



Chesapeake Bay  
**Capacity Building Initiative**  
**Request for Proposals and Application Instructions**

[www.chesapeakebaytrust.org](http://www.chesapeakebaytrust.org) / 410-974-2941

## AT A GLANCE

The Capacity Building Initiative will provide grants and technical assistance to increase the effectiveness of organizations that protect and restore rivers and watersheds, increasing their power to advance local watershed protection priorities through collaborative strategies.

**Application Deadline:**  
**December 2, 2011**

***In this Application Package:***

**Section 1:** Request for Proposals  
**Section 2:** Application Instructions

**Submit your application to:**  
On-line at [www.cbtrustgrants.org](http://www.cbtrustgrants.org)



## Capacity Building Initiative Overview

The role of community-based, non-profit, river and watershed organizations has become increasingly more important in restoration, protection, policy, and watershed science in the Chesapeake Bay. Over the past two decades, the number of watershed groups and their effectiveness has increased. As the focus of the Chesapeake Bay restoration and protection effort shifts more and more to the local level and with the adoption of the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) that requires the development of Watershed Implementation Plans by state and local governments, watershed groups are poised to play an even greater role in the Bay's recovery.

Roles played by these groups include: building the base of stakeholder support; shaping and promoting local policy and financing solutions; ensuring that regulations are enforced; expanding outreach to farmers, homeowners and businesses to increase adoption of best management practices; and initiating and actively managing on-the-ground implementation projects.

The Capacity Building Initiative will provide assistance to organizations in the form of grants, technical assistance, and training in order to build individual organizational capacity and increase effectiveness in accelerating implementation of local watershed restoration priorities. The initiative also seeks to support and strengthen a network of sustainable and highly effective organizations that work collaboratively with public and private partners to make measurable environmental improvements to the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers.

The Capacity Building Initiative will provide assistance to eligible organizations in all Chesapeake jurisdictions: New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington DC to: 1) increase overall organizational capacity; 2) increase the effectiveness of programs designed to accelerate the implementation of local watershed protection or restoration plans; and 3) increase the collaborative capacity of organizations to working together to achieve water quality goals.

Assistance will consist of annual organizational assessments to identify priorities and goals; grants to target identified needs (up to \$50,000); training sessions targeted based on identified needs; and networking opportunities. Assistance will be available to organizations that demonstrate a high degree of readiness for comprehensive capacity building assistance and a commitment and ability to play a leadership role in advancing implementation of local watershed action plan(s).

The Capacity Building Initiative is an initiative of the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN) and its partners include the Chesapeake Bay Trust, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Baltimore Community Foundation, Keith Campbell Foundation, Marpat Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts, Rauch Foundation, and Town Creek Foundation.

## Capacity Building Initiative Assistance Provided

Several types of resources will be made available to organizations selected to participate in the Capacity Building Initiative:

- Annual Organizational Assessment - A third party assessment (online and in-person interview) that will enable the organization to identify and prioritize specific capacity building needs and develop an action plan and budget to guide capacity building activities.
- Capacity Building Grants – Up to \$50,000 per year to support staff and consulting costs, specialized training, program development assistance and other activities integral to the organization’s capacity building work plan. Factors determining grant award amount are described below.
- Trainings and Workshops – Depending on the specific needs of program participants, the Initiative will offer training sessions, workshops and peer learning opportunities on various topics related to work plans created as part of the annual organizational assessment. These sessions will be scheduled independently as well as in conjunction with important regional meetings.

