total of \$75,000Up to 8 awards expected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awards up to \$25,000Total of \$50,000Up to 2 awards expected.

ONLINE Applications are due by Friday, July 12, 2024. Email submissions of grant proposals will NOT be accepted. All applications must be submitted online using the link below:

https://webportalapp.com/sp/sustainable_md_pepco_grant

The grants will have a 12-month performance period. Notification of grant awards will be made by early-September. A grant announcement event will be held in late-September. A final grant report will be due on **October 31, 2025**.

An informational webinar will be held on **Tuesday, May 14th, from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm**. The webinar will include an overview of the program, a demonstration on how to use the online application portal and the ability to ask questions about the program. Register [here](#) for the webinar.

B. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not be considered for an award. Sustainable Maryland staff will verify the information provided.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Projects already underway or completed are not eligible for funding. Funding cannot be used to reimburse municipalities and nonprofits who have already spent funds on the proposed project. It can be used for project expansions that have not yet been funded or “phase 2” of a previous project.

Standard Eligibility Rules

To be eligible to apply for a grant in this cycle, the following requirements must be met:

- Projects must be located within the Pepco service territory (see [Attachment 1](#)),
- Municipalities must be [registered](#) or [certified](#) with the Sustainable Maryland program.
- Nonprofit eligibility:
 - Must show proof of 501(c)3 status
 - Can be located outside the Pepco service area so long as the project presented serves communities located in the territory

Limitations on the Number of Application Submissions

- An applicant is eligible to apply for **one** Environmental Stewardship Grant and **one** Community Resiliency Grant. However, **only one grant will be awarded**.

C. Use of Grant Funding

Matching or in-kind contributions (including volunteer time) are encouraged, but not required. Funding can be passed through to a nonprofit, partner organization, or contractor, but the awarded applicant will be responsible for the reporting requirements. Checks will be made payable to the primary applicant and sent to its fiscal agent.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Awards will not be made for general operating funds of an organization, but **up to 15%** of a project budget may be used for operating funds to manage the project.

Environmental Stewardship Grants

\$75,000 total, awards up to \$10,000 – up to 8 awards expected

Open space is a major driver of quality of life in the DC Metro region. The Trust for Public Land recently named the DC region #1 nationwide for park access; continued protection and enhancement of those resources remains a critical priority for the region in the face of climate stressors. These projects will enhance resiliency in this region by stewarding open space and protected lands, which protect water quality in streams and rivers, mitigate urban heat island effects, and promote social benefits such as health, a sense of place, and community connections. Projects should align with existing climate resiliency strategies or land management plans, such as [Sustainable DC 2.0](#), [Montgomery County Climate Action Plan](#), [Prince George's County Climate Action Plan](#), or plans for management of protected areas.

Eligible activities can include: conservation; pollution prevention; community engagement; developing or updating open space plans; improving applicant-owned open spaces such as meadows, woodlands, and riparian buffers or capital improvements for passive recreation such as installing recreation trails, boardwalks, informational kiosks, and observation platforms; acquisition of parcels of land to be used for open space; and acquisition of conservation easements.

Community Resiliency Grants

\$50,000 total, awards up to \$25,000 – up to 2 awards expected

Though the Washington metropolitan region is known for its rich diversity, it remains one of the most socioeconomically segregated urban areas, and one in which many communities struggle for access to environmental and social benefits, such as cooler and cleaner area. These projects will focus on projects that demonstrate innovation in providing a safe and reliable resource for a community that minimizes potential impacts to the environment during a time of emergency. Projects should align with local or regional resiliency or emergency planning efforts.

Eligible activities include implementation of strategies to minimize the impact of severe weather events, natural disasters or other emergencies impacting the environment; emergency operations planning, training, and community outreach; and purchase of supplies and equipment needed to respond to emergencies including energy storage and stationary or mobile solar.

In both categories, projects that leverage additional funds will be considered favorably. Projects may begin September 1, 2024 and are expected to be completed October 31, 2025.

