CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT PROGRAM

A Partnership of the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network

CHESAPEAKE BAY
FUNDERS NETWORK
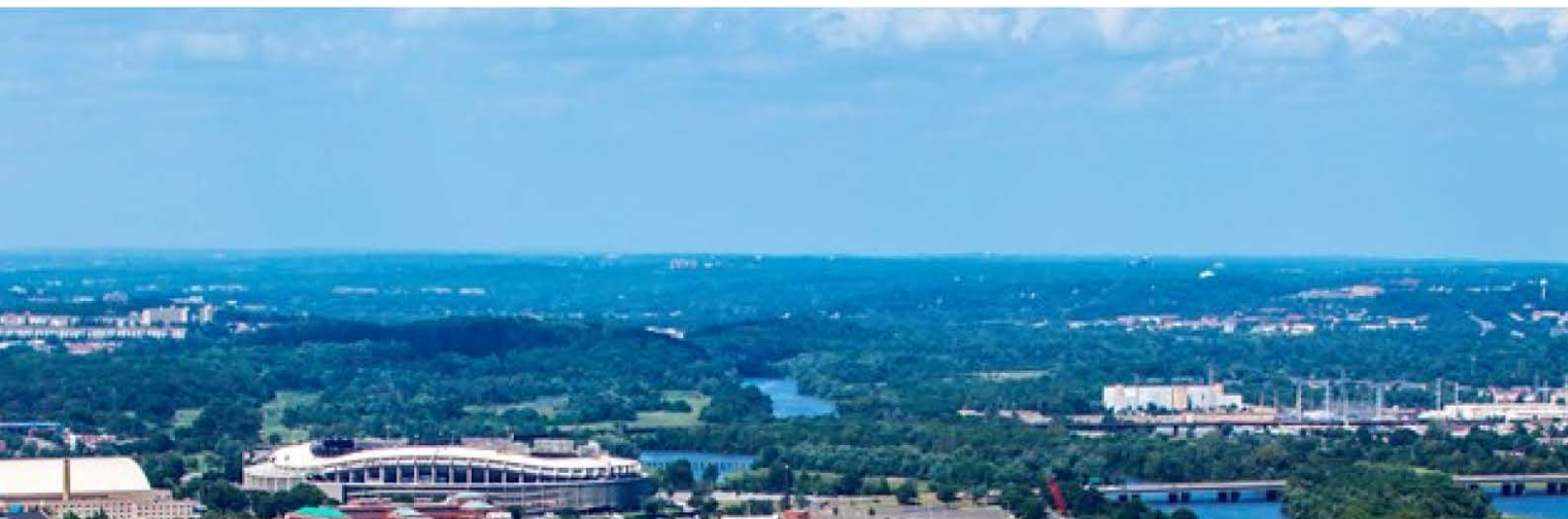
CHESAPEAKE BAY TRUST
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CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT PROGRAM

At A Glance

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.

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

Request Amounts: Requests are typically no higher than $30,000 but may be higher with justification.

Request Amounts: 4:00 PM EST on Thursday, March 16th, 2023

Submitting Your Application:
Follow the instructions online at:
https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35204

Contact:
Kacey Wetzel, Vice President of Programs, Outreach and Education, (410) 974-2941 x 104

Introduction and Program Goals

The Capacity Building Grant Program is an annual program of the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN). It seeks to support the capacity of organizations working on both community and environmental health issues. "Organizational capacity" is defined as activities that strengthen an organization to help it better fulfill its mission. Organizations that are strong and healthy are more effective in carrying out their missions and are more consistent and sustainable partners. Grants will be awarded to eligible nonprofit organizations to either a) strengthen their internal capacity, or b) strengthen the capacity of other nonprofit organizations.

Applicants to this opportunity will be asked to submit in writing general information about their organization and their proposed capacity building activities for their organization or others, along with a detailed proposed project budget.

The Trust and CBFN are committed to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in its award-making and environmental work. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages applications directly from underrepresented groups, and for capacity building projects that increase resilience of non-profits traditionally underrepresented, such as organizations led by people 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 our Diversity and Inclusion statement at https://cbtrust.org/diversityinclusion/.

The Capacity Building Initiative is supported by several members of CBFN including: the Agua Fund, Chesapeake Bay Trust, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Chesapeake Bay Program through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Keith Campbell Foundation, Kentfields Foundation, and Prince Charitable Trust. As well as the Phillip Merrill Foundation.

