



District of Columbia Urban Agriculture Small Award Program

2024 Request for Applications (RFA)



Chesapeake Bay Trust | 108 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403
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Introduction and Program Goals

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.

[District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment](#) (DOEE) funds the Chesapeake Bay Trust to implement the District Urban Agriculture Small Award Program within the [Small and Accessible Sustainability \(SAS\) Grant Program](#). The SAS grant program emphasizes supporting small, new, and historically excluded (SNHE) entities.

DOEE is the leading authority on the District of Columbia's energy and environmental issues. DOEE formalized the [Office of Urban Agriculture](#) (OUA) to be a central hub working with the [DC Food Policy Council](#), sister agencies, the [University of the District of Columbia](#), farmers, and community members to support urban agriculture in the District.

The source of funds for this program is the Government of the District of Columbia.

Despite a growing urban agriculture movement in the District, farmers need more resources and essential infrastructure. These challenges are compounded by historic disenfranchisement for socially disadvantaged farmers in obtaining access to land and funding. This program seeks to support urban farms, especially those led by socially disadvantaged farmers, or directly benefit communities with low access to grocery stores and fresh food through grant awards to increase infrastructure and operations support.

At A Glance

Program Summary:

The District of Columbia Urban Agriculture Small Award Program offers funding to increase urban agriculture through infrastructure and operations support for District farms, particularly for socially disadvantaged farmers and communities with low access to grocery stores and fresh food.

Deadline:

Thursday, November 9, 2023, at 6:00 pm EST

Eligible Project Locations:

This program funds programs and services physically located in the District of Columbia.

Eligible Applicants:

Nonprofit organizations; Faith-based organizations; Universities/educational institutions; or Private Enterprises.

Request Amounts:

Requests up to \$10,000

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35662

Contact:

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

This Request for Proposals was released on 09/15/2023.

The Trust recognizes that application processes can be complicated and time-consuming; the Trust continues to work to simplify our application processes where possible. New applicants, younger organizations, small organizations, or any group that is experiencing capacity challenges or other barriers to applying, is eligible to receive guidance on the application process. Please contact Program Coordinator Carlton Burns at cburns@cbtrust.org.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Trust staff to discuss applications *at least* two weeks prior to the deadline. The Trust cannot guarantee availability of site visits or project development assistance within two weeks of the deadline.

What is an Urban Farm?

District urban farms are *any property in the District of Columbia used for growing, cultivating, processing, and distributing crops for profit, not-for-profit, or educational purposes* (statute §§ 48-401). These farms are diverse in form and function, in-ground, rooftop, hydroponic/aquaponic operations, controlled-environment, etc. Produce grown and cultivated at District urban farms should be for the benefit of the public via sales or donation (as opposed to personal or single-family use).

Who are the communities with low access to groceries and fresh food?

Low-food access areas have a higher percentage of **low-income** and **Black and Latinx residents** than the general District population. As of April 2021 in the District, 12.9% of Black and 17.1% of Latinx households without children experienced food insufficiency, meaning that they did not have enough to eat sometimes or often in the seven days before reporting.¹ This percentage increased for **households with children** to 21% for Black families and 29.3% for Latinx households, compared to statistically no food insufficiency experienced by white homes with children. Reporting from the [DC Food Policy Council](#) indicated that in 2019 senior food insecurity (a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life) in the District marked 13.9%, the **highest rate of senior food insecurity** among U.S. states.²

Residents in parts of Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8 have fewer options for groceries and fresh food. These same neighborhoods also have fewer farmers' markets and essential food access points for residents who use nutrition benefits like SNAP, WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, and Produce Plus. Residents who live in low food access areas must travel further to access fresh food, increasing their cost and time burdens.³

DOEE and the Trust are committed to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in award-making and environmental work. 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/>. DOEE upholds an intimate relationship between the natural environment and the built environment of Washington, DC, and acknowledges the complex history of the land upon which it sits. We strive to align our present and future work with the envisioned, yet not fully realized for all, aspirations of the nation's capital by serving as a regional, national, and international leader in climate action, resilience, and environmental health. We prioritize equity, environmental sustainability, public health, and economic opportunity for the District's communities. Learn more about DOEE's Equity framework at <https://doee.dc.gov/node/19312>.

