Mini Community Planting Grant Program for Anne Arundel County

www.chesapeakebaytrust.org / 410-974-2941

AT A GLANCE

The Mini Grant Program for Tree Planting Projects in Anne Arundel County is designed to result in an increase in the number of trees planted in Anne Arundel County, and to engage Anne Arundel citizens in tree planting activities that raise public awareness and participation in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers.

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Mini Grants
Deadline:
Mini Grant proposals for Community Planting requests are accepted on an on-going basis until funds for this fiscal year are exhausted.

Timeline:
Please note that funding partners must receive all proposals **six weeks prior** to the start of the proposed project. Reimbursement cannot be made for already completed projects. If awarded funding, please allow an additional two weeks to receive your check.

Grant Requests up to:
$2,500

Submit Your Application Online:
https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_1520?SA=SNA&FID=35183

Introduction

The Anne Arundel County Forest Conservancy District Board and the Chesapeake Bay Trust announce a new partnership to provide small community-based grants to help communities and organizations increase the number of trees and tree canopy in neighborhoods, parks, and communities throughout Anne Arundel County.

The goal of the Anne Arundel County Forest Conservancy District Board (Board) is to conserve and enhance the County's natural resources by good forest management practices and citizen awareness. The Board includes educators, forest and other natural resource professionals, small landowners, community leaders, and government officials. The Trust promotes public awareness and participation in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers. Since 1985, the Trust has awarded more than $80 million in grants to schools, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies throughout Maryland.

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

Goals of the Program

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 and resulting 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, enhance local economic development opportunities, and increase property values.

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

The Trust is committed to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in its grant-making and environmental work. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages grant 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, please see our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

Project Guidelines

- All planting projects **must** include a native plant list, site plan, project design, photo of the planting/restoration site, and a *detailed maintenance plan*.
- List native plants that will be used in the planting/restoration project in the proposal. Funds may be requested for native plant species only.
- 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 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.
- *Signage* for requests in highly visible areas is *highly* recommended. The funding partners will fund signage if the Forestry Board and the Trust's Bay plate logo is included www.cbtrust.org/logos.

Evaluation Criteria

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

Most Important Criteria:
1. **Consistency with Request for Proposal (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. Restoration and protection projects must include a photo of the site, site plan, native plant list, detailed maintenance plan and a commitment to long term success.
   b. Projects must also 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 is 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 take 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, and 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 have been engaged? Is the community to be served involved appropriately in the project; i.e., was community buy-in obtained, were community needs and desires assessed, 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?

Also to be Considered:
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 a site plant, site photos, a native plant list, and a maintenance plan included?

Eligible Applicants

The 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 & Tributary Teams
* Public and Independent Higher Educational Institutions

Funding Restrictions

The funding partners do *not* fund the following:

* Refreshments and T-shirts.
* Promotional collateral, ex. Pens, key chains, etc.
* Endowments, deficit financing, individuals, building campaigns, annual giving, research, fund raising or venture capital.
* Mitigation or capital construction activities such as structural erosion control measures.
* Political lobbying.
* Reimbursement for a project that has been completed or materials that have been purchased.
* Projects and programs located outside of Anne Arundel County.
* Budget items that are considered secondary to the project's central objective. These items include, but are not limited to, cash prizes, cameras and video equipment, and microscopes.
* Funding is generally restricted to projects on public property, private community-owned land and conservation easements, unless otherwise specified in a grant program.
* Routine mowing and landscape maintenance.

The funding partners will evaluate each proposal on a case by case basis. The partners reserve the right to fund projects and budget items that advance their missions and meet their specific funding priorities and criteria.

Deadlines, Review Process, and Notifications

Deadline:
Mini Grant proposals for Community Planting requests are accepted on an on-going basis until funds are fully expended for the given fiscal year; please check our website and sign up for our grantee newsletter for the most up to date information about the status of this rolling grant program. Although the grant program accepts proposals on a rolling basis, proposals are approved by the Anne Arundel Forestry Board. *Thus notification of the grant decision will not occur until <u>after</u> the next Forestry Board meeting (June 12th, August 14th, October 9th, December 11th and February 12th).* Plan to submit your grant application accordingly (i.e. if you submit on June 11th you will not find out the decision until after August 14th and so on).

To set applicant expectations prior to investing time in application, the Trust provides historical application approval rates for the same or similar programs: The average approval rate from the last three years in this grant

program is 68%, which includes fully and partially funded applications. The average approval rate of all applications to the Trust is 33%. Should your proposal not be funded, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Trust to discuss and obtain reviewer feedback, which will make your proposal stronger for a future submission.

Each application is reviewed by a review committee composed of individuals who are experts in the fields supported by this RFP. Reviewers score all applications based on the criteria above.

The Trust reserves the right to fund projects and budget items that advance its mission and meet its specific funding priorities and criteria.

Please note that the Trust must receive all proposals at least **six weeks prior** to the start of the proposed project. The Trust cannot make exceptions to this policy nor provide reimbursement funding for already completed projects. If awarded funding, please allow an additional two weeks to receive the check after your signed award letter has been received by the Trust.

Award Notification and Final Reports:
All applicants will receive an e-mailed letter stating the Trust's decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the Trust will send an e-mailed grant agreement letter with grant conditions and the due date of the final report. Grantees must sign, scan, and upload the grant agreement letter with original signatures to the online grant management system. If awarded funding, please allow a minimum of two weeks to receive your check (from the date the Trust receives the signed award letter in the online system).

