



Outdoor Learning Network Initiative Application Package

www.chesapeakebaytrust.org / 410-974-2941

AT A GLANCE

The Outdoor Learning Network Initiative is designed to establish and build school district and nonprofit partnerships to advance environmental education through the implementation of systemic MWEE programs in targeted high-need school districts within the Chesapeake Bay region.

This grant program welcomes applications for projects in all school districts in the Chesapeake Bay region.

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Deadlines:

4pm, March 28, 2019

Decisions made May 2019

Request Level:

Up to \$100,000 for a two year grant period.

Submit Your Application online by following the instructions at:

www.cbtrust.org/grants/environmentaleducation.



www.bayplate.org

Goal of the Initiative

The Outdoor Learning Network Initiative, in coordination with the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup and administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust, offers the funding opportunity described below for high-need school districts within the Chesapeake Bay region that are interested in advancing their environmental literacy goals. The goal of the Initiative and resources provided is to build partnerships among school district and nonprofit partners to advance environmental education through capacity building training, ongoing support, and the implementation of systemic environmental literacy programs.

In the Chesapeake region, the [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience \(MWEE\)](#) is recognized as a comprehensive approach to achieving environmental literacy, and will be the focus of implementation for this initiative. The MWEE model has been developed with and is supported by state departments of education within the Chesapeake region, and is a flexible framework based in the principles of inquiry and project based learning (not a prescriptive curriculum). [An Educator's Guide to the MWEE](#) contains more information and tools on the MWEE model.

The Outdoor Learning Network Initiative will create the infrastructure for local school district networks by (1) focusing on high-need districts who are seeking assistance, (2) providing specific training for the school districts and their nonprofit partners (hereafter referred to as “backbone partners”) for each network, (3) employing existing proven approaches from successful systemic projects in program development, and (4) underwriting the startup costs for these networks.

The Initiative seeks to accomplish the following goals in the effort to ensure that all students in our region graduate environmentally literate:

1. Increase communication, coordination, and collaboration among key partners advancing environmental literacy plans within priority school districts

2. Increase capacity of backbone partners and local implementation networks to advance systemic environmental literacy plans
3. Increase the number of teacher supported systemic environmental literacy programs occurring in priority school districts
4. Increase communication between local implementation networks at a regional scale

The Initiative will provide training and up to \$100,000 in direct funding to be distributed over a two-year period for capacity building to establish a local environmental literacy network working to develop an environmental literacy plan and implement a systemic MWEE program. Systemic programs will reach every student in a targeted grade level within a school system or district through incorporation of a MWEE in a course or combination of courses.

The ultimate goal is that the funding, partnership, and training resources offered through this initiative will institute a sustainable district-level team and plan for advancing environmental literacy goals long-term.

Criteria and Guidelines

The following criteria will be used by external technical expert reviewers to evaluate applications:

- 1) School District Need, assessed in two ways:
 - a. Information provided by the applicant about the need for capacity building support and training to advance environmental literacy goals (items requested in Narrative Question #1 below).
 - b. Review by the Technical Review Committee of existing data submitted via the most recently completed version of the Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool (ELIT), fielded by the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office. Every two years since 2015, the ELIT survey has been administered to states in the Mid-Atlantic region to assess the current status of district-wide environmental literacy activities with students and track the progress, identify areas of strength, and highlight areas where more support is needed to increase systemic integration and implementation of environmental education throughout the Chesapeake Bay.
- 2) Readiness and Commitment of Backbone Partnership (School District and Lead NGO):
 - a. Demonstration by the School District and Lead NGO (i.e. the Backbone Partnership) of their commitment to manage the grant and participate in (1) Capacity Building Training (32-48 hours over the course of a year), (2) Co-Lead Local Environmental Literacy Team, (3) Curriculum co-development, (4) support Teacher Professional Development, and (5) the development and implementation Student MWEES for the two-year grant period.
 - b. Commitment from the backbone partnership to pursue sustainability of the project (environmental literacy team and systemic MWEE program) beyond the two-year grant period.
 - c. Commitment from the backbone partnership to identify curricular connection, subject, grade level, targeted standards and length of curricular intervention of the MWEE program to be implemented. For those school districts that have already identified this information prior to submission please describe how these selections were made and the justification for the selections.
- 3) Experience of Backbone Partners (School District and Lead NGO) as evaluated by applicant responses to Narrative Question #3 below.
- 4) Leadership Support as demonstrated by a letter of recommendation from the State

Department of Education and/or State Department of Natural Resources/Environmental Agency as per Narrative Question #4 below.

