



Anne Arundel County Community Tree Planting Grant Program

FY 23 Request for Proposals



Chesapeake Bay Trust

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Anne Arundel County Community Tree Planting Grant Program

At A Glance

Program Summary:

The Anne Arundel County Community Planting Mini Grant Program is designed to increase the number of trees planted in Anne Arundel County and engage Anne Arundel County community members in tree planting activities that raise public awareness and participation in restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers.

Deadline:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until funds for this fiscal year are exhausted. **The Trust must receive all applications a minimum of eight weeks prior to the start of the proposed project.**

Eligible Project Locations:

This program funds in Anne Arundel County, Maryland

Request Amounts:

Requests up to \$5,000

Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/anne-arundel-county-community-planting/>

Contact:

Whitney Vong, Program Coordinator,
wvong@cbtrust.org or 410-974-2941 ext. 122

This Request for Proposal was released on 11/23/2022. RFP was revised on 4/28/2023.



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Introduction

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 \$130 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The goal of the Anne Arundel County Forestry Board (Board) is to conserve and enhance the County's natural resources by good forest management practices and resident awareness. The Board includes educators, forest professionals and other natural resource professionals, small landowners, community leaders, environmental activists, and government officials, to name only a few.

Together, these two funders welcome your interest and encourage you to learn more about how to apply for a grant.

Program Goals

Neighborhood by neighborhood, community stewardship projects are helping to raise public awareness about the health of our region's tree canopy, watersheds, air quality, streams, rivers, and the Bay, as well as the steps that can be taken to restore and protect them. By increasing tree cover and expanding green areas, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service reports that erosion can be reduced, water and soil quality can be improved, airborne pollutants such as particulates, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide can be filtered, and summer temperatures, ozone pollution, and energy use can be reduced. In addition, adding trees to a community has clear economic benefits. Studies show that urban trees and green space play an important role in providing a higher quality of life, enhancing local economic development opportunities, and increasing property values.

The purpose of this program is to provide funding to Anne Arundel County neighborhood associations, community associations, non-profit groups, and other groups to plant trees, increase tree canopy, remove invasive plants, and engage residents in environmental stewardship.

The Trust is 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 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/>.

Eligible Project Types

This program funds all tree planting projects following the guidelines below.

- ◆ All planting projects **must** include a [native plant list](#), planting plan, project design, photo(s) of the planting/restoration site, and a [detailed maintenance plan](#) for at least two years.
- ◆ Projects can be completed on public property, property owned by non-profit organizations, community-owned property, and other property *with* conservation easements or signed long-term protection agreements.
 - For projects planned on properties other than that of the applicant, **attach a letter stating that permission has been granted by the entity owning the land on which the project will be**

- completed.** Proposals that demonstrate long-term (five to seven years) commitment to upkeep, manage, and maintain the project will receive more favorable review.
- ◆ If permits are required, describe the status of those permits (i.e., permits pending review of application, permits secured).
- ◆ Requests for invasive vegetation removal as part of site preparation for native planting projects are permitted.
 - Removal of trees, dead or dying, are not applicable through this grant program.
- ◆ *Signage* for requests in highly visible areas is *highly* recommended. The funding partners will fund signage if the Forestry Board and the Trust’s logo are included www.cbtrust.org/logo.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the Forestry Board and the internal expert reviewers to evaluate applications under the Anne Arundel County Community Tree Planting Grant Program:

Most Important Criteria:

1. **Consistency with Request for Proposals (RFP):** Is the project proposed consistent with the intent of the program? Are all required application components included for sound evaluation of the application?
 - a. Projects must include a [native plant list](#), planting plan, project design, photo(s) of the planting/restoration site, and a [detailed maintenance plan](#) for at least two years.
 - b. Projects should try to include education, training, and/or public outreach components to enhance the benefits of the project and promote activities as models for others to replicate.
2. **Cost Effectiveness /Budget:** Is the budget appropriate and cost effective? Are the line items budgeted justified in the project narrative? In-kind and cash match are not required but will be viewed favorably.
3. **Likelihood of Project Success:** What is the likelihood of success if this project were to move forward? Are methodologies sound and consistent with best practices?

Important Criteria

4. **Demonstration Value:** Will others be able to learn lessons from this project and perhaps replicate it in their own communities?
5. **Long-term Sustainability:** Will the project last for a long time or otherwise have lasting impact? Will additional resources be needed to maintain the value of the project? If so, has that issue been addressed in the proposal?
6. **Partnerships and Community:** Are any key partnerships required, and if so, are the selected partnerships appropriate? Are any partners missing that should be engaged? Is the community to be served involved appropriately in the project, i.e., was community buy-in obtained, were community needs and desires considered, and are there individual(s) in the community committed to serving as community leads? If the lead applicant 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 house of worship), is a transfer of “ownership” to the community built into the project and the ability of the community to carry the work forward developed?

Additional Considerations:

7. **General Quality of Application:** What is the level of completeness and attention to detail?

8. **Supporting Documents:** Does the application include appropriate additional attachments? For on-the-ground projects, are site plans, site photos, a native plant list, and a maintenance plan included?

