# Chesapeake Bay Organizational Capacity Building Grants Program

**www.chesapeakebaytrust.org / 410-974-2941**

## AT A GLANCE

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

*Deadline:* June 13, 2019, at 4 pm

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

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

*Funding Availability:* $220,000 is available in this round. The average request last fiscal year was $13,000.

*Submit your application by following instructions at:*
https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35204

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## IIntroduction and Goals

The Capacity Building Initiative, a program of the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN), 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, Coastal Bays, and Youghiogheny watersheds. Through this opportunity, grants will be provided to eligible organizations to support their ability to accomplish their missions.

The Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) is supported by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (supported in large part by the *Treasure the Chesapeake* license plate program), 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, and the Agua Fund.

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.

The Trust is committed to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in its grant-making and environmental work. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages grant applications from underrepresented groups whose missions includes a strong natural resources element. For a full description of the Trust's efforts to engage under-engaged groups, please see our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan at www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan.

## II. Eligible Project Types

Capacity building projects should focus on addressing organization challenges 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, organizations must 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 collaboration among organizations. Collaborative models may range from increased coordination through network development, sharing of back office support, and/or shared decision making and resources 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, 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 program manager 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. This 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, <br> ➢ Investigating and evaluating the potential for organization collaborations with the goal of developing a sustainable network or integrating / merging existing organizations as a preferred outcome <br> ➢ Developing or refining a strategic plan, including a vital mission and clear theory of change <br> ➢ 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 | ➢ Developing a stronger board <br> ➢ Creating a leadership succession plan or addressing staff or board leadership transitions |

| mission. | ➢ Conducting community needs assessments to inform leadership direction<br>➢ 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,<br>➢ Developing efficient operation processes,<br>➢ 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<br>➢ Training and development for staff in necessary program skills,<br>➢ Technology improvements or database assistance<br>➢ Accounting and budgeting improvements<br>➢ Marketing and communications planning<br>➢ Volunteer or member recruitment and retention |

# III. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must:

- ✓ Have current 501(c)(3) status
- ✓ Provide services in one or more of the following Chesapeake Bay region jurisdictions:  MD, DE, DC, PA, VA, and WV
- ✓ Have a natural resources mission
- ✓ Have an explicit component of their strategic plan that seeks to protect and preserve rivers and streams in the Chesapeake Bay, Coastal Bays, and/or Youghigheny watersheds. 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 employ 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.
- ✓ Have an active Board of Directors
- ✓ Have 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 proposals before applying for funding.** Please contact the program manager, Kacey Wetzel, kwetzel@cbtrust.org or 410-974-2941 x104.

## IV. Criteria

- **General quality of Application** (Scale 1-5): What is the level of completeness and attention to detail? Are all required application components included for sound evaluation of the application?
- **Consistency with the Request for Proposals (RFP)** (Scale of 1-10): Is the project proposed consistent with the intent of the RFP?
- **Partnerships** (Scale 1-10): Are selected volunteer and compensated partners (including contractors) appropriate? Are the partnerships necessary to accomplish the goals of the project, and are any partners missing?
- **Demonstration Value** (Scale of 1-5): Does the project have demonstration value and/or capacity building value from a transferability perspective?
- **Justification** (Project Need) (Scale of 1-15): Does the applicant justify the need for the proposed capacity building activities?
- **Likelihood of Success** (Scale of 1-15) What is the likelihood of success if this project were to move forward?
- **Sustainability** (Scale of 1-10) Has the applicant addressed sustainability, specifically, what is the likelihood that the funding requested will lead to greater organization capacity and a stronger organization that will be sustained for years into the future?
- **Cost Effectiveness and Budget** (Scale of 1-15): Is the budget appropriate and cost effective? Are the line items budgeted justified in the project narrative? Are requests for consultant costs justified? Requests for staff time to accomplish specific goals are appropriate; however, be sure to clearly justify the amount of staff time required for the project and the tasks (and hours per task) associated with time requested. Cash and in-kind match are not required but will be viewed favorably.

## V. 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.

## VI. Application Review

Each application is reviewed by a technical external peer review committee, called the Technical Review Committee (TRC), composed of individuals who are experts in the fields supported by this RFP. The TRC ranks and scores all applications based on the criteria above, then meets to discuss the application merits. The TRC then recommends a suite of applications to the Trust's Board of Trustees.

The Trust reserves the right to fund projects and budget items that advance its mission and meet its specific funding priorities and criteria.

To set applicant expectations prior to investing time in application, the Trust provides historical application approval rates for the same or similar programs: The average approval rate from the last three rounds in this grant program is 60%, this includes both fully and partially funded applications. The average approval rate of all applications to the Trust is 33%.

## VII. Contact

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

## VIII. Application Submission Instructions and Deadlines

To apply for a grant, follow instructions at https://cbtrust.org/grants/capacity-building/
Click on "New Applicant" and follow the on-screen instructions if you have not yet registered to use the system.

Applicants must submit their application in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online Grant System** by **4:00 pm on June 13, 2019**. Late applications <u>will not</u> be accepted and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 4:00 pm.

**<u>Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit at least a few days prior to the deadline</u>** given potential for high website traffic on the due date. The Trust cannot guarantee Online Grant System technical assistance on the deadline date. ***Grant awards will be announced in September 2019.***

All applicants will receive a letter stating the funding partnership's decision. 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. The Trust will mail grant payments to the requesting organization following (a) the Trust's receipt of the signed grant agreement and (b) satisfaction of any award contingencies. When the project is complete, grantees are required to complete final reports and 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. Organizations with outstanding final reports will not be awarded additional grants.

