Chesapeake Bay
Organizational Capacity Building
Grants Program

www.chesapeakebaytrust.org / 410-974-2941

AT A GLANCE

This Grant program aims to increase the effectiveness of organizations who protect and restore rivers and the watershed by addressing organizational capacity needs.

Deadline: March 23, 2018, at 5 pm

Eligible Applicants: 501(c)(3) Non-profit organizations

Eligible Locations:
Throughout the Chesapeake watershed including MD, DE, DC, PA, NY, VA, Washington DC, and WV; with a particular focus in the state of Maryland.

Funding Availability:$210,000 is available in this round. The average request last fiscal year was $13,000.

Submit your application by following instruction:
https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35204

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Introduction

The Capacity Building Initiative is a program of the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN). The initiative aims to increase the effectiveness of organizations with missions that focus on natural resources and whose strategic plans contain elements that seek to advance the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Bays. Through this opportunity, grants will be provided to eligible organizations within the watershed to support their ability to accomplish their missions.

The Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) is supported by the generous funding commitments from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Chesapeake Bay Program, the Keith Campbell Foundation, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Rauch Foundation, Town Creek Foundation, the Prince Charitable Trusts, MARPAT, the Agua Fund, and the Hillsdale Fund.

The Trust is supported in large part by the *Treasure the Chesapeake* license plate program. The Trust promotes public awareness and participation in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers. Since 1985, the Trust has awarded over $90 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout Maryland.

Goals of the Program

The goal is to provide organizations with missions that focus on natural resources and whose strategic plans contain elements that seek to advance the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Bays with resources to advance their organizational effectiveness. The projects funded through this opportunity, intended to be short-term (one year or less), will enable the organizations to catalyze organizational development activities. Grants will support a range of activities that address organizational capacity and technical assistance in areas such

as strategic planning, program evaluation, finance and fundraising, development of a volunteer base, communications, and technology.

Eligible Project Types

Capacity building projects should focus on addressing organization challenges in order to improve an organization's ability to sustain itself and be effective long term. The landscape of regional funders is changing and key foundations are sun-setting at this time, consequently, it is important for organizations to have a strong financial and power base. Two key capacity building strategies vital to establishing a strong base are the development of robust financial plans to diversify and expand organizational revenue sources, and the establishment of collaborative models among organizations. Collaborative models may include increased coordination through network development, sharing of back office support, shared decision making and resources, all the way up to full integration of programs, planning, and funding via organizational mergers. Requests to develop more robust organizational financial plans or to investigate and plan for collaborations or mergers among organizations are encouraged.

> *What is Capacity Building?*
>
> Capacity building refers to activities that strengthen an organization and help it better fulfill its mission.
>
> Capacity building can occur in every aspect of an organization, including programs, management, operations, technology, governance, fundraising, and communications.
>
> Please contact the Trust early in proposal development. The Trust can help you develop your request, assess its fit within this grant program, and discuss your organizational needs.

Examples of other specific tools for which funds may be requested include: organizational assessments, consultant or facilitation costs for planning, financial management or donor management software, volunteer software or other tools, workshop fees or registration costs for board or staff training opportunities, website design specifically related to online giving and membership, brochure materials, printing and postage for membership drives or annual appeals, presentation materials, and administrative software costs. This list is not exhaustive and you are encouraged to consider the below organizational capacity categories when forming your request. If you have a request idea, please contact the Trust staff to discuss your idea before applying.

Applicants may consider external forms of assistance such as peer mentoring or peer exchange elements, consultant services, coaching, or other third party methods for addressing organizational challenges. The Capacity Building Small Grants Program supports requests for funding of the following project types in this Request for Proposal (RFP):

Organization Capacity Category/Type Project	Example Projects:
Adaptive Capacities	
The ability of your organization to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes.	➤ Assessing organizational effectiveness, ➤ Investigating and evaluating the potential for organization collaborations with the goal of developing a sustainable network or integrating / mergeing existing organizations as a preferred outcome ➤ Developing or refining a strategic plan, including a vital mission and clear theory of change ➤ Evaluating programs and services

Leadership Capacities	
The ability of your organization's leaders to inspire, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction and innovate in an effort to achieve the organization's mission.	➢ Developing a stronger board ➢ Creating a leadership succession plan or addressing staff or board leadership transitions ➢ Conducting community needs assessments to inform leadership direction ➢ Developing skill sets of organization leaders
Management Capacities	
A non-profit organization is more likely to reach its goals if it is well managed. Management capacity is the ability of a nonprofit organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of organizational resources.	➢ Improving processes for internal communications, ➢ Developing efficient operation processes, ➢ Developing or enhancing management support systems; specifically, the quality of staff supervision
Technical Capacities	
Addressing technical capacities can be a broad category but typically refers to performance of the work of the organization: delivering programs and services. To do so, an organization needs solid finances with reliable and diverse revenue streams, staff with required skill sets, clear communications, and accountability.	➢ Fundraising plan development / developing diverse revenue sources ➢ Training and development for staff in necessary program skills, ➢ Technology improvements or database assistance ➢ Accounting and budgeting improvements ➢ Marketing and communications planning ➢ Volunteer or member recruitment and retention

