



Chesapeake Bay Trust, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Environmental Protection Agency

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**CONSULTANT SERVICES
COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE
OUTREACH SERVICES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANT SERVICES TO SUPPORT
CAPACITY AND WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE WATER
QUALITY IN MARYLAND COMMUNITIES**

Proposal Deadline: October 15th 2026

SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to select contractors to support the Community-Based Organization Capacity Building Initiative (CBO-CBI) as either a **Connector Group contractor (Track 1)**, a **Technical Assistance Provider (Track 2)**, or a **contractor capable of serving both roles (Tracks 1 and 2)**.

The goal of the CBO-CBI is to identify and engage community-based organizations (CBOs) that have project needs and potential sites for watershed restoration but would benefit from additional capacity to pursue and manage watershed restoration-focused grant funding, particularly through programs where technical assistance is limited. Connector Group contractors will identify, reach, and engage eligible CBOs, while Technical Assistance Providers will work with those organizations to strengthen their grant development and support the submission of robust, competitive applications. Contractors serving both roles may provide this support directly. Connector Group and Technical Assistance contractors will coordinate their outreach and engagement activities by geographic region, based on each partner's capacity, expertise, and preferred area of work.

Through this initiative, participating CBOs will build their capacity to identify, pursue, and successfully manage funding opportunities for watershed restoration projects. CBOs will gain knowledge of available funding sources, develop stronger grant applications, improve grant management and reporting skills, and increase their ability to plan, initiate, and lead future restoration efforts. In the short term, the CBO-CBI aims to increase the number and competitiveness of applications from organizations with demonstrated watershed restoration needs but limited capacity to pursue funding. Over time, these efforts will expand community capacity to implement restoration projects that improve water quality by reducing nitrogen

pollution and other sources of nutrient runoff within local watersheds.

The funding partners and the Trust are particularly interested in engaging organizations in the Eastern, Southern, and Central Maryland regions to promote broad geographic representation and necessary access to technical assistance and funding opportunities. Eligible CBOs must be located within a Most Effective Basin (MEB) in the Chesapeake Bay watershed portion of Maryland, ensuring that investments are directed to areas where restoration activities can achieve the greatest water quality benefits.

CBOs engaged through the CBO-CBI may pursue funding for eligible watershed restoration projects through the following grant programs, or other restoration-focused funding opportunities:

Chesapeake Bay Trust:

- [Watershed Assistance Grant Program \(WAGP\)](#)
- [Outreach and Restoration \(OR\) \(Only tracks 3 & 4 are eligible\)](#)
- [Community Engagement and Restoration Mini-Grant \(only with Trust and partner approval\)](#)
- [Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns \(G3\)](#) (Track 6 is not eligible)

Department of Natural Resources:

- [Resilience through Restoration Initiative \(RtR\)](#)

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation:

- [Chesapeake Small Watershed Grants \(SWG\)](#)
- [Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense \(WILD Implementation Grant\)](#)

Contractors should be able to identify organizations whose missions, community needs, and potential projects align with these eligible funding opportunities or help organizations identify opportunities to connect their missions and goals with watershed restoration work.

The work supported through this RFP will contribute to implementation of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement outcomes. The CBO-CBI is a partnership between the Chesapeake Bay Trust (Trust) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), with funding provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA; limited to coastal zone jurisdictions) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA; limited to Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions).

Maryland submits Two-Year Milestones to EPA biennially, identifying programmatic goals and near-term commitments for restoring the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. The milestone framework is intended to accelerate nutrient and sediment reductions for the benefit of local communities and the Bay watershed. The CBO-CBI supports this broader effort by expanding the participation and capacity of community-based organizations and residents in identifying, pursuing, and implementing watershed restoration projects.