D. Online Application Portal

The grant applications can be accessed using this link, which will take you to this landing page:

https://webportalapp.com/sp/sustainable_md_pepco_grant



Sign In/Sign Up Instructions

For New Users:

By clicking **Sign Up**, you will be prompted to enter your email address and create a password. Once you have chosen your password, your account will be created and you will gain access to the portal.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS GRANT CYCLE IS ONLY OPEN TO MUNICIPALITIES AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN PEPKO TERRITORY.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Projects already underway or completed are not eligible for funding. Funding cannot be used to reimburse municipalities and nonprofits who have already spent funds on the proposed project. It can be used for project expansions that have not yet been funded or "phase 2" of a previous project.

Sign In

Email

Password

Log In

[Forgot your password?](#)

Need an Account?

Sign Up

Applications must be submitted using the online application portal by 11:59 PM on **Friday, July 12, 2024**. At that time the portal will close. Only online application submissions will be considered for funding.

You may save your work, log out, and resume your in-progress application at any time by using the login feature. Even if you submit the application, you will still be able to access it up until the application deadline. Drafts of the application will automatically save every 5 minutes and a "save draft" button is available at the end of the application form. You are encouraged to manually save your application when you are logging out or stepping away from working on it.

Creating an Account

STEP ONE: First, **sign up** for an account. **Be sure to record the email address and password you used.** Grant recipients will need that information to log into the system to complete the required reports. The person signing up for the account will be considered the grant's **primary contact**. Sustainable Maryland will direct all communications about the grant application to this person. This account can be used to submit up to two grant applications (applications for one Community Resiliency grant **AND/OR** one Environmental Stewardship grant).

Thank you for signing up for a grant account! As the **primary grant contact**, you will use this account to submit up to two applications in the 2022 Sustainable Communities Grant Program. Before moving forward with a grant application, you must first create a Profile for your grant account.

Please click **"Create a Profile to Get Started"** to begin. You can always edit your Profile by clicking "Edit".

You cannot move forward until you have completed your Profile.



STEP TWO: After signing up for your grant account, you must create a profile before moving forward with filling out the grant application sections. Click "Create a Profile to Get Started" to access the Profile form. Depending on the type of applicant you are, select "Municipality" or "Nonprofit Organization" from the dropdown.

Primary Application Contact

This is the primary person Sustainable Maryland will correspond with regarding this application and any subsequent award.

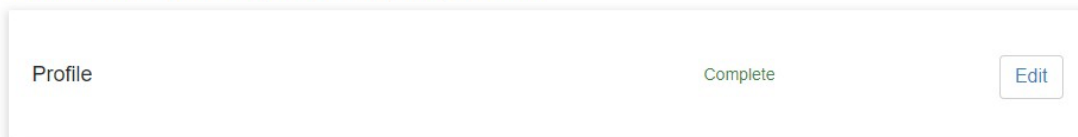
Are you submitting grant applications for your municipality or non-profit organization? *

STEP THREE: Fill out the Profile sections. **Please note that for municipalities, the primary contact must be a municipal staff member or an elected/appointed official (green team member/volunteer). For nonprofits, it must be a staff member. It cannot be a consultant.** If a consultant is responsible for completing the grant application, they should submit the application under an account owned by the primary grant contact. Click "Get Started" to access the application form. You are now ready to complete the different application sections.

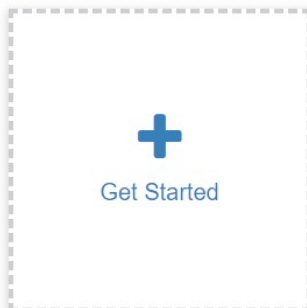
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Please click **"Create a Profile to Get Started"** to begin. You can always edit your Profile by clicking "Edit".

You cannot move forward until you have completed your Profile.



Thank you for filling out the profile form for your grant account. To begin an application, click **"Get Started"** below. When you return to this Homepage, you can see the status of your submission by the colored status bar below the submission card.



