

FY26 Veterans Engagement Mini Grant Program

Narrative Questions

You will upload a MS Word or PDF file not to exceed five (5) pages of text, excluding photos or materials such as Letter(s) of Commitment, which address the following questions. Additional file attachments can be uploaded, not to exceed a total of four file attachments per application. Use the additional “Upload” options in the online system. To ensure that you address all questions, we recommend you use the outline below to answer the narrative questions. Make sure that your answers describe how the criteria in the “Evaluation Criteria” section of the Request for Proposals (RFP) will be met. The RFP and online application are located here: <https://cbtrust.org/grants/veterans-engagement/>

To ensure that you address all questions, we recommend that you use the outline below to answer the narrative questions.

1. **Goals and Objectives:** What are the big-picture goals and the specific objectives of the project? How do these goals and objectives tie in with your organization’s overall goals and objectives? Provide a detailed explanation about what your project will do to meet the goals of this Request for Proposals (RFP).
2. **Background:** Describe the background of the project. Why is this project needed and how was it identified? How would the success of your project advance the protection or improvement of natural resources (address co-benefits such as human health, leadership development, and/or improvement of community livability)?
3. **Audience:** Identify the priority audience you will educate or engage and describe how you will reach them and why you chose that method.
4. **Demographic Information:** In light of the Trust's commitment to the advancement of diversity in its award-making, provide demographic information about the community or population involved in or served by the project.
 - Describe how the population and/or the community are involved in the planning, development, and implementation of the proposed project, and in the development of this application.
 - The Trust encourages applications directly from under engaged communities; however, if your organization is not a member of the community served by the grant (e.g., an external non-profit doing work on land owned by another entity, such as a faith-based organization), describe how “ownership” will be transferred to the community and how the ability of the community to carry the work forward will be developed and resourced.
 - Provide your organization’s experience working within the specific communities that you will be prioritizing/engaging. If you have not had significant experience working with or as part of your prioritized audience, explain how you intend to address this issue.

- The Trust encourages applicants to establish partnerships with local organizations that may have greater cultural competencies within the prioritized demographic(s).
 - Cultural competence involves understanding and appropriately responding to the unique combination of cultural variables which entails the integrated patterns of human behavior such as language, thoughts, actions, customs, beliefs, and institutions of racial, ethnic, social, or religious groups that the community or population bring to interactions.
- 5. **Demonstration Value:** Describe how this project might be used as a model in other areas. How might lessons learned from this project be transferred to others?
 - For restoration projects, describe the project location(s), why it/they were selected, and how visible to others the project will be.
 - For outreach projects, describe the take-away messages and practices/behaviors individuals can implement on their own.
- 6. **Sustainability:** The Trust aims to invest in projects that have the longest potential longevity, after the grant period is over. Several threats exist that may result in loss of project value: change in public interest in an effort, changes in rainfall or sea level associated with climate change; change in land use; and more.
 - Discuss the future you see for the work for which you are requesting funds. What factors may affect its long-term value and how will you ensure its long-term value is maximized?
 - If the project or program needs ongoing financial resources in order to maintain its value, provide an abbreviated plan describing how the project will be self-sustained beyond the term of the proposed funding request.
- 7. **Community context:** The best projects will connect to other existing community watershed stewardship efforts.
 - Indicate how this project fits into other watershed stewardship activities occurring in the community. For example, are neighboring health providing facilities or homeowner's associations who may already be undertaking environmental activities going to be engaged in this project?
- 8. **Contractors:** Has/will a contractor be hired and has a contractor been selected? Describe your contractor/consultant selection process, including justification and background of the selected contractor/ consultant. If using a bid process, describe the process.
 - The Trust strongly recommends that applicants get at least three cost estimates or quotes from three service providers.
 - If you anticipate using a contractor, indicate in your proposal that at least three cost estimates or quotes will be obtained.
- 9. **Experience:** Briefly describe your organization's experience completing similar projects. If limited experience, do you plan to partner with an organization that can provide technical expertise (for either on-the-ground or outreach projects)? If you are receiving support from another organization, please name them and what support they are providing for you.
- 10. **Evaluation:**
 - a) Describe how you will assess the effectiveness of your project.
 - For restoration projects, how will you determine if your project is working well? How will you measure the functionality of the project?

- For outreach projects, how will you measure the number of people who increased their knowledge or will implement changes in their behavior?
- b) How will you collect information to refine and improve your project?

11. **Mentorship Program:** Did you participate in the Mentorship Program? (Yes/No)

- If yes:
 - Who was your Mentor/Mentee organization?
 - What role did your Mentor play in this application submission (project development assistance, narrative creation, application submission assistance, etc.) and about how much time did its staff spend assisting you?

12. **Upload the required documentation for projects:** Are the following items included in your application where we asked for the information and when it applied to your project?

Required for all Projects
<u>Letters of Commitment.</u> Document support for and of the project from collaborators who have committed to help with this project by adding letters of commitment. To better understand the Trust's definition of letter of commitment, see the Letter of Commitment Guidance and Policy (source: this link is found under the "Other Important Documents and Forms" section on our Forms and Policies webpage: https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/).
Required for Restoration-type Projects
• <u>Photo(s)</u> of the site. • <u>Site plan/project design</u> that includes the area to be restored and location of the project work to be done/restored, plant list/name/species, plant spacing, and other details that tell us what you plan to do. ○ <u>Native plant list.</u> Funds may be requested for native plant species only. ○ <u>Native Plant Species Selection Guide</u> The Trust has resources to help you get started with plant selection: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/External_Final-Trust-Draft-Plant-Species-Selection-Guide_May2021.pdf (source: this link is found under the "Restoration" menu at https://cbtrust.org/additional-resources/). • A detailed <u>maintenance plan</u> for short-term (first growing season) and long-term (three years) maintenance. Applicants proposing work on private property should have a particularly strong maintenance description. Proposals that demonstrate long-term commitment to keep and maintain the project will receive more favorable review. ○ A <u>maintenance template</u> is available at https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Landscape-Maintenance-Plan.docx (source: this link is found under the "Maintenance of Stormwater Best Management Practices" menu at https://cbtrust.org/additional-resources/). • <u>Permits or other approvals:</u> ○ <u>If permits or any other type of approvals are required, describe the status</u> (e.g., permits pending review of application, permits secured). ○ <u>Documentation that property owner approves of this restoration project.</u> A letter from the property owner stating approval to implement the restoration project at the site is required for projects installed on private property.
Required for Outreach-type Projects
• List of knowledge objectives; tell us what participants will learn from your project. • Evaluation plan; pre- and post-surveys can be used to evaluate the change in knowledge in project participants. • For workshops and other knowledge-building events, include a draft agenda.

If any of these above items that are required/needed to assess your application are not provided earlier in your application, provide them here or tell us why you are unable to provide this information now and your plan to provide this information later or with assistance, etc.