1.2 Total Funding Available

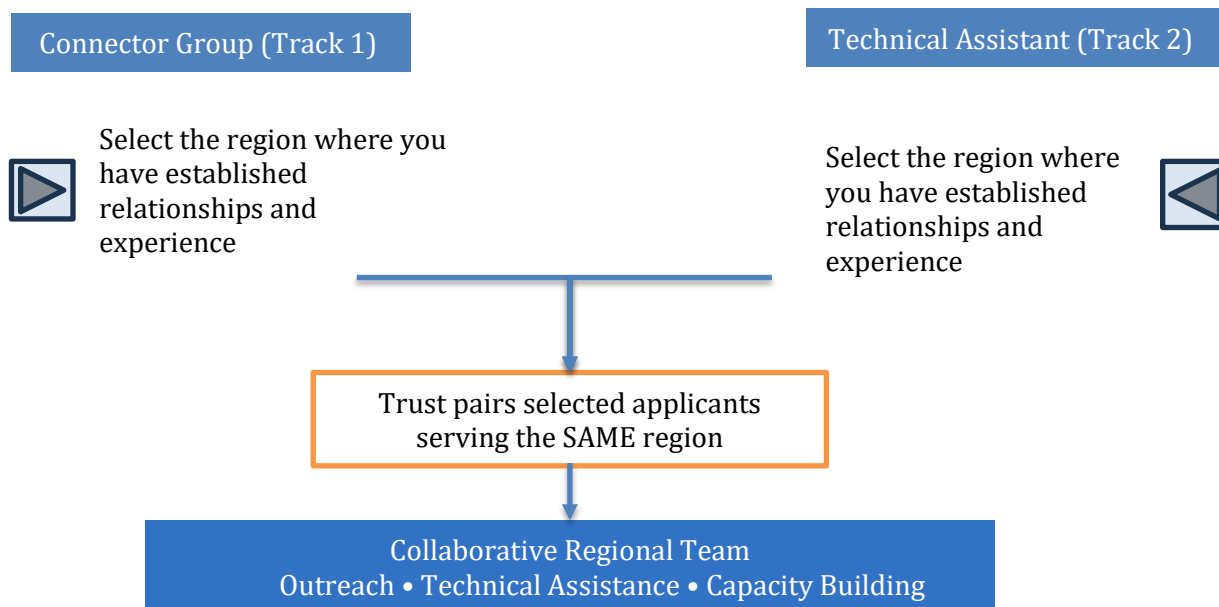
Total funding available: \$485,500

Region	Connector Group Allocation	Technical Assistance Allocation
Central & Southern Maryland (combined)	\$120,000	\$120,000
Eastern Maryland	\$32,675	\$62,750

***Note:** The Central & Southern Maryland allocations are combined regional allocations. The Trust may award the full \$120,000 allocation for each track to one contractor or may divide the allocation between two contractors, with approximately \$60,000 awarded to each contractor. The allocation is \$120,000 total per track for Central & Southern Maryland, not \$120,000 per region.

1.3 Regional Collaboration

Applicants for both Track 1 (Connector Group) and Track 2 (Technical Assistant) must select **one** geographic region of Maryland—Eastern, Central + Southern or Central, or Southern—in which they propose to work. Applicants should demonstrate existing relationships, experience, and knowledge relevant to the region they select. Following the selection process, the Trust will pair the selected Connector Group and Technical Assistant serving the same region. Each regional pair will work collaboratively to conduct outreach, engage community-based organizations, and provide coordinated technical assistance throughout the grant period.



SECTION II – CONNECTOR GROUP SERVICES/SCOPES OF WORK and OFFEROR'S MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

2.1 Track One: Connector Group

2.1.a Regional Budget, Contract Structure, and Expected Level of Service

The Trust intends to award Connector Group contracts by geographic region. The regional allocations below represent the total funding available for Connector Group services in each region or combined region.

Region	Connector Group Allocation
Central and Southern Maryland (combined)	\$120,000 total
Eastern Maryland	\$32,675 total

The Trust anticipates that the Central and Southern Maryland allocation will be awarded to one contractor serving both regions, when possible. However, the Trust may divide the \$120,000 allocation between two contractors, with approximately \$60,000 awarded to each contractor, if doing so will provide greater reach, expertise, geographic coverage, or diversity of services.

Offerors must identify the geographic area for which they are proposing. Offerors may:

- Propose to serve Central and Southern Maryland together;
- Propose to serve Central Maryland only;
- Propose to serve Southern Maryland only; or
- Propose to serve Eastern Maryland.

Offerors should **not** submit a proposal to serve all regions. The Trust seeks a diversity of organizations, services, expertise, community relationships, and approaches among the selected contractors and will consider geographic coverage and complementary areas of expertise in making awards.

The difference in funding among regions reflects anticipated differences in population, geographic coverage, community need, and workload. The level of work expected under each contract will be commensurate with the amount awarded.