## Program Eligibility and Criteria

The criteria described below will be used to evaluate proposals submitted to the Capacity Building Initiative. Funders anticipate selecting 15–25 organizations to participate in the Initiative for three years, with second and third year participation contingent upon available funding. To be eligible to participate in the Initiative, an organization must:

- 1) Have current 501(c)(3) status
- 2) Provide services in one or more of the Chesapeake Bay region jurisdictions: VA, WV, MD, Washington DC, DE, PA and NY

- 3) Have a primary mission to protect and preserve rivers and streams in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and established programs to support that mission
- 4) Have a minimum of two (2) staff (at least one position must be paid with total hours equaling 35 hours or more per week; other positions must be at least 20 hours per week, paid or volunteer)
- 5) Have an active board that provides leadership in governance, community outreach, and fundraising

Evaluation Criteria: Organizations will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate that they:

- 1) Have board and staff leadership that understand the value of organizational capacity building, as evidenced by recent capacity building work and/or a well-articulated commitment to specific capacity building activities (e.g., board development, strategic planning, program improvement/evaluation, fundraising, information technology, and other trainings and activities);
- 2) Have board and staff leadership committed to working with key partner organizations to strengthen the network of organizations that advance local and regional watershed protection and restoration goals;
- 3) Has the ability to work with a diverse array of community partners, including but not limited to local governments, non-governmental organizations, landowners, farmers, other private citizens, community and neighborhood organizations, and businesses;
- 4) Provide or could provide a leadership role in the local community, by working with local government and non-governmental organization partners, in advancing the implementation of Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans and/or other relevant local watershed action plans;
- 5) Can explain how increased organizational capacity and program effectiveness will assist the organization in achieving specific programmatic, policy or other outcomes that advance the implementation of Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans and/or other relevant local watershed action plans

## Timeline and Process

**1) Grantee application and review:** Organizations focused on protection and restoration of rivers and watersheds in NY, PA, MD, DE, VA, WV and Washington, DC are eligible to apply to participate in the Capacity Building Initiative (see eligibility criteria above). You are encouraged to contact funders (contact information below) to discuss your application in advance. Applications will be reviewed by funding partners and evaluated based on the criteria outlined in this proposal. Selected applicants will be notified by February 2011.

**2) Annual Organizational Capacity Assessments (Spring 2012, 2013, 2014):** Organizations selected for assistance will be asked to complete a third-party assessment to identify and prioritize their *organizational* and *programmatic* capacity building needs. From this assessment, which will be conducted by a consultant, a work plan with specific goals, objectives, tasks, and budget will be developed by the organization in partnership with a funder's representative.

**3) Annual Capacity Grants (May 2012, 2013, 2014):** Based on the proposed work plan and the organization's existing capacity grants ranging from approximately \$15,000 to \$50,000 will be awarded. Grant agreements between the grantees and the Chesapeake Bay Trust, the fiscal agent of

the funding collaborative, will be crafted. Grant agreements will cover the period of one year, with additional years contingent upon available resources.

## Expectations of Participating Organizations

By signing the grant agreements, organizations agree to participate in the full suite of Capacity Building Initiative elements, including:

- 1) Attend all program trainings, approximately 3 per year
- 2) Undergo annual organizational assessments,
- 3) Develop annual work plans with support from assessment process,
- 4) Report on grant funding, including submission of all invoices/receipts for grants larger than \$25,000
- 5) Participate in periodic peer-to-peer networking events

## Contact Information

All potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact:

Jamie Baxter  
Chesapeake Bay Trust  
[jbaxter@cbtrust.org](mailto:jbaxter@cbtrust.org)  
(410) 974-2941 ext. 105  
[www.cbtrust.org](http://www.cbtrust.org)

## Application Instructions

Applicants must submit proposals using the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Online Grants System, located at [www.cbtrustgrants.org](http://www.cbtrustgrants.org) by **5:00 pm on December 2, 2011**. Late applications will not be accepted, and the online funding opportunity will close promptly at 5:00 pm. To use this system, applicants must register at least 24 hours in advance of submitting an application. **Applicants 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 Grant System technical assistance on the deadline date.

***Selection of groups for assistance and development of work plans and associated budgets will be announced in February 2012. Ultimate funding and technical assistance awards will be announced in May 2012, after the assessment and work plan development phases are complete.***

To those organizations selected for financial assistance, the Trust will send a grant agreement letter with grant conditions and due dates of status and final reports. Grantees must sign and return the grant agreement letter with original signatures. The Trust will mail the check to the requesting organization following (a) the Trust's receipt of the signed grant agreement and (b) satisfaction of any award contingencies. In cases where 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.

