



Clean Water Montgomery Grant Program

FY26 Request for Proposals



Chesapeake Bay Trust | 108 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 974 - 2941 | www.cbtrust.org

At A Glance

Program Summary:

The Clean Water Montgomery Grant Program is designed to support on-the-ground restoration as well as outreach and stewardship activities that reduce stormflow and pollutants and engage Montgomery County residents in the restoration and protection of the local rivers and streams of Montgomery County.

Deadline:

November 13, 2025, at 4 pm EST

Pre-Application Site Visit Deadline:

October 17, 2025. **Applicants are highly encouraged to schedule a site visit before applying for restoration projects. To schedule a site visit, contact the Trust.**

Eligible Project Locations:

This program funds projects throughout Montgomery County, outside the municipalities of Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Takoma Park.

Request Amounts are generally:

1. Public Outreach and Stewardship projects at \$40,000 for knowledge building projects, \$60,000 for behavior change projects

2. Community Based Restoration projects at \$100,000

3. Water Quality Monitoring projects at \$75,000

4. Litter Reduction in the Anacostia River Watershed projects at \$50,000

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at

<https://cbtrust.org/grants/cleanwatermontgomery/>

Contact:

Kathy Somoza, Program Manager at 410-974-2941 ext. 120 and ksomoza@cbtrust.org

Grace Dho, Program Coordinator at 410-974-2941 ext. 145 and gdho@cbtrust.org

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1. Introduction and Program Goals

The Montgomery County Government and the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) announce a grant program to support watershed restoration and outreach projects and programs throughout Montgomery County, funded through the Water Quality Protection Charge (<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dep/water/clean-water-montgomery/wqpc/index.html>).

Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) works to “enhance the quality of life in our community by protecting and improving Montgomery County's air, water, and land in a sustainable, innovative, inclusive, and industry-leading way while fostering smart growth, a thriving more sustainable economy and healthy communities.”

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 \$210 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Montgomery County DEP will fund projects that increase engagement in stewardship activities to reduce pollutants through community-based restoration and outreach projects that will ultimately change behaviors. Projects should be inclusive of and represent the diversity of Montgomery County. Projects that engage historically underrepresented communities, defined as any subset of a population with disproportionately low representation, are highly encouraged.

This funding opportunity aims to:

1. Engage residents in achieving water quality improvement through increased awareness and quantifiable behavior change;
2. Reduce stormwater runoff and improve local water quality on property owned by non-profit organizations such as faith-based organizations, community associations, community pools, private schools, or other types of non-profit entities;
3. Expand community-based water quality monitoring capacity in the County; and
4. Reduce litter in the Anacostia River Watershed through litter reduction-focused stewardship programs.

Montgomery County DEP and the Trust 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 projects that increase awareness and participation of communities that are historically underrepresented, such as communities of color. For a full description of the Trust’s efforts to engage underrepresented groups, see our strategic plan at <http://www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan> and <https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/>.

The Trust recognizes that application processes can be complicated and time-consuming. If you would like technical assistance/support in completing your application, please reach out to Kathy Somoza, ksomoza@cbtrust.org; (410) 974-2941 x120 or Grace Dho, gdho@cbtrust.org; (410) 974-2941 x145, for assistance. 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 project development assistance within two weeks of the deadline.

2. Eligible Applicants and Project Locations

Montgomery County DEP and the Trust welcome requests from the following non-profit organizations:

- Watershed/environmental organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Service, youth, and civic groups
- Community associations
- Private schools (public school sustainable efforts are supported through the School Energy and Recycling Team Program;
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/greenschoolsfocus/index.aspx>)

This is not an exhaustive list of eligible applicants; however, applicants **must have a current tax-exempt 501(c)3 status**. If your organization does not have a current 501(c)3 status, a fiscal sponsor may apply and secure funds on your behalf. For more information about fiscal sponsorships, reach out to the Trust. If your organization category is not listed above, contact the Trust to verify eligibility.

Projects must be implemented in Montgomery County, Maryland. Projects located in the municipalities of Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Takoma Park are not eligible for funding in this program. However, projects in these areas are eligible in the Outreach and Restoration Grant Program (<https://cbtrust.org/grants/outreach-and-restoration/>), Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns Grant Program (<https://cbtrust.org/grants/green-streets-green-jobs-green-towns/>), and other programs through the Trust. Reach out to the Trust for more information.

Applicants not based in Montgomery County must have a Montgomery-based partner whose role is clearly articulated in the application and in a Letter of Commitment from that partner.

