Capacity Building Grant Program

FY 22 Request for Proposals

CBTRUST
Chesapeake Bay Trust

CHESAPEAKE BAY FUNDERS NETWORK

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Chesapeake Bay Program
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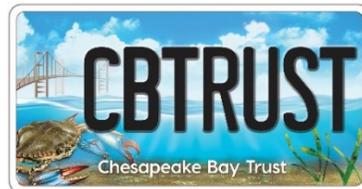
Chesapeake Bay Trust

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Capacity Building Grant Program

At A Glance

Program Summary:

The Capacity Building Grant Program is designed to increase the effectiveness of organizations that work at the nexus of natural resource and community health issues, within the Chesapeake Bay, Coastal Bays, and Youghiogheny River watersheds by addressing organizational capacity needs.

Deadline:

Thursday, January 13th, 2022, at 4:00pm EST

Eligible Project Locations:

This program funds projects throughout the Chesapeake watershed, including MD, DE, DC, PA, VA, and WV, and the Coastal Bays and Youghiogheny watersheds in Maryland.

Request Amounts:

Requests are typically up to $30,000 but may be higher with justification.

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35204

Contact:

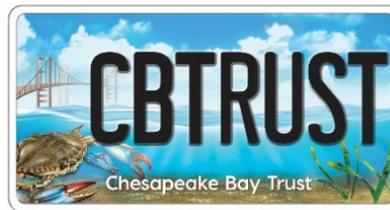Kacey Wetzel, Director, Outreach and Education, 410-974-2941 ext. 104, kwetzel@cbtrust.org

Table of Contents

Introduction and Program Goals

The Capacity Building Grant Program is an annual program of the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) and the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN) that seeks to support the internal capacity of organizations working at the nexus of natural resource and community health issues in the Chesapeake, Coastal Bays, and Youghiogheny watersheds. "Organizational capacity" is defined as activities that strengthen an organization and help it better fulfill its mission. Organizations that are strong and healthy are better able to accomplish their missions, which in turn allows the entire community to realize its collective goal of healthy natural resources given the degree of partnership that exist across organizations. Through this opportunity, grants will be provided to eligible nonprofit organizations to strengthen their internal capacity or to strengthen the capacity of other non-profit organizations.

> **What is Capacity Building?**
>
> Capacity building refers to activities that strengthen an organization and help it better fulfill its mission.
>
> Capacity building can occur in every aspect of an organization, including programs, management, operations, technology, governance, fundraising, and communications.

Organizations of all types, nonprofit and otherwise, have faced challenges in recent years in the face of the syndemic (COVID-19 pandemic, social injustices, impacts of climate change, and increased spotlight on long-standing social inequities). Organizations have had to be flexible, adapt, change policies and procedures, find new lines of revenue, ask themselves tough questions, review their missions, and more. While this year's Capacity Building Initiative grant opportunity seeks to support general capacity improvements similar to its methodology in years' past, we expect applicants to propose activities that account for the specific challenges of current circumstances.   Grants will support a range of activities that address organizational capacity and technical assistance in any area that makes an organization stronger, including but not limited to finance and fundraising, strategic planning, diversity, equity, inclusion and justice, program evaluation, collaboration, communications, and technology. The Capacity Building Initiative is supported by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Chesapeake Bay Program, the Keith Campbell Foundation, Kentfields Foundation, Hillsdale Fund, the Prince Charitable Trusts, and the Agua Fund.

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 $130 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

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, 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

Capacity building projects should focus on addressing organization challenges to improve an organization's ability to adapt and be effective long term. The landscape of regional Chesapeake funders has recently changed, and key foundations have sunsetted, emphasizing the need for organizations to have a strong,

independent financial and power base. Two key capacity building strategies vital to establishing a strong base are the development of robust financial plans to modify or diversify organizational revenue sources and collaboration among organizations. Collaborative models may range from increased coordination through network development, sharing of back-office support, and/or shared decision making and resources to full integration of programs, planning, and funding via organizational mergers. Requests to modify or develop more robust organizational financial plans or to investigate and plan for collaborations or mergers among organizations are encouraged.