The following provides a general indication of the level of outreach and engagement anticipated for each funding level. These numbers are intended to help Offerors develop an appropriate scope and budget and are not intended to establish a rigid per-organization cost or prevent the Trust and contractor from adjusting the level of service based on community needs. The primary objective is meaningful engagement and appropriate referral of eligible CBOs to Technical Assistance Providers, rather than simply maximizing the number of organizations contacted.

Approximate Contract Allocation	Anticipated Engagement and Referral
\$32,675	Approximately 4–6 CBOs
\$60,000	Approximately 6–8 CBOs
\$120,000	Approximately 8–10 CBOs, depending on the proposed approach and regional workload

2.1.b Timeline for Connector Group

Work is anticipated to begin in **February 2027** and end on **December 1, 2027**. Engagement and referrals may occur throughout the contract period as organizations are identified and engaged. Please note that groups engaged must be serviced by the Technical Assistance Provider, connector Groups are expected to coordinate closely with Technical Assistance Providers regarding the timing of outreach, organizational readiness, referrals, technical assistance, and grant application deadlines. This coordination is crucial to consider the Technical Assistance as well as the organizations engaged. The bulk of the Connector work will be mostly in the first 5 to 6 months of the contract period to allow time for the CBO and Technical Assistant to work on submissions.

2.1.c Scope of Work for Connector Group

Connector Groups will identify and engage community-based organizations (CBOs) that would benefit from additional support to pursue watershed restoration-focused grant opportunities. Connector Groups will conduct prioritized outreach within their selected region and networks to identify eligible organizations with appropriate missions, community needs, and potential projects.

Connector Groups will coordinate with Technical Assistance Providers to ensure that organizations are appropriately referred for technical assistance, and that outreach, engagement, and technical assistance activities are complementary.

Depending on the regional allocation and proposed scope of work, Connector Group activities may include:

- Outreach and Engagement: Identify, contact, and engage eligible CBOs that may benefit from watershed restoration-focused grant opportunities and technical assistance.
- Organizational Readiness and Referral: Help organizations understand available funding opportunities, assess their interest and readiness, and connect appropriate organizations with Technical Assistance Providers.
- Survey Implementation and Analysis: Administer surveys or other information-gathering tools provided by the Trust to assess organizational capacity, needs, interests, and progress.
- Capacity-Building Workshops: Support the development and delivery of workshops addressing needs identified through outreach and engagement. Topics may include grant

writing, grant management and compliance, and restoration project maintenance and stewardship. Workshops may be led or co-led by Connector Groups in coordination with Technical Assistance Providers.

- **Resource Identification:** Identify and connect CBOs with existing resources that address capacity-building needs outside the direct scope of the CBO-CBI.
- **Collaborative Planning and Coordination:** Participate in regular coordination meetings with Technical Assistance Providers and other partners to align outreach, referrals, work plans, and support provided to CBOs.
- **Culturally Relevant Outreach:** Use outreach approaches and materials that are appropriate, accessible, and responsive to the communities and organizations being engaged.
- **Documentation and Reporting:** Maintain records of outreach, engagement, referrals, workshops, and other activities and provide information needed for program reporting and evaluation.

2.1.d Deliverables for Connector Group

Offerors must describe their proposed approach to accomplishing the scope of work within the regional allocation for which they are applying. The proposed scope should be proportional to the level of funding requested and should demonstrate the Offeror's ability to reach and meaningfully engage eligible CBOs within the selected region.

The anticipated level of engagement is described in Section 2.1.a. Offerors should explain how their proposed budget and approach will support meaningful engagement and referral of organizations at the anticipated scale.

Deliverable 1 – Outreach, Engagement, and Referral

Identify and engage eligible CBOs within the selected region that have limited engagement with watershed restoration-focused grant programs and may benefit from technical assistance. Connector Groups will refer appropriate organizations to Technical Assistance Providers.

Documentation should include, as appropriate:

- Organization name and primary contact information;
- Description of the organization's mission and community served;
- Description of potential project interests, including location and type of project;
- Relevant funding opportunities;
- Assessment of interest and readiness for technical assistance; and
- Referrals made to Technical Assistance Providers.

