



NFWF



Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund

TECHNICAL CAPACITY GRANTS PROGRAM

2016 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Proposal Due Dates:

- Agricultural Conservation: **Thursday, March 3rd by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**
- Restoration and Community Stewardship: **Thursday, Jun 30th, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**
- Stormwater Management: **Thursday, September 29th by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is soliciting applications from approved NFWF Technical Assistance Providers (“eligible applicants”) to provide technical services to local governments, nonprofit organizations, and conservation districts (“eligible beneficiaries”) for projects that enhance local capacity to more efficiently and effectively restore the habitats and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Eligible beneficiaries interested in receiving technical capacity assistance through this program are encouraged to consult NFWF’s current list of eligible applicants [here](#) which lists the expertise, geographic service area, and contact information for approved NFWF Technical Assistance Providers. Applications may only be submitted by eligible applicants and must list and document the support of at least one eligible beneficiary. NFWF will award approximately \$1 million in grants to eligible applicants on behalf of eligible beneficiaries through the CBSF Technical Capacity Grants Program in 2016 across three distinct priority investment areas: agricultural conservation, restoration and community stewardship, and stormwater management.

Funding for the CBSF Technical Capacity Grants Program is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Chesapeake Bay Program Office.

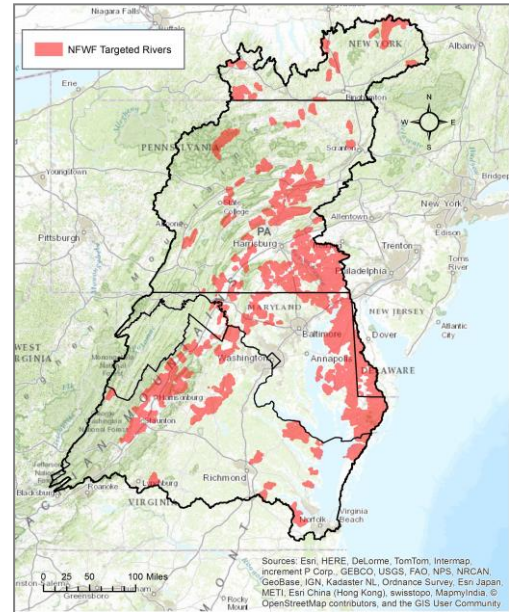
	Definition	Roles and Responsibilities
Applicants	Approved NFWF Technical Assistance Providers (available here) AND Approved Social Marketing Technical Assistance Providers, as identified by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (available here)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide project-related technical services directly to beneficiaries • Submit project applications to <i>Easygrants</i> on behalf of beneficiary organizations • Manage associated grant awards, including financial and programmatic reporting
Beneficiaries	Non-profit 501(c) organizations, local governments (including soil and water conservation districts), municipal governments, and Indian tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive project-related technical services from applicants • Identify technical capacity needs consistent with RFP priorities • Consult list of Approved NFWF Technical Assistance Providers (available at here) to develop project application • No application or grants management responsibilities

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

To be eligible for funding, projects must occur within the Chesapeake Bay watershed as depicted in Map 1. Priority consideration may be provided to projects located within NFWF's Targeted Rivers and Watersheds. A more detailed interactive map can be viewed [here](#).

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The goal of the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund (CBSF) is to protect and restore local waters that contribute to the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay, and to accelerate adoption of the most cost effective and sustainable approaches to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution to the Chesapeake Bay.



Through the annual Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants (INSR) and Small Watershed Grants (SWG) programs, CBSF funds efforts that measurably reduce nutrient and sediment pollution, improve important habitats, and increase citizen stewardship through implementation of on-the-ground restoration actions.

Through the Technical Capacity Grants Program detailed below, CBSF will provide grants directly to eligible applicants acting on behalf of eligible beneficiaries for delivery of technical services that enhance the capacity of local partners to implement high-impact and cost-effective on-the-ground restoration efforts.

Funded projects are not expected to include significant on-the-ground restoration actions but instead to enhance the technical capacity of beneficiaries to implement more effective restoration through existing programs and/or future funding and project opportunities, including future INSR and SWG grant opportunities. Entities interested in applying for INSR or SWG funding in 2016 and beyond should consider the Technical Capacity Grants Program as an opportunity to better develop project ideas and enhance the technical merits and competitive status of later INSR and SWG applications.

Competitive proposals for all priority investment areas of the CBSF Technical Capacity Grants Program will achieve one or more of the following broad programmatic priorities:

- Build the technical capacity of local governments, conservation districts, and small watershed organizations and nonprofit partners to deliver water quality and stewardship implementation projects through CBSF and other funding sources.
- Catalyze increased and more targeted local investment of restoration and protection project funding through strategic planning, technical design, assessment, and prioritization efforts.
- Support the establishment of long-term program delivery and restoration and protection implementation strategies through program design and review, financing and delivery strategies, and targeting approaches for outreach, restoration siting, etc.

Proposals will be accepted through three successive separate application periods in 2016 (see TIMELINE section on pg. 5). Further information on the specific priorities for each application period is provided below:

- **Agricultural Conservation:** Projects that enhance the capacity of conservation districts, watershed organizations, and non-profit partners to more efficiently deliver agricultural conservation programs for water quality and habitat improvement. Please note that, due caps on available awards, this program should not be viewed as an opportunity to fill short-term staffing needs for conservation planners or technical assistance staff.
- **Restoration and Community Stewardship:** Projects that enhance the capacity of local governments, conservation districts, watershed organizations, and non-profit partners to efficiently deliver restoration and community stewardship efforts, including in the areas of watershed planning, habitat restoration, land conservation and land use, public access, diversity initiatives, environmental literacy, and leadership development.
- **Stormwater Management:** Projects that enhance capacity of local governments and allied non-governmental partners to efficiently deliver stormwater management efforts, including design of regional stormwater servicing models, sustainable financing and management strategies, and targeting of stormwater improvements for water quality, resiliency, and community benefit.