Examples of other specific tools for which funds may be requested include: organizational assessments, consultant or facilitation costs for planning, financial management or donor management software, financial planning, video conferencing software, fees or registration costs for board or staff training opportunities, website design specifically related to online giving and membership, printing and postage for membership drives or annual appeals, presentation materials, and administrative hardware costs. This list is not exhaustive, and you are encouraged to consider the below organizational capacity categories when forming your request. If you have a request idea, please contact the program manager to discuss your idea before applying.

Applicants may consider external forms of assistance such as peer mentoring or peer exchange elements, consultant services, coaching, or other third-party methods for addressing organizational challenges. This program supports requests for funding of the following project types in this Request for Proposal (RFP); however, the below is not an exhaustive list:

Organization Capacity Category/Type Project	Example Projects:
Adaptive Capacities	
The ability of your organization to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes.	➢ Adapting existing programs and events for digital engagement or safe remote engagement ➢ Investigating and evaluating the potential for organization collaborations with the goal of developing a sustainable network or integrating / merging existing organizations as a preferred outcome ➢ Developing or refining a strategic plan, including a vital mission and clear theory of change ➢ Assessing organizational effectiveness. Example - Assessment (or audit) of organizational functions to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ)
Leadership Capacities	
The ability of your organization's leaders to inspire, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction, and innovate in an effort to achieve the organization's mission.	➢ Developing a stronger board ➢ Creating a leadership succession plan or addressing staff or board leadership transitions ➢ Conducting community needs assessments to inform leadership direction ➢ Developing skill sets of organization leaders ➢ DEIJ training as part of a systematic planned effort
Management Capacities	

A non-profit organization is more likely to reach its goals if it is well managed. Management capacity is the ability of a nonprofit organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of organizational resources.	➢ Management training to plan for the 'new normal' considering COVID-19 ➢ Improving processes for internal communications, ➢ Developing efficient operation processes, ➢ Developing or enhancing management support systems; specifically, the quality of staff supervision
Technical Capacities	
Addressing technical capacities can be a broad category but typically refers to performance of the work of the organization: delivering programs and services. To do so, an organization needs solid finances with reliable and diverse revenue streams, staff with required skill sets, clear communications, and accountability.	➢ Fundraising plan development / developing diverse revenue sources ➢ Creation a DEIJ plan, including transparent goals and measurable outcomes ➢ Training and development for staff in necessary program skills, ➢ Technology improvements or database assistance. Example – Hardware or software necessary to support remote work ➢ Accounting and budgeting improvements ➢ Marketing and communications planning ➢ Volunteer or member recruitment and retention

We recognize that many organizations may still be struggling because of COVID-19 impacts and are seeking unrestricted emergency funds for operational support. Unfortunately, the source and amount of funding available through the Capacity Building grant program does not allow for operational support requests. This grant program instead seeks to invest in specific organization-strengthening activities by organizations working to adapt to the 'new normal' in light of COVID-19 impacts. Please contact the Trust program lead if you would like to discuss your proposal idea.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by reviewers to score your proposal:

- ◆ **General quality of Application** (Scale 1-5): Are all required application components included for sound evaluation of the application?
- ◆ **Consistency with the Request for Proposals (RFP)** (Scale of 1-25): Is the project proposed consistent with the intent of the RFP? Are specific capacity-building activities proposed that will strengthen the organization and make it more sustainable in the future and more likely to accomplish its mission? (Reminder that funding for general operating support is not provided through this grant program)
- ◆ **Partnerships and/or Contractors** (Scale 1-10): Are selected volunteer and compensated partners (including contractors) appropriate and/or qualified? Are the partnerships necessary to accomplish the goals of the project, and are any partners missing?
- ◆ **Need** (Scale of 1-20): Does the applicant justify the need for the proposed activities? Is there an element of the organization that, were it made stronger, would lead to greater sustainability and likelihood to accomplish its mission?
- ◆ **Likelihood of Success** (Scale of 1-20) Are the activities proposed likely to be accomplished well, and likely to fulfill the capacity needs identified by the organization? If costs are requested for training, will trainings incorporate best practices?
- ◆ **Cost Effectiveness and Budget** (Scale of 1-20): Is the budget appropriate and cost effective?