3. Priorities and Requirements for all Project Types

Priority Areas: Montgomery Planning's Community Equity Index mapping tool (<https://community-equity-index-mncppc-mcplanning.hub.arcgis.com/>) has been vetted for use in this grant program. Projects located within *Highly Disproportionate – Disadvantaged* and *Moderately Disproportionate – Disadvantaged* areas will receive a higher ranking, as outlined in Section 9. Evaluation Criteria.

Awardee Product Requirements: All products (such as submitted photos and likeness, brochures, pamphlets, videos, maps, etc.) produced through this grant program are the property of the awardee but must be provided to the funding partners for use and distribution at the sole discretion of the funding partners and must not be copyrighted by the grantee or any other entity. Products will be required to acknowledge the Water Quality Protection Charge funding source. Finally, these products cannot be used for profit during the award period or in the future by the awardee or any other entity.

Supporting Documents: All projects will be required to submit supporting documents for their project type. View the required documents and information for each project type in [Appendix A](#). If the document/information is not available at the time of application, it will be requested upon award.

4. Funding Availability and Eligible Project Types

The funding partners anticipate \$900,000 will be available to support projects in this grant round. The Clean Water Montgomery Grant Program supports funding requests for the following project types:

Project Type	Name	Funding Level
Type 1	Public Outreach and Stewardship	Up to \$40,000 for Knowledge Building, and up to \$60,000 for Behavior Change
Type 2	Community Based Restoration	Up to \$100,000
Type 3	Water Quality Monitoring	Up to \$75,000
Type 4	Litter Reduction in the Anacostia River Watershed	Up to \$50,000

Requests may exceed these levels with additional justification and prior approval by the Trust. Projects that will NOT be supported include:

- Annual giving, fundraising, and/or venture capital;
- Political lobbying;
- Reimbursement for a project that has been completed or materials that have already been purchased;
- Traditional marketing efforts that serve to generally promote the applicant organization; and/or
- Projects that are required under an existing or pending regulatory process or permit, are required for mitigation, or are required by a regulatory authority for any other reason.



View example projects at: <https://cbtrust.org/grants/cleanwatermontgomery/projects/>

4.1 Project Type 1 – Public Outreach and Stewardship

The Public Outreach and Stewardship track will consider projects focused on Knowledge Building or Behavior Change.

Knowledge Building projects will educate and engage residents on watershed challenges, behaviors that achieve watershed improvement, and community stewardship activities. Projects should seek to increase knowledge within a priority audience, which can be described as a clearly defined segment of the public. Knowledge should be increased on a topic in which a basic level of knowledge has not yet been established within the priority audience.

Organizations that have completed several rounds of knowledge building are encouraged to consider pursuing a Behavior Change project. For more information on proposals to achieve behavior change, see the Behavior Change Planning and Process Guidelines here: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-and-Information-for-Behavior-Change-Projects_8.6.24.pdf.

The best proposals will include the following key requirements:

- Leverage and promote existing County programs (e.g., [Tree Montgomery](#), [RainScapes Rewards Rebates](#), etc.). View [Appendix B](#) for a list of County programs and resources.

- Align with the community engagement guidelines found in [Appendix C](#). For more information on outreach tools, visit the Trust’s “Outreach and Behavior Change” resources at: <https://cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/>.
 - To support a high likelihood of project success and sustainability, applicants are encouraged to build long-term relationships and partnerships to engage a priority audience rather than a "once & done" approach.
 - Applicants must explain and justify the methodology that will be used to co-create and/or share information and programming with the priority audience at specific outreach and engagement stages. For example, outreach methods may include engaging trusted community member(s), listserv use, attendance at community meetings, etc. Engagement methods may include a workshop, training, art installation, innovative media, etc.
- Place the project in the context of a larger initiative that will eventually seek to influence behavior and will support the DEP mission and programs; and
- Focus knowledge-building on the following topics:
 - Pet waste management;
 - Litter reduction with a focus on personal attitudes or barriers towards removing litter, reducing, reusing, and recycling solid waste;
 - Rain barrel and other small-scale stormwater management practice installation and use;
 - Proper use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizer, using native plants and converting lawns to conservation landscapes;
 - Environmentally-conscious residential car washing, including proper water and product usage;
 - Proper disposal of household hazardous waste;
 - Proper management of septic systems;
 - Proper disposal of fats, oils, and grease; and
 - Proper use of ice control and winter salt management.