Deliverable 2 – Capacity-Building Workshops and Resources

Develop, coordinate, or support capacity-building workshops and identify relevant resources in response to needs identified through outreach and engagement. Workshops and resources may address topics including:

- Grant writing;
- Grant management and compliance;
- Maintenance and stewardship of restoration projects;
- Organizational readiness; and
- Other capacity-building needs identified during the project period.

Deliverable 3 – Coordination with Technical Assistance Providers

Participate in regular coordination with Technical Assistance Providers to support effective referrals, align outreach and technical assistance activities, share information about CBO needs, and avoid duplication of services.

Deliverable 4 – Final Report

Provide a written final report summarizing outreach and engagement activities, including:

- Methods used to reach priority audiences;
- Organizations engaged and referred for technical assistance;
- Capacity-building workshops and resources provided;
- Lessons learned;
- Challenges and barriers identified; and
- Recommendations to the Trust and funding partners for improving future outreach and engagement.

The final report should also identify organizations that may be interested in technical assistance or watershed restoration funding opportunities in the future but were not ready or interested in applying during the project period.

2.1.e Qualifications and Expertise of Connector Group

Offeror's personnel assigned to perform under the Contract should have the following experience:

- a) A minimum of five (5) years of experience engaging the proposed priority audience(s) (required)
- b) Demonstrated knowledge and cultural competency related to the proposed priority audience (required); and
- c) A minimum of three (3) years of experience using multi-faceted outreach and engagement strategies (required).

Offeror's organization should have the following qualifications:

- a) Demonstrated relationships with organizations in their region that meet the description of the priority audience for this program. Please describe existing partnerships, collaborative work and contacts that you could leverage to identify potential applicants.
- b) An organization mission that focuses either on the proposed priority audience or that crosscuts that of the proposed priority audience and natural resources (preferred).

SECTION III – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES/SCOPES OF WORK and OFFEROR'S MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

3.1 Track Two: Technical Assistance Providers

3.1.a Regional Budget, Contract Structure, and Expected Level of Service

The Trust intends to award Technical Assistant contracts by geographic region. The regional allocations below represent the total funding available for Connector Group services in each region or combined region.

Region	Connector Group Allocation
Central and Southern Maryland (combined)	\$120,000 total
Eastern Maryland	\$62,750 total

The Trust anticipates that the Central and Southern Maryland allocation will be awarded to one contractor serving both regions, when possible. However, the Trust may divide the \$120,000 allocation between two contractors, with approximately \$60,000 awarded to each contractor, if doing so will provide greater reach, expertise, geographic coverage, or diversity of services.

Offerors must identify the geographic area for which they are proposing. Offerors may:

- Propose to serve Central and Southern Maryland together;
- Propose to serve Central Maryland only;
- Propose to serve Southern Maryland only; or
- Propose to serve Eastern Maryland.

Offerors should **not** submit a proposal to serve all regions. The Trust seeks a diversity of organizations, services, expertise, community relationships, and approaches among the selected contractors and will consider geographic coverage and complementary areas of expertise in making awards.

The difference in funding among regions reflects anticipated differences in population, geographic coverage, community need, and workload. The level of work expected under each contract will be commensurate with the amount awarded.

The following provides a general indication of the level of Technical Assistance anticipated for each funding level. These numbers are intended to help Offerors develop an appropriate scope and budget and are not intended to establish a rigid per-organization cost or prevent the Trust and contractor from adjusting the level of service based on community needs. The primary objective is competitive grant application submissions that increase the likelihood of the CBO's being granted funds for Watershed Restoration projects.

Approximate Contract Allocation	Anticipated Submissions
\$62,750	Approximately 4–6 CBOs
\$120,000	Approximately 6–8 CBOs,

3.1.b Timeline for Technical Assistant Group

Work is anticipated to begin in **February 2027** and end on **December 1, 2027**. Engagement and referrals from Connector Groups may occur throughout the contract period as organizations are identified and engaged. Please note that groups engaged must be serviced by the Technical Assistance Provider. Technical Assistance Providers are expected to coordinate closely with their regional Connector Group partner regarding the timing of outreach, organizational readiness, referrals, technical assistance, and grant application deadlines. This coordination is crucial to consider the Technical Assistance as well as the organizations engaged. The bulk of the Technical Assistance work will likely be mostly in second half of the contract period to allow time for the Connector Groups to engage CBOs.

