



Charles County Forestry Grant Program

FY 23 Request for Proposals



Chesapeake Bay Trust

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Charles County Forestry Grant Program



At A Glance

Program Summary:

The Charles County Forestry Grant Program is designed to result in an increase in the number of acres of forested land in Charles County. Project site proposals are sought from individuals, nonprofit organizations, and contractors. Proposed project sites will need to sign a property agreement stating they agree to preserve and protect the conservation values of the planting project for a minimum of ten years.

Deadline:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until funds for the fiscal year are exhausted.

For project requests up to \$10,000, the Trust must receive an application a minimum of eight weeks prior to the start of the proposed project.

For project requests more than \$10,000, the Trust must receive an application a minimum of eight weeks prior to the next Trust quarterly Board meeting. Please see section "Deadline" for Board meeting dates.

Eligible Project Locations:

This program funds in Charles County, Maryland.

Request Amounts:

Requests generally up to \$20,000 and should be less than \$4,500 per acre.

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/charles-county-forestry/>

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Introduction to the Chesapeake Bay Trust

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 \$140 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Charles County Government and the Chesapeake Bay Trust are pleased to partner to offer funds for forestry projects in Charles County.

Program Goals

The goal of this program is to implement cost-effective reforestation projects in the County to increase tree canopy and as a result create forest habitat and improve water quality in the county's local watersheds and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. By increasing tree cover and expanding green areas, erosion can be reduced, water and soil quality can be improved, airborne pollutants such as particulates, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide can be filtered, and summer temperatures and resulting ozone pollution and energy use can be decreased.

Projects on individual private, commercial private, community-owned, school sites, and non-profit owned property are eligible for funding. Projects on federal and state land cannot be considered under this funding source.

Land currently protected under a long-term agreement or other protection vehicle will be given priority. Landowners must be willing to agree to long-term protection and maintenance of the tree planting project funded under this program. Proposed project sites must not be currently forested and must be available for reforestation or afforestation. Projects to protect already forested land cannot be considered under this funding source. Projects should be on the scale of at least 0.5 acres. For tree planting projects less than this size, please consider the Trust's Mini Community Engagement Grant Program.

Preference will be given to projects that:

- 1) establish and enhance riparian buffers;
- 2) create and enhance larger contiguous tracts of forest; and
- 3) create and enhance habitat, including habitat for forest interior dwelling species.

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 Project Types

This opportunity is open to:

- a. applicants who have the capacity and interest in leading a project through implementation

- b. applicants, such as individual landowners or small homeowners associations, who have project site ideas that they would like to offer for tree planting projects, but who are not able serve as project leads.

Applicants may therefore apply to either:

- a. serve as project manager to implement a forestry project (Track A), or
- b. offer project site ideas and obtain technical assistance from the Trust in implementing a forestry project (Track B).

Who should apply to each track?

Applicant type	Track A	Track B	Comments
501(c)3 Private Nonprofit Organizations	X	X	These applicant types can apply for either track, depending on the capacity of the organization to lead the implementation of the project
Faith-based organizations	X	X	
Community Associations	X	X	
Service and Civic Groups	X	X	
Public Agencies	X	X	
Soil/Water Conservation Districts & Resource Conservation and Development Councils	X	X	
Public and Independent Higher Educational Institutions	X	X	
Individual private or commercial landowners		X	Individual and commercial landowners should apply to Track B.
Consultants, contractors, and other for-profit entities	X		For-profit entities (contractors, consultants) must apply to Track A.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Trust staff for guidance and, if deemed appropriate, a potential site visit.

Track A: Project Management Track

Applicants submitting a proposal in this track will have the capacity to serve as project manager of the following phases of the project:

- 1) Verifying that any existing long-term protection vehicle will allow reforestation and modifying that vehicle if not, and obtaining landowner agreement to maintain and protect the new tree planting project.
- 2) Developing a planting design and plan
- 3) Obtaining any required permits
- 4) Planting activities, including procuring contractual or volunteer services
- 5) Monitoring the project for one year to ensure survivorship

- 6) Providing maintenance in the first year to ensure a survivorship rate consistent with guidelines in Maryland State Forest Conservation Technical Manual Third Edition of 1997
- 7) Working with the planting contractor to replace any trees as required under the plant warranty

Successful applicants will not be required to provide monitoring or maintenance beyond one year post-planting and will not be required to perform any easement monitoring activities. Funds may be awarded through this track through either grants to applicant types eligible to receive grants from the Trust or through contracts if the applicant is a for-profit contractor or consultant. Non-profit applicants to whom grants would be awarded may request project management fees, which will cover personnel time and administrative costs such as travel, postage, and other costs. Indirect costs will not be permitted. For-profit applicants will be asked to provide full estimates for all project components, which will serve as the basis for a contract scope of work and budget.