Example projects include, but are not limited to:

- Outreach to target audiences to further DEP’s mission and expand engagement in County programs and initiatives (e.g., water quality improvement projects, lawn stewardship, litter reduction, pet waste management, and proper winter salt application);
- Projects that support outreach about the Tree Montgomery program and RainScapes Rewards Rebate program, particularly with the goal of engaging historically under-engaged communities;
- Water-focused volunteer education and engagement activities such as community or stream cleanups (outside of the Anacostia River watershed; projects in the Anacostia River watershed should apply under Project Type 4 – Litter Reduction in the Anacostia Watershed);
- Community stormwater education workshops to train volunteers or “Train the Trainer” type programs;
- Environmental knowledge-building events, workshops, campaigns, etc. designed to encourage small scale stormwater practice installation and maintenance. Small-scale stormwater practices include rainwater harvesting (e.g., rain barrels), rain gardens, and other green infrastructure/stormwater techniques; and
- Programming that connects human-health benefits and natural resource engagement and education.

4.2 Project Type 2 – Community Based Restoration

There are three types of projects that will generally be supported within Project Type 2:

- Design – request amounts will generally be up to \$25,000
- Design and Implementation – request amounts will generally be up to \$100,000
- Implementation – request amounts will generally be up to \$100,000

Several stages of community-based restoration work will be supported: 1) Designs (conceptual and final design); 2) Design and Implementation projects; and 3) Implementation (projects where final designs exist and funds are needed for implementation only). Applicants are highly encouraged to conduct a pre-application site visit with the

Trust and the County prior to applying for this track. Preference will be given to projects that are furthest along in the assessment and design phases. All design-only applications should be ready to begin design of specific projects upon award and shall commit to planning for and demonstrating the ability to implement the completed design. Each project should lead to the eventual implementation of “in the ground” projects that improve stormwater management and result in water quality improvements, such as reducing the flow of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, and other pollutants into local waterways. Additionally, implementation projects will commit to applying to Montgomery County’s Water Quality Protection Charge Credit Program at project completion.

For projects that include installation of understory trees and shrubs, projects must meet the following requirements:

- Understory tree and shrub species must be native to the Mid-Atlantic and/or Southeast USA region;
- A minimum of two growing seasons/years of maintenance must be provided. A maintenance agreement, signed by the landowner, will be required upon award to ensure long-term maintenance;
- All trees and shrubs must either have a one-year warranty from the supplier and/or installer, OR demonstrate a higher-density planting plan (115% of the original planting plan) to account for mortality; and
- All understory trees must have a diameter of at least 1 inch in caliper.
- All shrubs must be in a 5 gallon pot or larger.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss any projects that involve planting of trees with the Tree Montgomery program staff. Email Trees@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov to initiate communication in a timely fashion to allow for sufficient project coordination during the application period.

The best proposals will include the following key requirements:

- Abide by all federal, state, and local laws and regulations and industry standards;
- Projects shall be voluntary. Any projects that are required under an existing or pending regulatory process or permit, are required for mitigation, or are required by a regulatory authority for any other reason cannot be supported. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to determine if any regulatory requirements or conditions exist prior to applying for the grant;
- A five-year detailed maintenance plan that includes a monthly schedule for weeding, watering, seasonal cleanup and dead plant replacement, signed by the landowner and the party responsible for maintenance (in some cases, this will be the same party), will be required and Montgomery County shall be allowed access to the site to assess and support the function of the restoration practice. These expectations shall continue in perpetuity;
- Projects will typically be less than 5,000 square feet and/or 130 cubic yards of land disturbance. Projects that are outside of these thresholds will require permits. Visit the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services for more information: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/index.html>;
- Applicants are strongly discouraged from proposing projects within the right-of-way. Projects cannot be located within a floodplain. To check if your project is located within a floodplain, visit this map: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/programs/FEMA-FIRMS/index.html>;
- Landowner permission is required for all projects. Projects proposing to work in easements, or on other lands not owned by the applicant, must provide documentation of permits/permission or state how permits/permission will be obtained, if awarded.
- Implementation projects funded through this grant track are not eligible for the RainScapes Rebates Program. Subsequently, the RainScapes Rebates program cannot be used as match for the same grant project; and
- Due to the high cost of permeable paver installation projects, proposals that include a permeable paver component will require a 20% match for the permeable paver costs.

Example projects include, but are not limited to:

- Bioretention cells, bioswales, and projects such as conservation landscaping, green roofs, rain harvesting techniques, rain gardens, pavement removal, permeable pavers/porous concrete, and other innovative green infrastructure stormwater techniques that measurably reduce stormwater runoff;
- Formal site assessments which lead to medium to large scale stormwater practice design(s) and installation to help slow or reduce runoff;
- Projects that create and/or enhance larger contiguous tracts of forest, connect existing forestland or green infrastructure, or enhance existing forest conservation easements; and
- Projects that create and enhance habitat, including habitat for forest interior dwelling species.

