

FY27 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

KEEP MARYLAND BEAUTIFUL TRACK 1 & 2



ELIGIBLE LOCATIONS

Maryland – State wide

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

KMB WEBSITE

<https://cbtrust.org/grants/keep-maryland-beautiful/>

CBT AWARD PORTAL

<https://cbtrust.org/login/>

QUESTIONS? ¿PREGUNTAS?

Contact Marylin Veiman Echeverría at
mveiman@cbtrust.org or (410) 974-2941 x130

The Grant Journey



The Keep Maryland Beautiful program is a partnership between the Maryland Environmental Trust, Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Department of Agriculture and Chesapeake Bay Trust. This year's program offers funding through three tracks:

- Track 1: Community Stewardship
- Track 2: Land Trust Assistance
- Track 3: Tree Planting on Agricultural Lands
- Aileen Hughes Award



PURPOSE

This grant program builds the capacity of land trusts and supports other community-based organizations that are increasing civic engagement and the adoption of stewardship practices and developing solutions to local environmental problems. Proposed projects activate residents and encourage stewardship through education, outreach, and planting activities while increasing awareness of and working towards addressing local environmental problems.

For more information about this year's program visit the grant page:
<https://cbtrust.org/grants/keep-maryland-beautiful/>

HOW THIS RFP IS ORGANIZED:

This document provides guidance for Track 1 and Track 2.

The Trust recognizes that application processes can be complicated and time-consuming; the Trust continues to work to simplify our application processes where possible. New applicants, younger organizations, small organizations, or any group that is experiencing capacity challenges or other barriers to applying, are eligible to receive guidance on the application process.

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 see our [Strategic Plan](#).



This Request for Proposals (RFP) is organized to walk you through a project's logical progression. Questions and steps should prompt applicants to think through the design structure needed to successfully plan, execute, and report on a project, ultimately helping develop stronger and more complete applications.

As you prepare your proposal, think about your project using the following framework:

At a glance



WHO SHOULD APPLY

TRACK 1:

- 501(c)3 Non-profit Organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Community Associations
- Homeowner Associations
- Service and Civic Groups
- Public Agencies

TRACK 2:

- Land Trusts that have a current Cooperative Agreement with MET (dated on or after November 2, 2020).

TRACK 1: COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

Honoring the legacies of Bill James and Margaret Rosch Jones.

This track supports small scale community-driven projects that enhance Maryland's environment and inspire stewardship.

Requests up to \$5,000

TRACK 2: LAND TRUST ASSISTANCE

Honoring the legacies of Janice Hollmann, a visionary leader in Maryland land conservation.

This track supports projects that strengthen land trusts by building organizational capacity, advancing implementation of Standards and Practices, fostering public support for conservation, and enhancing the long-term stewardship of permanently protected lands.

Requests up to \$10,000



WHAT KINDS OF PROJECTS ARE ELEGIBLE?

Eligible Project Types for TRACK 1: Community Stewardship

- Community Engagement and Environmental Education projects especially those aligned with Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) Framework.
- Problem solving of root causes of environmental issues.
- Hands on stewardship and place-based Learning

Project Ideas:

- Turn vacant spaces into community green spaces with trees and native plants.
- Create environmental education programs for all ages.
- Engage youth in hands-on environmental projects such as rain gardens, litter cleanups, and stormwater solutions.

Eligible Project Types for TRACK 2: Land Trust Assistance

- Land Conservation
- Monitoring and Stewardship
- Organizational Support

Project Ideas:

- Working collaboratively with regional conservation partnerships to protect signature landscapes.
- Technology costs for GIS software and equipment to develop GIS mapping of priority conservation areas.
- Staff or contractual time dedicated to easement work, baseline documentation, monitoring, and volunteer training.

Interested?



ARE THE FUNDS AND TIMELINE A GOOD FIT?

→ **Total funding pool:** \$114,074

- TRACK 1: \$54,074 for Community Stewardship with requests of up to \$5,000
- TRACK 2: \$60,000 for Land Trust Assistance with requests of up to \$10,000

EXAMPLES OF ALLOWABLE EXPENSES TRACK 1 & 2

Budget Category	Examples of Eligible Costs
→ Personnel	Salaries and fringe benefits for project staff, including conservation, stewardship, GIS, outreach, communications, and administrative staff directly supporting the project.
→ Supplies	Office supplies, field supplies, outreach materials, volunteer training materials, printing, mapping supplies, and planting materials.
→ Contractual	GIS consultants, strategic planning facilitators, baseline documentation services, organizational assessments, website development and specialized trainers.
→ Travel	Mileage reimbursement such as travel to monitoring sites, landowner meetings, trainings, or partnership meetings.
→ Field Trip Fees	Registration or participation fees for educational field trips, volunteer training events, conservation workshops, or similar project-related activities.
→ Equipment	GPS units, cameras, drones (if allowable), mapping equipment, and other durable items needed to complete the project.
→ Other	Software licenses, cloud storage, meeting room rental, food and non-alcoholic beverages for project meetings or volunteer events, and others not captured elsewhere.
→ Indirect (<i>≤10% of direct costs</i>)	Utilities, rent, and administrative support, up to the allowable limit.