The proposed project application must include:

- Photo(s) of the site
- Vicinity map of the site
- Support letter for the project signed by the property owner
- Submittal of a property agreement stating that the landowner agrees to preserve and protect the conservation values of the planting project for a minimum of ten years
- Budget

Track B: Request for Technical Assistance

Applicants submitting a proposal in this track will rely on the Chesapeake Bay Trust for some or all seven project phases listed in Track A. The successful applicant will not be required to provide monitoring or maintenance beyond one-year post-planting and will not be required to perform any easement monitoring activities. Applicants to this track need not prepare full budgets, and will not be awarded project management fees or indirect costs. The Trust and Charles County will work with the applicant to directly contract the work required to complete the project.

The proposed project application must include:

- Photo(s) of the site
- Vicinity map of the site
- Support letter for the project signed by the property owner

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications. We recommend reviewing your proposal or having a colleague review your proposal against these criteria before you finalize it to ensure that you have addressed all the relevant criteria.

Track A:

- General Quality of Proposal (1-15 points) - What is the level of completeness and attention to detail? Has the applicant answered all appropriate narrative questions? Does the applicant include all required supporting documents such as letters of commitment, photo(s) of the site, vicinity map, planting plan, native plant list, etc., when applicable?

- Stakeholder Involvement (1-20 points) - Applicants who have not procured landowner permission, as demonstrated through a landowner letter of commitment and property agreement where applicable, will get zero points in this category.
- Likelihood of Success (1-15 points) – What is the likelihood of success if the project is selected for funding? Success is defined as the accomplishment of outcomes proposed. Does the applicant have the necessary qualifications to conduct the work that include past history of successfully completing similar environmental projects? Is the project likely to proceed in a timely fashion?
- Ecological Benefit (1-20 points) – Is the project technique being implemented appropriate? Will the technique address the issues as planned (consider planting size and density)? Is the planting area currently available for reforestation or afforestation, or is it already forested making it ineligible for the program? How will future climate change, including sea level rise, impact the project?
- Sustainability (1-15 points) – Will the project persist and be well-maintained? Has the applicant proposed a relevant and robust monitoring and maintenance plan that will be used to improve project sustainability in the future?
- Cost-effectiveness/Budget (1-10 points) – Is the budget appropriate and cost-effective? Are the line items budgeted justified in the project narrative? Are the costs per acre to reforest/afforest consistent with the RFP requirements?
- Demonstration Value (1-5 points) – Does the project have demonstration value and/or transferability?

Track B:

- General Quality of Proposal (1-10 points) - What is the level of completeness and attention to detail? Has the applicant answered all appropriate narrative questions? Does the applicant include all required supporting documents such as letters of commitment, photo(s) of the site, vicinity map, etc., when applicable?
- Stakeholder Involvement (1-15 points) - Applicants who have not procured landowner permission, as demonstrated through a landowner letter of commitment and property agreement where applicable, will get zero points in this category.
- Likelihood of Success (1-10 points) – What is the likelihood of success if the project is selected for funding? Is the project likely to proceed in a timely fashion?
- Ecological Benefit (1-10 points) – Will the technique address the issues as planned (consider planting size and density)? Is the planting area currently available for reforestation or afforestation, or is it already forested making it ineligible for the program? How will future climate change, including sea level rise, impact the project?
- Demonstration Value (1-5 points) – Does the project have demonstration value and/or transferability?

Eligible Applicants

Charles County and the Trust welcome requests from the following organizations:

- 501(c)3 Private Nonprofit Organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Community Associations
- Service and Civic Groups
- Public Agencies
- Soil/Water Conservation Districts & Resource Conservation and Development Councils
- Public and Independent Higher Educational Institutions
- Individual private or commercial landowners
- Consultants, contractors, and other for-profit entities

- ◆ Eligible applicants will have and maintain in full force and effect during the term of the proposed project liability insurance coverage in connection with the performance or failure to perform services proposed.

Please see the Section titled “Eligible Project Types” for further details on track eligibility based on organization type.

Funding Availability, and Timeline

Funding Availability: The funding partners, Chesapeake Bay Trust and Charles County Government, anticipate that approximately \$23,500 will be available for this grant program in FY23. Funding availability in subsequent years will be updated each year.

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.

Request Level: Requests for funding from this program will generally be less than \$20,000 and should be generally less than \$4,500 per acre. Requests exceeding this level should be accompanied by additional justification in the “Budget Justification Section” of the online application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Trust staff to discuss request level prior to submitting proposals.

Deadline

Proposals for the Charles County Forestry 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.

Please note this is a rolling grant program; however, grant decisions for requests over \$10,000 must be approved by the Trust’s Board of Directors. The Trust’s quarterly Board meetings for FY23 will be on August 26th, 2022, November 16th, 2022, February 15th, 2023, and May 17th, 2023. Please submit your proposal at least 8 weeks before the upcoming Board meeting date to allow for application review time. In addition, the Trust is unable to provide reimbursement funding; this means that project start dates must occur after the date of decision (Board meeting date).

For project requests up to \$10,000, the Trust must receive all proposals at least EIGHT weeks prior to the start of the proposed project. The Trust cannot make exceptions to this policy.

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

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 status, progress, and final reports. The Trust will mail the first award payment to the requesting organization following: satisfaction of any phase 1 payment award contingencies, including upload of the signed award agreement. Ten percent of the total award will be held until the final report is submitted and approved. In cases where the awardee fails to submit a status report, progress report, final report, or other requirement 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 final reports that may include but are not limited to submission of all receipts for supplies, invoices for subcontractors/contractors, and copies of timesheets for personnel time used (timesheets must include date, name, time worked per day, and coding to tie the time worked to the award).

All financial back-up documentation will be grouped and numbered to correspond to the budget line item reported as spent. Organizations with outstanding final, progress, or status reports will not be awarded additional grants.

Contact

For technical assistance contact Emily Stransky at (410) 974-2941 x 101 or EStransky@cbtrust.org

Narrative Questions

1. **Project Site:** Please describe the project site, including describing the landowner's involvement in the project (landowner letter of commitment must be provided) and the current land use of acres to be reforested. List the total number of acres to be reforested and the total number of trees expected to be planted.
2. **Land and Project Protection:** Please describe whether the site is under current long-term protection. If so, please describe the type of protection and any restrictions. The Trust and the County can work with you to determine land protection options. Please contact us early in project development. Please also indicate willingness of the landowner to agree to long-term maintenance and protection of the tree planting project to be funded under this request.
3. **Required Projects:** Funding partners are unable to fund projects or programs that are wholly required by a separate Federal, state, or locally issued permit, decree, or enforcement action, such as critical area buffer establishment. In addition, funding partners cannot support projects that lead to financial benefit, such as creation of a mitigation bank. In some cases, funding partners may elect to fund optional portions of required projects that are in excess of regulatory requirements. Please state 1) whether any part of your project is required under any existing or pending permit, decree, or enforcement action, and 2) how and whether your proposal exceeds the regulatory requirements.
4. **Track A Only:**
 - a. **Project Methodology:** Please describe the following:
 - i. planting method,
 - ii. planting plan,
 - iii. species list (native species only), and
 - iv. method by which you will procure contractual services to accomplish planting, easement, and other services

- v. monitoring and maintenance plan
- b. **Applicant Capacity:** Please describe your ability to provide project leadership and management on the following tasks:
- i. Verifying that any existing long-term protection vehicle will allow reforestation and modifying that vehicle if not, and obtaining agreement from the landowner to maintain and protect the tree planting project if funded under this award.
 - ii. Developing a planting design and plan
 - iii. Obtaining any required permits
 - iv. Planting activities, including procuring contractual or volunteer services
 - v. Monitoring the project for one year to ensure survivorship
 - vi. Providing maintenance in the first year to ensure a survivorship rate consistent with guidelines in Maryland State Forest Conservation Technical Manual Third Edition of 1997
 - vii. Working with the planting contractor to replace any trees as required under the plant warranty
5. **Demographic Information:** In light of the Trust's commitment to the advancement of diversity in its award-making, provide demographic information about the community or population involved in or served by the project.
- ◆ Additionally, for project track A applicants: provide your organization's experience working within the specific communities that you will be prioritizing. If you have not had significant experience within your prioritized demographic, explain how you intend to address this issue; the Trust encourages applicants to establish partnerships with local organizations that may have greater cultural competencies within the targeted demographic(s).
6. **Sustainability:** The Trust aims to invest in projects that have the longest potential longevity, after the grant period has ended. Several threats exist that may result in loss of project value: change in public interest in an effort, changes in rainfall or sea level associated with climate change; change in land use; and more.
- ◆ 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? If the project or program will need ongoing financial resources in order to maintain its value, provide an abbreviated plan describing how the project will be sustained beyond the term of the proposed funding request?
7. **Community context:** The best projects will connect to other existing community watershed stewardship efforts.
- ◆ Indicate how this project fits into other watershed stewardship activities occurring in the community. For example, are neighboring faith-based organizations or homeowner's associations who may already be undertaking environmental activities going to be engaged in this project?
8. **Contractors:** If you plan to subcontract work; the Trust highly recommends you solicit at least three competitive bids, estimates, or quotes from at least three contractors. If hiring a contractor, applicants are encouraged to have either already obtained cost estimates or quotes from at least three service providers prior to completing the application, indicate in the proposal that at least three estimates or quotes will be obtained
- ◆ Has/will a contractor be hired and has a contractor been selected?
 - ◆ Describe your contractor selection process, including justification and background of the selected contractor. If using a bid process, describe the process.

