



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
DIVISION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION
OFFICE OF PLANT INDUSTRY SERVICES**

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Document number: OPIS 2018-01
Subject: Beehive Distribution Program
Effective date: July 1, 2018
Expiration date: In effect until otherwise rescinded

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and requirements for qualification under the Beehive Distribution Program.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- The Virginia General Assembly created the Beehive Grant Fund (Fund) for the purpose of promoting the establishment of new beehives in the Commonwealth.
- The 2018 Session of the General Assembly replaced the Beehive Grant Program with the Beehive Distribution Program (Chapter 192 of Acts of Assembly). The Beehive Grant Program reimbursed beekeepers for expenses related to the purchase of beehive equipment whereas the Beehive Distribution Program (Program) will provide beehive equipment directly to beekeepers.
- Effective July 1, 2018, the Beehive Grant Fund will be used for the Beehive Distribution Program and will not provide funding for reimbursement to beekeepers who submitted an application and are awaiting approval of their grant under the Beehive Grant Program.
- An individual who submits an application to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Department) for a beehive unit through the Program will be registered as a beekeeper with the Department.
- Applications will be processed in the order in which completed eligible applications are received by the Department.
- Individuals may receive no more than three basic beehive units per fiscal year (July 1 thru June 30).

- In the event funds have been exhausted and all beehive units distributed for the fiscal year (July 1 thru June 30), the Department will cease accepting applications and notify applicants. Applications for beekeepers who do not receive beehive units will not be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

REQUIREMENTS

- Only residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia who are 18 years of age or older at the time the application is submitted are eligible to receive a beehive unit through the Program.
- The fair market value of beehive units received through the Program are subject to state and federal taxes.
- New beehives funded through this program, either fully or in part, shall be installed and remain within the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- A beehive unit shall consist of two deep hive boxes with frames and foundation, a bottom board, and cover, or a hive of equivalent capacity that has movable frames with combs or foundation that cause the bees to construct brood combs and that may be removed from the hive without injuring other combs.
- A basic beehive unit shall include the following items:
 - Hive box or boxes
 - Two deep Langstroth boxes, or
 - Three medium Langstroth boxes, or
 - One Top Bar Box
 - Frames for the hive box(es)
 - Foundation or similar guide for drawing comb for frames for the hive box(es)
 - Bottom board
 - Inner cover for a Langstroth hive unit
 - Outer cover
- Basic beehive units in the following styles will be distributed by the Department. A limited number of each style will be available. Should the preferred style not be available at the time an application is processed, the applicant will be contacted and may choose from available units or withdrawing their application should an acceptable style not be available.
 - Eight frame Langstroth medium brood box hive
 - Eight frame Langstroth deep brood box hive
 - Ten frame Langstroth medium brood box hive
 - Ten frame Langstroth deep brood box hive
 - Top bar hive

- The Department will ship beehive units to beekeepers by geographic area and to a specific destination determined by the Department. Beekeepers will be responsible for transporting beehive equipment from the location of the shipping destination. The Department will notify applicants of the date and location for receiving their beehive units.
- Beehive units must be used to establish a new beehive with a viable colony of honey bees within one year of the date the items are received by an individual.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications for beehive units may be submitted electronically to the Department utilizing the online application that is accessible at <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services-beehive-distribution-program.shtml>.
- Applicants may mail completed applications and required documentation to the address below. Printed application forms are available upon request. The processing of applications received by mail may be delayed.

VDACS
Office of Plant Industry Services
Beehive Distribution Program
P.O. Box 1163
Richmond, VA 23218

- Applicants are required to provide the following documentation with their application:
 - A completed Commonwealth of Virginia Substitute W-9 form, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification. Copies of the form may be obtained from the Virginia Department of Accounts or the VDOA website at https://www.doa.virginia.gov/forms/CVG/W9_COVSubstitute.pdf.

INSPECTION

The Department reserves the right to inquire into the legitimacy of any application, as well as the right to inspect any bee colony established in a distributed beehive unit. A colony shall consist of a laying queen, brood, and at least 10 frames of adult bees. The hive must contain honey and pollen in amounts sufficient to sustain the colony into the following year.

STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO BEEKEEPING ACTIVITY

- Applicants must comply with all state and local requirements related to beehive management and other beekeeping activity. A copy of the Virginia Bee Law (Va Code § 3.2-

4400 *et seq.*) may be found at <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title3.2/chapter44/>. Applicants should contact the locality or localities in which the beehive(s) will be located to ensure compliance with all applicable ordinances.

DISCLAIMERS

- By submitting an application to the Program, the applicant agrees to hold free and harmless the Commonwealth of Virginia and its officers, employees, and agents from and against all loss, liability, injury, and damage, including but not limited to injury or death to any person or damage to any property, resulting from or caused by, directly or indirectly, the applicant's beekeeping activity.
- The Department reserves the right to revise these guidelines at any time.

QUESTIONS

- Email inquiries regarding the Beehive Distribution Program to VABees@vdacs.virginia.gov.