EXAMPLES OF EXPENSES THAT ARE NOT ALLOWED

TRACK 1 & 2:

- For Staff training / professional development, eligible costs are limited to registration fees, meals and travel within Maryland. Costs of overnight accommodations and travel beyond Maryland are not eligible.
- Maintenance expenses are only eligible during the grant period. If the project includes planting trees or other vegetation, only maintenance activities completed within the one-year performance period can be charged to the grant.
- Non-Native plants are not fundable if planting trees or other vegetation.
- All grant funds must be expended within one year, so the budget should only include costs that will be incurred and documented before the grant end date.
- No alcohol may be purchased with grant funds.

TRACK 2 ONLY:

- While land trusts may request funding for staff time and other costs related to the research and preparation of acquiring easements, funds cannot be used for the purchase of an easement itself.
- Land trusts are required to have a current Cooperative Agreement with MET (dated on or after November 2, 2020).
- Funds are only available to Maryland land trusts.

Matching funds are encouraged but not required.

TIMELINE:

Deadline to apply: Applicants must submit applications in the Chesapeake Bay Trust Online System by 4:00 PM EST on December 1, 2026. 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.

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

Talk to Trust staff if you have questions. We are here to support you.

Before you begin...

BEFORE YOU BEGIN, GO THROUGH THIS APPLICANT READINESS CHECKLIST:

Before preparing your application, review the questions below. If you answer "No" to any of these questions, you may not yet be eligible to apply or may need to obtain additional documentation before submitting your application.

General Eligibility

Organizational Eligibility

- Is your organization an eligible applicant (e.g., a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, local government agency, or other eligible entity)?
- Has your organization been in continuous operation for at least one year?

Financial Readiness

- Can you provide audited financial statements or tax returns for your organization's most recently completed fiscal year?
- Do those financial records demonstrate that your organization is not currently in bankruptcy and has no unresolved tax liens?

Active Agreement & Compliance

Legal and State Standing

- Is your organization currently registered and in Good Standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT)?
- Can you provide documentation verifying your Good Standing status?
 - Most applicants should upload a screenshot of their SDAT entity page showing their organization's status and the date the screenshot was taken.
 - Government agencies that are not eligible to receive a Certificate of Good Standing are exempt from this requirement.

Helpful Resources

- Search your organization's SDAT record through [Maryland Business Express](#).
- A step-by-step guide for locating and documenting your Good Standing status is available in the Good Standing Tutorial.

TRACK 2 ONLY:

Cooperative Agreement & Organizational Compliance

- Does your organization have an active, current, and unexpired Cooperative Agreement with the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)?
- Is your organization in compliance with all requirements of its current and any prior MET agreements, including completion of required milestones, deliverables, reporting requirements, and project timelines?

Ineligibility:

Applications will be automatically disqualified if the applicant:

- Has overdue progress/financial reports, unapproved scope deviations, or unresolved non-compliance notices under any existing agreement are ineligible to apply until those matters are fully resolved. The Chesapeake Bay Trust may allow applications from 'ineligible' applicants who are working to ensure they are fully compliant before the award date.
- Has had an agreement terminated for cause by MET and CBT
- Fails to submit all required verification documentation detailing the status of active projects.

Ready to apply?



The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, this will be the system you use for project management. By submitting an application to this program, applicants acknowledge that: 1) they are compliant with federal employment and non-discrimination laws; 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 products, from application to final products will be provided to the funding partners for use and distribution at the sole discretion of the funding partners.

STEP 1. CREATE YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION ACCOUNT



Click “Manage a Grant” on our website <https://cbtrust.org/grants/keep-maryland-beautiful/> Log in to the [Chesapeake Bay Trust Award application portal](#) using an existing account or create a New account. If you forgot your password use the “Forgot Password” feature.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- You will complete the application online. No email submissions are accepted.
- You may save your progress and return later.
- All supporting documents must be uploaded electronically in the application portal.

STEP 2. GATHER THE APPLICANT INFORMATION



- Both an Executive Officer and a Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified.
- In the case of organizations, 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.
- Email, physical address, latitude and longitude using [google.com/maps](https://www.google.com/maps)
- Project partner organizations or contractors, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project. If possible, include a letter of commitment for the project from each partner describing the partner’s role or contribution to the project.

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. Exclusively for this program, an Executive Director may be a homeowner. 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 Program Leader is the individual will be responsible for all project coordination and is the primary correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project. Therefore, the email address used to log into the online system and the email entered MUST be 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.

Ready to apply?