Eligible Applicants

The Forestry Board and the Trust welcome requests from the following organizations:

- ◆ 501(c)3 Private Nonprofit Organizations
- ◆ Faith-based organizations
- ◆ Community Associations
- ◆ Service and Civic Groups
- ◆ Municipal, County, Regional, State, Federal Public Agencies
- ◆ Soil/Water Conservation Districts & Resource Conservation and Development Councils
- ◆ Forestry Boards
- ◆ Public and Independent Higher Educational Institutions

Funding Availability, and Timeline

Funding Availability: The Forestry Board and the Trust anticipate total funds available in FY23 of up to \$20,000. Applicants may request **up to \$5,000** to complete their project.

Project Timeline: Projects must be completed within 12 months upon receipt of the award. Requests to extend project completion period will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.

Deadline

Proposals for Anne Arundel County Community Tree Planting Grant Program requests are accepted on an **on-going basis** until funds are fully expended for the given fiscal year. To stay up to date on the status of this rolling program, visit our website (<https://cbtrust.org/grants/anne-arundel-county-community-planting/>) and sign up for our [grantee newsletter](#) for the most up to date information about the status of this rolling program.

The Trust must receive all proposals at least EIGHT weeks prior to the start of the proposed project. The Trust cannot make exceptions to this policy.

Application Review Process

All submitted applications are scored by technical experts in the field supported by this RFP. Reviewers score all applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in the “Evaluation Criteria” section.

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 of this grant program is 73%, including both fully and partially funded applications.

Awards and Notifications

The grant program accepts proposals on a rolling basis and all proposals are approved by the Anne Arundel Forestry Board. Notification of the grant decision will not occur until **after** the next Forestry Board meeting

(December 13th, February 14th, April 11th, June 13th), so plan to submit your grant application accordingly. The Forestry Board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every other month, therefore if you submit your application on December 14th, you will not find out the decision until after February 14th and so on. Should the Forestry Board meeting dates change, updates will be made on the [Community Tree Planting section](#) of the Trust’s website.

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 full award payment to the requesting organization following the satisfaction of any award contingencies, including upload of the signed award agreement.

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).

In cases where the awardee fails to submit any contingencies, such as the signed award agreement or final report materials, 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.

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 will not be awarded additional grants.

Contact

For technical assistance, contact Whitney Vong at wvong@cbtrust.org or (410) 974-2941 ext. 122

Narrative Questions

You will be asked to upload a Microsoft Word or PDF file not to exceed five pages of text that answer the project narrative questions. Materials such as letter(s) of commitment or photos will not count towards your five pages of text. Additional file attachments can be uploaded using the “upload” options in the online system—only a total of 4 additional file attachments can be added to each application.

We recommend that you copy and paste these questions into a separate document to use as an outline in your narrative to ensure that all questions are addressed.

1. **Goals and Objectives:** What are the big-picture goals and the specific objective(s) of the project? Provide a detailed explanation about what your project will do to meet the goals of this RFP.
2. **Description of project location(s):** Clearly indicate project site property ownership, and identify property type (public, community, institutional, private). Maps of the site are recommended as attachments.
 - Describe how *and* why project sites were selected. Note, if the site is highly visible or used by the public, then the Trust heavily encourages signage.
3. **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 or served by the project.

- Provide your organization’s experience working within the specific communities that you will be prioritizing. If you have not had significant experience within your prioritized demographic, 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 targeted demographic(s).
4. **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 faith-based organizations or homeowner’s associations who may already be undertaking environmental activities going to be engaged in this project? Describe the recruitment strategy for volunteers and why that strategy was selected.
 5. **Project Context:** Is this project an extension of an on-going or recently completed project or plan? Please explain.
 6. **Sustainability:** The Trust aims to invest in projects that have the longest potential longevity, after the grant period has ended. 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 will need ongoing financial resources to maintain its value, provide an abbreviated plan describing how the project will be sustained beyond the term of the proposed funding request?
 7. **Evaluation:** Description of how you will assess the effectiveness and overall success of your project.
 - How will you determine if the project is functioning as intended?
 - How will you measure the number of people who increased their knowledge or will implement changes in their behavior?
 8. **Organizational Experience:** Describe your organization’s experience completing similar projects. If your organization has limited experience, do you plan to partner with an organization that can provide technical expertise? If you are receiving support from another organization, name them and what support they are providing for you.
 9. **Contractors:** If hiring a contractor, applicants are encouraged to have either already obtained cost estimates or quotes from at least three service providers prior to completing the application, indicate in the proposal that at least three estimates or quotes will be obtained
 - Has/will a contractor be hired and has a contractor been selected?
 - Describe your contractor selection process, including justification and background of the selected contractor. If using a bid process, describe the process.

Budget Instructions

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)**, an Excel file template. The template can be found by

visiting <https://cbtrust.org/forms-policies/> where you can also watch a video with instructions on how to complete the FMS.

Financial Management Spreadsheet – Application Budget Information

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.