Projects that will NOT be supported under Project Type 2 include:

- “Green Street” projects that control runoff from public roads or rights-of-way. For these types of projects, see the Trust’s Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns Program (<https://cbtrust.org/green-streets-green-jobs-green-towns/>).
- Retrofit of existing stormwater practices, such as stream restoration, stream stabilization, stormwater pond, stormwater wetland, regenerative stormwater conveyance, or other existing stormwater practice retrofits. For these types of projects, see the Trust’s suite of restoration programs (<https://cbtrust.org/grants/>) or other funding mechanisms.
- Proposals for understory tree and shrub planting on land owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).
- Proposals with intent for profit: e.g., Christmas trees, orchards, etc.
- Projects that would qualify for the Tree Montgomery program. If uncertain, please reach out to the Tree Montgomery program staff to clarify your project. www.TreeMontgomery.org. Trees@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov.

4.3 Project Type 3 – Water Quality Monitoring

Projects in this category will educate and engage residents in community-based water quality monitoring. Projects should increase knowledge and build monitoring skills within a priority audience/community. This project type helps supplement Montgomery County DEP’s overall dataset and understanding of stream and watershed quality trends and health. Projects in this track will be considered for award periods of up to two years. Request amounts will generally be up to \$75,000, for two-year projects.

The best proposals will include the following key requirements:

- Leverage community-based monitoring to align with the County’s existing monitoring efforts;
- Indicate that the applicant will join or has joined the Maryland Water Monitoring Council (MWMC) and will submit their data through the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative’s Chesapeake Data Explorer (<https://www.chesapeakemonitoringcoop.org/services/chesapeake-data-explorer/>), if awarded. Data management will be considered an eligible part of the grant;
- Indicate intent to present the monitoring program at MWMC’s Annual Roundtable: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/streams/Pages/MWMC/roundtable.aspx>;
- Engage new and diverse audiences that have historically been underrepresented in community science programs; and
- Follow robust water quality monitoring protocols outlined by the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative’s tier I or tier II for non-tidal waters (<https://www.chesapeakemonitoringcoop.org/monitoring-programs/non-tidal-water-quality-monitoring/>) and aligns with best practices.

Example projects include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging community members in water quality education and stewardship building, supplemented by hands-on water quality monitoring activities;

- Projects that make the connection between stormwater runoff, the health of local water bodies, and the solutions to improve water quality, including through the building of increased monitoring capacity; and
- Water quality monitoring programs that establish baseline conditions, and can be sustained over the long-term with community support.

4.4 Project Type 4 – Litter Reduction in the Anacostia River Watershed

This track is designed to broaden engagement in litter reduction efforts in the Anacostia River Watershed.

Projects must have a defined goal, measurable outcomes, and a process that leads to successful reduction of litter entering the Anacostia River Watershed. Successful projects will be able to report litter and/or waste reduction metrics at project end and will have a plan for future maintenance/sustainability of the effort. For more details on the litter reduction efforts in the County, visit <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/topics/water-pollution/litter.html>. Request amounts will generally be up to \$50,000.

The best proposals will include the following key requirements:

- Projects should aim to remove at least 50 pounds of trash per clean-up event;
- All projects must be done in the Anacostia River Watershed. See a map of this area at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dep/water/clean-water-montgomery/stream-health/stream-conditions.html> and priority litter clean-up areas at https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/MC_TrashReport24_Final-Draft.pdf;
- Awarded projects will be required to use the County’s Litter Collection form (to be included in the award agreement, if awarded) to report litter collected per clean-up event. Data needed for reporting includes:
 - Type of cleanup
 - Organizer’s name
 - Email
 - Organization (if applicable)
 - Type of Trash bag used
 - Number of bags collected
 - Date of cleanup(s)
 - Location
 - Photo(s) of the trash bag(s)

Example projects include, but are not limited to:

- Stream cleanups, storm drain marking, and instituting more frequent pickups of receptacles in public spaces that result in a measurable litter reduction outcome in the Anacostia Watershed;
- Community enhancement projects such as the installation of structural controls to reduce trash (e.g., solar powered or trash and recycling receptacles that include messaging, increasing public access to waste receptacles by property owners and pledge continued maintenance);
- Community workshops to train volunteers to lead cleanups, including the use of "roll off" containers to collect large amounts and bulk trash from communities and similar litter reduction efforts;
- Environmental education events, campaigns, and communication products specifically designed to promote litter and waste reduction action (such as the development and distribution of litter reduction action kits) and/or community cleanups resulting in a measurable collection of trash. Coupling free and/or reduced cost products and services to a project that promotes and communicates litter and waste reduction is highly encouraged.
- Projects that answer the question “What types of litter are present across land uses and what is the source of the litter?” are encouraged. Collected data must include, but is not limited to, pounds of litter removed. The program encourages data collection that can be used as a baseline study to inform future behavior change projects.