3.1.c Scope of Work for Technical Assistance

The second type of partner organization will have significant experience with green infrastructure design, engineering, and grant proposal writing. Technical Assistants will work directly with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide tailored support throughout the grant application process for programs such as WAGP, OR, RtR, and SWG (or others as pre-approved by the Trust and partners at DNR). In addition to proposal development expertise, Technical Assistants may be responsible for:

- Grant Proposal Co-Development: Collaborating closely with CBOs to co-write grant proposals and ensure applications are aligned with the goals and eligibility criteria of applicable funding programs. Support may include:
 - Aligning organizational needs and project ideas with available grant opportunities
 - Enhancing CBO readiness for future funding opportunities by helping them:
 - Obtain required documentation (e.g., SAM registration, UEI number)
 - Identify themes in their mission that align with the purpose of the grant
 - Develop a viable project concept that meets grant objectives
 - Secure a site, build partnerships, or strengthen proposals that build on previously funded work
- Capacity-Building Workshops: Workshops will be led by Connector groups; however TA may be required to support the development and delivery of workshops. Topics may include, but are not limited to:
 - Grant writing
 - Grant management and compliance
 - Maintenance and stewardship of restoration projects
- Collaborative Planning and Coordination: Participating in regular group meetings with Connectors and other partners to align work plans, share progress, and ensure strategic -

3.1.d Deliverables for Technical Assistance:

Deliverable 1 – Initial Consultations Report

A report detailing initial consultations provided to approximately a minimum of four (4) to a maximum of eight (8) community-based groups depending on the requested funding amount and region (contact information to be provided by “connector” group(s)), including photos of site visits conducted to assess site conditions, narrative summaries of applicant/community concerns, and recommendations on appropriate best management practices (BMPs) and/or assessments for site improvement that incorporate multiple ecological objectives especially water quality enhancement, nitrogen reduction and climate resiliency.

Deliverable 2 – Report on Technical Assistance Provided

A report detailing technical assistance provided to a minimum of four (4) to a maximum of eight (8) groups (follow the table above according to the workload), corresponding to the submission of a minimum of minimum of four (4) to a maximum of eight (8) complete grant proposals to the above mentioned grant programs. The report must detail assistance with project development, concept design creation, estimated nutrient reduction calculations, proposal narrative writing, budget creation, and submission of online applications.

Deliverable 3 – Final Report

A final report summarizing lessons learned and recommendations about how to overcome barriers to community-based organization ability to pursue similar projects.

3.1.e Qualifications and Expertise of Technical Assistant

Personnel assigned to perform under the Contract should have the following:

- A minimum of five (5) years of experience with green infrastructure design, engineering, and permitting (required)
- A minimum of five (5) years of experience with grant writing (required)
- A minimum of five (5) years of experience planning and designing green infrastructure projects for climate resiliency (required)
- A minimum of three (3) years of experience creating new relationships with local communities to develop green infrastructure and resiliency projects (required)
- A minimum of three(3) years of experience working with communities (required)
- A minimum of three (3) years of experience with sea level rise projections and climate data (preferred)
- Experience calculating nutrient reduction values (required), particularly utilizing FieldDoc www.fielddoc.org (preferred)

SECTION IV – ADDITIONAL SERVICES

4.1 Additional Services:

The Contract Officer may request ancillary or additional services within the capacity of the Contractor as may be useful or necessary in the interests of the Trust and the Project for any of the above Scopes of Work.

4.2 Add/Deduct:

The Trust reserves the right to add or remove items from the base bid proposal during the contract and modify or adjust scope of work and payment as needed.

SECTION V - PROPOSAL FORMAT AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

5.1 Principal Solicitation Officer and Issuing Office:



Contract Officer: Marilyn Veiman Echeverría



Telephone Number: 410-974-2941 x 130



E-Mail: mveiman@cbtrust.org



Address: Chesapeake Bay Trust
108 Severn Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21403

The sole point of contact for the purpose of this RFP is the Contract Officer.

5.2 Prospective Offerors:

An “Offeror” is a person or entity that submits a proposal in response to this RFP.

5.3 Cancellation; Discretion of Contract Officer:

This RFP may be canceled in whole or in part and any proposal may be rejected in whole or in part at the discretion of the Contract Officer. In addition, the Contract officer has the right to negotiate separately with any Offeror in any manner which will best serve the interests of the Trust. The Contract Officer may waive any mandatory condition or minimum qualification if she determines that such action is in the best interest of the Trust.

