



Maintenance Small Grants Program

Request for Proposals

Introduction

Watershed restoration projects like tree planting, rain gardens, bioswales, conservation landscaping, pollinator habitat, and stream buffers generally have two phases: 1) installation and 2) operation and maintenance for the lifespan of the project. Maintaining projects keeps them functioning as designed and ensures aesthetic value, which maintains public support for these investments. We want restoration practices to clean water, cool neighborhoods, and provide habitat benefits long after installation.

In most of our grant programs, the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) requires short-term maintenance immediately after project installation during the project award period, costs for which can be included in the grant, as well as long-term maintenance plans to be proposed for the post-award period. While required at the time of application, we understand that the unexpected often happens (invasive species that had never been present colonize the area, resources that might have been available at the time become unavailable; people and organizations change). Also, see our "Maintenance for Stormwater Practices – If we build it, can we maintain it?" webinar on this topic: <https://cbtrust.org/convenings/>.

Factors such as project age, size, and type impact whether maintenance at any one time will cost a few hundred dollars (e.g., invasive species control and plant replacements) or tens of thousands of dollars (e.g., replacing filtering media in large stormwater systems). For its second year, this program **will continue to focus on small-scale maintenance projects that are \$500 or less specifically for invasive species removal/control and/or plant replacements/enhancements. Funds cannot be used to purchase non-native species.**

Our goal is to grow this new program over time. We appreciate your feedback as we continue to build it.

Narrative Questions

This program is designed to be simple to use relative to our larger programs. No formal budget will be required in either the application or final report. The final report will consist of a photo(s) of the completed project rather than a written report.

In the online application system, you will be asked to provide responses to the following questions. We recommend answering each question in one or two sentences.

1. What is the voluntary restoration project that requires maintenance (e.g., a tree planting at Park ABC is being colonized by invasive vines or a rain garden at School XYZ needs additional plants).
2. When was the practice originally installed, and who funded it? (If you do not know who funded it or when, that is okay).
3. What is the problem requiring maintenance?
4. Have maintenance activities ever been performed at this project site?

5. What maintenance activities will you be performing, who will do the work, and when will this effort start and end? If your maintenance plan includes adding or replacing plants, provide a list of the proposed native species. (Native status can be verified at <https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/home>.)
6. Do you own the property OR do you have property owner permission to do this work? If the latter, documentation of the approval from the property owner is **required**; a copy of an email is acceptable.
7. No formal budget spreadsheet is required but indicate, in general, how you plan to spend the amount you have requested (estimated expenses). ***Your request cannot exceed \$500.***
8. In the "Supporting Attachments" tab, please provide a picture of the site which clearly shows the maintenance need.
9. Do you commit to providing a picture at the project end to demonstrate completion of the maintenance proposed?
10. Anything else you wish to share?

Eligible Project Location and Applicants

This program only funds projects in Maryland. Proposals can only request funds for maintenance on previously grant-funded restoration project sites that have voluntarily installed practices that need this maintenance to function as intended. The proposed project site does not need to have been previously funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust to be eligible.

We welcome applications from homeowners associations, civic groups, youth and service organizations, and other community-based associations; faith-based groups, watershed organizations and other nonprofits, schools; and small municipalities (population less than 5,000).

No more than two applications will be awarded to an organization each year.

Funding Availability and Timeline

We have **\$18,150 available in funding** and anticipate making 36 awards this fiscal year (ending June 30, 2027). **Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis** until the amount available has been exhausted, with anticipation of reopening the program on July 1, 2027. Depending on demand, we aim to grow the program and offer more funds in future years.

Expenses must not have already occurred. This program cannot fund reimbursements. Allow six weeks for proposal review. Projects must be completed within 12 months upon receipt of the award. Requests to extend the project completion period will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Contact

For help with your application, project guidance, and/or assistance with estimating your expenses, contact Caitly Embly, Program Coordinator, at cemby@cbtrust.org or 410-974-2941 x169.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by reviewers to score your proposal.

- **Justification:** Is the project needed?
- **Scale:** Will the work be sufficient for the scale of maintenance needed?

- **Partnerships and Community:** Does the property owner support the project? Are the people and groups needed to do this work included?
- **Cost Effectiveness:** Is the cost appropriate for the scale of the maintenance activity?

Application Review and Notifications

Applications will be reviewed as they are received. All applicants will receive a letter stating the funding decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the Trust will send an award agreement with award conditions. The Trust will release the award payment to the requesting organization following upload of the signed award agreement and any possible contingencies by the due date.

The Trust reserves the right to fund projects that advance our mission and meet specific funding priorities.

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 start your application.** You can access SmartSimple in two ways:

1. Through our website at <https://cbtrust.org/login> by clicking the link “Log In to the Bay Trust Awards Portal”, or
2. The Chesapeake Bay Trust’s SmartSimple page at 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).

You will be asked to provide the following information on the online application form.

Eligibility Quiz: This three-question quiz is meant to determine if your project meets program requirements.

Applicant Information Tab:

- Provide the organization’s name, mailing address, phone number, and organization type.
- Provide name, title, address, phone, and email address for two separate individuals, either board members or employees of the applicant organization, who can make decisions on behalf of the organization (an Executive Officer) and the project (Project Leader). Individuals associated with for-profit entities to be engaged in the project cannot serve in either role.

Project Information Tab:

- Provide a project title.

- In the “Project Description” section, only add your responses to the “Narrative Questions” which are provided above. A project abstract is not needed in addition to your responses to the “Narrative Questions.”
- Provide the project start and end date. Activities are optional.
- Provide the county, watershed, and legislative district in which the project is located; and the geographic coordinates of the project location.

(Optional) Deliverables Tab: Provide estimated metrics for your project such as square feet of invasives removed or number of native plants planted. Only fill out the metrics that are relevant to your project; leave anything not applicable blank.

(Optional) Volunteers Tab: Provide volunteer activities and estimated number of volunteers who will be engaged.

(Optional) Project Partnerships: Provide information on any partners who will be engaged in the project.

Supporting Documents Tab: Upload your project site photo(s).

Budget Tab: Only provide the amount requested. Leave the application budget worksheet blank.

Terms and Conditions Tab: Agree to the terms and conditions. This program is supported with funds from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (no federal funds).

(Optional) Voluntary Demographics Tab and Survey Tab: Provide demographic information, information about your organization’s current diversity and inclusion efforts/goals, and/or feedback on the application process.

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (<https://cbtrust.org/>) is a nonprofit, grant-making organization dedicated to improving the bays, streams, rivers, forests, parks, and other natural resources of all 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 Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Trust has a mission to empower all people to participate in the restoration and protection of our region’s natural resources through its award-making. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages applications directly from or engage communities underrepresented in the environmental space. 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/>.