

Aileen Hughes Award

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) and the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) are pleased to offer the 2026 Aileen Hughes Award. The Aileen Hughes Award of up to \$5,000 is awarded to an individual representing a Maryland land trust for outstanding leadership, partnership, and innovation in a conservation project.

The source of funds for Keep Maryland Beautiful: The Aileen Hughes Award is MET.

Purpose

To acknowledge leaders in Maryland land trust community and to encourage a high level of excellence, innovation and collaboration.

Restrictions

- There is no requirement for matching funding.
- A final report is not required.

Eligible Applicants

The Maryland Environmental Trust and the Trust welcome requests from the following organizations:

- Maryland land trusts

Please note: Maryland land trusts are required to have a current Cooperative Agreement with MET (dated on or after November 2, 2020).

Eligible applicants will be in good standing with the state of Maryland and will be able to provide a Certificate of Good Standing.

Certificates of Good Standing can be obtained for free at <https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch>. A step-by-step guide on how to obtain a Certificate of Good Standing is available at <https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/KMB-GoodStandingTutorial-FY26.pdf>. Applicants do not need to order a certificate. Instead, please upload a screenshot of your organization's SDAT page, including the date, to verify good standing status.

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process. To apply for an award, go to <https://cbtrust.org/grants/keep-maryland-beautiful/> and click on "Get Started" to begin a new application. This

At A Glance

Program Summary:

The Aileen Hughes Award recognizes an individual representing a Maryland land trust for outstanding leadership, partnership and innovation in a conservation project or organization development.

Deadline:

December 1, 2025, at 4:00PM

Eligible Project Locations:

Maryland, state-wide

Award Amount:

Up to \$5,000

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at

https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35750

Contact:

Kacey Wetzel, Vice President of Programs, Outreach and Education, 410-974-2941 ext. 104, kwetzel@cbtrust.org

This Request for Proposals was released on 9/15/2025.

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.

Applicants must submit applications in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System** by **4:00 pm on December 1, 2025**. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 4:00 pm.

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

Applicants must submit applications in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System** by **4:00 PM EST on December 1, 2025**. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close automatically and promptly at 4 PM EST. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit at least a few days prior to the deadline given the potential for high website traffic on the due date. The Trust cannot guarantee availability of technical assistance for our online system on the deadline date.

Online Application Form

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

Information regarding the nominee and nominating organization

- Name of nominee;
- Nominee's organization;
- Nominee's email address and phone number; and
- Nominator's name, contact information, and relationship to nominee.

Nomination and Selection Criteria

The nomination shall explain how the proposed recipient meets the following criteria:

- Individual representing a Maryland local land trust (qualified organization under Natural Resources Article 3-2A-01(d)
- For the successful completion of a conservation project (project not complete if the land trust still owes money on it);
- Projects should be within the last 2-3 years and may include land transactions, outreach and community education, fundraising, stewardship and/or legislative achievement;
- The individual and/or project should demonstrate some of the following: leadership; innovation; high level of performance and/or; forming and sustaining innovative partnership.

Certificate of Good Standing (required)

- Upload of a Certificate of Good Standing is required. Applicants do not need to order a certificate. Instead, please upload a screenshot of your organization's SDAT page, including the date, to verify good standing status.

Supporting documents (optional)

- Supporting documents may be submitted but are not required.

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

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

Application Review Process

The Aileen Hughes Grants Committee advises and makes recommendations on grant applications. The committee consists of Maryland Environmental Trust staff, Maryland Environmental Trust Board members and others as appointed.

The Aileen Hughes Committee funding recommendations are presented to Maryland Environmental Trust Board of Trustees. Maryland Environmental Trust Board of Trustees then vote on recommendations.

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

Awards and Notifications

The FY26 Aileen Hughes Award will be announced March 20, 2026, Keep Maryland Beautiful Day.

Appendix A: Funding Partner

[Maryland Environmental Trust](#) (MET) is one of the oldest and most successful land trusts in the country. MET holds over 1,100 conservation easements preserving over 140,000 acres statewide. From the Chesapeake Bay to the mountains of Garrett County, our Land Conservation, Monitoring and Stewardship, and Land Trust Assistance Programs promote the protection of open land. Maryland Environmental Trust works with landowners, local communities, and land trusts to protect Maryland's most treasured landscapes and natural resources as a legacy for future generations. MET accomplishes this work by providing direct assistance, information and innovative tools to ensure the ongoing stewardship and public concern for the natural, historic, and scenic resources of the state.