5.4 Submission Instructions/Proposal Closing Date:

Offerors must submit proposals using our Online Application System, located at:

<https://www.cbtrust.org/login> no later than **4:00 p.m. on October 15TH** (the "**Closing Date**"). Requests for extensions will not be granted, late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 4:00 pm. **Offerors are strongly encouraged to submit at least a few days prior to the deadline** given potential for high website traffic on the due date. The Trust cannot guarantee availability of Online Application System technical assistance on the deadline date. If email confirmation of submission is not received within two business days, please contact the Principal Solicitation Officer listed in Section 4.1.

Proposals are irrevocable for 90 days following the Closing Date.

5.5 Proposal Format:

5.5.a Narrative:

The Offeror must submit a proposal that includes responses to a) through d) in a concise (≤5 pages) description. Items e) and f) may be addressed outside of the 5-page limit and may be attached as additional pages. All material must be submitted in one electronic file.

- Names of personnel providing the services and number of years of experience in such areas.
- The Offeror's proposal for how to address the elements of the scope(s) of work and required outcomes described in the services and deliverables section (Section II above),
- Response to the qualifications section: a description of the experience of providing services on the topics described above as described in Section 2.1.
- Names, phone numbers, and email addresses of three references.
- The resume or CV of the individual(s) providing the service.
- Any other information which the Offeror considers relevant to a fair evaluation of its experience and capabilities.

5.5.b Budget:

The Offeror shall submit a budget online. No email submissions are accepted. You may save your progress and return later as needed. The 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. Under this program, food and beverage costs will not be supported.

The proposed rates of compensation will be irrevocable for a period of 90 days from the Closing Date, or if modified during negotiations, for a period of 90 days from the date such modified rates are proposed by the Offeror. If your proposed indirect rate is higher than 15% of the direct costs and your proposal is selected for funding, you will be required to provide the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) documentation.

Subcontracting Opportunities: It is assumed this solicitation will result in small procurements that will not provide realistic opportunities for subcontracting, though multiple organizations may apply as a collaborative or partnership with an identified project lead. If, however, the Offeror considers subcontracting of services to be available, they should follow 2CFR 200 and 2CFR1500.

NOTE: This program is funded utilizing Federal funding. The budget must be prepared utilizing Federal requirements, including 2 CFR Part 1500 and 2 CFR Part 200 and Subpart E Cost Principles and applicable indirect cost rates, see 2 CFR 200.414. If you have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), it must be uploaded with the application. The Trust has prepared an Indirect and Fringe Cost Policy and [FAQ for Federal Funding](#) document to assist applicants: [Additional Applicant & Awardee Resources](#).

5.5.c Professional Liability Insurance:

The Offeror shall agree to maintain in full force and effect during the term of the Contract usual and customary amounts of liability insurance coverage in connection with the performance or failure to perform services under the Contract.

5.5.d Eligible Organizations:

No entity may enter into a Contract with the Chesapeake Bay Trust under this funding opportunity unless the entity has provided its UEI number to the Trust.

SECTION VI - EVALUATION PROCEDURE

6.1 Qualifying Proposals:

The Contract Officer will review each proposal for compliance with the minimum qualifications set forth in "Offeror's Minimum Qualifications."

6.2 Deviations and Negotiation:

The Contract Officer shall have the sole right to determine whether any deviation from the requirements of this RFP is substantial in nature, and the Contract Officer may reject non-conforming proposals. In addition, the Contract Officer may waive minor irregularities in proposals, allow an Offeror to correct minor irregularities, and negotiate with responsible Offerors in any manner deemed necessary or desirable to serve the best interests of the Project.

6.3 Evaluation:

Proposals shall be evaluated by a review committee composed of technical experts and facilitated by the Contract Officer. Evaluation will be made on the basis of the evaluation criteria discussed below and may include any oral presentation that may be required by the Contract Officer, through a recommendation by the at his or her discretion. The Contract Officer reserves the right to recommend an Offeror for contract award based upon the Offeror's proposal without oral presentations or further discussion. However, the Contract Officer may engage in further discussion if he or she determines that it might be beneficial. In such cases, the Contract Officer will notify those responsible Offerors with whom further discussion is desired. In addition, the Contract Officer may permit qualified Offerors to revise their proposals by submitting "best and final" offers.

