Environmental Education Grant Program

FY 22 Request for Proposals

Chesapeake Bay Trust
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Environmental Education Grant Program

At A Glance

Program Summary:
The Environmental Education Program is designed to support the advancement of environmental literacy ensuring every student in Maryland graduates with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation to take informed and responsible actions to protect and improve the environment.

Deadline:
Thursday, December 2, 2021, at 4:00pm EST

Eligible Project Locations:
This program funds throughout the state of Maryland

Request Amounts:
- Track 1: MWEE Implementation
  - Up to $40,000 per year for up to 3 years
- Track 2: Environmental Literacy Capacity Building
  - Up to $40,000 for the 2022 schoolyear (March 2022 – August 2023)

Submit Your Application:
Follow the instructions online at https://cbtrust.org/grants/environmental-education/

Contact:
Tara Drennan, Program Manager, 410-974-2941 ext. 102, tdrennan@cbtrust.org

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

Program Goals

The Trust recognizes that the recovery of our local streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay – the future health of our environment, economy, and communities – depends on an environmentally literate and engaged populace. As the impacts of climate change continue to accelerate and are increasingly felt by residents, it is more important now than ever before that students are prepared to understand and address increasingly complex and urgent social and environmental challenges. The Trust also knows the power of environmental education to improve students’ academic achievement, physical and mental health, and build skills needed for the 21st century. Through this opportunity the Trust seeks to fund programs and initiatives that advance environmental literacy and result in students having the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation to take informed and responsible actions to protect and improve the environment.

The Trust is committed to 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/.

As a state partner of Project Green Classrooms in Maryland the Trust is committed to supporting efforts to reconnect children with the outdoors, specifically by funding programs that support the Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards and graduation requirement for all students in Maryland public schools. The Trust is also committed to the regional efforts of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement’s Environmental Literacy Goal of every student experiencing at least one Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) in elementary, middle, and high school. As a result, the Trust’s Environmental Education initiatives focus on building the capacity of educators to implement comprehensive and sustainable environmental literacy programs for all Maryland students.

Eligible Project Types

Track 1. MWEE Implementation: Proposals for up to $40,000 per year for up to three years for projects that focus on piloting (one-year requests) or embedding systemic (multiyear requests) MWEEs into school district’s curriculum.

The MWEE model integrates best practices of environmental education pedagogy where students investigate local environmental issues through classroom and outdoor experiences, engage in problem solving, and take action to address their issue through projects and civic engagement. MWEEs increase student achievement and engagement, develop 21st century skills, and provide authentic experiences understanding and protecting their local environment and community. The MWEE model includes four Essential Elements (Issue Definition, Outdoor Field Experience, Synthesis & Conclusions, and Stewardship & Civic Action) and four Supporting Practices (Active Teacher Support, Classroom Integration, Local Context, and Sustained Activity). A range of approaches to adapt to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) restrictions and the uncertainty impacting
schools throughout Maryland including any mix of virtual, at-home, or in-person learning is encouraged. To ensure strong alignment with the MWEE model the Trust highly recommends using An Educator’s Guide to the Meaningful Watershed Education Experience, MWEE Toolbox, and other resources found on Bay Backpack before applying. For an even deeper dive and greater understanding of the MWEE model check out the MWEE Online Courses.

MWEEs are considered **systemic** when they are embedded into curriculum and target all students and teachers in a grade or course within a school district. Leadership and support from the school district is essential for systemic MWEEs to be successful and sustainable as they provide the permission, expertise, and funding to embed MWEEs into the curriculum, implement outdoor field experiences and action projects, and require teachers to participate in professional development opportunities. Professional development for teachers is also a key element for systemic MWEEs to be successful and sustainable as it ensures teachers have the content knowledge and pedagogical skills to facilitate a MWEE. Partnerships with nonprofits and public agencies are also highly recommended as they provide expertise and resources for teacher professional development, MWEE design, and MWEE implementation.

The Trust understands the amount of time, effort, and training it can take to develop, implement, and sustain a systemic MWEE program, especially at a large school district. As a result, multiyear proposals can include a year of planning, developing an environmental literacy team, recruiting the right partners, and designing and embedding the MWEE into the curriculum. Proposals do not have to start reaching students, either systemically or through a pilot, until year two.

