



# Sponsorship Requests

## FY26 Request for Proposals



Chesapeake Bay Trust | 108 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403  
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## 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 \$210 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, in which the programming is likely more focused, requesters are encouraged to consider the Trust's grant programs, particularly our [Outreach and Restoration Grant Program](#) and [Community Engagement and Restoration Mini Grant Program](#).

The Trust is committed to the advancement of diversity and inclusion in its award-making and environmental work. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages 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, see our strategic plan at [www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan](http://www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan) and <https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/>.

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, Sadie Friesen, [sfriesen@cbtrust.org](mailto:sfriesen@cbtrust.org), for assistance.

## At A Glance

### Program Summary:

The Trust accepts requests for the Sponsorship Program for the following purposes:

- Track 1: Programmatic outcomes (e.g., increased awareness of a Trust mission-related issue)
- Track 2: Marketing outcomes (e.g., opportunities that provide co-benefits to the applicant and the Trust such as marketing the "Protect the Chesapeake & Coastal Bays" license plate program)

### Deadline:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until funds for this fiscal year are exhausted. **The Trust must receive all applications a minimum of six weeks prior to the start of the proposed project.**

### Eligible Project Locations:

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

### Request Amounts:

Generally, sponsorships awards are made at the \$500 level for programmatic support and up to \$500 for marketing support.

### Submit Your Application:

Follow the instructions online at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/sponsorship-program/>

### Contact:

Programmatic Requests: Sadie Friesen, Program Assistant, (410) 974-2941 ext. 150, [sfriesen@cbtrust.org](mailto:sfriesen@cbtrust.org)

Marketing Requests: Celia Parker, Vice President of Communications & Advancement, (410) 974-2941 ext. 142, [cparker@cbtrust.org](mailto:cparker@cbtrust.org)

This Request for Proposals was released on 7/15/2025

## Eligible Applicants

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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.

## Eligible Project Locations

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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

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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.

- 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:
    - The “Protect the Chesapeake & Coastal Bays” (<https://cbtrust.org/purchase-a-bay-plate/>) license plate program;
    - The Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund Tax Check-off (<https://cbtrust.org/taxdonation/>) on the Maryland State income tax form;
    - The 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

- The 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.

## Project Timeline

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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.

## Online Application Submission Instructions

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The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. To apply for an award, go to <https://cbtrust.org/grants/sponsorship-program/> and click on “Get Started” to begin a new application. This will open a new window asking you to log in or create an account on our online system. If you have applied in the past, use your existing username and password (if you have forgotten either of these use the ‘forgot password’ feature). If you have not used our online system before, click on “New Applicant” and follow the instructions.

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.

## Deadline

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Proposals for this program are accepted on an on-going basis until funds are fully expended for the given fiscal year (Fiscal Year 2026 is from 7/1/24 to 6/30/25); 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 Form

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You will be asked to provide the following information on the online application form. Some items are required in order to submit your application. Refer to the online application for details.

**Eligibility Quiz:** This three-question quiz is meant 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 organization's name, mailing address, phone number, organization type, mission, and EIN number. Provide the Executive Officer and Project Leader's name, title, address, phone, 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.

**Event Information Tab:** Provide an event title; event track; event description; event type; event start and end date; the county and legislative district in which the event is located; and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the project location. Add the project start and end date. Provide a project timeline that includes major tasks and their associated start and end dates.

**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:** Provide a description of volunteer activities, the number of volunteers, and total number of volunteer hours.

**Partnerships Tab:** Provide a list of project partner organizations or contractors, individuals, their areas of expertise, and their role(s) in your project.

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

**Budget Tab:** Enter the funding request total and matching funds from other sponsors, either requested or in-hand. Provide a descriptive budget narrative to explain costs.

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

Watch our video on how to apply and how to submit an application using our online system at <https://cbtrust.org/grants/>.

## Definitions

**The Executive Officer** is the individual that oversees the organization (e.g., Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer, Mayor, President or Vice President, Principal (for schools), 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 in order to reduce the variation in the Executive Officer across applications.

**The Event Leader** will be responsible for all project coordination and correspondence with the Trust for the duration of the project. The email address entered here **MUST** be the same as the email address you used to log in to the online system. The Event Leader is the primary point of contact for the application, and the email address used to submit the application via the online system must be that of the Event Leader. Applications in which the email address associated with the Event Leader in the applicant information tab of the online opportunity does not match the email address used to submit the application will not be considered for funding. The Trust cannot conduct any official correspondence with contractors or other project partners. If at any time the Event Leader cannot continue in the position, the organization must contact the Trust and assign a new qualified Event Leader.

**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

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The following criteria will be used by internal expert reviewers to evaluate applications under the Sponsorship Program:

- **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?

## Application Review Process

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Each application is reviewed by individuals who are experts in the fields supported by this RFP. Reviewers score all applications based on the "Evaluation Criteria" section.

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 Trust provides historical application approval rates for the same or similar programs. Including both fully and partially funded sponsorships, the average approval rate from the last three rounds of this award program was 74% overall, 75% for programmatic sponsorship, and 71% for marketing sponsorship.

## Awards and Notifications

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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.