Eligible Applicants

Requests are encouraged from non-profit organizations who have the following:

- Provide services in one or more of the following Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions: MD, DE, DC, PA, VA, and WV

- >1 and < 50 staff. At least one staff member must be employed full-time (defined as >35 hours per week). If a paid staff member is not in place, the applicant may substitute a dedicated volunteer position in which the individual contributes at least 35 hours per week.
- A water and/or natural resource-focused component within their mission
- Have an active Board of Directors

Contact

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

Eligible Project Types

Capacity building projects should focus on addressing nonprofit challenges to improve an organization(s) ability to adapt and be effective long term. An entity can apply to improve its own capacity or to serve in a capacity building role for other regional non-profit organizations. Examples of project types include but are not limited to: contractual support to assess organizational effectiveness, developing or refining a strategic plan, developing a stronger and more diverse board, developing leadership skills of organizational leaders or up and coming leaders within the staff, training of management staff, developing efficient operations processes, fundraising plan development, creation of a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) plan, and technology improvements or database assistance. While the source and amount of funding available through the Capacity Building grant program does not allow for general operating support requests, a more robust list of project types that are eligible can be found in the appendices below.

Funding Availability, Timeline, and Deadline

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

Timeline: Projects must be completed within 12 months upon receipt of the award. Requests to extend project periods 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, March 16th, 2023**. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close automatically and promptly at 4 PM EST. The Trust cannot guarantee the availability of technical assistance for our online system on the deadline date.

Application Review Process, Award Notifications, and Requirements of Successful Grantees

Each Application is reviewed by a technical external peer review committee, called the Technical Review Committee (TRC), composed of funding partners and expert reviewers. The TRC scores and ranks applications based on the criteria listed in the 'Evaluation Criteria' section below, then meets to discuss the application merits. The TRC then recommends a suite of applications to the Trust's Board of Trustees.

All applicants will receive a letter stating the decision on the grant request in early June 2023. An application may be conditionally awarded pending additional information or fully awarded, partially awarded, or declined.

If and when a project is fully awarded, the Trust will send an award agreement with award conditions and due dates of status, progress, and final reports. The Trust will send the first award payment to the requesting organization following: satisfaction of any phase 1 payment award contingencies, including upload of the signed award agreement. 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, copies of timesheets for personnel time, and other costs. <u>Organizations with outstanding final, progress, or status reports will not be awarded additional grants</u>.

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. If you need help using this system, please contact the Trust.

To apply for an award, go to: https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35721 and click on "Get Started" to begin a new application. A new window will open asking you to log in or create an account on our online system. If you have applied in the past, use your existing username and password (if you have forgotten either of these use the 'forgot password' feature). If you have not used our online system before, click on "New Applicant" and follow the instructions.

By applying 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 using our online system at: https://cbtrust.org/grants/.

You will be asked to provide the following minimum information on the online application form.

A. Eligibility Quiz (required)

This three-question quiz is meant to help you determine if your project meets this award program's requirements and that your staff/organizational structure best supports a successful application.

B. Applicant Information Tab (required)

- o Provide the organization's name, mailing address, phone number, organization type, mission, Employer Identification Number (EIN), and System for Award Management (SAM) Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number.
- o Provide the Executive Officer and Project Leader's name, title, address, phone, and email address.
  - Both an Executive Officer and a Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified for all applications.
  - The Executive Officer and Project Leader must both be able to make decisions on behalf of the organization either as a board member, an employee, or other approved position recognized by the organization but not a contractor of the application.
  - The Executive Officer is the individual that oversees the organization (e.g., Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer, President or Vice President, etc.) and has the authority to sign/execute award agreements on behalf of the organization. The Executive Officer information is tied directly to all the organization's applications and should not vary from application to application.

If the Executive Officer could be listed as the Project Leader in a future proposal, we recommend listing a Board Member or other higher-ranking position of the organization as the Executive Officer in order to reduce the variation in the Executive Officer across applications.

- The Project Leader will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the project's duration. 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.

C. Project Information Tab (required)

You will be asked on this tab to provide:

- a project title (the title must start with the type of project proposed (Adaptive, Leadership, Management, or Technical Capacity. Please see Appendix B below for definitions of these terms);
- project abstract (one paragraph), in which you identify the main purpose of your project;
- the county and legislative district in which the project is located;
- the latitude and longitude of the project location.

D. Timeline Tab (required)

Add your proposed project start and end date (required). Optional: If you know the details of when you aim to accomplish key project steps, add those into the timeline section.