The Trust is prioritizing MWEEs that:

- Serve an audience with high need including but not limited to:
  - School districts who do not have an existing systemic MWEE in elementary, middle, or high school. See the Trust’s Systemic MWEE Map as a reference.
  - School districts who serve schools and communities that have indicators of need in academic performance (e.g. academic achievement, graduation rates, and attendance), socioeconomic status (e.g. low-income, unemployment, high poverty, over 50% of Title 1 schools), and/or other areas that have shown to widen disparities in access to environmental education.
  - School districts who center equity in the delivery of pilot and systemic MWEEs prioritizing the needs and delivery of resources to underserved schools.

- Integrate youth voice. Encouraging youth voice during a MWEE is important for fostering a lasting environmental stewardship ethic in students. Giving students the opportunity to make decisions throughout the MWEE helps them to foster a belief in their own abilities, realize that their voices matter in the community, and apply innovation and creativity to tackle real issues. For ideas on how to work youth voice into each of the essential elements see page 6 in An Educator’s Guide to the Meaningful Watershed Education Experience and pages 34-38 in the Facilitators Guide to a MWEE.

- Integrate climate change. The Trust strives to invest in projects and programs that will positively “move the needle” for the health of the environment and communities across Maryland which includes adaptation and mitigation of climate change. Today’s students are tomorrow’s decision-makers and promoting climate literacy is essential to ensuring that future policy decisions address climate change mitigation and adaptation needs. Students should not only learn about the impacts of climate change, but also the solutions necessary to ensure a sustainable and livable world for all. Note: climate change does not have to necessarily be the focus but weaved throughout the learning experience.

**Track 2. Environmental Literacy Capacity Building:** Proposals for up to $40,000 for a year (latest project end date August 2023) for district or state-wide environmental literacy capacity building and collaboration efforts that advance environmental literacy, especially MWEEs, within school district(s).

The Trust recognizes there are numerous barriers to reaching the goal of every student in Maryland graduating environmentally literate and experiencing at least one MWEE in elementary, middle, and high school. To
The Trust welcomes new and innovative ideas. Please contact Tara Drennan tdrennan@cbtrust.org to discuss.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by external technical expert reviewers to evaluate applications under the Environmental Education Grant Program. The Trust staff will serve as guidance through the review phase, but we recommend reviewing your proposal or having a colleague review your proposal against these criteria before submission to ensure that you have addressed all the relevant criteria. Preference will be given to applications that meet multiple criteria.

Scoring Criteria for all Tracks:

- **Consistency with Request for Proposals (RFP) (Scale of 1 to 25):** Is the proposed program or project consistent with the intent of the RFP track selected (MWEE Implementation or Environmental Literacy Capacity Building)?
  - If MWEE Implementation is being proposed:
    - How strongly does the proposed program meet each of the four Essential Elements of the MWEE model (issue definition, outdoor field experiences, action project, synthesis and conclusion)? Note: applicants should describe any COVID-19 restrictions in the school district(s) and/or area they are working in that could impact the proposed work. A range of approaches to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions are encouraged. (Scale of 1 to 10)
How strongly does the proposed program meet each of the four Supporting Practices of the MWEE model (classroom integration, local context, active teacher support, sustained activity)? (Scale of 1 to 7)

How strongly does the proposed program integrate youth voice? (Scale of 1 to 5)

How strongly does the proposed program integrate climate change education? (Scale of 1 to 3)

- If Environmental Literacy Capacity Building is being proposed:
  - Does the proposal clearly define the barriers to advancing environmental literacy including MWEEs at either the district or state level? (Scale of 1 to 10)
  - To what degree will overcoming the identified barriers advance environmental literacy including MWEEs at either the district or state level? (Scale of 1 to 15)

**Professional Development** (Scale of 1 to 10): Is professional development for educators being proposed? If it is not being proposed because it is not necessary or already exists, then give a score of 10. If it is not being proposed but should be score accordingly. If it is being proposed:

  - Does it model environmental education pedagogy? Facilitators should utilize the same techniques and experiences in trainings that teachers are expected to use with their students.
  - Does it allow for adequate instructional time? Trainings should be multi-day, occurring consecutively or over the course of several months.
  - Does it provide ongoing teacher support and appropriate incentives? It is essential that professional development providers have a structure in place for ongoing teacher support and enrichment.
  - What is the likelihood that professional development training will be successful in accomplishing its objectives?

