



Community Engagement and Restoration

Mini Grant Program

FY27 Request for Proposals



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

Program Goals

Through this funding opportunity, the funding partners want to engage new applicants and organizations from diverse communities in small-scale projects that enhance communities, engage residents, and, ultimately, improve natural resources.

Among the Trust's core values are diversity and inclusion: We feel that a broad range of communities, from rural to urban, of all demographics, can benefit from healthy natural resources, even if their primary focus is on other issues. **As a result, we are investing in grants primarily to new applicants who have yet to frequently receive grants.** For more about the Trust's commitment to engage underrepresented groups, see our strategic plan at www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan and <https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/>.

Our goals are to:

1. Provide funding to groups that have been under-engaged with environmental issues, but who have a project idea that benefits both their communities and natural resources;
2. Engage residents in community-based environmental restoration; and
3. Introduce the grant process to applicants who may not be experienced in applying for and managing awards.

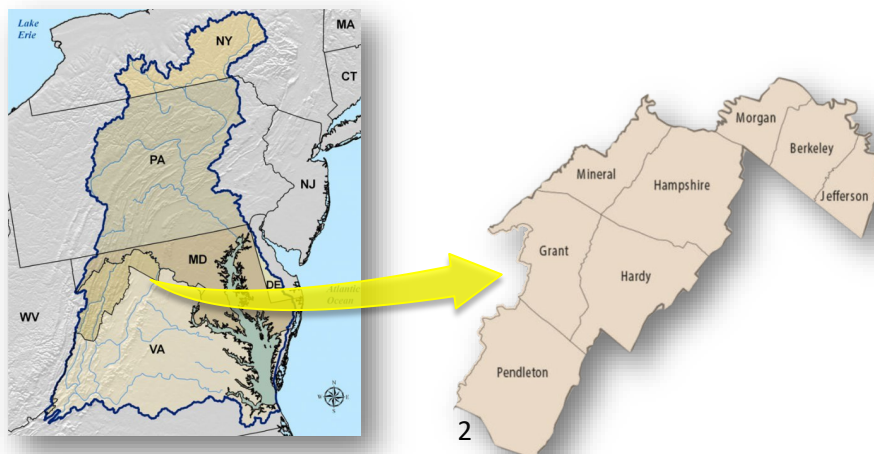
Eligible Applicants and Project Locations

This program is open to applicants that have received less than four awards (i.e., received three or fewer awards) from the Trust. Applicants who have received four or more awards from the Trust but are re-applying to the Trust for the first time in eight or more years are eligible to apply. Sponsorships and Chesapeake Conservation Corps awards are not counted toward the eligibility cap.

We welcome requests from the following organizations:

- ◆ Nonprofits;
- ◆ Faith-based;
- ◆ Community and Homeowners Associations;
- ◆ Service, Youth, and Civic Groups; and/or
- ◆ Municipal, County, Regional, State, Federal Public Agencies.

All communities in Maryland and in the Chesapeake Bay watershed portion of West Virginia are eligible. To determine if a West Virginia project site is eligible, see our online map here: https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/WAGP-Project-Eligibility-Map_8.23.23.pdf.



Funding Availability and Deadline

Applicants may request up to \$5,000. This RFP is partially funded with Federal funds, for West Virginia projects. The funding partners anticipate funding levels this year (July 1 to June 30) at:

- Approximately \$180,000 available for Maryland projects
- Approximately \$48,000 available for West Virginia projects

Proposals are accepted on an on-going basis until funds are fully used for the year; check our website and sign up for our grantee newsletter (<https://cbtrust.org/newsletters/>) for the most up to date information about the status of this rolling program. We need a few weeks to review your application so **please send your application to us at least eight weeks before your project starts.**

Eligible Project Types

We encourage projects that accomplish multiple benefits, such as meeting community goals and improving environmental health. We aim to fund community engagement and/or restoration projects that connect community members to local natural resources, promote health and well-being, and encourage behavior changes that benefit environmental health.