Eligible Applicants

The Trust seeks applications from school district(s) and nonprofit partnerships in the Chesapeake Bay region. It is preferred that the school district is the entity that applies for and manages the grant, but the nonprofit partner is eligible to be the applicant with justification for why it is better that they, and not the school district, manage the grant if awarded.

An Executive Officer and Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified for all applications. 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 Leader. To avoid conflict of interest issues, individuals associated with for-profit entities to be engaged in the project cannot serve in either role.

Funding Availability and Restrictions

Applicants may request up to \$100,000 for the two year grant period. t

The following cannot be funded in this program:

- Endowments, deficit financing, individuals, building campaigns, annual giving, research, fund raising or venture capital;
- Political lobbying;
- Reimbursement for a project that has been completed or materials that have been purchased;
- Funding is generally restricted to projects on public property, property owned by nonprofit organizations, community-owned property, and property with conservation easements, unless otherwise specified in a grant program.

Project Timeline

All awarded projects will be for a two year grant period, starting in May 2019 and ending in June 2021. The first year is dedicated to capacity building training and ongoing support from a designated contractor, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the backbone partners developing local partnerships, an environmental literacy plan, and planning a systemic MWEE program and teacher professional development trainings. The second year is dedicated to the implementation of the teacher professional development trainings and piloting the systemic MWEE program with students.

When the project is complete, grantees are required to complete final reports, including submission of all invoices, receipts, and copies of timesheets for grants in the amount of \$25,000 or greater OR as specified in the grant award letter. Organizations with outstanding final reports will not be awarded additional grants.

Application Review

Each application is reviewed by a technical external peer review committee, called the Technical Review Committee (TRC), composed of individuals who are experts in the fields supported by this RFP and represent communities served by projects funded by this RFP. The TRC ranks and scores all applications based on the criteria above, then meets to discuss the application merits. The TRC then recommends a suite of applications to the Trust's Board of Trustees.

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

Contact

Please contact Tara Drennan (tdrennan@cbtrust.org) at (410) 974-2941 ext 102 to discuss if you are eligible for this funding opportunity.

Application Submission Instructions and Deadline

To apply for a grant, follow instructions at www.cbtrust.org/grants/environmentaleducation. Click on “New Applicant” and follow the on-screen instructions if you have not yet registered to use the system.

Applicants must submit proposals using our Online Grants System by **4:00 pm on March 28, 2019**. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 4:00 pm. **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 availability of Online Grant System technical assistance on the deadline date.

All applicants will receive a letter stating the decision in May 2019. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the Trust will send a grant agreement letter with grant conditions and due dates of status and final reports. The Trust will mail grant payments to the requesting organization following: a) the Trust’s receipt of the signed grant agreement, and b) satisfaction of any award contingencies. In cases in which the grantee fails to submit a status report or final report by the due date, the Trust reserves the right to terminate the grant agreement and require a refund of funds already transferred to the grantee.

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).

Application Instructions

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

Organization Information:

- 1) Organization name (You must list the exact organization name to which the check will be issued if funding is approved. Please check with your finance office before submitting.)
- 2) Address and Phone Number
- 3) Mission of Organization
- 4) Organization Type
- 5) EIN Number
- 6) DUNS Number

An Executive Officer and Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified for all applications. An Executive Officer and Project Leader, two separate individuals, must be identified for all applications. 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 Leader. 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: Name, title, address, phone, and e-mail.

Project Leader: Name, title, address, phone, and e-mail.

Grant Information:

- 1) Project Title
- 2) Amount of Trust funding requested
- 3) Grant Period: enter project start and end dates. *Please note, all proposals should start in May of 2019 and end in June 2021.*
- 4) In which stream, river or watershed will the project be located?
- 5) In which county will the project be located?