**Audience Need** (Scale of 1 to 20)

  - Using the Trust’s Systemic MWEE Map, is there a high level of need based on the number of existing systemic MWEEs in the school district(s)? (Score 10 if 0 existing MWEEs, Score 7 if 1 existing MWEE, Score 4 if 2 existing MWEE, Score 1 if 3 existing MWEEs)
  - Does the school district(s) targeted in the proposal serve schools and communities that have indicators of need in academic performance (e.g. academic achievement, graduation rates, and attendance), socioeconomic status (e.g. low-income, unemployment, high poverty, over 50% of Title 1 schools), and/or other areas that have shown to widen disparities in access to environmental education. (Scale of 1 to 5)
  - If MWEE Implementation is being proposed:
    - Does the proposal center equity in the delivery of the MWEE, prioritizing needs and providing resources for underserved schools? (Scale of 1 to 5)
  - If Environmental Literacy Capacity Building is being proposed:
    - Does the applicant justify the need for focusing on the audience targeted by their proposed program or project? (Scale 1 to 5)

**Likelihood of Success** (Scale of 1 to 15): What is the likelihood of success if this project is funded? Success should be defined as the accomplishment of outcomes proposed. Are methodologies sound and consistent with best practices?

  - If MWEE Implementation is being proposed:
    - Is there a strong letter of commitment from the school district’s leadership if the school district is not the applicant?
    - Is it clear how the proposed MWEE is being integrated into the curricular scope and sequence of an academic program?
    - If a multiyear request will the proposed MWEE be systemic by the end of the grant term? MWEEs are considered systemic when they target all students and teachers in a given grade level or course across a school district.
  - If Environmental Literacy Capacity Building is being proposed:
Will the proposed strategy (deliverables and actions) successfully address the defined barriers? Are methodologies sound and consistent with best practices?
Are the right people and organizations involved or targeted to make a significant impact? Are the key partners committed with contacts designated to lead coordination?

- **Long-term Vision & Plan (Scale of 1 to 15):**
  - If MWEE Implementation is being proposed:
    - Does the proposal provide a realistic long-term vision and plan for ensuring the program will continue after the grant period?
    - Is there commitment to support and sustain the work beyond the grant period from all essential partners?
    - Does the applicant address what ongoing resources would be needed in order to maintain the program or project?
  - If Environmental Literacy Capacity Building is being proposed:
    - Will the impacts of the work be felt after the grant period has ended?

- **Evaluation (Scale of 1-5):** Has the applicant proposed an evaluation plan that will demonstrate if the proposed outcomes have been achieved and what changes are needed to improve?

- **Partnerships (Scale of 1 to 5):** Are partners appropriate and/or qualified? Are the partnerships necessary to accomplish the goals, and are any partners missing?

- **Cost Effectiveness / Budget (Scale of 1 to 5):** Is the budget detailed, appropriate, and cost effective? Are the line items budgeted (for example, personnel costs) justified? In-kind and cash match is not required but will be viewed favorably.

### Eligible Applicants

The Trust welcomes requests from the following organizations:

- Public and Independent Higher Educational Institutions
- 501(c)3 Private Nonprofit Organizations
- Municipal, County, Regional, State, Federal Public Agencies
- Community Associations
- Service, Youth, and Civic Groups
- Soil/Water Conservation Districts & Resource Conservation and Development Councils

If your organization category is not listed above, contact the Trust to verify eligibility prior to submitting your application. Applications submitted from organizations outside of these categories may not be eligible for funding.

### Funding Availability and Timeline

**Funding Availability:** The Trust has made available $300,000 in FY22 for the Environmental Education Award Program.

**Project Timeline:**

Track 1: MWEE Implementation: Projects must be completed by August 2023 if requesting up to $40,000, August 2024 if requesting up to $80,000, or August 2025 if requesting up to $120,000.

Track 2: Environmental Literacy Capacity Building: Projects must be completed from March 2022 – August 2023.
Requests to extend project completion period will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants are encouraged to contact Trust staff to discuss applications at least two weeks prior to the deadline. Applicants submitting a multi-year proposal must contact Trust staff to discuss their project. The Trust cannot guarantee availability of project development assistance within two weeks of the deadline.

**Deadline**

Applicants must submit applications in the Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System by 4:00 PM EST on Thursday December 2, 2021. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close automatically and promptly at 4 PM EST. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit at least a few days prior to the deadline given the potential for high website traffic on the due date. The Trust cannot guarantee availability of technical assistance for our online system on the deadline date.

**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 and represent communities served by projects funded by this RFP. 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.

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 5 rounds in this award program is 35%, 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 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 2022 Environmental Education Award Program awards will be announced in late February 2022.

**Contact**

For technical assistance contact Tara Drennan at (410) 974-2941 x 102 or tdrennan@cbtrust.org.
Narrative Questions

You will be asked to upload an MS Word or PDF file addressing the following questions. To ensure that you address all questions, we recommend that you copy and paste the questions to use as the outline for your narrative. Additional file attachments can be uploaded, not to exceed a total of four file attachments per application. Use the additional “Upload” options in the online system.