Are the line items budgeted justified in the project narrative? Cash and in-kind match are not required but will be viewed favorably.

Eligible Applicants

Funding Partners and the Trust welcome requests from organizations who have the following:

♦ A current 501(c)(3) status
♦ Provide services in one or more of the following Chesapeake Bay region jurisdictions: MD, DE, DC, PA, VA, and WV
♦ Have a water and/or natural resource focused component of their mission
♦ >2 and < 50 staff. At least one staff member must be employed full-time (defined as >35 hours per week). Organizations with only one paid staff member may substitute a dedicated volunteer position in which the individual contributes at least 20 hours per week.
♦ Have an active Board of Directors

Funding Availability, and Timeline

Funding Availability: The funding partners anticipate approximately $350,000 will be available in this round of the program.

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, January 13th, 2022**. 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 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 expert reviewers. 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 the same or similar programs. The average approval rate from the last three rounds in this grant program is 60%, 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. 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, 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 must be grouped and numbered to correspond to the budget line item reported as spent. <u>Organizations with outstanding final, progress, or status reports will not be awarded additional grants</u>.

The Fiscal Year 2022 Capacity Building Grant Program awards will be announced in February 2022.

Contact

For technical assistance contact Kacey Wetzel at (410) 974-2941 x 104 or kwetzel@cbtrust.org

Narrative Questions

Goal: What are the specific objectives of the project? What are the capacity needs of your organization? How will the specific activities you propose to undertake (with funds through this program) help meet your needs? Describe the steps to complete the project. Please also describe the proposed project outputs (products).

Outcomes: Please describe the outcomes that you expect to generate over the course of the requested grant period. Be mindful of the difference between outputs and outcomes. We are not asking how many meetings you will organize, or how many new organizational strategies you will put in place. We are interested in what you expect the meetings and strategies to produce in the way of change for your organization's sustainability and growth. I.e., how will meeting the needs described above lead to a stronger, healthier, more sustainable organization that can better meet its mission, and therefore lead to healthier natural resources and community well-being within this region?

Justification: How and why was this capacity building need prioritized to be addressed over other organizational needs? Explain how your request supports your organization's ability to implement your strategic plan. If previous efforts have been made to address this need, please summarize your experience.

DEIJ Training Requests: If requesting costs for staff or board training please describe the specific knowledge objectives for participants. For example, research shows that DEIJ trainings are most effective when tailored to the organization through preliminary assessments, designed to build and invoke social norms, use multiple instructional methods, encourage inter-group contact (groups of individuals with different identities), use trainers with qualifications in organizational change that identify from a diversity of racial and cultural backgrounds, and where possible link to existing or developing operational goals. If requesting costs for DEIJ training, please describe how these best practices will be incorporated into your request for contractual services and/or the training offered.

Sustainability: The Trust aims to invest in projects that have the longest potential longevity after the grant period is over. 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?

Partnerships: What partners (not contractors), volunteer or compensated, will help you complete the project?

Evaluation: How will you know if you were successful? What metrics will you use to determine if your efforts helped you to improve your organization's sustainability? On a related note, if a proposal is selected for funding, the Trust will track changes in metrics (pre and post) in the Marguerite Casey Foundation assessment.

If you plan to subcontract work, you are required to solicit at least three competitive bids, estimates, or quotes from at least three contractors; for additional information see the "Contractors" section below.

Contractors: IMPORTANT - If hiring a contractor, applicants must have either already obtained cost estimates or quotes from at *least* three service providers prior to completing the application OR indicate in the proposal that at least three estimates or quotes will be obtained. Obtaining bids also helps applicants to ensure that their request amount will be sufficient given costs for third-party services.

♦ Has/will a contractor be hired?
♦ If you have not yet received cost estimates, please explain how you are accurately estimating costs for the contractual scope of work.
♦ Describe your contractor selection process, including justification and background of the selected contractor. If using a competitive 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.