Example projects:

- Projects that capture rainwater, improve wildlife habitat, and green communities such as pollinator plantings, rain gardens, and tree plantings;
- Trash clean-ups that educate participants about the impacts of waste and pollution;
- Food gardens that increase access to fresh produce and discuss sustainable food sources and healthy cooking options;
- Workshops that educate and train the community on what actions they can take at their home or business to protect natural resources; and/or
- Using art to increase awareness of stormwater issues, such as storm drain stenciling or rain barrel installations.

This program cannot fund projects that:

- Are led by for-profit organizations;
- Are already completed. We cannot provide reimbursement funding;
- Better align with other Trust grant programs (e.g., Youth Environmental Education, Prince George's County Community Gardens, Mini Urban Trees, Sponsorship, etc.). Please reach out to the Chesapeake Bay Trust if you have any questions about which grant program is best for your project;
- Are required by a Federal, state, or locally issued permit, decree, mitigation, or enforcement action. In some cases, the Trust may elect to fund optional portions of required projects that go "above and beyond" the regulatory requirements.

Project Timeline

Projects should be completed within 12 months upon receipt of the award. Requests to extend the project completion period will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis. When a project is complete, grantees are required to submit a final report and include supporting materials/products.

Online Application Submission Instructions

We have a new online award management system, hosted by SmartSimple! The Trust uses this online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management.

Please login to SmartSimple to access your awards and applications. You can access SmartSimple in two ways:

1. Through our website: <https://cbtrust.org/login> and clicking the link “Log In to the Bay Trust Awards Portal”, **or**
2. The Chesapeake Bay Trust’s SmartSimple page: https://chesapeakebaytrust.us-1.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp

If you have applied to the Trust in the past, your profile and award data has been migrated to our new system. You can access the new system by entering the same email you used in our former system (Blackbaud), click ‘forgot password’, and follow the prompts to create a new password. If you are a new applicant, click the blue “Register” button on the landing page and follow the instructions.

See <https://cbtrust.org/login> for help setting up your account and finding funding opportunities.

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.

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: You will be asked three questions at the beginning 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 (if applying for a project in West Virginia). 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.

Definitions

The Executive Officer is the individual that oversees the organization (e.g., Executive Director, Mayor, President or Vice President, Principal), 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.

The Project Leader will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project and therefore, the email address used to submit the application via the online system must be that of the Project Leader. 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.

- 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 cannot serve in either role, but can be engaged in the project as contractors or partners.

Project Information Tab: Provide a project title; project abstract; timeline for activities; the watershed, county, and legislative district in which the project is located; and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the project location.

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.

In any cases in which the success of the project is dependent on one of these partners, applicants are encouraged to upload a Letter of Commitment in which the partner describes and commits to their role. An example includes permission from a landowner if you do not own the physical space on which a restoration project is to be implemented. The Trust’s definition of and policy on Letter(s) of Commitment can be found at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/additional-applicant-awardee-resources/>.

Narrative & Supporting Documents Tab: Download the “Narrative Questions” document and answer these questions to tell us about your project <https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Mini-CER-Narrative-Qs-FY27.docx>. Upload the completed document (your answers) as a Microsoft Word or PDF file into the online application form.

Review the [Supporting Documents Checklist](https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/MiniCERSupportingDocumentsChecklist.pdf) to ensure you have all the required items to submit with your project at <https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/MiniCERSupportingDocumentsChecklist.pdf>.

Budget Tab: You will be asked to enter items into the various budget categories. Totals will be automatically calculated on the page. Additional guidance on the budget can be found at <https://cbtrust.org/login>. 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.

NOTE: This program is funded with federal funds for West Virginia projects. After submission, the Trust will review budgets for Federal compliance. If your project is in West Virginia, the request will be funded using Federal funds and should meet Federal requirements, including [2 CFR Part 200 Subpart E Cost Principles](#) and applicable indirect cost rates, see [2 CFR 200.414](#). If you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

The Trust recognizes that application processes can be complicated and time-consuming. We continue to simplify our application processes where possible. If you are experiencing any challenges or barriers to applying, please contact the Program Managers, Anabel Kadri; akadri@cbtrust.org; (410) 974-2941 x168 for Maryland projects and Kayleigh Katzenberger; kkatzenberger@cbtrust.org; (410) 974-2941 x127 for West Virginia Projects.