6.4 Evaluation Considerations:

Proposals and any oral presentation by Offerors who meet the minimum qualifications set forth in Section II will be evaluated by the technical review committee on the basis of the following factors:

- A. Proposed Team (Specific Individual(s) Responsible for Performance of Contract). Evaluation of the qualifications, reputation, and compatibility with needs of the Trust and the Project of the individual or individuals who will perform the Contract.
- B. Proposed Approach. Evaluation of the work to be performed to accomplish the goals outlined in the Scopes of Work in Section II.
- C. Experience of Offeror. Evaluation of the quality and quantity of the Offeror's experience and expertise in the areas proposed, supported by references.
- D. Capacity. Evaluation of the Offeror's ability and commitment to meet the timeline for the Project.
- E. Price and Hours. Hourly rate and number of hours to be devoted to the project.

SECTION VII: OTHER INFORMATION

7.1 Disclosure:

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP may be provided to government agencies and be subject to disclosure pursuant to the provisions of the Access to Public Records Act of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (the "Public Information Act"). Offerors must specifically identify those portions of their proposals, if any, which they deem to contain confidential or proprietary information and must provide justification for why such materials should not, upon request, be disclosed by the State under the Public Information Act.

7.2 Expenses:

The Trust and the Contract Officer are not responsible for any direct or indirect expenses which an Offeror may incur in preparing and submitting a proposal, participating in the evaluation process, or in consequence of this solicitation process for any reason.

7.3 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions:

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, (A) the Offeror accepts all of the terms and conditions set forth in this RFP; (B) the Offeror, if selected for award, agrees that it will comply with all federal, State, and local laws applicable to its activities and obligations under the Contract; (C) the Offeror shall be deemed to represent that it is not in arrears in the payment of any obligation due and owing the United States Government or the State or any department or unit thereof, including, without limitation, the payment of taxes and employee benefits, and, if selected for award, that it shall not become so in arrears during the term of the Contract; and (D) the Offeror, acknowledges that they are compliant with federal employment and non-discrimination laws and have not been debarred, convicted, charged or had 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)

7.4 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Minority Business Enterprise (DBE/MBE) Participation:

This RFP encourages the participation of DBE/MBE firms (members of a group as defined in the State Finance and Procurement Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (the "Procurement Article"), Section 14-301(f)(i)(ii)). The Trust encourages DBE/MBE firms who meet the minimum qualifications to respond to this RFP.

7.5 Parties to the Contract:

The contract to be entered into as a result of this RFP (the "Contract") shall be between the successful Offeror (the "Contractor") and the Trust and may be subject to DNR approval prior to Contract award.

7.6 Contract Documents:

The Contract shall include the following documents: this RFP, the Contractor's Proposal (to the extent not inconsistent with the RFP or the Contract), and the Contract. In the event of an inconsistency, the Contract shall have priority over the other documents and specific conditions of the Contract shall have priority over General Conditions.

7.7 Contract Term:

The Contract term shall commence as of a date to be specified in the Contract and, unless sooner terminated in accordance with the Contract, shall end when all work authorized under the Contract has

been successfully completed. This contract can be renewed for up to three years or extended at the sole option of the Contract Officer.

7.8 Billing Procedures and Compensation:

- A. Method. The Contracts to be entered into as a result of this RFP will not exceed the small procurement threshold fixed at 41 U.S.C. 403 (11) (currently \$250,000.) The Contractor(s) must comply with billing procedures as may be required by the Contract Officer and DNR. These may entail monthly reporting of time and eligible expenses or may be based upon satisfactory completion of benchmark tasks.
- B. Records. The Contractor(s) shall submit invoices in a form acceptable to the Contract Officer and maintain records relating to the costs and expenses incurred by the Contractor(s) in the performance of the Contracts for a period of three years from the date of final Project payment under the Contracts.
- C. The Agreement between the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the "Trust") and the Contractor ("Contractor") will be managed as a Firm-Fixed-Price Contract.

7.9 Certification:

The Offeror shall certify that, to the best of its knowledge, the price information submitted is accurate, complete, and correct as of the Closing Date, and if negotiations are conducted as of the date of "best and final offer."

7.10 Branding:

All products (outreach materials, events) will be branded with the DNR, EPA, NOAA and Trust logos and relevant funding acknowledgement language.