For the purposes of this RFP, we define these terms in the following ways:

a. **Goal**: overall aim the program or project will help achieve, which may be longer-term and extend beyond the grant.

b. **Objective**: specific, measurable steps within the grant period that will help realize the goal.

c. **Output**: the immediate results of the work which is being completed (example: how many students will the program engage, how many teachers or administrators do you propose will attend a professional development training, development of an environmental literacy plan, or number of proposed partnerships).

d. **Outcome**: the change that is prompted as a result of the output listed above (example: increased knowledge and skills, changes in attitudes and behaviors, streamlining processes to remove barriers for outdoor environmental literacy programs, or securing sustainable funding to ensure the longevity of environmental literacy programs).

1. **Goal and Objectives**: Provide a brief summary of the project including the goal, objectives, school district(s), number of schools reached, and targeted grade level(s) or course(s) as applicable.

2. **Track**: Identify the track to which you are applying.
   a. **Track 1**: MWEE Implementation
   b. **Track 2**: Environmental Literacy Capacity Building

3. **Background and Need**: Describe the background of the project including why it is needed and how it was identified? Also include if the targeted school district(s) are serving schools and/or communities that have indicators of need in academic performance (e.g. academic achievement, graduation rates, and attendance), socioeconomic status (e.g. low-income, unemployment, high poverty, over 50% of Title 1 schools), and/or other areas that have shown to widen disparities in access to environmental education. Have you applied for this program or project in the past? If yes, what has changed since the last time you applied?
   a. If applying to the MWEE Implementation Track, make sure to highlight if the delivery of the MWEE will prioritize needs and resources for underserved schools.
   b. If applying to the Environmental Literacy Capacity Building Track, make sure to define the barriers you are addressing and why addressing those barriers will advance environmental literacy including MWEEs at the district or state level.

4. **Description**: Describe the actions and outputs. Be as detailed as possible with duration, frequency, and alternative options depending on COVID-19 restrictions. This is the logistical work plan for your program or project and should be the most in-depth section.

Depending on the elements of your program and project make sure to also emphasize:

a. If MWEE Implementation, describe how the program meets each of the Essential Elements and Supporting Practices. Be as detailed as possible. Remember to highlight if the proposed MWEE integrates youth voice and/or incorporates climate change as those elements are prioritized in the evaluation criteria.

b. If professional development is being proposed describe the audience, recruitment methods and incentives, topics and pedagogy, amount of instructional time, and outgoing support.
c. If a Multiyear MWEE Implementation Request, clearly differentiate between yearly activities including the number of schools being reached year.

5. **Evaluation**: Describe the outcomes that you expect to generate over the course of the requested grant period. Then demonstrate how you will assess the effectiveness of your program or project in order to meet those outcomes and improve in the future. Describe how you will collect and synthesize the information?
   a. Note evaluation plans should be quantitative and qualitative and may include evaluation tools, observation, or outside consultation. The Trust encourages applicants to plan for and include evaluation in the timeline and will consider requests for personnel time to conduct robust program evaluation.

6. **Long-term Vision & Plan**: The Trust aims to invest in projects that have the longest potential longevity, after the grant period has ended. Discuss the future of the program or project after the grant period. What factors may affect its long-term value and how will you ensure its long-term value is maximized? If the program or project will need ongoing financial resources in order to maintain its value, provide an abbreviated plan describing how the program or project will be sustained beyond the term of the proposed funding request.

7. **Demographic Information**: In light of the Trust’s commitment to diversity in its award-making, provide demographic information about the community or population served by the program or project.

**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](https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/) (FMS), an excel file template. The template can be found by visiting [https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/](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://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35037](https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35037) 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.
Applicants must submit applications in the Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System by 4:00 pm on Thursday December 2, 2021. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 4:00 pm.

By submitting an application to this program, applicants acknowledge that: 1) they are compliant with federal employment and non-discrimination laws and 2) they have not been debarred, convicted, charged or had a civil judgment rendered against them for fraud or related offense by any government agency (federal, state or local) or been terminated for cause or default by any government agency (federal, state, or local). In addition, all final products will be provided to the funding partners for use and distribution at the sole discretion of the funding partners.

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 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
  o Add the project start and end date. 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 project participants and outreach and restoration outcomes.

• Volunteers Tab
  o Provide a description of volunteer activities, the number of volunteers, and total number of volunteer hours.

• 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
  o 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
  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
  o Agree to the specified terms and conditions for the program for which you are applying.