Projects that will **NOT** be supported under this project type include:
o Endowments and capital campaigns, deficit financing, annual giving, research, and venture capital;
o Political lobbying; and
o Reimbursement for a project that has been completed or materials that have been purchased.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants will meet the following critera:

✓ Has current 501(c)(3) status
✓ Provides services in one or more of the following Chesapeake Bay region jurisdictions: MD, DE, PA, NY, VA, Washington DC, and WV.
✓ Has a natural resources mission
✓ Has an explicit component of their strategic plan that seeks to protect and preserve rivers and streams in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; water focused elements of the plan should be supported by specific objectives and programs in pursuit of the water focused elements of the plan
✓ Currently employs at least two staff dedicated to the organization's mission. At least one staff member must be employed full-time (defined as >35 hours per week). Organizations with only one paid staff member may substitute a dedicated volunteer position in which the individual contributes at least 20 hours per week.
✓ Has an active Board of Directors
✓ Has leadership (board and staff) who understand the value of capacity building and a well-articulated interest and commitment to build capacity (e.g. board development, strategic planning)

Applicants are highly encouraged to contact the Trust to discuss their proposal before applying for funding. Please contact the program manager, Kacey Wetzel, kwetzel@cbtrust.org or 410-974-2941 x104.

An Executive Officer and Project Lead must be identified for all proposals and must be different individuals. Both individuals must be staff or board members of the applicant organization.

Criteria and Guidelines

A Technical Review Committee will evaluate all applications prior to awarding grants. Reviewers consider the following in their evaluation of all proposals:

- General quality and consistency with the request for proposal/application
- Both short-term and long-term potential outcomes from the work, for example: increased numbers of volunteers, increased numbers of donors, increased numbers of revenue streams, increases in budget
- Justification and need
- Cost-effective project and appropriate budget items
- Likelihood of success and sustainability, most specifically, likelihood that the funding requested will lead to greater potential for a stronger organization to be sustained for many years into the future.

Project Timeline

Projects must be completed within a year upon receipt of the grant award. Requests to extend the project completion period will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

Contact

For questions, please contact Kacey Wetzel at (410) 974-2941 ext. 104 or kwetzel@cbtrust.org.

Application Submission Instructions and Deadlines

Applicants must submit their application in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online Grant System** by **5:00 pm on March 23, 2018**. Late applications will not be accepted and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 5:00 pm.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit at least a few days prior to the deadline given potential for high website traffic on the due date. The Trust cannot guarantee Online Grant System technical assistance on the deadline date.

To apply for a grant, follow instructions at http://www.cbtrust.org. We recommend logging into the online grant system early to start your grant application and so that you become familiar with the online grant application format (e.g., grant timeline format and number of timeline/task options), content (e.g., grant deliverable options), and process (e.g., how to submit the grant application). We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the day of the deadline to begin the application process.

Grant awards will be announced in May 2018.

All applicants will receive a letter stating the decision on the application. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the Trust will send a grant agreement letter with grant conditions and due dates of status and final reports. When the project is complete, grantees are required to complete final reports and may be required to submit invoices/receipts and timesheets (if

personnel time was used). Requirements related to award expenditures and documentation will be detailed in the award letter.

In cases where the grantee fails to submit a final report by the due date, or where funds are not being used in accordance with requirements, the Trust reserves the right to terminate the grant agreement and require a refund of funds already transferred to the grantee. <u>Organizations with outstanding final reports will not be awarded additional grants.</u>

Proposal Instructions

When completing the online application process, you will be asked for the following information:

Project Title: List the title of your project. Start your title with the type of project proposed: Addressing either a a) adaptive, b) leadership, c) management, or d) technical capacity

Organization Information
1) Organization name
2) Address & Phone Number
3) Mission of Organization
4) Organization Type
5) EIN Number
6) DUNS Number

An Executive Officer and Project Lead must be identified for all proposals and must be different individuals. Both individuals must be staff or board members of the applicant organization. Individuals from for-profit entities or organizations without 501(c)3 status cannot serve in either role.

Executive Officer of Requesting Organization: Name, Title, Address, Phone, and E-mail

Project Officer or Lead: Name, Title, Address, Phone, and E-mail

Grant Information:
1) Amount of funding requested
2) Grant Period: Enter project start and end dates

Project Abstract
In a text box, you will be asked to provide a brief (3 to 4 sentences) summary of the project, including details such as type of project, location, and main objectives.

Project Timeline
You will be asked to enter a table of major tasks, with start and end dates.

Project Deliverables
You will be asked to fill in estimated deliverables for a variety of metrics, please provide a numeric response for the metrics that apply to your project.

Project Partnerships and Qualifications
You will be asked to enter: project partner organizations or contractors, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project.