Interested applicants or beneficiaries unsure of which application period best suits their proposed project are strongly encouraged to contact NFWF staff for further guidance.

ELIGIBILITY

• Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- ✓ Eligible **applicants** include only those entities approved by NFWF as Technical Assistance Providers for the purposes of the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund or approved by the Chesapeake Bay Trust as Social Marketing Technical assistance providers. A list of NFWF-approved providers is available [here](#). The list of CBT-approved Social Marketing Technical Assistance Providers is available [here](#). Entities interested in registering as an approved Technical Assistance Provider for this RFP must submit appropriate registration documents no later than five days prior to the beginning the of the next open application period for any given cycle. Interested parties can contact Mark Melino at mark.melino@nfwf.org for further details.
- ✓ Eligible **beneficiaries** include non-profit 501(c) organizations, local governments (including soil and water conservation districts), municipal governments, and Indian tribes. Proposals must formally list and document support of the beneficiary for the proposed project.
- ✗ Ineligible beneficiaries include U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, educational institutions, businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations.

- **Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds**

- ✕ NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- ✕ NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts. Grant funds also may be used to develop or inform the development of cost-effective programs to implement MS4 permit requirements

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund will award a total of approximately \$1 million in grants through the Technical Capacity Grants Program in 2016. This program has three application cycles per year for a rotating set of priority investment areas, including (1) agricultural conservation, (2) restoration and community stewardship, and (3) stormwater management. Please visit [NFWF's Technical Capacity page](#) for more details on each application cycle, including RFPs that outline specific investment priorities and application timelines.

NFWF plans to award approximately 25 grants through the Technical Capacity Grants Program in 2016. Total funding for awards made under each application cycle will be determined based on the quality and quantity applications received each cycle. Grants through this program will not exceed \$50,000 and must be completed within 12 months following finalization of the grant agreement. There is no match requirement for the Technical Capacity Grants Program. However, projects are encouraged to provide non-federal cash or in-kind match (for example, as documentation of support from the eligible beneficiary).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Priority and Overall Context – Project clearly achieves a programmatic priority and demonstrates a connection to a local or regional watershed initiative or plan, including, as appropriate, the state's Phase II or III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). Projects that address specified gaps identified in WIP implementation will receive priority consideration.

Commitment to Implementation – Clear evidence that guidance, plans, designs, etc. resulting from the project will be translated into future improvements to local water quality and habitats and/or accelerated nutrient and sediment reductions to the Chesapeake Bay.

Demonstrated Need – Project clearly addresses a lack of capacity, technical expertise, financial resources, etc. for beneficiaries in implementing projects and programs to improve to local water quality and habitats and/or accelerate nutrient and sediment reductions to the Chesapeake Bay.

Projects should establish a clear need for the funds being requested and demonstrate that activities would not move forward absent funding.

Partnership – Projects must engage local partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project, as well as its integration into local programs and policies. Examples include: local government agencies (e.g., departments of planning, zoning, public works, environment, conservation districts, school districts, etc.), local watershed groups, and community leaders.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities within the Chesapeake Bay region and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies (e.g., state and Federal cost share, MS4 program delivery, etc.).

Work Plan – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan.

Technical Merit – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible.

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Detailed Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the Program page of the NFWF [website](#) for the most current dates and information.

Agricultural Conservation

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Applicant/Beneficiary Webinar | 10:00am, February 10 th , 2016 |
| ✓ <i>Easygrants</i> Open for Proposal Submission | February 3 rd , 2016 |
| ✓ Proposal Due Date | March 3 rd , 2016 |
| ✓ Review Period | March 2016 |
| ✓ Awards Announced (anticipated) | April 2016 |

Restoration and Community Stewardship

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|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ✓ Applicant/Beneficiary Webinar | 10:00am, June 7 th , 2016 |
| ✓ <i>Easygrants</i> Open for Proposal Submission | May 31 st , 2016 |
| ✓ Proposal Due Date | June 30 th , 2016 |
| ✓ Review Period | July 2016 |
| ✓ Awards Announced (anticipated) | August 2016 |

Stormwater Management

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Applicant/Beneficiary Webinar | 10:00am, September 6 th , 2016 |
| ✓ <i>Easygrants</i> Open for Proposal Submission | August 30 th , 2016 |
| ✓ Proposal Due Date | September 29 th , 2016 |
| ✓ Review Period | October 2016 |
| ✓ Awards Announced (anticipated) | November 2016 |

HOW TO APPLY

Applications may only be submitted by eligible applicants (see Eligibility section for more details). All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Easygrants system.

1. Go to www.nfwf.org/easygrants to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information.
2. Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.
3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

For eligible beneficiaries interested in receiving technical capacity assistance through this program, please consult NFWF's list of eligible applicants [here](#) which lists the expertise, geographic service area, and contact information for approved NFWF Technical Assistance Providers.

A PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded [here](#).

A [Tip Sheet](#) is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website's "Applicant Information" page (<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx>).

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact Jake Reilly (jake.reilly@nfwf.org), Elizabeth Nellums (elizabeth.nellums@nfwf.org), or Mark Melino (mark.melino@nfwf.org) via e-mail or by phone at (202) 857-0166.

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.