Eligible Applicants

DOEE and the Trust welcome requests from the following entities *physically located* in the District of Columbia:

- Nonprofit organizations, including those with IRS 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) determinations;
- Faith-based organizations;

¹ [The Road Ahead: 2021 Update on Food Access & Food Security in the District of Columbia](#)

² Opportunities to Strengthen Nutrition Programs in DC to Address Senior Food Insecurity (February 2022)

³ [Supermarket Tax Incentives Map by the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and the Office of Planning](#)

- Universities/educational institutions; and
- Private Enterprises.

In addition to the above, eligible applicants must meet the criteria of operating as an urban farm, defined as *any property in the District of Columbia that is used for the growing, cultivating, processing, and distributing of crops for profit, not-for-profit, or for educational purposes* (statute §§ 48-401). These farms are diverse in form and function, in-ground, rooftop, hydroponic/aquaponic operations, controlled-environment, etc. Produce grown and cultivated at District urban farms should be for the benefit of the public via sales or donation (as opposed to personal or single-family use).

All applicants must provide a Clean Hands Certificate of Compliance or a copy of the Certificate of Non-Compliance with a brief explanation of how the applicant will come into compliance by January 2024. Clean Hands Certificate can be obtained for free at <https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands>. A Certificate of Clean Hands will be a contingency of funding for all awarded entities who did not provide one in their initial application.

Applicants, if selected, must have insurance coverage listed in **Appendix 3** or an insurance waiver request approved by DOEE. If needed, insurance costs can be included in the project budget. Insurance waiver requests can be submitted to DOEE once awards are made.

Eligible applicants will have and maintain in full force and effect during the term of the proposed project liability insurance coverage in connection with the performance or failure to perform the services proposed.

The following types of applicants are NOT eligible:

- Organizations without a formal legal non-profit or business status, i.e., unincorporated associations (Example: a neighborhood association that has members, a bank account, and rules of organization, but no formal incorporation papers.)
- Government entities
- Individual person
- Entities that do not meet the criteria of operating as an urban farm, including farmers' markets, community gardens, etc.

An otherwise ineligible person or group could partner with an eligible applicant (from the eligible entities listed above). If the project is selected, the Trust would award to the eligible entity as the "fiscal agent" as appropriate.

Please review the Eligible Project Types section below for more information on ineligible applicants.

Funding Availability

The funding partners anticipate approximately \$68,000 available for this grant program; applicants can request up to \$10,000.

Typical allowable costs are:

- Small tools;
- Field supplies and equipment below \$5,000 in value;
- Contractor labor, including professional services;
- Employee salaries and benefits;
- Accounting and bookkeeping services;

- Communications, including telephone and data services;
- Printing, reproduction, including signage;
- Materials and supplies;
- Computers and printers;
- Postage and shipping;
- Necessary travel, meals and lodging; and
- Insurance;

Funding Restrictions:

This award program can NOT fund the following:

- ◆ Cannabis crop production or distribution;
- ◆ Lobbying, including salaries and overheads and out-of-pocket expenses;
- ◆ Entertainment;
- ◆ Interest payments on loans;
- ◆ Most food;
- ◆ Purchase or rental of office space or farmland;
- ◆ Major equipment above \$5,000 in value; and
- ◆ Endowments, deficit financing, individuals, building campaigns, annual giving, research, fund raising, or venture capital.

Eligible Project Types

All projects must be led by a [Historically Underserved Farmer](#) and/or Female Farmer **OR directly benefit communities with low access to grocery stores and fresh food.** The District has defined neighborhoods lacking grocery stores and fresh food on this map: <https://opendata.dc.gov/datasets/supermarket-tax-incentives>

Projects must provide written permission from the landowner to implement the project.

A successful project proposal should produce outcomes that address at least two of the following goals:

1. Increase food crop production, processing, and/or distribution for public sales or distribution;
2. Improve distribution & access to fresh foods;
3. Construct facilities that enable agricultural education experiences for public benefit;
4. Accelerate the business and production capacity for socially disadvantaged farmers; and
5. Advance sustainable agricultural efforts in the District for public benefit.

Examples of fundable projects include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Fencing, cold storage, wash/pack stations, sheds, and pavilions for food processing and education events.
- ◆ Hoop houses, greenhouses, and shipping containers for indoor growing.
- ◆ Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) Technology, including lighting, hydroponic, and aquaponic components.
- ◆ Utility installation to support urban farms, such as water, electrical lines, and solar panels.
- ◆ Farm supplies and equipment, e.g., tools and irrigation supplies, tillers, lawnmowers.
- ◆ Operational Support, including office equipment, web platforms for program promotion and expansion, EBT technology, and training associated with equipment or platforms.