For your budget request:

♦ Budgets that are detailed, justified, and itemized are ideal.

♦ 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.

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. such as: 1) if you requested staff costs (personnel/staff that are in your organization) you must provide a

detailed justification for those staff costs that includes a <u>scope of work for the staff costs requested</u>, tasks for the scope of work, and hours associated with those tasks and 2) the source of any contractor cost estimates. Staff cost requests that are not fully justified will not be funded. If awarded, you will be required to provide timesheets for all staff time used during the project.

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.

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. To apply for an award, 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.

Applicants must submit applications in the Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System by the specified deadline date and time (see deadline section above). Late applications <u>will not</u> be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 4:00 pm the day of the deadline.

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 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.

- o 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.
  - o 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**
  - o Provide a project title; project abstract; project start and end dates; the watershed, county, and legislative district in which the project is located; and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the project location.

- **Timeline Tab**
  - o Provide a project timeline that includes major tasks and their associated start and end dates.

- **Deliverables Tab**
  - o Provide estimated metrics for your proposed project such as number of people with increased knowledge.

- **Project Partnerships**
  - o Provide a list of project partner organizations or contractors, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project.
  - o 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:
  - o A Microsoft Word or PDF file that contains your answers to the narrative questions found in the Narrative Questions section of this RFP.
  - o A completed self-assessment. Instructions can be found below in appendix A.
  - o Additional supporting documents, if needed/required.

- **Budget Tab**
  - o 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: Self-Assessment Baseline Evaluation

All submitted applications must include a complete self-assessment. The Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool downloadable here (https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/final-report-and-status-report-forms/marguerite-casey-blank/) must be completed and attached to each application.

What does the Self-Assessment Tool Ask?

The Assessment is intended for self-guided use by nonprofit organizations, completing the assessment using a team approach both improves validity and reduces individual biases and is highly recommended.

The workbook contains several worksheets, one worksheet for each organizational capacity dimension and additional worksheets containing instructions, a section to record general information about your organization and individuals completing the Assessment, a summary table, and a summary chart. The various worksheet tabs are located at the bottom of the screen; click on the tabs to view each worksheet.

You will be rating your organization on a variety of capacity elements. The capacity elements are clustered into four dimensions of nonprofit organizational capacity.

1) **Leadership**: the capacity of organizational leaders to inspire, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction, and innovate.
2) **Adaptive**: the capacity of a nonprofit organization to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes.
3) **Management**: the capacity of a nonprofit organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of organizational resources.
4) **Operational**: the capacity of a nonprofit organization to implement key organizational and programmatic functions.

Once you have completed tabs labeled 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the assessment tool, the spreadsheet will automatically total the scores in each capacity element in the "Summary Table" and "Summary Chart" tabs. This report will aid the group in determining its capacity building needs and its future organizational priorities. You will be able to interpret the data to decide which best practices your organization may need to put in place and/or improve to have a healthy and sustainable organization, which should directly inform the application submitted to this request for proposals.

You are encouraged to answer the self-assessment tool frankly and honestly, because that will lead to useful discussions within the organization. Remember to answer the questions as the organization currently operates, not as you wish it would or envision it in the future.

Please note: Some questions may not apply to every organization so the default option is "N/A." If an element does not apply to your organization, you may leave the "N/A" in place, and it will not factor into the summary totals.

How much time will it take?
Expect to spend 20 minutes to complete each of the four sections, totaling about 1 to 1.5 hours to work

through the entire tool. Some questions will require some prep work on your part BEFORE starting the survey. We highly recommend that you review the questions before you start the survey so that you can be prepared to enter the data requested by the survey when it is time to submit it.

How do I access the survey?
The Marguerite Casey Foundation Organizational Capacity Assessment is accessible through our website via the following link: https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/final-report-and-status-report-forms/marguerite-casey-blank/

What if I have questions about the survey?
If you are having technical difficulties with the survey, contact Rylee Kennedy, Program Assistant at the Trust, via email at rkennedy@cbtrust.org