



Chesapeake Oyster Innovation Awards Program

FY 23 Request for Proposals



Chesapeake Bay Trust

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Chesapeake Oyster Innovation Awards Program

At A Glance

Program Summary:

The Oyster Innovation Program is designed to support innovative small-scale projects to advance proof-of-concept oyster and/or aquaculture education and restoration initiatives at scales from local (within a tributary) to Chesapeake watershed-wide. The goal of the program and of each project funded is to advance stewardship and restoration goals within the Chesapeake Bay agreement.

Deadline:

Thursday, September 15th, 2022 at 4:00 PM EST

Eligible Project Locations:

This program funds projects in Maryland and Virginia. Only official Chesapeake Oyster Alliance Partners may apply.

Request Amounts:

The maximum funding request is \$10,000.

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at

https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35592

Contact:

Carlton Burns, Program Coordinator, Outreach and Education Programs
410-974-2941 ext. 125, cburns@cbtrust.org



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Introduction to the Funding Partners

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 Trust is partnering with the Chesapeake Oyster Alliance (COA), a multi-year collaborative initiative supported by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (hereafter referred to as 'funding partner'). The COA is designed to spark public attention to accelerate ongoing oyster restoration efforts in the Chesapeake Bay. Funding made available from the funding partner will support the ambitious goals of this collaborative effort. The goals of the COA can be viewed [here](#).

Program Goals

Oysters, oyster restoration, and oyster aquaculture activities world-wide, provide a suite of environmental and economic benefits, such as providing and enhancing marine habitat for commercial and recreational fishes; boosting the economy through seafood production, marketing, and by providing a way of life for watermen; buffering sensitive coastal shorelines from wave energy; and offering water quality improvements through filtration. Oyster aquaculture, in addition, can reduce pressure on wild oyster stocks, and has been implemented as a complement to wild harvest in many locations around the globe. Oyster aquaculture was recently recognized by the Chesapeake Bay Program as a nutrient reduction Best Management Practice (BMP) for the Chesapeake Bay; however, several aspects of this BMP, like any other best management practice, can be refined for cost effectiveness, improved ecological value, increased adoption in appropriate locations, and cultural sensitivity.

The purposes of this award program are to 1) increase knowledge within priority audiences of the value of oysters, oyster fisheries, and aquaculture efforts, 2) advance technologies for increasing oyster population or aquaculture production, and/or 3) advance oyster population monitoring techniques.

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, please see our strategic plan at www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan and <https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/>. The funding partner is also committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice. Read more about the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's commitment to putting this into action here: <https://www.cbf.org/about-cbf/our-mission/our-commitment-to-diversity-equity-inclusion-and-justice.html>.

Eligible Project Types

The funding partners will consider projects that meet any of the three goals stated in the "Program Goals" section above, broken into 3 different tracks; Track 1: Education, Track 2: Technology, and Track 3: Monitoring. Projects that increase knowledge and implementation of effective, appropriate oyster and aquaculture-related practices common in other estuarine systems are encouraged. Ideas will be chosen in which a small amount of investment can make a difference in helping to advance stewardship and restoration goals within the Chesapeake Bay.

Funding partners acknowledge that there are debates occurring among various stakeholder groups in the oyster realm, from siting issues to cultural issues. While these stakeholder groups disagree on certain topics, they do agree on a number of key points including: the ecological and economic importance of oysters to the Chesapeake system, the rich cultural history of the Chesapeake oyster, and the desire to increase the number of oysters in the Bay for economic, cultural, and ecological reasons. This program seeks to support projects which serve to help advance the commonly held stakeholder goals.

Example projects:

Track 1: Education

1. Projects that educate residents about the value of oysters and/or aquaculture through the development of scientific web-based content (e.g. – short videos, infographics, etc.).
2. Projects that facilitate information sharing across jurisdictions to accelerate oyster tourism through oyster industry tourism training in areas where it has not yet been fully established.
3. Development of outreach materials specifically for chefs/wholesalers/retailers promoting local Chesapeake oysters, and/or oyster shell recycling.
4. Projects that educate the youth through the development of new curriculum materials, or by providing [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences \(MWEEs\)](#).

