Anne Arundel County Community Tree Planting Mini Grant Program

FY26 Request for Proposals

Chesapeake Bay Trust | 108 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403

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Introduction and Program Goals

The [Chesapeake Bay Trust](#) (Trust) is a nonprofit, grant-making organization dedicated to improving the bays, streams, rivers, forests, parks, and other natural resources of our local systems, from the Chesapeake to the Coastal Bays to the Youghiogheny River. The Trust, supported in large part by Maryland's Chesapeake Bay License Plate, and partnerships with other regional funders, engages and empowers diverse groups to take actions that enrich natural resources and local communities of the Chesapeake Bay region. Since 1985, the Trust has awarded over $195 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

This program is administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) and funded by the Anne Arundel County Forestry Board and the City of Annapolis (Watershed Restoration Fund).

Neighborhood by neighborhood, community stewardship projects are helping to raise public awareness about the health of our region's tree canopy, watersheds, air quality, streams, rivers, and the Bay, as well as the steps that can be taken to restore and protect them. By increasing tree cover and expanding green areas, erosion can be reduced, water, soil, and air quality can be improved, and summer temperatures, ozone pollution, and energy use can be reduced. Studies show that urban trees and green space play an important role in providing a higher quality of life, enhancing local economic development opportunities, and increasing property values.

The purpose of this program is to provide funding to Anne Arundel County neighborhood associations, community associations, non-profit groups, and other groups to plant trees, increase tree canopy, remove invasive plants, and engage residents in environmental stewardship.

The Trust is committed to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in its award-making and environmental work. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages applications directly from underrepresented groups, and for projects that increase awareness and participation of communities that are traditionally underrepresented, such as communities of color. For a full description of the Trust's efforts to engage under-engaged groups, see our strategic plan at www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan and https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/.

Eligible Applicants

The Anne Arundel County Forestry Board, City of Annapolis, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust welcome requests from the following organizations:

- ◆ 501(c)3 Private Nonprofit Organizations
- ◆ Faith-based organizations
- ◆ Community Associations
- ◆ Service and Civic Groups
- ◆ Municipal, County, Regional, State, Federal Public Agencies
- ◆ Soil/Water Conservation Districts & Resource Conservation and Development Councils
- ◆ Forestry Boards
- ◆ Public and Independent Higher Educational Institutions

Eligible Project Locations and Funding Availability

This program only funds projects in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, including the City of Annapolis.

- ◆ Projects can be completed on public property, property owned by non-profit organizations, community-owned property, and other property *with* conservation easements, signed long-term protection agreements, or other land protection.

Funding Availability: The funding partners anticipate funds available in FY26 of up to $43,500. Applicants may request **up to $5,000** to complete their project.

Eligible Project Types

This project funds native tree planting and/or invasive species removal projects.

- ◆ All planting projects **must include** a native plant list, planting/site plan, photo(s) of the planting/restoration site, and a detailed maintenance plan for at least three years.

- ◆ Requests for invasive vegetation removal as part of site preparation for native planting projects are permitted.
  - o Removal of trees, dead or dying, **are not** applicable through this grant program.

Project Timeline

Project Timeline: Projects must be completed within **12 months** upon receipt of the award. Requests to extend project completion period will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. To apply for an award, go to https://cbtrust.org/grants/anne-arundel-county-community-planting/ and click on "Get Started" to begin a new application. This will open a new window asking you to log in or create an account on our online system. If you have applied in the past, use your existing username and password (if you have forgotten either of these use the 'forgot password' feature). If you have not used our online system before, click on "New Applicant" and follow the instructions.

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). In addition, all final products will be provided to the funding partners for use and distribution at the sole discretion of the funding partners.

Deadline

Proposals for the Anne Arundel County Community Tree Planting Mini Grant Program are accepted on an on-going basis until funds are fully expended for the given fiscal year; check our website and sign up for our grantee newsletter for the most up to date information about the status of this rolling program.