E. Deliverables Tab (required – at a minimum, input the number of trees to be planted)

Provide estimated metrics for your proposed project such as the number of new revenue sources identified. Leave those not relevant to your project blank.

F. Project Partnerships (optional)

List any project partner organizations, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project (there is a separate section where will enter contractor information under the budget tab).

G. Narrative and Supporting Documents - Project Narrative (required)

You will be asked to upload a MS Word or PDF file addressing the following questions.

1) Project Description (required)

- Provide a description of your project, including the goal(s) and capacity needs of your organization. How will the specific activities you propose help meet your identified needs?
- Describe the outcomes you expect to generate over the course of the project 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, resiliency, and growth. i.e., how will meeting the needs you described above lead to a stronger, healthier, more resilient organization that can better meet its mission, and therefore lead to healthier natural resources and community well-being within this region?

2) Justification (required)
- How and why was this capacity building need prioritized to be addressed over other organizational needs?
- Is your organization filling a gap or a need that other organizations are not currently filling in your geographic region?

3) Evaluation (required)
- How will you know if you were successful?

4) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Requests (required only for DEIJ requests)
- If requesting costs for staff or board training, please describe the specific knowledge objectives for participants. Research shows that DEIJ trainings are most effective when they are 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 from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds with qualifications in organizational change, and where possible link to existing or developing operational goals. If requesting costs for DEIJ training, please describe how the aforementioned best practices will be incorporated into your request for contractual services and/or the training offered.

5) Contractors (Required only if hiring a contract): 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 quates 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 already hired a contractor please explain your contractor selection process, including justification and background of the selected contractor. If using a competitive bid process, describe the process and how diversity, equity, inclusion, and just considerations were applied in the selection process.
- If you have not yet received cost estimates, please explain how you are accurately estimate costs for the contractual scope of work.

You are also encouraged to upload a Letter of Commitment or upload a document with a link to a video testimonial from each partner under the 'Supporting Documents Upload' sub-section of the 'Narrative & Supporting Documents' tab, describing in detail the partner's role or contribution to the project. Applications including strong Letter(s) or video statements of commitment often receive higher scores.

If not submitted with the application, letter(s) or video statements 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.

H. Budget (required)

1) *Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Upload (required)*

You will need 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. 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. Matching and leveraged costs are encouraged but not required.

2) *Personnel/Consultant Request Description (optional)*

If personnel and/or contractual costs are requested, please use this section to provide detailed information about the scope(s) of work for the individual or contractor.

3) *Additional Budget Justification (required)*

This online application component will ask you to provide a descriptive budget narrative to justify and explain costs. If the success of your project is contingent upon award of other funds from other funding sources, make this clear in your budget justification section.

I. Terms and Conditions Tab

o Agree to the specified terms and conditions

J. Demographics Tab

o Provide voluntary demographic information
o Provide information about your organization's current diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) efforts and future goals

Evaluation Criteria

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

- **Application components** (Scale 1-5): Are all required application components included for sound evaluation of the application?
- **Consistency with the Request for Proposals (RFP)** (Scale of 1-20): 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 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 resiliency and likelihood of accomplishing its mission?
- **Justification** (Scale 1-5)**:** Will the organization fill a gap/need in a given geography that other entities are not already filling?
- **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 training 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?

Appendices

Appendix A. Application Checklist:

- ○ Complete all fields in the online application (letters A. through F. above)
- ○ Upload a Project narrative that answers all the required questions (letter G. above)
- ○ Upload a completed Financial Management Spreadsheet and complete the additional budget justification in the online system (letter H. above)

Appendix B. Additional Information on Eligible Project Types (the list below is not exhaustive):

Organization Capacity Category/Type Project	Example Projects:
Adaptive Capacities	
The ability of your organization to monitor, assess, and respond to internal and external changes.	➢ 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 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 a nonprofit organization's ability to ensure the effective and efficient use of organizational resources.	➢ Management training ➢ 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 organization's work: 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
Movement Building	
The ability of organizations working at the community level to connect, inform and collaborate to achieve lasting, transformative and systems change at a local, state, or regional level. This includes strong leadership and infrastructure that supports and enables an inclusive, just, and powerful environmental movement in the Chesapeake region.	➢ Developing and pilot testing trainings for regional non-profits that meet common capacity building needs (please see the Choose Clean Water and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's capacity assessment survey outcomes here and T. Rowe Price's State of non-profits in Baltimore report. These reports summarize potential areas of common training needs. ➢ Facilitate leadership cohorts for sub-segments of the movement in need of community and support (e.g. professionals of color, new executive directors)