



Sponsorship Requests

Request for Proposals

Chesapeake Bay Trust 📍 108 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403 ➡ www.cbtrust.org



Introduction and Program Goals

The [Chesapeake Bay Trust](#) (Trust) is a nonprofit, grant-making organization dedicated to improving the bays, streams, rivers, forests, parks, and other natural resources of 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 \$254 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Through this program, the Chesapeake Bay Trust will consider requests to sponsor events, such as conferences, festivals, and forums have a programmatic or marketing goal as described in the "Eligible Project Types" section. Generally, the Trust will sponsor events that are intended for audiences of 100 people or greater. For events with smaller audiences and focused programming, please consider the Trust's grant programs, particularly our [Outreach and Restoration Grant Program](#) and [Community Engagement and Restoration Mini Grant Program](#).

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, new organizations, small organizations, or any group that is experiencing capacity challenges or other barriers to applying, is eligible to receive guidance on the application process. Please contact the Program Manager, Anabel Kadri, akadri@cbtrust.org, for assistance.

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 that 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/>.

Eligible Applicants and Locations

The Trust welcomes requests from the following organizations:

- Nonprofits;
- Faith-based;
- Community Associations;
- Service and Civic Groups; and/or
- Municipal, County, Regional, State, Federal Public Agencies.

This program funds projects in Maryland and throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including DE, DC, PA, VA, and WV, when there is a focus on Maryland audiences.

Eligible Project Types

The event must accomplish one or both of the following goals to be considered for sponsorship under this opportunity:

Track 1: Programmatic Value – Programmatic requests will generally be considered at the \$500 level. A programmatic connection to the Trust's mission (<https://cbtrust.org/mission/>) exists if the event:

- Is targeted towards a specific audience, with the goal of increased awareness among event participants about issues pertaining to restoration and protection of the natural resources of the

- Chesapeake and/or Maryland's other watersheds or
- Encourages and provides tools/resources to event participants to change behavior that improves or protects these natural resources.

Examples of events with programmatic outcomes are conferences about water quality, habitat, green space, and other watershed issues or forums about restoration and protection solutions in which the audience emerges from the event with a better understanding of natural resource problems and solutions to those problems. Fundraising events will be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be submitted under the Marketing track.

For questions or support with programmatic requests, contact: Anabel Kadri, Program Assistant, (410) 974-2941 ext. 168, akadri@cbtrust.org.

Track 2: Marketing Value – Marketing requests will generally be considered at the **\$250 to \$500** sponsorship level. A marketing connection to the Trust's mission (<https://cbtrust.org/mission/>) exists if the event:

- Expands awareness of the Trust's vision, mission, approach, and impact among key audiences of prospective donors, volunteers, and the general public
- Engages audiences likely to participate in the following revenue streams:
 - "Protect the Chesapeake & Coastal Bays" (<https://cbtrust.org/purchase-a-bay-plate/>) license plate program;
 - Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund Tax Check-off (<https://cbtrust.org/taxdonation/>) on the Maryland State income tax form;
 - Maryland Outdoor Recreation and Clean Water Fund (<https://cbtrust.org/mdoutdoors/>) where voluntary contributions are made when purchasing a Maryland fishing and hunting licenses, and/or registering a boat online; and
 - Healing, and Hunting, and Fishing Fund (<https://cbtrust.org/veterans/>) where hunters and anglers who obtain licenses online Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) registration system can choose to make a contribution to support the Fund.

An example of an event type with marketing value to the Trust is festivals with a large attendance of individuals or communities with characteristics that make them likely to participate in the license plate and/or tax check-off programs. The applicant will be asked to provide hypotheses about why he or she believes the audience exhibits this likelihood.

For questions or support with marketing requests, contact: Bridget Robey, Marketing Officer, (410) 974-2941 ext. 117, brobey@cbtrust.org.

Project Timeline and Deadline

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

Proposals for this program are accepted on an on-going basis until funds are fully expended for the given fiscal year (Fiscal Year 2027 is from 7/1/26 to 6/30/27); check our website and sign up for our [grantee newsletter](#) for the most up to date information about the status of this rolling program. **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.

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 access your awards and**

applications. You can access SmartSimple in two ways:

1. Through our website: <https://cbtrust.org/login> and clicking the link “Log In to the Bay Trust Awards Portal”
2. The Chesapeake Bay Trust’s SmartSimple page: 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). In addition, all final products will be provided to the funding partners for use and distribution at the sole discretion of the funding partners.

Online Application Form

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

Eligibility: You will be asked three questions at the beginning to assist you in determining if your project meets the requirements of this award program and that your staff/organizational structure best supports a successful application.

Applicant Information Tab: Provide the Executive Officer’s name and email address.

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

Project Information:

- Provide an event title.
- In the “Project Description” section provide the event track and event description.
- Provide the event start and end date.
- Provide the county, watershed, and legislative district in which the event is located; and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the event location.

Definitions

The Executive Officer is the individual that oversees the organization (e.g., Executive Director, Mayor, President or Vice President, Principal), etc.) and has the authority to sign/execute award agreements on behalf of the organization. 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 Project Leader will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project and therefore, the email address used to submit the application via the online system must be that of the Project Leader. 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.

Deliverables Tab: Provide estimated metrics for your proposed event such as project participants and outreach and restoration outcomes. Disregard deliverables that do not apply to your project.

Volunteers Tab: You may leave this tab blank.

Partnerships Tab: You may leave this tab blank.

Supporting Documents Tab: Attach any files that support your request, such as the event sponsorship brochure or event agenda.

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

Terms and Conditions Tab: Agree to the specified terms and conditions for the program for which you are applying.

Demographics Tab and Survey Tab (optional): Provide voluntary demographic information. Provide information about your organization's current diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) efforts and future goals. Additionally, provide voluntary feedback on the application process.

Evaluation Criteria and Review Process

Internal expert reviewers will use the following criteria to evaluate applications:

- **Consistency with Request for Proposals (RFP):** Is the event consistent with the intent and goals of the program? To what degree will the proposed event or sponsored activity provide programmatic or marketing value?
- **Supporting Documents:** Are the relevant supporting documents (conference agenda, sponsorship package, etc.) included for proper evaluation of the request?

The Trust reserves the right to sponsor events and activities that advance its mission and meet its specific priorities and criteria. To allow applicants to set expectations prior to investing time in application, the average approval rate (including full and partial awards) from the last three rounds of this program was 75% for programmatic sponsorship and 71% for marketing sponsorship.

Awards and Notifications

All applicants will receive correspondence stating the funding partnership's decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded.

If approved under the Programmatic track, the Trust will send an award agreement with sponsorship conditions and the due date of the final report, if required. Awardees must sign and upload the signed award agreement with original signatures to the online award management system. The Trust will release funds to the requesting organization following submission of the signed award 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.

If approved under the Marketing track, the Trust will send email correspondence notifying of the decision. The Trust will release funds to the requesting organization following notification of approval. Please allow a minimum of two weeks (from the date the Trust notifies the requesting organization of approval) for the payment to be released.

When the event is complete, awardees may be required to log into the online application system and answer a few questions about event attendance and success.