The Trust must receive all proposals **at least EIGHT weeks** prior to the start of the proposed project.

Online Application Form

You will be asked to provide the following information on the online application form. Some items are required in order to submit your application. Refer to the online application for details.

Eligibility Quiz: This three-question quiz is meant to assist you in determining if your project meets the requirements of this award program and that your staff/organizational structure best supports a successful application.

Applicant Information Tab: Provide the organization's name, mailing address, phone number, organization type, mission, EIN number, and SAM UEI number**.** Provide the Executive Officer and Project Leader's name, title, address, phone, and email address.

- Both an Executive Officer and a Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified for all applications.
- The Executive Officer and Project Leader must both be able to make decisions on behalf of the organization either as a board member, an employee, or other approved position recognized by the organization but not a contractor of the application.
- To avoid conflict of interest issues, individuals associated with for-profit entities to be engaged in the project cannot serve in either role.

Project Information Tab: Provide a project title; project abstract; the watershed, county, and legislative district in which the project is located; and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the project location.

Watch our video on how to apply and how to submit an application using our online system at https://cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/.

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Definitions

The Executive Officer is the individual that oversees the organization (e.g., Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer, Mayor, President or Vice President, Principal (for schools), etc.) and has the authority to sign/execute award agreements on behalf of the organization. The Executive Officer information is tied directly to all the organization's applications and should not vary from application to application. If the Executive Officer could be listed as the Project Leader in a future proposal, we recommend listing a Board Member or other higher-ranking position of the organization as the Executive Officer in order to reduce the variation in the Executive Officer across applications.

The Program Leader is the individual will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project. The email address entered here MUST be the same as the email address you used to log in to the online system. The Project Leader is the primary point of contact for the application, and the email address used to submit the application via the online system must be that of the Project Leader. Applications in which the email address associated with the Project Leader in the applicant information tab of the online opportunity does not match the email address used to submit the application will not be considered for funding. The Trust cannot conduct any official correspondence with contractors 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.

Timeline Tab: Add the project start and end date. Provide a project timeline that includes major tasks and their associated start and end dates.

Deliverables Tab: Provide estimated metrics for your proposed project such as project participants and outreach and restoration outcomes.

Volunteers Tab: Provide a description of volunteer activities, the number of volunteers, and total number of volunteer hours.

Project Partnerships: Provide a list of project partner organizations or contractors, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project.

Applicants are encouraged to upload a letter of commitment for the project from each partner describing in detail the partner's role or contribution to the project. Applications including strong letter(s) of commitment often receive higher scores. If not submitted with the application, letter(s) of commitment may be required prior to the release of any awarded funding. To better understand the Trust's definition of and policy on Letter(s) of Commitment, visit our Forms and Policies webpage: https://cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/.

Narrative & Supporting Documents Tab: Use the link below to download the *required* narrative questions template for the Anne Arundel Community Tree Planting Mini Grant Program. Complete all questions and upload the completed document as a Microsoft Word or PDF file.

Narrative Questions: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/FY26-Narrative-Questions_MiniAA.docx

Budget Tab:

1. **Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Upload**
   a. You will be asked to upload your budget using the "Application Budget" worksheet of the Chesapeake Bay Trust's **Financial Management Spreadsheet** (FMS), an excel file template. The template can be found by visiting https://cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/ where you can watch a video with instructions on how to complete the FMS.
2. **Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Information**
   a. This online application component will ask you to enter budget category and request totals. These totals will be automatically calculated in the FMS Application Budget, so you will only need to copy and paste the values from the FMS to the Online Application.
3. **Additional Budget Justification**
   a. This online application component will ask you to provide a descriptive budget narrative to justify and explain costs. If the success of the work is contingent upon award of other funds, make this clear in your budget justification section.

Terms and Conditions Tab: Agree to the specified terms and conditions for the program for which you are applying.