When the project is complete, grantees are required to complete final reports, including submission of all invoices/receipts for grants larger than \$25,000. Organizations with outstanding final reports will not be awarded additional grants.

## Proposal Instructions

The Online application process will ask for the following information:

### Applicant Information

- 1) Mission of Organization
- 2) Organization Type
- 3) EIN Number
- 4) Name and Title of Executive Officer of Requesting Organization
- 5) Address, phone, email
- 6) Name and Title of Project officer
- 7) Address, phone, email

*An Executive Officer and Project Lead must be identified for all proposals. Both individuals must be staff or board members of the applicant organization. Individuals associated with for-profit entities to be engaged in the project cannot serve in either role.*

### Project Abstract

In a text box, you will be asked to provide a brief (3-4 sentence) summary of your organization and its role in watershed protection and restoration. Include a sentence about why your organization is ready to build capacity with support of this initiative. You may copy and paste from a word processing document, but please do not copy and paste any formatting (such as bullets, indentations, bold, etc.). You may format after pasting.

### Organization characteristics

You will be asked to fill in the following data:

- 1) Year organization was founded
- 2) Total revenue and total expenses for 2008, 2009, 2010
- 3) Total number of full-time and part-time staff in 2008, 2009, 2010 (estimate). Please indicate if they are paid or volunteer and number of hours per week/month.
- 4) Total number of dues paying members

### Narrative File Upload

You will be asked to upload an MSWord or PDF file containing the following information. The narrative must not exceed 5 pages, be single spaced and use 11 pt font or larger. Attachments are not included in the 5 page limit.

You are encouraged to organize your narrative using the following outline:

*Priority consideration will be given to organizations that demonstrate greatest achievement of the Capacity Building Initiative's evaluation criteria.*

**A. Experience with and Commitment to Capacity Building:** Describe your organization's experience with and commitment to capacity building. Include information on the status and

use of planning documents to guide decisions, the current role and function of the board of directors and staff, diversity of revenue sources and extent of current membership. Based on your experience, highlight the capacity building priorities you believe are most important to address in order for you to increase your impact on local watershed protection and restoration priorities.

**B. Local watershed action plan:** Briefly describe the priorities for your watershed (geographically and/or by pollutant source area). Describe the status of the Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan or other local watershed planning efforts in your community/jurisdiction/watershed. How receptive have local jurisdictions in your watershed been to planning and restoration efforts generally and specifically to Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans? How could current planning efforts (TMDL related or otherwise) influence the future direction and/or success of watershed protection and restoration in your region?

**C. Organization niche and role in local watershed action plan efforts:** How is your organization uniquely positioned to address the priorities identified for your watershed? In what ways does your organization provide leadership on your watershed's priorities? If possible, identify specific regions and/or issues where opportunities may exist to demonstrate near-term local implementation success. (Such opportunities could be in the areas of policy, community engagement and/or watershed restoration)

**D. Current programmatic focus:** Provide a description of your organization's current programs (i.e., restoration activities, community education and outreach, enforcement, policy advocacy, etc). How do these programs advance the priorities highlighted in answers to questions B and C?

**E. Partnerships:** Describe the relationships and partnerships your organization has developed to accomplish its goals. Which relationships/partnerships have been the most effective? What made them effective? What new relationships/partnerships need to develop to realize the ambitious implementation goals established for your river/watershed?

**F. Evaluation of Progress**

Describe your current efforts to evaluate the success of your programs. In what ways does your organization's leadership (board and staff) assess the progress of the overall organization? Where do you see opportunities with in your organization to improve evaluation and learning?

**Other Attachments: File Upload**

You will be asked to upload MSWord or PDF files containing the following information.

- a. List of board of directors and their affiliations
- b. Position descriptions for all staff (indicate full time, part time, or volunteer)
- c. 2008, 2009 and 2010 budgets showing income and expenses by budget category
- d. IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter
- e. Annual report, if available
- f. Map of watershed which highlights political and/or geographic target areas if applicable