Projects that will NOT be supported under Project Type 4:

- Projects proposed on land owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) or the State Highway Administration (SHA).

5. Project Timeline

Projects must be completed within 18 months upon receipt of the award. Water Quality Monitoring projects may request up to 24 months, to allow sufficient time for seasonal water quality monitoring activities. Requests to extend the project period will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

6. 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/cleanwatermontgomery/> 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 using the updated awardee portal 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 updated awardee portal before or are completely new to our online system, 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).

7. Deadline

Applicants must submit applications in the Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System by **4:00 PM EST on November 13, 2025. 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 the availability of technical assistance for our online system on the deadline date.

8. 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. 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: Provide estimated metrics for your proposed project such as project participants and outreach and restoration outcomes. Disregard deliverables that do not apply to your project.

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.

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: cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/.

Narrative & Supporting Documents Tab: Use the links below to download the *required* narrative questions template for the track you are applying to. Complete all questions and upload the completed document as a Microsoft Word or PDF file.

- Project Type 1: [Public Outreach and Stewardship](#)
- Project Type 2: [Community Based Restoration](#)

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 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.

- Project Type 3: [Water Quality Monitoring](#)
- Project Type 4: [Litter Reduction in the Anacostia River Watershed](#)

Budget Tab:

1. **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). This is an excel file and can be found at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/>. That webpage also offers a video with instructions on how to complete the FMS.
2. **Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Information** - You will be asked to enter the various budget categories and 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. Do not complete this section until you have completed the FMS.
3. **Additional Budget Justification** - You will be asked 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.

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

Demographics and Survey Tab (optional): Provide voluntary demographic information. Provide information about your organization’s current diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) efforts and future goals. Additionally, provide voluntary feedback on the application process.

9. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by external technical expert reviewers to evaluate applications under the Clean Water Montgomery Grant Program. The Trust staff will serve as guidance through the review phase. Projects must abide by all County laws and regulations. Preference will be given to applications that meet multiple criteria.

Equity Priority (10 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the audience that will be engaged in the project or physical project located in a <i>Highly Disproportionate – Disadvantaged</i> or <i>Moderately Disproportionate – Disadvantaged</i> area per Montgomery Planning’s Community Equity Index mapping tool (https://community-equity-index-mncppc-mcplanning.hub.arcgis.com/)? • Does the project demonstrate authentic engagement or involved role of a historically underrepresented community or audience, as outlined in Appendix C?
Justification (Project Need) (15 points):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the applicant justify the project need? • For all projects (in-ground or community engagement), is the project located or engaging community members in a priority stormwater management suitability area, per this map: https://mcgov-gis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=7a4c70d8343c44f783c0a1c44271371e?
Cost Effectiveness/Budget (15 points):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the budget appropriate, cost effective, and justified in the narrative? • If “soft costs” are requested (such as executive management, travel costs, and other administrative costs), are they less than or equal to 20% of the budget and fully justified? • For contractual work, was the work competitively bid OR were estimates from at least three consultants or contractors considered? • If the application requested funds for permeable pavers, does it include the required 20% match?
Consistency with RFP (15 points):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the project proposed consistent with the intent of the project type selected? • Are all application components included that allow for sound evaluation, as outlined in Appendix A? If not, has the applicant addressed how that information will be secured/finalized, if awarded? • For Community Based Restoration Projects, was a pre-application site visit completed and documented? • Will the project support the advancement of the County’s watershed restoration goals/requirements (e.g. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), watershed restoration plan) through public engagement and physical restoration efforts?
Likelihood of Project Success (15 points):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the likelihood that this project will accomplish the proposed outcomes? • Are methodologies and/or designs sound and consistent with best practices?
Sustainability (10 points):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the applicant addressed future project sustainability (e.g., ongoing resources)? • If the lead applicant is not a member of the community impacted by the project, is a transfer of “ownership” to the community/responsible party built into the project and the ability to carry the work forward developed? • For knowledge-building, behavior change, water quality monitoring, or litter reduction projects: Will the impacts of the work be felt after the award period has ended? • For implementation projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has a five-year detailed maintenance plan that includes a monthly schedule for weeding, watering, seasonal cleanup and dead plant replacement been addressed? ○ Does the property owner agree to apply to the Water Quality Protection Charge Credit Program after project completion, if applicable?
Partnerships (10 points):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the partnerships leverage organizational strengths and enhance project outcomes? • Has the applicant leveraged existing resources, such as connecting to complementary community-based or County-led watershed stewardship programs, organizations, or efforts?
Demonstration Value and Transferability (10 points):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the project serve as a model and/or be replicated in other communities? • Does the project educate and engage people in ways that promote positive attitudes and behaviors to benefit local watersheds of Montgomery County?

10. 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 engaged 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.

This grant program reserves the right to approve funding for projects and budget items that meet specified funding priorities and that meet the goals of Montgomery County.

To allow applicants to set expectations prior to investing time in the 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 71%, including both fully and partially funded applications.

11. Awards and Notifications

The FY26 Clean Water Montgomery Grant Program awards are anticipated to be announced in March 2026.

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 distribute the first award payment to the requesting organization following: satisfaction of any phase one 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 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, or pending refunds, may be declined or if awarded funding will be required to submit all outstanding items prior to receiving additional award funds.

Appendix A: Application Supporting Documents Checklist

Use the checklist below to upload the appropriate supporting documentation for your project type. If certain documentation or project information is not available at the time of application, provide details on how that documentation/information will be secured or finalized, if awarded.

General Requirements for All Projects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Letter(s) of Commitment</u> : Have you included documented support for and of the project from collaborators who have a committed role to help with this project? View the Trust's Letter of Commitment Guidance and Policy at: https://cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/ .	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track 1: Public Outreach and Stewardship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Knowledge Objectives</u> : Have you included a list of your knowledge objectives that tell us what participants will learn from your project?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Evaluation plan</u> : Have you included methods of evaluation in knowledge for project participants, such as drafts of pre- and post-surveys?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>For publication requests</u> :	
Have you provided a <u>detailed dissemination plan</u> , to include an estimated number of copies for each audience, content outline, and draft text or mockup of proposed publication?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided a list that describes any previously developed publications like those proposed (publication requests without an explanation of how the request compares to other similar publications or that conflict with County content will not be approved)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>For an education event or workshop request</u> :	
Have you provided a recruitment strategy and promotion plans?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided a sample agenda?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided an outline of the program?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>For website and on-line media request</u> :	
Have you provided a plan to drive traffic to the site, such as a social media strategy?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided a sample website design, if available?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track 2: Community-Based Restoration Projects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Percolation test results (if applicable)</u> : Have you completed a percolation test and provided the results? (Directions for how to complete a percolation test can be found here: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dep/resources/files/rainscapes/How-to-do-a-Perc-Test.pdf)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Proposed project design</u> : Have you provided a plan view or site/concept plan, if designs are not completed OR a <u>DEP Approved Site Assessment</u> ? *Note: If awarded, a final, completed site plan must be submitted to the Trust for approval prior to any installation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Planting Plans</u> : If designs are completed, have you provided a scaled planting plan and a detailed plant list? Does the plant list specify the scientific names and varieties of plants, their quantities, spacing, and container sizes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance for developing a planting plan can be found at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Resources/Files/rainscapes/planting-plan.pdf Guidance for determining quantity of plants and materials needed can be found at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Resources/Files/rainscapes/plant-material-calculator.xlsx A blank plant list can be found at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Resources/Files/rainscapes/blank-plant-list.xlsx 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the planting plan include a graphic scale (e.g., <-----> = 8', not 1" = 8') that shows the project's location in relation to the property (including nearby buildings and features), clearly define the project area, and indicate plant locations along with their quantities?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Landowner permission</u> : Did you include a letter from the property owner stating approval to implement the project at the site for projects implemented on property not owned by the applicant?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Detailed maintenance Plan</u> : If designs are completed, did you include a detailed, draft maintenance plan signed by the entity responsible for maintenance and the landowner (if different than organization applying)? The maintenance plan must detail maintenance activities in the short-term (1 to 5 years) and in the long-term (5 to 10 years). See the Trust's maintenance plan template and resources at https://cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/ .	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track 3: Water Quality Monitoring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Knowledge Objectives</u> : Have you included a list of your knowledge objectives that tell us what participants will learn from your project?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Evaluation plan</u> : Have you included methods of evaluation in knowledge for project participants, such as drafts of pre- and post-surveys?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Monitoring Sites</u> :	
Have you included a list of proposed monitoring sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you included metrics you intend to collect?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Volunteer recruitment</u> :	
Have you provided a recruitment strategy and promotion plans for volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided a training plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided an outline of draft program or presentations that will be used (if applicable)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Track 4: Litter Reduction in the Anacostia River Watershed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Knowledge Objectives</u> : Have you included a list of your knowledge objectives that tell us what participants will learn from your project?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Evaluation plan</u> : Have you included methods of evaluation in knowledge for project participants, such as drafts of pre- and post-surveys?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Volunteer recruitment</u> :	
Have you provided a recruitment strategy and promotion plans for volunteers?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided a training plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided an outline of draft program or presentations that will be used (if applicable)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Proposed location(s) of litter clean ups</u> : Have you provided the proposed locations of the litter clean ups? Applicants can refer to the FY24 Litter Hotspot report for guidance on priority clean-up areas: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/MC_TrashReport24_Final-Draft.pdf .	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix B: Additional Resources