Track 2: Technology

1. Projects that test creative reuse of materials, new equipment design, or alternative substrates.
2. Projects that employ “off-the-shelf” technology or tools for improving restoration efforts.
3. New designs for oyster gardening cages or other activities that improve the oyster population.

Track 3: Monitoring

1. Development and piloting of innovative, low-cost technologies for remote water quality monitoring (e.g. monitoring tools for hatcheries, setting tanks, or in-situ locations; or equipment which can be used to monitor the efficacy of oyster reefs in establishing/enhancing fish habitat).

If you have an idea that is not listed above, but meets one or more of the program’s three goals, contact Carlton Burns at (410) 974-2941 ext. 125 or cburns@cbtrust.org to discuss your idea before applying.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to by reviewers to evaluate applications:

- ◆ **Consistency with Request for Proposal (RFP) (20 points):** Is the project proposed consistent with the purpose of the program? Is the topic within the “common ground” realm among key stakeholder groups as described in the “Eligible Project Types” section above? Are all required application components included for sound evaluation of the application?
- ◆ **Cost Effectiveness /Budget (20 points):** Is the budget appropriate and cost effective? Are the line items budgeted justified in the project narrative? Are project partners being resourced appropriately? Can the work described be done with the amount of funds requested/proposed as match? In-kind and cash match is not required but is highly encouraged.
- ◆ **Likelihood of Project Success (20 points):** What is the likelihood of success if this project were to be selected for funding? Success should be defined as the accomplishment of the outcomes and outputs proposed. Is there a clear plan for producing outputs and achieving the outcomes proposed? Are methodologies sound and consistent with best practices? Have any potentially

mandatory permits been obtained or planned?

- ◆ **Demonstration Value and Transferability (10 points):** Will others be able to take lessons from this project, and perhaps replicate it? Will the results of this project be shared with appropriate stakeholders, partners, and/or other COA members? If so, how will that be accomplished? Is any part of this project destined for a patent that will inhibit sharing with other COA members? If so, please describe which part and timeline for establishing the patent.
- ◆ **Long-term Sustainability (10 points):** Will the project have lasting impact? Will additional resources be needed to maintain the value of the project, and if so, has that issue been addressed in the proposal?
- ◆ **Partnerships and Community (10 points):** Are any key partnerships required, and if so, are the selected partnerships appropriate? Are any partners missing that should have been engaged? Is the community to be served involved appropriately in the project; i.e., was community buy-in obtained, were community needs and desires assessed? Have appropriate letters of commitment for project from Partners or the Community been incorporated?
- ◆ **Innovation (10 points):** Is the project proposed a new idea in the oyster world, and/or to the Chesapeake region? What new information can be produced/shared from the project that advances the goals of the program?

Eligible Applicants

Funding partners welcome requests from Partners of the Chesapeake Oyster Alliance (COA) including community organizations and both for-profit and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. If your organization is not a member of the COA but is interested in becoming a member and thus create eligibility to apply to this program, please contact Tanner Council at TCouncil@cbf.org. Individual COA members may NOT submit applications for a joint project that would exceed the \$10,000 maximum request per project.

Funding Availability and Timeline

Funding Availability: The Trust and funding partners anticipate funds available as follows:

- ◆ A total of \$150,000 is available.
- ◆ Applicants may request up to \$10,000.

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.

Deadline

Applicants must submit applications in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System** by **4:00 PM EST on Thursday September 15th, 2022**. Late or incomplete 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 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.

Application Review Process

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 will include 1 – 2 COA Partner representatives; upon committal of reviewing, their respective organizations will not be permitted to apply for this award program this year. The TRC ranks and scores all applications based on the

criteria listed in the “Evaluation Criteria” section above, then meets to discuss the application merits. The TRC then recommends a suite of applications to the Trust’s Board of Trustees. The funding partners reserve the right to fund projects and budget items that advance their missions and meet specific funding priorities and criteria.

To allow applicants to set expectations prior to investing time in application, the Trust provides historical application approval rates for award programs. This RFP represents the second year this award program has been offered. The average approval rate of this program is 55-75%, including both fully and partially funded applications.

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. Awardees are required to return the signed award agreement and satisfy any award contingencies.

The Trust will mail the first award payment to the requesting organization following satisfaction of any award contingencies, including upload of the signed award agreement and/or submission of the first deliverable. Ten percent (10%) of the total grant awards will be held until the final report is submitted and approved. Awards made to for-profit entities will be made as deliverables-based contracts and will be paid as deliverables are submitted and approved.

