

5-425.

The General Assembly finds and declares that forests and trees are an important and necessary part of the urban and community environment and that the retention, enhancement, and management of these forests and trees by local governments is in the best interest of the citizens of this State.

5-426.

(a) (1) The Department shall establish and administer an urban and community forestry program to provide State or federal financial assistance, on a matching basis, to:

(I) [a] A county or municipal corporation that implements a local urban and community forestry program within its jurisdiction; OR

(II) A NONPROFIT CORPORATION THAT PARTICIPATES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A LOCAL URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM.

(2) The county or municipal corporation may hire an individual to direct its program with the cooperation of the Department.

(b) The Department's urban and community forestry program shall provide technical assistance to counties, municipal corporations, NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS, and individuals for the retention and management of forests and trees. This technical assistance may include:

(1) Street tree inventories;

(2) Technical evaluation of site development plans;

(3) Management recommendations for the retention, protection and utilization of forests and trees in developments;

(4) Assistance to planning and zoning departments;

(5) Advice on insect and disease control; [and]

(6) Advice to counties and municipal corporations in implementing and conducting their own urban and community forestry program; AND

(7) ADVICE TO NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM.

5-427.

(b) The Department may accept federal funds and provide funds, on a matching basis, to:

(1) [cooperating] COOPERATING counties and municipal corporations for the purpose of administering an urban and community forestry program; AND

(2) NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF AN URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM.