2019-2020 Community Engagement Mini Grant Program
Application Package

AT A GLANCE

Program:
This grant program is designed to engage a diverse array of organizations in activities in Maryland that both benefit communities and raise public awareness of and engagement in natural resources issues.

Funding:
Grant requests up to $5,000

Eligible Applicants*:*
Only applicants who have received three grants or fewer from the Trust in the past are eligible to apply. Applications are particularly encouraged from organizations who have never received a grant from the Trust.

Organizations must be either a non-profit organization or a municipal, county, regional, state, or federal agency.

Deadline:
Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until funds for this fiscal year are exhausted. **The Trust must receive all applications a *minimum of eight weeks prior* to the start of the proposed project.** The Trust cannot provide reimbursement funding for already completed projects.

Submit Your Application on-line*:*
https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35004

In this Application Package:
1. Program Overview
2. Applications Instructions
3. Criteria for Specific Project Types

For assistance with project ideas and development contact:
Bre'Anna Brooks at (410) 974-2941 ext. 112 or bbrooks@cbtrust.org.

Program Goals and Importance of Inclusion

Through this funding opportunity, the Trust seeks to engage new applicants and organizations from a diverse array of communities in small-scale projects that enhance communities, engage residents, and, ultimately, improve natural resources.

One of the Trust's core values is *Inclusion*: We feel that a broad range of communities can benefit from healthy natural resources, even if their primary focus is on other issues. Human health, the economy, jobs, community livability, education and our children are all connected with a healthy environment.

As a result, the Trust is investing in grants through this opportunity primarily to new applicants who have yet to frequently engage with the Trust. Our goals are:

1. To provide funding to groups that have traditionally been under-engaged with environmental issues, but who have a project idea that benefits both their communities and natural resources (such as native wildlife (birds, pollinators, and other species), greenery in local parks, rural or urban forests, streams, rivers, and other natural spaces);
2. To engage residents in community-based restoration and protection;
3. To introduce the grant lifecycle to applicants who may not be experienced in applying for grants.

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 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 2015- 2020 Strategic Plan.

Sample Eligible Projects

The Trust encourages projects that seek to accomplish multiple benefits, such as meeting community goals and improving environmental health. This objective can be met through applications from organizations new to environmental work, groups engaging audiences through on-the-ground-work, and new creative partnerships. The Trust will consider funding elements of projects that may not have a primarily environmental purpose but that have an ultimate connection or potential to improve natural resources.

Example ideal *goals* of a project proposed through this grant program may be (but are not limited to):

1. Educating residents about the connection between their communities and natural resources such as wildlife, local water bodies, local parks, or trees;
2. Involving new or under-engaged groups, connecting their goals with the goal to improve or protect natural resources
3. Engaging residents in community-based restoration and protection projects and encouraging behavior changes that benefit environmental health;
4. Promoting collaborative restoration solutions among multiple partners;
5. Encouraging organizations, when pursuing natural resource projects, to engage the communities in which they work.

Eligible projects *types* include (but are not limited to):

1. Projects that capture rainwater and improve wildlife habitat such as pollinator habitat plantings and rain gardens;
2. Community greening projects, such as tree plantings, which have been shown to beautify communities, improve health via air quality improvement, save money due to energy reduction value of shade, and lead to reduced crime, as well as improve stormwater;
3. Community clean-ups that benefit both communities and local waterways;
4. Community gardens that combine a water quality practice, lessons about local food, and education about natural resources;
5. Projects that combine art with an increased awareness of stormwater issues, such as storm drain stenciling or rain barrel installations;
6. Projects that educate and get residents outdoors, which have been shown to improve human health.

These are not exhaustive lists. If you have an idea that is not listed above, but meets the program's goals, contact Bre'Anna Brooks at (410) 974-2941 ext. 112, bbrooks@cbtrust.org to discuss your idea before applying.

*This grant program does *not* support applications for school-related projects or requests for sponsorships for conferences or events. Applicants interested in Environmental Education projects targeting Pre-K-12 students should refer to the Mini Grant Application Package for K-12 Environmental Education requests available at https://cbtrust.org/grants/environmental-education-mini/. Requests for sponsorships for conferences and events should be submitted through the Chesapeake Bay Trust's sponsorship RFP, also found at https://cbtrust.org/grants/sponsorship-program/.

Eligible Applicants

Only applicants who have received three grants or fewer from the Trust in the past are eligible to apply. Applications are particularly encouraged from organizations who have never received a grant from the Trust.

Organizations must be one of the following types:

- 501(c)3 Private Nonprofit Organizations;
- Faith-based Organizations;
- Community Associations;
- Service and Civic Groups;
- Municipal, County, Regional, State, Federal Public Agencies.

The Trust offers a mentorship opportunity to new applicants. If you are in need of a mentor to assist you in applying to this grant program, see a description of the mentorship opportunity and a list of willing mentors on the Mini Grant webpage found here https://cbtrust.org/community-engagement/.

This grant program is an opportunity for the Trust to offer resources to less experienced applicants or groups newly engaging in environmental restoration or community engagement activities. Applicants experienced in community engagement or restoration activities (i.e., have successfully received four or more grants) are encouraged to consider the Trust's Outreach and Restoration Grant Program. If unsure of your organization's eligibility, contact the Trust prior to applying.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to by internal expert reviewers to evaluate applications under the Community Engagement Mini Grant Program:

Most Important Criteria:

1. **Consistency with Request for Proposal (RFP)**: Is the project proposed consistent with the intent of the program? Are all required application components included for sound evaluation of the application?
2. **Cost Effectiveness /Budget**: Is the budget appropriate and cost effective? Are the line items budgeted justified in the project narrative? Are project partners being resourced appropriately? In-kind and cash match is 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?

Important Criteria:

4. **Demonstration Value**: Will others be able to take lessons from this project, and perhaps replicate it in their own communities?
5. **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, and if so, has that issue been addressed in the proposal?
6. **Partnerships and Community**: 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, 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?

Also to be Considered:

7. **General Quality of Application**: What is the level of completeness and attention to detail?
8. **Supporting Documents**: Does the application include appropriate additional attachments? For on-the-ground projects, are a site plant, site photos, a native plant list, and a maintenance plan included?

Funding Availability and Restrictions

Applicants may request up to $5,000. The Trust evaluates every budget line item in every application. **The need for each budget line should be clearly justified and connected to the goals of the project.**

The following cannot be funded in this program:

- Projects and programs located outside the state of Maryland;
- Political lobbying or advocacy work;
- Indirect costs;
- Endowments, building campaigns, annual giving, or venture capital;
- Mitigation or capital construction activities such as structural erosion control measures;
- Reimbursement for a project that has been completed or materials that have been purchased;

Project Timeline

Projects should be completed within one year upon receipt of the grant award. When the project is complete, grantees are required to submit a completed final report form with supporting materials.

Deadline

Requests for this Program are accepted on an on-going basis until funds are fully expended for the fiscal year (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020). Check our website and sign up for our grantee newsletter for the most up to date information about the status of this rolling grant program. **Note that 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 nor provide reimbursement funding for already completed projects.**

Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the grant application process, and if awarded, grant management. To apply for a grant, you can access the application by clicking the following link:
https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35004.
Click on "New Applicant" and follow the on-screen instructions if you have not yet registered to use the system.

The Trust must receive all applications at least eight weeks prior to the start date of the proposed project. For example, if you were to submit on August 1st, 2019 the earliest that your project may start is September 26th, 2019. The Trust cannot make exceptions to this policy nor provide reimbursement funding for already completed projects.

Application Review Process and Notification

Each application is reviewed by two individuals who are experts in the fields supported by this RFP. Reviewers score all applications based on the criteria above.

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 years in this grant program is 73%, which includes fully and partially funded applications. The average approval rate of all applications to the Trust is 33%. Should your proposal not be funded, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Trust to discuss and obtain reviewer feedback, which will make your proposal stronger for a future submission.

Award Notification, Funding Distribution and Final Reports: All applicants will receive an emailed letter stating the Trust's decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the Trust will email an award agreement with grant conditions and the due date of the final report. Grantees must print, sign, scan, and upload the signed award agreement with original signatures to the online award management system.

The Trust will mail the check to the requesting organization following submission of the signed award agreement and any information necessary to meet contingency requirements. Allow a minimum of four weeks (from the date the Trust receives the signed award agreement and any contingencies) for the check to be issued.

Contact

For questions about the grant program, application, or project ideas contact Bre'Anna Brooks at (410) 974-2941 ext. 112 or bbrooks@cbtrust.org.

Online Application Instructions

When completing the online application process, you will be asked for the following information:

Project Title: List the title of your project

Organization Information:

1) Organization name
2) Address
3) City, State, Zip
4) Phone
5) Mission of Organization
6) Organization Type
7) EIN Number

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 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.

- 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: Provide the Executive Officer name, title, address, phone, and e-mail.

Project Leader: Provide the Project Leader name, title, address, phone, and e-mail. REMEMBER: THIS EMAIL ADDRESS MUST BE THE ONE YOU USED TO LOG IN TO SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION

Grant Information:

1) Amount of Trust funding requested
2) Grant Period: enter project start and end dates (submit applications *at least six weeks prior* to the start of the proposed project for the application to be considered.)
3) In which stream, river or watershed will the project be located?
4) In which county will the project be located?

Project Abstract:
Provide a brief summary of the project, including details such as type of project, location, and main objectives. Limit the abstract to 100 words.

Project Timeline:
Fill in a project timeline including major tasks and their associated start and end dates. You are limited to eight entries (though not required to use all eight) and are welcome to combine steps if necessary.

Project Deliverables:
Enter in a variety of metrics such as the proposed square feet of rain garden, volunteers engaged, trees planted, number of workshops held, etc. Fill out only the project deliverables that apply to your project; leave the others (that are not applicable) blank.

Volunteer Involvement:
Provide a description of volunteer activities, indicate the number of volunteers that will be involved with each activity, and an estimated number of hours contributed by those volunteers.

Project Partnerships and Qualifications:

List the project partner organizations, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project. While not required, applicants are encouraged to upload a letter of commitment from each project partner outlining the partner's role in the project. Letters of commitment can be uploaded in the narrative file attachment section.

Project Narrative Upload:
Upload a PDF or MSWord file containing the project narrative questions, not to exceed five pages.

Address the following narrative questions and then upload your narrative document through 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 this document to ensure that you do not omit an answer.

Project Description (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?
2) Background: Describe the background of the project. Why is this project needed? How was it identified?
3) Audience: Identify the priority audience you will educate or engage and describe how you will reach them and why you've chosen that method.
4) Demonstration value: Describe how this project might be used as a model in other areas? How might lessons learned from this project be transferred to others? For on-the-ground projects, describe the project location(s), why it/they were selected, and how visible to others the project will be.
5) Long-term sustainability: 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 on-the-ground projects), long-term attitude or knowledge changes in a community, etc.
6) Demographic Information: In light of the Trust's commitment to the advancement of diversity in its grant-making, provide demographic information about the community or population involved in or served by the project. Describe how the population and/or the community are involved in the planning, development, and implementation of the proposed project, and in the development of this application.
   - The Trust encourages applications directly from under-engaged communities; however, 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), describe how "ownership" will be transferred to the community and how the ability of the community to carry the work forward will be developed and resourced.
   - Provide your organization's experience working within the specific communities that you will be prioritizing. If you have not had significant experience working with or as part of 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 prioritized demographic(s). Cultural competence involves understanding and appropriately responding to the unique combination of cultural variables which entails the integrated patterns of human behavior such as language, thoughts, actions, customs, beliefs and institutions of racial, ethnic, social or religious groups that the community or population bring to interactions.
7) Experience: Briefly describe your organization's experience in completing similar projects.
8) Evaluation: Describe how you will assess the effectiveness of your project. How will you collect information to refine and improve your project?
9) Mentorship Program: Did you participate in the Community Engagement Mentorship Program?
   - If yes, who was your Mentor/Mentee organization?
   - For Mentee: What role did your Mentor play (project development assistance, narrative creation, application submission assistance, etc.) and how much time did its staff spend assisting you?
10) Required documentations for projects: Are the following items included in your application where applicable?
    Required for Restoration-type Projects:
    - Site plan/ project design that includes species, area, spacing, etc.
    - Native plant list. Funds may be requested for native plant species only.

- Photo of the site.
- A detailed maintenance plan for short-term (first growing season) and long-term (three years) maintenance. Applicants proposing work on private property should have a particularly strong maintenance description. Proposals that demonstrate long-term commitment to keep and maintain the project will receive more favorable review.
- Permits or other approvals: If permits or any other type of approvals are required, describe the status (i.e., permits pending review of application, permits secured).
- Letters of Commitment. 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/.

Recommended for Outreach-type Projects:

- For workshops: a draft agenda.
- Letters of commitment. 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/.
- List of knowledge objectives.

Additional Attachments:
We prefer that all documents be merged into one file for ease of reviewing; however, up to four additional file attachments may be uploaded in this section. Only a total of five attachments will be reviewed. Additional attachments (more than five in total) will not be allowed. **Planting project requests must include the following additional attachments: a site plant, site photos, a native plant list, and a maintenance plan that assigns specific tasks to specific individuals throughout the year.**

Budget Upload:
Upload your budget using the "Application Budget" worksheet of the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Financial Management Spreadsheet, an excel file template. The template is available in the online application and can be found by visiting www.cbtrust.org/forms.

- Be as detailed as possible
- For any staff cost requests, list the percentage of overall time devoted to the project by each staff member in the budget item column. It is expected that all personnel included in budgets will be directly involved in the work conducted under this program. Requests that do not include full justification for personnel involved may not be fully funded.
- Matching/leveraged resources are encouraged. Indicate whether each match entry is applied for, pledged, or in-hand. Indicate in the narrative whether your organization has requested financial support from any other sources for the project not listed as match in the budget submitted.