9. **Attachments:** Please include, preferably in the narrative file but in a separate file if necessary, the following information as required depending on Track -

Item	Track A	Track B
Photo(s) of the site	X	X
Vicinity map and project map of the site. Please include: 1) property address 2) location of planting project 3) boundaries of full parcel	X	X
Support letter for the project signed by the property owner	X	X
Site plan	X	
Budget (using Trust Financial Management Spreadsheet as outlined below in “Budget Instructions”)	X	

Budget Instructions

Funding in this program is restricted to costs required to implement reforestation projects. Requests for any other purpose will not be funded. The funding partners will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis. The partners reserve the right to fund projects and budget items that advance their missions and meet their specific funding priorities and criteria. Those requesting project technical assistance through Track B will not have to prepare a budget with specific funding requests.

Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Upload

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/forms-policies/> where you can also watch a video with instructions on how to complete the FMS.

Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Information

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.

Eligible budget items for requests through Track A:

- Site preparation costs (soil amendment, invasive species removal);
- Plant material;
- Planting costs;
- One-year maintenance costs;
- For not-for-profit entities, project management costs.

Ineligible budget items include, but are not limited to:

- Indirect costs.
- Funding partners are unable to fund projects or programs that are required by a separate Federal, state, or locally issued permit, decree, or enforcement action. In addition, funding partners cannot support projects that lead to financial benefit, such as creation of a mitigation bank. In some cases, funding partners may elect to fund optional portions of required projects that are in excess of regulatory requirements.

Additional Budget Justification

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.

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/charles-county-forestry/> 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.

Watch our video on how to apply for and submit an application using our online system at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/>.

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 DUNS 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.

- 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 Project Leader 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.
 - 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.
- 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: www.cbtrust.org/forms.

- Narrative & Supporting Documents Tab
 - Upload a Microsoft Word or PDF file that contains your answers to the narrative questions found in the Narrative Questions section of this RFP. Upload additional supporting documents, if needed/required.

- Budget Tab
 - Upload your application budget, provide budget category and request totals, and provide additional budget justification. Use the Trust’s Financial Management Spreadsheet and fill out the “Application Budget” worksheet. Refer to the Budget Instructions of this RFP.

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

Appendix A: Performance Standards for Restoration Projects

Size	Number Required per Acre	Approximate Spacing (feet on center)	Survivability Requirement (at the end of the second growing season)	
			Survivability	Number of Plants
Bare Root Seedlings or Whips	700	8 x 8	55%	385
Container Grown Seedling Tubes (minimum cavity width 1.5 in.)	450	10 x 10	65%	290
Container Grown (1, 2, 3 gallon)	350	12 x 12	75%	260
Container Grown (5, 7 gallon or 1 in. caliper B & B)	200	15 x 15	85%	170
Container Grown (15, 25 gallon or 1.5 to 2 in. caliper B & B)	100	20 x 20	100%	100
Notes:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) These stocking and survival requirements are the minimum numbers estimated to meet the definition of forest from bare land. 2) In certain circumstances, any combination of the above mentioned stocking options, dry seeding, tree shelters, transplants, and/or natural regeneration may be more appropriate strategies to fulfill the requirements of an approved FCD. They will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the approving authority. 3) Spacing does not imply that trees or shrubs must be planted in a grid pattern. 4) For large-scale reforestation projects (>1 acre), reforestation costs (trees, planting, and maintenance for 2 years) should not exceed \$15,000/acre. 				