E. Grant Application

If you plan on submitting an application for both a Community Resiliency and an Environmental Stewardship grant, you will need to submit two separate grant applications.

Applications must be submitted using the online application portal by midnight 11:59 PM on **Friday, July 12, 2024.**

Pepco Grant Proposal Form

Complete this form requesting information on your requested grant type (Community Resiliency or Environmental Stewardship), funding amount (up to \$10,000 or \$25,000, depending on the grant type), and information on the proposed grant project.

I. Grant Type and Requested Funding Amount

Select the grant type and funding amount that you are applying for. This will populate the form with questions specific to that funding amount.

Which type of grant are you applying for? (Choose One)

- Environmental Stewardship Grant – up to \$10,000
- Community Resiliency Grant – up to \$25,000

II. Applicant Information

Select the applicant type to provide information on the municipality or nonprofit organization applying for the grant.

Which type of applicant are you? (Choose One)

- Municipal
 - ☐ Municipality name
 - ☐ County
 - ☐ Employer Identification Number (EIN) without dashes
 - ☐ Current Status in the Sustainable Maryland program. Municipalities must either be registered or certified in the program to be eligible to apply. Use the Participating Communities map [here](#) to check your municipality's current program status. Find the name of your municipality using the "List View". Review the status types below:
 - **Not Registered.** If your municipality is not listed, that means it is not registered and must do so in order to be eligible to apply for grants. See

instructions on how to get started [here](#) or contact opierce@umd.edu or 301-405-9424

- **Registered.** If your municipality's name is listed but the certification column is blank, that means the municipality is registered.
- **Currently Certified.** If the certification column says "Bronze" or "Silver," that means your municipality is currently certified.

- Nonprofit Organization
 - Organization name
 - Address
 - Employer Identification Number (EIN) without dashes
 - Please upload the following documents:
 - List of board of directors
 - Proof of 501(c)3 status
 - Most recently available audited financial statements (or equivalent)

III. Application Contacts

All application contacts will be notified once a final decision on the grant application is made. Provide the name, title, phone number, phone extension number (if applicable), and email address for each of the following:

- Mayor or Executive Director
- Fiscal - The fiscal contact must be a person authorized to manage official funds. Please also provide the mailing address of your business office if applicable.
- Media (Optional) - The person responsible for the promotion of your project with the community and news outlets.

IV. Grant Proposal

The applicant must provide the following information about the project:

- **Project Title**
- **Brief Description (300-word limit):** The description should be concise and focus on the specific effort that the grant will be used to support. This description will be used in program reports and communications materials.
- **Project Goals and Measurable Outcomes**

- **Key Audiences and/or Partners:** Identify key audience and partners. Priority consideration will be given to projects that partner with community-based organizations led by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented communities.
- **Project Team:** List of the key people who will be involved in completing the proposed project that includes each person's name, organization, position (title), and other experience relevant to the completing the project.
- **Alignment with Local or Regional Plans**
- **Action Plan and Timeline:** Describe the specific steps your team will take to complete the proposed project and identify the estimated target completion date for each step to ensure the project can be accomplished by the end of the grant performance period (12months). Please include:
 - Project planning
 - Implementation
 - Community engagement
 - Promotional activities
 - Ribbon cutting ceremonies or milestone events evaluation
- **Community Engagement:** Describe how the proposed project will leverage collaborations between community members including staff, residents, and representatives from community-based organizations (i.e., green teams, municipal and county agencies, civic or community-based organizations, nonprofits, professional organizations and local businesses). Also include plans for sharing information on the project with the greater community. This can include plans to hold a “ribbon-cutting” ceremony, create project signage, give presentations to the governing body, distribute printed communications, create website content, and create social media postings. Promotion of the grant should include both the [Pepco](#) and the [Sustainable Maryland](#) logos. Social media posts should utilize the #sustainablecommunities hashtag.
- **Evaluation:** This grant does not require a rigorous or formal evaluation process, however, grant recipients are expected to report on specific and/or measurable results or outcomes and other non-quantifiable impacts on the community. Estimate who (staff, residents, etc.) and how many will benefit from the proposed project.