Learn about projects funded in the past here: <https://doee.dc.gov/node/1592081>

Additional Project Information

- **A project is NOT eligible if:**
 - The project is already funded by another federal or District Government grant or contract.
Exception: A project funded by another grant or contract IS eligible if the applicant requests additional funding for a proposed project outside the original scope.
 - It uses invasive plant species, herbicides, or pesticides.

Project Timeline

Project Timeline: Awards are anticipated to be made in January 2024. Projects must be completed by August 23, 2024. Requests to extend the deadline to meet the mini grant award objectives will NOT be considered.

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. To apply for an award, go to <https://cbtrust.org/grants/district-of-columbia-urban-agriculture/> 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.

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.

Deadline

Applicants must submit applications in the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System** by **6:00 PM EST on Thursday, November 19, 2023**. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close automatically and promptly at 6 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.

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 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 SAM UEI 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.
- 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: Add the project start and end date. Provide a project timeline that includes major tasks and their associated start and end dates.

Deliverables Tab: Identify and estimate metrics for your proposed project such as project participants and outreach and environmental restoration outcomes

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

Project Partnerships: Provide a list of project partner organizations or contractors, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project. The Trust encourages applicants to establish partnerships with other local organizations that may have complementary and/or additional cultural competencies within the prioritized demographic(s) to amplify the benefit to the community.

Applicants are **required** 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. For guidance on this, see the [Trust's Letter of Commitment and Guidance Policy](#).

Narrative & Supporting Documents Tab: Use the link below to download the **required** narrative questions template for the track you are applying

Watch our video on how to apply and how to submit an application using our online system at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/>.

Definitions

The Executive Officer is the individual that oversees the organization (e.g., Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer, Mayor, President or Vice President, Principal (for schools), 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 Program Leader is the individual 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. Complete all questions and upload the completed document as a Microsoft Word or PDF file.
https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/FY-24-Urban-Agriculture-Narrative-Questions_FINAL-1.docx

Budget Tab

1. **Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Upload**
 - a. 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 watch a video with instructions on how to complete the FMS.
2. **Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Information**
 - a. 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.
3. **Additional Budget Justification**
 - a. 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.

Terms and Conditions Tab: Agree to the specified terms and conditions for the program for which you are applying

Demographics Tab (optional): Provide voluntary demographic information. 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 technical expert reviewers to evaluate your proposal:

Scoring Criteria	Description of Scoring Criteria	Scoring
Project Lead and Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant provide strong details to justify that the project is led by a Historically Underserved Farmer and/or Female Farmer <u>OR</u> directly benefit communities with low access to grocery stores and fresh food? 	Scale of 1 to 5
Urban Farm Operations and Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Urban Farm Operations table breakdown reflect that the project will benefit the public (through education, sales, donations, etc.)? • Are the metrics on the “Deliverables Tab” and the narrative effective to measure the impact of the proposed project? 	Scale of 1 to 5
Background and History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant demonstrate technical experience in this work? 	Scale of 1 to 10
Project Goals, Description and Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant identify at least two (2) of the program goals they will meet and connect goals with the project scope? 	Scale of 1 to 25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the applicant make a strong justification on why the project is needed? 	
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there explicit activities for this project? Does the applicant include dates for when these activities will occur? Are the activities reasonable given the August 23rd deadline, budget, and staff allocated for this project? 	Scale 1 to 10
Partnerships and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the applicant demonstrate existing solid relationships with the communities that it's trying to serve? Are the selected partnerships appropriate? (e.g., previous experience with work proposed, clear community connections, etc.) Is it clear that partners are aware of their role, and does the applicant provide letter(s) of commitment from project partners? 	Scale 1 to 20
Sustainability and Long-term Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the applicant demonstrate that this project will support the organization's broader goals and strategic plan? Has the applicant addressed future project sustainability (e.g., ongoing resources)? For infrastructure projects, is there a plan for maintaining the project during and after the award period? 	Scale 1 to 10
Cost Effectiveness / Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the budget appropriate and cost-effective? Are the line items budgeted justified in the budget narrative? 	Scale 1 to 15
Total Score Possible		100

Application Review Process

Each application is reviewed by a 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 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 two rounds in this grant program is 55%, including both fully and partially funded applications.

Awards and Notifications

The 2024 District of Columbia Urban Agriculture Small Award Program awardees will be announced in January 2024.

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, final report, or other requirement 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 backup 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 awards.

Appendices: DOEE Grant Promises, Certifications, Assertions, Assurances and DOEE Grant General Terms and Conditions

You may access all necessary Appendices [here](#).