The Trust will mail the check to the applicant organization listed on the original online grant application form, following the Trust's receipt of the signed grant agreement and any information necessary to meet contingency requirements. Please allow a minimum of four weeks (from the date the Trust receives the signed award agreement and any contingencies) for the check to be issued.

When the project is complete, grantees are required to complete the final report form and budget expenditures spreadsheet, which is available through the online grant management system.

Project Timeline

Projects should be completed within one year upon receipt of the grant award. When the project is complete, grantees are required to submit a completed final report form with supporting materials.

Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online grants management system for the application process, and if awarded, grant management. As a result, you will need to register with the online grants management system with a username and password; if you have applied for a grant in the last year please use your existing username and password (if you have forgotten either of these please use the 'forgot password' feature). To apply for a grant go to the Trust website and click on the appropriate start a new online application link: http://www.cbtrust.org/grants/mini

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).

Contact
Contact Joe Toolan at (410) 974-2941 ext. 116 or jtoolan@cbtrust.org

Online Application Instructions

When completing the online application process, you will be asked for the following information:

Project Title: List the title of your project

Organization Information:
1) Organization name
2) Address
3) City, State, Zip
4) Phone
5) Mission of Organization
6) Organization Type
7) EIN Number

An Executive Officer and Project Leader must be identified for all applications and must be different individuals. The Executive Officer and Project Leader must be able to make decisions on behalf of the organization either as a board member, an employee, or other approved position. The Project Leader will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project. The Trust cannot conduct any official correspondence with contractors, consultants, 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 officer. To avoid conflict of interest issues, individuals associated with for-profit entities to be engaged in the project cannot serve in either role.

Executive Officer of Requesting Organization: Provide the Executive Officer name, title, address, phone, and e-mail.

Project Leader: Provide the Project Leader name, title, address, phone, and e-mail.

Grant Information:
1) Amount of Trust funding requested
2) Grant Period: enter project start and end dates (submit applications *at least six weeks prior* to the start of the proposed project for the application to be considered.)
3) In which stream, river or watershed will the project be located?
4) In which county will the project be located?

Project Abstract:
Provide a brief summary of the project, including details such as type of project, location, and main objectives. Please limit the abstract to 100 words.

Project Timeline:
Fill in a project timeline including major tasks and their associated start and end dates. You are limited to eight entries (though not required to use all eight), and are welcome to combine steps if necessary.

Project Deliverables:
Enter in a variety of metrics such as the proposed square feet of rain garden, volunteers engaged, trees planted, number of workshops held, etc. Please fill out only the project deliverables that apply to your project; leave the others (that are not applicable) blank.

Volunteer Involvement:
Provide a description of volunteer activities, indicate the number of volunteers that will be involved with each activity, and an estimated amount of hours contributed by those volunteers.

Project Partnerships and Qualifications:
List the project partner organizations, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project.

While not required, applicants are encouraged to upload a letter of commitment from each project partner outlining the partner's role in the project. Letters of commitment can be uploaded in the narrative file attachment section.

Project Narrative Upload:

Upload an MSWord or PDF file containing the project narrative questions, not to exceed five pages.
Please address the following narrative questions and then upload your narrative document through the project narrative file attachment section in the online system. We recommend that you copy and paste these questions into a word processing

Project Description:

1. What are the big-picture goal and the specific objective(s) of the project?
2. Description of project location(s) (maps are recommended as attachments). Clearly indicate project site property ownership, and identify property type (public, community, institutional, private).
3. Describe how *and* why project sites were selected. Please note, if the site is highly visible or used by the public the Trust heavily encourages signage.
4. In light of the Trust's commitment to the advancement of diversity in its grant-making, please provide demographic information regarding the community or population benefiting from or served by the project. Describe how the local community will be involved in the planning, development and implementation of the proposed project. Please include specific roles of volunteers in project activities.
5. Describe the recruitment strategy for volunteers and why that strategy was selected.
6. Is this project an extension of an on-going or recently completed project or plan? Please explain.
7. Sustainability and Transferability: How will the sustainability of the project be ensured? How can this project be a model for others?
8. Description of how the project will be evaluated. How will success be determined?
9. Describe your organization's experience in completing similar projects.

Attachments:

- Site plan/ project design that includes species, area, spacing, etc.
- Native plant list. Funds may be requested for native plant species only.
- Photo of the planting/restoration site.
- A detailed maintenance plan 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.
- Landowner letter. 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 commitment to upkeep, manage, and maintain the project will receive more favorable review.
- Permits: If permits are required, describe the status of those permits (i.e., permits pending review of application, permits secured).

Budget Upload:
Upload your budget using the Chesapeake Bay Trust Financial Management Spreadsheet Template, an excel file template. Copies of the form can be obtained by going to the Trust's Forms and Polices webpage at www.cbtrust.org/forms-policies/.
Indicate whether each match entry is applied for, pledged, or in-hand. Please do not list volunteer hours as match; these hours are captured in the deliverables and volunteer involvement sections. Indicate in the narrative whether your organization has requested financial support from any other sources for the project not listed as match in the budget table.

Budget Category Information and Additional Budget Justification:

A) Enter the budget category totals as automatically calculated in the Financial Management Spreadsheet. Use the budget justification section to provide clear justification for each budget line item.