Montgomery County Programs and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montgomery County's Clean Water Montgomery website: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/water/clean-water-montgomery/index.html Suitability & Equity Mapping Tools: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/water/clean-water-montgomery/watershed/watershed-planning.html#mapping-tools RainScapes program overview: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/property-care/rainscapes/index.html Tree Montgomery overview: https://treemontgomery.org/
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Chesapeake Bay Trust Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust's additional resources page on social marketing tools, native plants, maintenance, etc.: https://cbtrust.org/grants/applicant-resources-forms-policies/ Native Plant Species Selection Guide: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/External_Final-Trust-Draft-Plant-Species-Selection-Guide-Oct2021.pdf Mini Community Engagement and Restoration Grant Program: https://cbtrust.org/grants/community-engagement/
Behavior Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chesapeake Behavior Change, an online behavior change campaign database: https://www.chesapeakebehaviorchange.org/ View Behavior Change Planning and Process Guidelines here: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-and-Information-for-Behavior-Change-Projects_8.6.24.pdf
Community-Based Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montgomery County Site Assessment form: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/DEP-Blank-Site-Assessment-form.pdf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An example completed form can be found here: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/DEP-Example-Site-Assessment-form.pdf Montgomery County Rain Garden Resources (including Rain Garden Technical Manual, How to make a Planting Plan, Plant Calculator, and Suggested Plant Lists): https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/property-care/rainscapes/rain-garden.html Montgomery County Permeable Pavement Resources (including Permeable Pavement Technical Manual and Contractor List): https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/property-care/rainscapes/permeable-pavement.html Montgomery County Percolation Test Guidance: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/Resources/Files/rainscapes/How-to-do-a-Perc-Test.pdf Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional's Maintenance Template: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Landscape-Maintenance-Plan.docx Example of a completed RainScapes Maintenance Template for Conservation Landscaping: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/CL_MaintenancePlan_general.pdf Choosing the Right Tree, Attaining Your Tree, and Site Preparation Considerations M-NCPPC Trees Approved Technical Manual for Montgomery County: http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/environment/forest/trees/toc_trees.shtm Soil Survey Mapping: http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm
Water Quality Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative's Chesapeake Data Explorer: https://www.chesapeakemonitoringcoop.org/services/chesapeake-data-explorer/ Maryland Water Monitoring Council: https://dnr.maryland.gov/streams/pages/mwmc/index.aspx Water quality monitoring protocols outlined by the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative's tier I or tier II for non-tidal waters: https://www.chesapeakemonitoringcoop.org/monitoring-programs/non-tidal-water-quality-monitoring/
Litter Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY24 Litter Hotspots Report: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/MC_TrashReport24_Final-Draft.pdf

Appendix C: Guidance for Public Outreach and Stewardship Projects

The common starting place of project development includes defining an issue and selecting a priority audience impacted by that issue. Most importantly, the audience selected should be considered a key partner in the development and/or refinement of solutions and program offerings. Below are best practices for equitable and inclusive community engagement, adapted from Montgomery Planning's Equitable Engagement Guide (https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MP_EquitableEngagementGuide_FINAL_revised.pdf).

Clarity: Clearly identify the purpose and goals of outreach and engagement at each stage and phase of a plan or project. Define what you are asking of audiences and/or inviting them to do at each stage.

Inclusiveness + Equity: The engagement plan and engagement activities should encourage and facilitate participation by those who may be affected by the plan or project, and those who are historically underrepresented in the planning process. Provide multiple opportunities for participation. Strategies and tactics must be culturally sensitive and provide the resources/accommodations needed to ensure full participation by all communities. Be adaptable and flexible to ensure equitable engagement. Consider literacy level, socioeconomic status, language, culture, and physical and mental ability. It may also be helpful to acknowledge and address past inequities, preferably those identified by community members.