(OPTIONAL) Demographics Tab: Provide voluntary demographic information. Provide information about your organization's current diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) efforts and future goals.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the Forestry Board, City of Annapolis, and the internal expert reviewers to evaluate applications under the Anne Arundel County Community Tree Planting Grant Program:

Most Important Criteria:

1. **Consistency with Request for Proposals (RFP)**: Is the project proposed consistent with the intent of the program? Are all required application components included for sound evaluation of the application?
   a. Projects must include a [native plant list](#), planting/site plan, project design, photo(s) of the planting/restoration site, and a [detailed maintenance plan](#) for at least three years.
   b. Projects should try to include education, training, and/or public outreach components to enhance the benefits of the project and promote activities as models for others to replicate.
2. **Cost Effectiveness /Budget**: Is the budget appropriate and cost effective? Are the line items budgeted justified in the project narrative? In-kind and cash match are not required but will be viewed favorably.
3. **Likelihood of Project Success**: What is the likelihood of success if this project were to move forward? Are methodologies sound and consistent with best practices?
4. **Supporting Documents**: Does the application include appropriate additional attachments? For on-the-ground projects, are site plans, site photos, a native plant list, and a maintenance plan included? Do you have community support and support from the landowner to conduct this project?

Important Criteria
5. **Demonstration Value**: Will others be able to learn lessons from this project and perhaps replicate it in their own communities?
6. **Long-term Sustainability**: Will the project last for a long time or otherwise have lasting impact? Will additional resources be needed to maintain the value of the project? If so, has that issue been addressed in the proposal?
7. **Partnerships and Community**: Are any key partnerships required, and if so, are the selected partnerships appropriate? Are any partners missing that should be engaged? Is the community to be served involved appropriately in the project, i.e., was community buy-in obtained, were community needs and desires considered, and are there individual(s) in the community committed to serving as community leads? If the lead applicant is not a member of the community served by the grant (e.g., an external non-profit doing work on land owned by another entity, such as a house of worship), is a transfer of "ownership" to the community built into the project and the ability of the community to carry the work forward developed?

Additional Considerations:
8. **General Quality of Application**: What is the level of completeness and attention to detail?

Application Review Process

All submitted applications are scored by technical experts in the field supported by this RFP and discussed by a review committee. Reviewers score all applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in the "Evaluation Criteria" section above.

The funding partners reserve the right to fund projects and budget items that advance their missions and meet specific funding priorities and criteria.

Awards and Notifications

The grant program accepts proposals on a rolling basis and all proposals are approved by the Anne Arundel County Forestry Board and/or the City of Annapolis.

All projects outside of the City of Annapolis will be reviewed by the Anne Arundel County Forestry Board; the Forestry Board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every other month (usually February, April, June, August, October, and December).

Projects located within the City of Annapolis may be reviewed by the Anne Arundel County Forestry Board and/or the City of Annapolis.

Notification of the grant decision will not occur until **after** the approval is received by either the Forestry Board or City of Annapolis, depending on your project location. Therefore, there will be at least a six-week review period after your application is submitted and received.

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 an award agreement with award conditions and due dates of the final report. The Trust will mail the full award payment to the requesting organization following the satisfaction of any award contingencies, including upload of the signed award agreement. In cases where the awardee fails to submit any contingencies, such as the signed award agreement or final report materials, by the due date, the Trust reserves the right to terminate the award agreement and require a refund of funds already transferred to the awardee.

When the project is complete, awardees are required to complete the final report and submit final products and supporting materials for the project. Organizations with outstanding final, progress, or status reports will not be awarded additional grants.

Additional Resources for Applicants

Appendix A - Guidance for New Applicants: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/AppendixA.pdf

Appendix B – Native Tree Species Resources: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Native-Tree-Resources.pdf

Appendix C - Application Checklist: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/mini-aa-checklist-items.pdf

Narrative Questions: Download the "Narrative Questions" document and answer these questions to tell us about your project at https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/FY26-Narrative-Questions_MiniAA.docx**.** Upload the completed document (your answers) as a Microsoft Word or PDF file into the online application form.