By submitting an application to this program, applicants acknowledge that: 1) they are compliant with federal employment and non-discrimination laws and 2) they have not been debarred, convicted, charged or had a civil judgment rendered against them for fraud or related offense by any government agency (federal, state or local) or been terminated for cause or default by any government agency (federal, state or local).

## Application 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) adaptive, b) leadership, c) management, or d) technical capacity.

**Organization Information**
1) Organization name (You must list the exact organization name to which the check will be issued if funding is approved. Please check with your finance office before submitting.)
2) Address & Phone Number
3) Mission of Organization
4) Organization Type
5) EIN Number
6) DUNS Number

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**An Executive Officer and Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified for all applications.** The Executive Officer and Project Leader must be able to make decisions on behalf of the organization either as a board member, an employee, or other approved position. The Project Leader will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project. The Trust cannot conduct any official correspondence with contractors, consultants, or other project partners. If at any time the Project Leader cannot continue in the position, the organization must contact the Trust and assign a new qualified Project Leader. To avoid conflict of interest issues, individuals associated with for-profit entities to be engaged in the project 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. The project abstract should be succinct and provide a clear idea of the project outputs based on intended outcomes. For the purposes of this RFP, we define these terms in the follow ways:
1) Output: the immediate results of the work which is being completed (e.g.: # of new revenue generating strategies identified; # of new plans or strategies developed, # of new board members engaged).
2) Outcome: the change that is prompted as a result of the output listed above (e.g.: enhanced fundraising capacity; increased ability to react to external challenges; improved leadership capacity).

**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.

**Project Narrative Upload**
You will be asked to upload two documents.

1. A MS Word or PDF file not to exceed 5 (five) pages of text, addressing the following narrative questions. We recommend that you copy and paste the questions to use as an outline in your narrative to ensure that you address all questions:
   a. Project Abstract: Copy and paste project abstract as written in the online application under the "Project Abstract" section.
   b. Goal: What are the specific objectives of the project? Describe the steps to complete the project. Please also describe the proposed project outputs (products). Include in this description a detailed explanation about what your project will do to meet the goals of this RFP: to increase the

effectiveness of organizations whose strategic plans contain elements that seek to advance the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Bays.

   c. <u>Outcomes:</u> 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. <u>Justification</u>: How and why was this capacity building need prioritized to be addressed over other organizational needs? 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. If previous efforts have been made to address this particular need, please summarize your past experience.

   e. <u>Sustainability</u>: The Trust aims to invest in projects that have the longest potential longevity, after the grant period is over. Discuss the future you see for the work for which you are requesting funds. What factors may affect its long term value and how will you ensure its long term value is maximized?

   f. <u>Partnerships and/or contractual services</u>: What partners, volunteer or compensated, will help you complete the project.

   g. <u>Evaluation</u>: 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 the self assessment spreadsheet; 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 <u>www.cbtrust.org/forms</u> 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:** <u>Use the budget justification section to provide a 2-3 paragraph budget justification.</u> 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.

**If contractual costs are requested, please provide a description of the procurement method by which contractual services were/ will be obtained. Applicants must either (a) have already obtained and documented costs estimates, quotes, or bids from three service providers prior to completing the application, or (b) indicate in the proposal that the project/ contractual services needed will be put out to bid. Please also provide a proposed scope of work for the contractor and qualifications of the consultant selected or to be selected

## Appendix A. Organizational Self-Assessment Tool

All submitted applications must include a complete self assessment. The Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool downloadable here (https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/final-report-and-status-report-forms/marguerite-casey-blank/) must be completed and attached to each application.

**What does the Self-Assesment Tool Ask?**
The Assessment is intended for self-guided use by nonprofit organizations, completing the Assessment using a team approach both improves validity and reduces individual biases and is highly recommended.

The workbook contains several worksheets, one worksheet for each organizational capacity dimension and additional worksheets containing instructions, a section to record general information about your organization and individuals completing the Assessment, a summary table, and a summary chart. The various worksheet tabs are located at the bottom of the screen; click on the tabs to view each worksheet.

You will be rating your organization on a variety of capacity elements. The capacity elements are clustered into four dimensions of nonprofit organizational capacity.

1) **Leadership**: the capacity of organizational leaders to inspire, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction, and innovate.
2) **Adaptive**: the capacity of a nonprofit organization to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes.
3) **Management**: the capacity of a nonprofit organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of organizational resources.
4) **Operational**: the capacity of a nonprofit organization to implement key organizational and programmatic functions.

Once you have completed tabs labeled 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the assessment tool, the spreadsheet will automatically total the scores in each capacity element in the "Summary Table" and "Summary Chart" tabs. 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 put in place 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 self assessment tool 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.

Please note: Some questions may not apply to every organization so the default option is "N/A." If an element does not apply to your organization, you may leave the "N/A" in place and it will not factor into the summary totals.

**How much time will it take?**
Expect to spend 20-30 minutes to complete each of the four sections, totaling about 2 hours to work through the entire tool. Some questions will require some prep work on your part BEFORE starting the

survey. We highly recommend that you review the questions before you start the survey so that you can be prepared to enter the data requested by the survey when it is time to submit it.

**How do I access the survey?**
The Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Capacity Assessment is accessible through our website via the following link: https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/final-report-and-status-report-forms/marguerite-casey-blank/


**What if I have questions about the the survey?**
If you are having technical difficulties with the survey, contact Joseph Toolan, Program Assistant at the Trust, via email at jtoolan@cbtrust.org.