In cases where the awardee fails to submit a status report, progress report, or final report 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.

The program awards will be announced in December 2022.

Contact

For technical assistance contact Carlton Burns at (410) 974-2941 x 125 or cburns@cbtrust.org.

Narrative Questions

Address the following narrative questions and then upload your narrative document (not to exceed five pages) via the project narrative file attachment section in the online system. We recommend that you copy and paste these questions into a word processing document and work from the document to ensure that you do not inadvertently omit an answer.

I. Project Information (answer **each question** in no less than three sentences):

- 1) Goals and Objectives: What are the big-picture goals and the specific objectives of the project?

Provide a detailed explanation of how your project meets the goals of this RFP.

- 2) **Background:** Describe the background of the project. Is this the continuation of an ongoing project? If so, what aspects of the project are new? Why is this project needed? How was it identified?
- 3) **Innovation and Demonstration value:** Describe how this project will develop new methods that advance oyster and aquaculture initiatives. Will the project be used as a model in other areas? Is this project based off a model from another area? If so, how can it be implemented in the Chesapeake region and what value does it bring? How might lessons learned from this project be transferred to others?
- 4) **Experience:** Briefly describe your organization's experience or technical expertise in completing similar projects.
- 5) **Evaluation:** Describe how you will assess the effectiveness of your project. How will you collect information to refine and improve your project? Describe how the evaluation connects to the project outputs and outcomes.
- 6) **Required documentation for projects:** Include in your application where applicable:
 - ◆ For workshops or trainings: a draft agenda.
 - ◆ For projects that require permitting, describe the permits needed, process, and what the status is of the permit acquisition.
 - ◆ For monitoring projects, provide a map and the latitude/longitude of site locations.
 - ◆ Letters of commitment from project partners specifically outlining their role(s). To better understand the Trust's definition of letter of commitment, visit the "Other Important Documents and Forms" section on our Forms and Policies webpage: <https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/>.
 - ◆ Note that you will be required to fill out a budget narrative justification in the electronic application.

II. Project Partnerships: Applicants are encouraged to identify individuals or organizations that can help you advance your project. You'll describe paid contractors you engage in VI below. Please describe here any entity who will volunteer its time to your project, their role, and their expertise. Key partners that drive the success of your project should supply a letter of commitment and accompanying budget agreeing to their role(s).

III. Audience and Demographic Information: Identify the priority audience you will educate or engage and describe how you will reach its members. Why have you chosen that method? Think about who is most likely to benefit from the message/data/information produced by this project. Considering the Trust's and CBF's commitment to the advancement of diversity in its award-making, please provide demographic information about the community or population involved in or served by the project.

- ◆ Please 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, please 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).

IV. 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.

- ◆ How will the future of the project be ensured and/or impacts of the project be long-lasting? Topics to discuss here include maintenance plans (for technology), long-term attitude or knowledge changes in a community, etc.

- ◆ If the project or program will need ongoing financial resources to maintain its value, please provide an abbreviated plan describing how the project will be sustained beyond the term of the proposed funding request?

V. Community context: The best projects will connect to other existing community watershed stewardship efforts. How does this project fit into other watershed, oyster, or fishery stewardship activities occurring in the community?

VI. 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 consultant be hired and has a contractor been selected?
- ◆ Describe your consultant/contractor selection process, including justification and background of the selected consultant/contractor. If using a bid process, describe the process.

Budget Instructions

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.

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/chesapeakeoyster/> 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, please 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 Thursday September 15th, 2022**. 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).

The final outcomes of these awards are intended to be shared with the public in the spirit of the Chesapeake Oyster Alliance – to drive innovative new approaches and technology among all oyster practitioners and accelerate advancements in oyster industry, restoration, and research in the Chesapeake Bay. Projects that align with this intention will be prioritized and all final products will be provided to the funding partners for use and distribution at the sole discretion of the funding partners. However, we understand some ideas and projects may be proprietary or subject to future patents. If that is the case, please indicate as such in your proposal in the “Goals and Objectives” section of your narrative.

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 must be able to legally bind the organization.
 - 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 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, 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.

- **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.