V. Budget Narrative and Detailed Project Budget:

- **Budget Narrative:** Provide a brief budget narrative explaining what the grant funds will be used for.
 - **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Only eligible expenses can be paid for using grant funding. Awards will not be made for general operating funds, but up to 15% of a project

budget may be used for operating funds to manage the project. Other eligible grant expenses vary depending on project type and can include:

- Professional service fees
 - Costs associated with implementing public outreach and education efforts such as meeting space rental, advertising, printing
 - Materials, equipment, and supplies
 - Expenses that support the acquisition (by purchase or donation) of open space or conservation easements such as land cost, development rights, legal or consultant fees, surveying, environmental assessments, appraisals, etc.
- **SM Financial Management Spreadsheet:** The [SM Financial Management Spreadsheet](#) is a one-stop shop for financial information about your project that will be used to manage the financial components of your request/award from the time of application through (if your award request is approved) the time of award close-out. The Application Budget tab is an itemized list of all project expenses by category and must be filled out during the application process.
 - **IMPORTANT NOTE:** In-kind contributions or matching funds are not required but do help demonstrate an applicant's commitment to a project. Sources of matching funds can include municipal funding, other grant funds, or in-kind contributions such as non-cash donations, staff time, and volunteer time. If using another grant to fund part of your project, the status of the grant award should be clear in the SM Financial Management Spreadsheet. Projects where its completion is contingent upon receiving uncommitted funding will not be viewed favorably by the selection committee.

VI. Optional Information

Applicants are encouraged to upload letters of commitment and/or letters of support from project partners that will participate in the proposed project and/or organizations or community members that will benefit from it. The additional file upload option can also be used to provide more detailed project information, such as surveys or other data supporting the need for the project.

If you plan on submitting an application for both a Community Resiliency and an Environmental Stewardship grant, you will need to submit two separate grant applications.

Applications must be submitted using the online application portal by midnight 11:59 PM on **Friday, July 12th, 2024.**

F. Selection Process

Applicants may submit one proposal for the Environmental Stewardship Grant **AND** one Community Resiliency Grant. However, only one grant will be awarded. The selection committee will evaluate applications that meet the grant eligibility requirements based on criteria listed in [Attachment 2](#). Sustainable Maryland reserves the right to reallocate the funding based on the quality and quantity of grant applications received. The selection committee will also consider the needs of the community and the distribution of grants throughout the Pepco service territory.

G. Grant Awards and Additional Terms

Grant Awards

Applicants selected to receive a grant will be notified through their designated contacts. Grant awards will be announced by **early-September** and a grant announcement event will be held in late-September.

Awardees will be required to complete a vendor application through the University of Maryland. More information will be sent out separately for this process.

Additional Terms

- **Project Promotion and Recognition:** Pepco and the Sustainable Maryland Program should be acknowledged on reports or other materials developed with grant funds. Copies of materials acknowledging the funders will be required attachments in the final grant report for all grants. Promotion of the grant should include both the [Pepco](#) and the [Sustainable Maryland](#) logos. Social media posts should utilize the #sustainablecommunities hashtag.

During the grant period, award recipients will agree to participate in press conferences or events, to be quoted in Pepco literature describing the program and to identify Pepco as a funder in any materials produced to explain or promote the funded project.

All grant recipients are required to notify Sustainable Maryland of any project-related ribbon-cutting ceremonies or milestone events so that media outreach can be coordinated with Sustainable Maryland and Pepco. The purpose of these events is to celebrate the grantee's accomplishments in completing the grant project with the community and recognize the program funder. It is recommended that the project teamwork with the grant media contact to develop a strategy to promote the completion of the grant through the community and local media. The promotion of the grant should include [Pepco](#) and [Sustainable Maryland](#) logos. Copies of materials documenting recognition of Pepco and Sustainable Maryland are required as part of the final grant report.

If holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony does not apply to your project, there are other ways to share the success of the project with the rest of the community. Consider presenting grant accomplishments in public meetings, distributing printed communications, and creating

website content and social media postings. Social media posts should utilize the #sustainablecommunities hashtag.

- **Project Photos**: All grant recipients are also required to include at least **TWO** photographs depicting the grant project and/or related activities with their final report. Whenever possible, the photographs should include members of the community. Pepco and Sustainable Maryland reserves the right to use these photographs in reports, presentations, and other program-related materials.

H. Grant Recipient Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to complete a final report using an online report form. Reminders will be emailed to the primary project contact at least 30 days in advance of the reporting submission deadline.

Final Report (Due October 31, 2025): Document completion of the project described in the original application. For a project to be considered complete all funds must be spent and all activities listed in the application must be completed. Recipients will be asked to provide:

- A project summary and lessons learned
- Describe the impact of the grant on the community
- A summary of community outreach efforts
- At least **TWO** photographs
- Documentation that Pepco and Sustainable Maryland were acknowledged in promotional materials and signage
- [SM Financial Management Spreadsheet](#) and supporting documentation

Failure to submit the required documentation will result in the grantee being ineligible to apply for future Sustainable Maryland grants.

Attachment 1: Pepco Service Territory

The following communities are eligible to apply for a Sustainable Communities Grant funded by Pepco

Washington DC

Prince George's County

Berwyn Heights
Bladensburg
Brentwood
Capitol Heights
Cheverly
College Park
Colmar Manor
Cottage City
District Heights
Edmonston
Fairmount Heights
Forest Heights
Greenbelt Hyattsville
Landover Hills
Morningside
Mount Rainier
New Carrollton
North Brentwood
Seat Pleasant
University Park
Upper Marlboro

Montgomery County

Brookeville
Chevy Chase (Town, Village, Section 3, Section 5, View)
Friendship Heights
Gaithersburg
Garrett Park
Glen Echo
Kensington
Laytonsville
Martin's Additions
North Chevy Chase
Rockville
Somerset
Takoma Park
Washington Grove

Attachment 2: Grant Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Applications that meet the grant eligibility requirements will be evaluated using the criteria listed below:

Project Description (10 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The description concisely summarizes the specific project to be funded by the grant award
Project Goals and Measurable Outcomes (15 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals have been well defined • Deliverables are clear • Measurable outcomes have been well articulated
Alignment with Local and/or Regional Plans (5 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal describes how project will align with local and regional plan and/or existing efforts
Project Team Members (10 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The designated project team appears qualified to undertake the proposed project • The project team includes representation from municipal and community stakeholder groups that will be involved in or impacted by the implementation of the proposed project
Action Plan & Timeline (15 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed project action plan addresses the steps needed to successfully complete the project • Target completion dates are realistic and will enable the project to be completed within the 12month performance period • Events where the grant will be promoted, such as a ribbon cutting ceremony, and materials will be distributed are identified
Community Engagement and Key Audiences (10 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed project will capitalize on collaborations between community stakeholders including representatives from the schools, municipal and county agencies, civic or community based organizations, nonprofits, professional organizations and local businesses. • Details on how the project will be shared with the community are included • Engages organizations led by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented communities.
Project Impact and Evaluation (20 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed project will address the community need identified in the proposal • The project will preserve, protect, and improve public spaces designated as open space or used for passive recreation or contribute to a more resilient community • Some consideration has been given to how this project will be evaluated over time
Budget (15 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Budget Narrative clearly summarizes project expenses and identifies all the sources of funding needed to complete the proposed project, including in-kind contributions such as volunteer hours • The project leverages no or low-cost resources to cost-effectively complete the proposed project • It is clear that all additional funding besides the grant is in-hand or committed • The detailed project budget is consistent with the Budget Narrative and clearly identifies the eligible project expenses that will be billed to the grant • The budget is realistic, costs are justified and resource contributions, including in-kind, have a reasonable value