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Project Narrative Upload
You will be asked to upload two documents :

1) A MS Word or PDF file not to exceed 4 (four) pages of text, addressing the following narrative questions.

   a. What are the specific objectives of the project? Describe the steps to complete the project, including any use of consultants and how you will select them. Contractors must be selected through a competitive bid process.

   b. Describe specific products or outputs that will be generated over the course of the project.

   c. Please describe the outcomes that you expect to generate over the course of the requested grant period. Be mindful of the difference between outputs and outcomes. We are not asking how many meetings you will organize, or how many new organizational strategies you will put in place. We are interested in what you expect the meetings and strategies to produce in the way of change for your organization's sustainability and growth.

   d. How specifically will this project adress a capacity building need of your organization? Explain how your request supports your organization's ability to implement your strategic plan.

   e. If previous efforts have been made to address this particular need, please summarize your past experience.

   f. How and why was this capacity building need prioritized to be addressed over other organizational needs?

   g. How will you know if you were successful? What metrics will you use to determine if your efforts helped you to improve your organization's sustainability?

2) A completed self-assessment. Instructions can be found below in appendix A. If a group has done a formal internal assessment with the last three years you can submit the summary document of that assessment in place of this survey; however, regardless of previous assessments, the below self-assessment survey is a worthwhile exercise.

Budget Upload
You will be asked to upload your budget using the Chesapeake Bay Trust Budget Form, an excel file template. The template can be found by visiting www.cbtrust.org/forms and clicking on "**Budget Form**."

- For any staff cost requests, list the percentage of overall time devoted to the project by each staff member in the budget item column.

Budget Category Information
This online grant program component will ask applicants to enter budget category totals. These totals will have been automatically calculated in the **Budget Form.**

Personnel Category Information: If personnel and/or contractual costs are requested, please use this component of the form to provide detailed information about the scope(s) of work. You are limited to 5 entries. For additional tasks, use the Additional Budget Justification section.

Budget Justification: Use the budget justification section to provide a 2-3 paragraph budget justification. The justification narrative should include, in addition to general budget justification information detailed justification for staff cost requests, if requested, including a specific scope of work, specific tasks, and hours associated with those tasks.

Appendix A. Organizational Self-Assessment Survey

All submitted applications must include a complete online assessment. River Network has an online assessment tool that each group will complete as part of their application.

What does the Survey Ask?

This survey is designed to assess the programmatic and organizational capacities of your organization. The survey is divided into two sections. However, you are required to complete only Section One.

Section One, called the Status Report, seeks quantitative data about your organization's programs and operational structures (#, %, $) and is completed by only ONE person from your organization. **This is the section you will need to complete** (or submit a previous River Network assessment summary taken within the last 3 years). No need to do **Section Two** at this time. (Section Two captures perceptions and opinions from several people within an organization.)

Once you have completed and submitted Section One of the survey, the organization will receive by email a summary report. This report will aid the group in determining its capacity building needs and its future organizational priorities. You will be able to interpret the data to decide which best practices your organization may need to install and/or improve to have a healthy and sustainable organization, which should directly inform the application submitted to this request for proposals.

You are encouraged to answer the survey questions frankly and honestly, because that will lead to useful discussions within the organization. Remember to answer the questions as the organization currently operates, not as you wish it would or envision it in the future. River Network assures the confidentiality of your answers and will not share your individual data with funders.

Please note: Some questions have drop down boxes for answers with 'none' as the default, however, 'none' is not an answer; please use one of the other choices in the drop down box. Some questions require text answers and have narrative boxes to capture your words. Please make your answers short; you may use phrases instead of full sentences.

How much time will it take?

Expect to spend 30-40 minutes to complete Section One. Some questions will require some prep work on your part BEFORE starting the survey. River Network highly recommends that you reviews the questions before you start the survey so that you can be prepared to enter the data requested by the survey. Look through a copy of the questions here (Word .doc format). If the lead respondent has to gather statistical and financial data about your organization before starting the Status Report section that will add more time.

How do I access the survey?

The online Status Report survey is accessible through River Network's website via the following link: http://www.rivernetwork.org/status-report-survey.

When you are at the assessment site you will be asked which assessment version do you want. Click Status Report Only.

Can I stop midway and come back later?

Yes. When you leave the survey, River Network will email you an ID number to access the form again at a later date. Once the survey is completed River Network will email a copy of the data that you entered.

Can I edit my answers?
At the end of the Status Report section there will be a review page so that you can see your answers from that section. If needed, you can edit your answers from this review page before submitting the survey.

How many people within my organization can take the survey?
Only one person, the lead respondent, can complete Section One, the Status Report of the survey.

Can I get a report of my organization's responses?
Yes. Once your organization has responded to the survey, the lead respondent will receive a summary report. This report must be uploaded as a supporting document with your grant application.

What if I have questions about the the survey?
If you are having technical difficulties with the survey, contact Caroline Bott, at
cbott@rivernetwork.org