Flexibility: Meeting the needs of diverse populations requires you to embrace a culture and remain adaptable and flexible. Celebrate learning while doing, constantly building and evolving as you learn more about and from community members.

Collaboration: Involve the community early and often, even at the early stages of planning. Build and maintain ongoing and mutually beneficial relationships with community members, especially community influencers, community-based organizations, and other groups trusted by the community. Design engagement experiences that encourage listening and learning together.

Respect: Plan outreach and engagement well to meet the needs of community members and respect their experiences, knowledge, opinions, time, and life circumstances. Clearly communicate the purpose for community engagement and how the community's participation will impact outcomes. Provide community members with the information needed to meaningfully participate. Ensure that all communication (written, visual, verbal) is culturally appropriate, inclusive, and accessible. When in doubt, consult with an expert or direct representative of a particular community, group, culture, or organization to learn more about them.

Authenticity: Engage community members only when their involvement will have a meaningful impact on recommendations or plans. Do not undertake community engagement when decisions have already been made, to check a required box, and/or when promised outcomes cannot be delivered. Honor time and capacity for participation. This includes building awareness of and trust with ongoing communications to clarify roles and value to all stakeholders and to increase equitable community stakeholder engagement with the planning process. Facilitate open conversations where participants listen to each other and are able to share freely. Also, make sure you have concrete ideas for how you can put community input into action.

Strong relationships + sustained engagement: Build knowledge, understanding, and capacity over time, learning from successes and missteps along the way. Each plan and project – and all the time in between – provide an opportunity to build and strengthen relationships with community members, influencers, community groups, and

other organizations. As these relationships develop, you will learn more about community issues and better understand the demographic, cultural, economic, social, and other realities of community members. Make sure to keep the community members and other stakeholders informed after the project is implemented.

Transparency + Responsiveness: Communicate often and clearly with the community members and stakeholders. Clearly state who is involved in and who organizes engagement activities. Proactively share public feedback and demonstrate how feedback was used to inform recommendations or plans, or why it was not. Be responsive to community members' and other stakeholders' questions, concerns, comments, and ideas.

Evaluation/shared results: Develop and share success measures at the beginning of the planning process and reevaluate them before beginning each phase of the process. Develop tools and mechanisms for evaluation and reporting. Evaluate outreach and engagement strategies on an ongoing basis and celebrate progress with the community. Develop a system for consistently learning from audience response and feedback, including questions to help better understand the needs and outreach and engagement preferences of various groups. Share results internally and externally to improve future outcomes. Evaluate strategies and activities for effectiveness.

Easy participation: When communicating with diverse groups, be mindful that others may not have the same context or have a different level of knowledge on the subject matter that you may have. Their reality and experience may differ from yours. Position outreach and engagement in a way that is relevant to the audience(s). Consider the most accessible and convenient ways for community members to participate. Engagement activities should not require prior knowledge of the subject area. Consider the timing of meetings and events relative to school, work, or mealtimes; the need for provision of childcare; and the importance of offering meals or food. Consider alternatives to in-person meetings such as telephone calls or virtual meetings. Choose locations where community members feel comfortable and that can be easily accessed by public transportation, bicycle, or walking, and that have sufficient parking. Choose days and times that the community can best participate, such as evenings and weekends. Reduce barriers to participation via stipends, gift cards, incentives, and more.

Efficiency: Use outreach and engagement methods and tools that are appropriate to the phase in the process and the purpose of outreach and engagement. Avoid duplication of efforts. Identify and collaborate with Montgomery County government, community-based groups, and other organizations already engaging the community and work to collaborate. Align efforts where possible to bring together varied perspectives. Partner with organizations by co-hosting listening sessions and events, providing content for their events and communications, and resourcing their staff with tools like social media posts, meetings in a box, and talking points.

Some appropriate forms of outreach and engagement may include:

- **INFORMING** community members of the process, purpose and goals, and milestones. Informational activities may include web pages, blog posts, flyers, emails, tabling, and presentations with Q&A.
- **EDUCATING** community members about the plan or project concepts, goals, and how data contributes to decisions. Educational activities may include data sharing, videos, infographics, panels, and story maps.
- **STORYTELLING** with community members. Asking community members to share pictures, stories, and videos about themselves or the subject at hand so other stakeholders and officials can learn about the issues from a human perspective. Story-telling activities may include photo contests, interviews, and social media campaigns sharing personal stories.