Budget Category Information
This final online grant program component will ask applicants to enter budget category totals. These totals will be automatically calculated in the Application Budget. Finally, check that the project's total requested amount you entered earlier in the application is correct.

Use the "Additional Budget Justification" section in the online application to justify and explain costs. Budgets that are detailed, justified, and itemized are ideal.

The body of work described in your proposal should be able to be accomplished with the resources requested in your budget. If the success of the work is contingent upon award of other funds, make this clear in your budget justification section.

Guidelines for Project Types

Review the guidelines for specific project types below as you prepare a Community Engagement Mini Grant application. The Trust will continue to expand the criteria available on specific project types.

Greening/Garden Projects

- All planting projects **must** include a plant list, site plan, project design, photo of the planting/restoration site, and a detailed maintenance plan.

- List plants that will be used in the planting/restoration project in the application. For non-edible projects, only native plants may be used. Funds may be requested for native plant species only.

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

- For projects planned on properties other than that of the applicant and/or private property, attach a letter of commitment stating that permission has been granted by the entity owning the land on which the project will be completed. Applications that demonstrate long-term commitment to upkeep, manage, and maintain the project will receive more favorable review. Projects planned on private property must have a high demonstration value for the site to be a fit into the Community Engagement Mini Grant Program.

- Requests for invasive vegetation removal as part of site preparation for native planting projects are permitted.

Publication, Printing, and Electronic Media Projects

- Publication projects supporting the full scope of the Trust's activities are welcome. The ultimate project goal must be to help individuals take actions that can benefit the environment, community health, and rivers and streams. The message should be consistent with the mission of the requesting organization.

- Applicants must explain how the project and materials fulfill an unmet need for information that does not duplicate existing materials. Include a review of existing similar types of publications, and explain what is new about your materials and associated communications campaign. Applications that do not place a project in the context of existing materials will not be considered.

- The target audience must be clearly defined, and how the audience is expected to use the information must be articulated.

- The publication's distribution plan must be completed before the application is submitted and included with the application. This plan should include information such as:
  (a) why the specific medium (web, print, other) was chosen to reach the target audience;
  (b) the number of copies to be produced (or web hits to be generated);
  (c) how the product will be advertised to the target audience (for example, if a new resource will be posted on your website, explain the plan to drive the target audience to the website); and
  (d) fees that may be involved (applicant is not permitted to charge for project components funded by the Trust, such as charging for a publication that Trust resources are supporting).

- Applicants proposing print media are strongly encouraged to make an electronic copy of the publication available on a public website.

- For web-distributed footage, applicants must secure all required digital distribution rights.

Workshops and Trainings

- Applicants must describe the knowledge objectives for project participants as it relates to natural resources and/or water quality education.

- A priority audience and number of attendees must be identified in the application, as well as a recruitment strategy based on assessment of the priority audience identified.

- A list of speakers, their qualifications, and a draft agenda should be provided in the application. If unknown at the time of application, submission of these supporting documents will be a contingency of an award.

- The Trust will consider speaker fees on a case by case basis. Applicants should clearly identify the speaker(s) for which funds are requested and list a rate per hour for the speaker in the budget.

- The Trust encourages applicants holding workshops or trainings to evaluate audience knowledge and selfefficacy with a combination of survey or other similar tools. The grantee must share results of the evaluation with the Trust and outline next steps resulting from the workshop or training in the final report.

Water Quality Monitoring Projects

The Trust will consider monitoring projects in certain cases: (a) when data will be used to target future restoration projects; (b) when data will be used to increase public awareness of watershed issues, for example, in a "State of the Watershed" report; (c) when monitoring data will be used to help create or refine a watershed management plan; (d) when data will be used to address land use issues on a large-scale, in a way that will help local governments advance best management practices. In the latter case, letters of commitment from local governments are required. For all cases:

- Identify the purpose of the monitoring (i.e., which of the above four cases apply to your project).
- Describe who will use the data and how it will be used.
- Describe the monitoring protocol to be followed, including how sites were or will be selected for monitoring, what parameters will be measured, the methods and equipment for sampling, and the frequency of monitoring.
- Explain how the monitoring project provides new data or information not already understood. Put the project in the context of any existing state or federal monitoring programs.
- Preference will be given to monitoring projects that engage volunteers.
- We strongly recommend that water quality monitoring, Watershed Report Card, and State of the River Report projects follow water quality monitoring methodology recommendations established by the Mid Atlantic Tributary Assessment Coalition (MTAC) led by the University of Maryland. Contact the Trust for more information or to obtain a copy of the monitoring protocol document.