Additional Budget Justification

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.

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. Watch our video on how to apply for and submit an application using our online system at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/> (scroll to the bottom of the webpage).

To apply for an award:

1. Go to <https://cbtrust.org/grants/anne-arundel-county-community-planting/> and click on “Start a New Application” This will open a new window asking you to log in or create an account on our online system.
2. Log in with the email address and password of the Project Leader for the proposed project.
 - a. *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).
 - b. 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.

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, 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.
 - 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 Project 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.
 - 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; county, the watershed, and legislative district in which the project is located; and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the project location.

- Timeline Tab
 - Add the proposed 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 number of trees planted.

- 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: www.cbtrust.org/forms.
- Narrative & Supporting Documents Tab
 - Upload a Microsoft Word or PDF file that contains your answers to the narrative questions found in the Narrative Questions section of this RFP. Upload additional supporting documents, if needed/required.
- Budget Tab
 - Upload your application budget, provide budget category and request totals, and provide additional budget justification. Use the Trust’s [Financial Management Spreadsheet](#) and fill out the “Application Budget” worksheet. Refer to the Budget Instructions of this RFP.
- Terms and Conditions Tab
 - Agree to the specified terms and conditions for the program for which you are applying.

Appendix A: Checklist for Applicants

The application process has many different steps, so feel free to use this checklist as you are preparing your materials to ensure that you have everything before submission.

- Are all narrative questions fully addressed?**
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Description of project location
 - Demographic information
 - Community context
 - Project context
 - Sustainability
 - Evaluation
 - Organizational experience
 - Contractors
- Do you have permission by the entity owning the land that the project is being proposed on to work on their land?**
 - If necessary, do you have permits? If yes, what are their statuses—pending or secured?
- If your proposal is a planting plan, do you have the following supporting documents:**
 - Native plant list
 - Planting plan
 - Project design
 - Photo(s) of the planting/restoration site
 - Detailed maintenance plan for two years
- Is your application budget complete and accurate?**
 - Have you considered creating signage for your project?
 - If your proposed project site is in a highly visible area, then we highly recommend creating signage. This *grant program will fund signage* if the Trust’s Bay plate and Anne Arundel Forestry Board logos are included. For examples and information about signage, visit <https://cbtrust.org/additional-resources/> and expand the “Signage” section.
- Review your application through in the Trust’s online portal—note that you can save your application and come back to it.**
 - Do you have all necessary components?
 - Narrative questions
 - Supporting documents (e.g., possible permits and Letters of Commitments, if needed)

- Application budget Financial Management Spreadsheet (FMS)
 - Make sure the amount you requested in your FMS budget matches the values entered in the “Financial Management Spreadsheet- Application Budget Information” section under the “Budget” tab of the online application.
 - Though it’s not required, we recommend taking time to justify your proposed expenses in the “Additional Budget Justification” section.

Submit your application!

- You will know your submission was successful when you receive an automated email confirmation.

Appendix B: Additional Resources for Applicants

The goals of this program are to plant trees in Anne Arundel County and engage the community along the way. Determining the right native trees for your area and where to purchase trees for an affordable price might be questions running through your mind during the application process. Below are lists of resources to serve as steppingstones. *Please note that any organization, company, program, or resource mentioned are **not** endorsed by the Trust.*

Determining/Choosing Native Tree Species

- The Chesapeake Bay Trust [Native Plant Species Selection Guide](#) – A downloadable PDF guide that walks through the importance of using native plants, when and how to use them in projects, and other resources available to find and purchase native plants in the Chesapeake Bay region.
- The [Chesapeake Bay Native Plant Center](#) – Search for native plants based on region, plant type, sun exposure, soil texture, soil moisture, and more.
 - A downloadable PDF version is also available. [USFWS Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#)

Resources to Source Native Trees for your Project

- [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's National Suppliers Directory](#)—Find businesses that sell native plants or seeds and provide professional landscape or consulting services. Search by zip code to find local businesses near you.
- [Maryland Forest Service's Tree-Mendous Maryland program](#)—This program provides Marylanders with affordable trees to plant on their public lands. Tree-Mendous provides free delivery to three locations across the state each Spring and Fall; groups can pay for delivery directly to their site for an additional fee.
 - An order form must be submitted to purchase trees through this program. Reach out to anne.gilbert@maryland.gov to gain access to the password protected order form.
- [Watershed Stewards Academy's RePlant Anne Arundel and RePlant Annapolis programs](#)—These programs provide discounted, and in some cases, free trees to residential properties, community spaces, and other property types.
- [Marylanders Plant Trees \\$25 Off Coupon](#)— This coupon is worth \$25 off the purchase of one tree with a retail value of \$50 or more at all participating retail nurseries and garden centers. The discount is taken at the register at the time of the sale. One coupon must be filled in for each tree purchased.
 - For list of participating retail nurseries and garden centers, click here: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/nurseries.aspx>. **Only Marylanders Plant Trees Nurseries will accept and honor the \$25 coupon.**
 - Please be sure to read the terms and conditions of the coupon before using!