Want a mentor to help you with this application?

We offer mentors to help all eligible applicants. Contact the Trust and we will connect you with mentor who will assist you with the application process. See a description of the mentorship opportunity, a list mentors, and a description of how the mentor can help you with this application at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/community-engagement/mentorship-program/>.

(NICRA), it must be uploaded with the application, and be utilized if funded using Federal funding. The Trust has prepared an Indirect and Fringe Cost Policy and FAQ for Federal Funding document to assist applicants: [Additional Applicant & Awardee Resources - Chesapeake Bay Trust](#).

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

Demographics Tab 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.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by internal expert reviewers to evaluate applications for this grant program and we will work with you to strengthen your project against this criteria, prior to finalizing a funding decision:

Most Important Criteria:

- **Consistency with program goals:** Is the project proposed consistent with the goals of the grant program?
- **Cost Effectiveness/Budget:** 1) Is the budget appropriate (at or below \$5,000 requested) and cost effective? and 2) Are the budget line items justified in the proposed project? In-kind and cash match are not required.
- **Likelihood of Immediate Project Success:** 1) Are the methods likely to accomplish this type of project? and 2) Does the application include the required items for a successful project? For on-the-ground, restoration projects (tree planting, rain garden), did you tell us where the project is (including photos), who owns the property (and if not you, did you provide proof the owner approves of the project); did you provide a site plan with a native plant list; and did you provide a maintenance plan? For outreach projects, did you provide a list of knowledge objectives or an evaluation plan to show beginning and end knowledge change or if a workshop was planned, did you provide a draft agenda?

Important Criteria:

- **Demonstration Value:** 1) Could others take lessons from this project and perhaps replicate it in their neighborhood? and 2) For on-the-ground, restoration projects, how visible and impactful will the project be?
- **Likelihood of Long-term Project Success:** 1) Will the project last for a long time (five to ten years) or otherwise have lasting impact? and 2) If additional resources are needed to maintain the value of the project, has that been explained in the proposal?
- **Partnerships and Community:** 1) Are the people and groups needed to do this work included in and supportive of the project (e.g., landowner and/or neighbors)? and 2) If any partnerships are required, are they included in and supportive of the project? and 3) If the lead applicant is not a member of the community served by the project (e.g., an external non-profit doing work on land owned by another group), is a transfer of project stewardship/ownership to the community built into the project?

Application Review Process

All projects are evaluated by technical experts. The Trust reserves the right to fund projects and budget items that advance our mission and meet specific funding priorities and criteria. To allow applicants to set expectations prior to investing time in an application, the Trust provides historical application approval rates for the same or similar programs. **The average approval rate from the last three rounds (years) in this grant program is 95%** (we aim to work with applicants to strengthen their applications); **this includes both fully and partially funded applications**. The funding partners reserve the right to fund projects and budget items that advance their missions and meet specific funding priorities and criteria.

Awards and Notifications

All applicants will receive a letter stating the funding partnership's decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the Trust will send an award agreement with award conditions and due dates of status, progress, and final reports. The Trust will release the award payment to the requesting organization following: satisfaction of any phase one payment award contingencies, including upload of the signed award agreement. 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.

For West Virginia projects, a final report will include but is 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.

About the Funders

The [Chesapeake Bay Trust](https://cbtrust.org/) (Trust) (<https://cbtrust.org/>) 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 and Coastal Bays 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. This grant program is a partnership between the Trust and West Virginia's Department of Environmental Protection (WV DEP).

Additional Resources

Appendices A & B - Guidance for New Applicants & Project Types:

<https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/AppendixAandB.pdf>

Narrative Questions: Download the "Narrative Questions" document and answer these questions to tell us about your project at <https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Mini-CER-Narrative-Qs-FY27.docx>. Upload the completed document (your answers) as a Microsoft Word or PDF file into the online application form.

Supporting Documents Checklist: To ensure you have all the required items to submit with your project at:

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