STEP 3. PREPARE YOUR NARRATIVE



- Familiarize yourself with the On-line Application Steps in the [Chesapeake Bay Trust Application Portal](#)
- Copy and fill in the Narrative Questions for the Track you are applying to. The Narrative Questions and Evaluation Criteria are together in a separate downloadable document at the right side of in the [Keep Maryland Beautiful Website](#). Each document is marked and individual to the track you are applying to.
- Prepare and upload a Microsoft Word or PDF file that contains your answers.

STEP 4. PREPARE YOUR BUDGET



- Consider how much you will request
 - Prepare an application budget
 - Prepare an Additional Budget Justification: A descriptive budget narrative to justify and explain costs.
 - Consider if the success of the work is contingent upon other funding being awarded and make it clear in your budget justification.
- *Note: See more detailed instructions in the section “Examples of expenses allowed and examples of expenses NOT allowed for Track 1 & 2” (pages 4 and 5 of this RFP)

WHAT TO EXPECT

- You will complete the budget online in the application portal. No email submissions are accepted.
- You may save your progress and return later.
- Budget items fall into categories of personnel, supplies, contractual, travel, field trip fees, equipment, other and indirect, which is no more than 10% of the direct costs.
- Personnel time is broken down by salary per hour and number of hours to be invested.

STEP 5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS



- Upload additional supporting documents according to your track selection such as the confirmation of [Good Standing with the State of Maryland](#) and confirmation of checking with [Miss Utility](#) if you are planting trees, audited financial statements or tax returns, financial records demonstrate that your organization is not currently in bankruptcy and has no unresolved tax liens, unexpired Cooperative Agreement with the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), map, photos, contractors etc. *Check the Applicant Readiness Checklist, General Eligibility section in page 5 for guiding questions.
- *Note: If you are selected to receive a grant or contract, you will be asked to upload your W-9.

STEP 6. AGREE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Agree to the specified terms and conditions for the program for which you are applying.

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QUESTIONS? ¿PREGUNTAS?

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mveiman@cbtrust.org or (410) 974-2941 x130

Submitted!

Now what?



HOW WILL YOUR PROPOSAL WILL BE REVIEWED?

All submitted applications are scored by technical experts in the field supported by this RFP and discussed by a review committee. Reviewers score all applications based on the evaluation criteria listed in the “Evaluation Criteria” that is included in the same document as the Narrative Questions.

The funding partners reserve the right to fund projects and budget items that advance their missions and meet specific funding priorities and criteria.

HOW WILL YOU BE NOTIFIED OF YOUR AWARD?

- All applicants will receive a letter through email and through the portal application/management system on **Keep Maryland Beautiful Day – March 20th 2027** stating the funding partnership’s decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the award agreement will include:
 - Award conditions and due dates of status, progress, and final reports.
 - Notification of your payments and how they will be phased.
 - The Trust will make phased payments as agreed in the award letter or contract.
 - The trust usually requests progress reports or other requirements as the project progresses, if reports are not met 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.

YOUR AWARD LETTER IS YOUR MAP TO SUCCESS! FOLLOW IT CLOSELY AND CHECK IT OFTEN

- 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 will not be awarded additional grants.



Tips

GRANT REVIEWERS LIKE TO SEE...

A CLEAR NEED AND STRONG PROJECT GOALS:



Successful applications explain:

- What community or conservation need your project addresses.
- Why the project is needed now.
- Why grant funding is important to make the project happen.
- How your project supports both your organization's mission and the goals of the Track you are applying to. .

ACTIVITIES THAT CREATE MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:



Think about how your project will create a welcoming space or meaningful experience for the people it serves:

- Who is your priority community and why are they selected?
- Does the project respond to a community need or local priority?
- Can you incorporate features that encourage long-term community use, such as benches, walking paths and public art?
- Are you serving an underserved or underengaged audience?
- If your organization is not from the community, will you involve and support local leadership and ownership?



WILL YOUR PLANNED ACTIVITIES BENEFIT THE NATURAL AND HUMAN COMMUNITY?

- Will the project restore habitat and improve biodiversity?
- Will you have ongoing stewardship or monitoring?
- Is this project intentional about improving water quality, land conservation, wildlife returns etc.?
- Will it support workforce development, green jobs or youth leadership?



WHO ARE YOUR PARTNERS AND WHY DO YOU NEED THEM ?

- Partnerships and letters of support are expected for collaborative or multi-organization proposals.
- 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.
- Will your partners be sustaining the project after the grant period?



SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE GOALS:

Reviewers look for projects that can demonstrate the project worked

- Pre and post surveys
- Numbers of volunteers
- Photo documentation
- Ecological monitoring

WILL THE PROJECT CREATE LASTING IMPACT?

Reviewers look for projects that continue providing benefits after the grant period ends

- Who will be responsible for ongoing stewardship or monitoring?
- How will the project be maintained over time past this grant timeline?
- Can the project serve as a model that others can replicate?
- Will the project strengthen your organization's long-term capacity or partnerships?