Project Deliverables:

You will be asked to fill in a number of *estimated* project outputs, including number of students and teachers reached, workshops held, volunteers engaged, trees planted, etc.

Project Partnerships and Qualifications:

You will be asked to enter project partner organizations, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project.

Project Narrative Upload:

You will be asked to upload an MS Word or PDF file not to exceed 3 pages of text, addressing the following narrative questions.

- 1) Need: Please describe why this project is needed? Specifically address the following.
 - a. Provide demographic information about the population the school district serves. Also provide evidence that the school district is serving an underserved population (Title 1 or Title 1 eligible schools).
 - b. Describe the number of MWEEs and/or environmental literacy programs currently being implemented within the school district. (Fewer students in the school district (elementary, middle, or high school) receiving a MWEE would equate with higher need).
 - c. List the primary unmet needs the school district is currently experiencing that are hindering the advancement environmental literacy goals (financial, leadership, partnerships, teacher training, other)?
- 2) Readiness and Commitment:
 - a. If selected, Backbone Partners will receive resources to support participation in this program; however, Backbone Partners will have to provide additional support as part of their participation. Please describe how you will allocate the necessary personnel, time, and additional support to manage the grant and participate in (1) Capacity Building Training (32-48 hours over the course of a year), (2) Co-Lead Local Environmental Literacy Team, (3) Curriculum co-development, (4) support Teacher Professional Development, and (5) the development and implementation of Student MWEEs for the two-year grant period.
 - b. Provide a letter of commitment from the proposed Backbone Partner (school district or lead NGO), who will not serve as the applicant, that indicates their commitment to participate (1) Capacity Building Training, (2) Co-Lead Local Environmental Literacy Team, (3) Curriculum co-development, (4) Teacher Professional Development, and (5) Student MWEEs for the two-year grant period.

- c. Explanation of how the backbone partnership will pursue sustainability of the project (environmental literacy team and systemic MWEE program) beyond the two-year grant period.
 - d. Provide a statement of commitment from the backbone partnership to identify curricular connection, subject, grade level, targeted standards and length of curricular intervention of the MWEE program to be implemented.
- 3) Experience and Qualifications:
- a. Provide a description of any previous *formal* partnerships between the school district and environmental education provider(s).
 - b. Describe the history of the partnership between the school district and lead NGO (i.e. Backbone Partners proposed). Is the partnership (i) not yet established, (ii) newly established, or (iii) was previously established?
 - c. Provide a description of each of the Backbone Partners experience developing and implementing environmental literacy programs including the presence or absence of an environmental literacy plan for the school district.
 - d. Provide the points of contact (leads and key staff with a short description of their qualifications) for both the school district and lead NGO (i.e. the Backbone Partnership).
- 4) Leadership Support:
- a. Provide a letter of recommendation from your State Department of Education and/or State Department of Natural Resources/Environmental Agency.

Budget Upload:

You will be asked to upload your budget using the “Application Budget” worksheet of the Chesapeake Bay Trust’s Financial Management Spreadsheet, an excel file template. The template is available in the online application and can be found by visiting www.cbtrust.org/forms.

- 1) Up to \$100,000 will be provided by the Trust with an estimated \$60,000 allocated for year 1 and \$40,000 for year 2. It is expected these costs will be used for personnel, contractual, transportation, teacher stipends, and supplies. Please provide a budget showing the \$60,000 for year 1 and \$40,000 for year 2 in the Amount Requested. You do not have to be detailed here as a more detailed budget will be determined with the contractor in the beginning of the first year.
- 2) As noted above, backbone partners will receive resources to support participation in the program; however, they will have to provide additional personnel, contractual, and other support as part of their participation. Please provide a detailed estimate of how you will allocate cash and in-kind match.

Budget Category Information

This final online award program component will ask applicants to enter budget category totals. These totals will be automatically calculated in the Application Budget. Finally, check that the project’s total requested amount you entered earlier in the application is correct.

Use the “Additional Budget Justification” section in the online application to justify and explain costs. Budgets that are detailed, justified, and itemized are ideal.