



Maryland Coastal Bays Program 2025 Mini Grant Program



Mini Grant Program Overview

The Maryland Coastal Bays Program (MCBP) is one of 28 National Estuary Programs (NEP) across the country that receives EPA funding in order to work toward the restoration and protection of “estuaries of national significance.” Since 1996, MCBP has been dedicated to preserving and restoring one of the most ecologically diverse regions in the state, the Coastal Bays watershed. MCBP is a partnership between the towns of Ocean City and Berlin, Worcester County, the National Park Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, the Environment, and Planning. As a NEP, MCBP operates with the guidance of a [Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan \(CCMP\)](#). The CCMP is a long-term plan that contains specific targeted actions designed to address water quality, fish and wildlife issues, recreation and navigation, and community and economic development in our local watershed.

The MCBP Mini Grant Program seeks to support watershed-based community, science, and educational initiatives that align with CCMP action items. Through this funding opportunity, MCBP is seeking to engage new applicants and organizations in small-scale projects that enhance communities, engage residents, and, ultimately, improve natural resources.

Mini Grant Program Details

What does this program fund?

Potential Mini Grant projects must align with one or more CCMP Challenges. To see a list of the 34 Challenges [click here](#). Projects can be completed throughout Worcester County, but the impact needs to reach the Coastal Bays watershed.

These grants can be used to fund a wide range of activities. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Habitat enhancement projects, such as tree plantings, rain gardens, pollinator habitat, invasive species removal, etc.

- Environmental education professional development opportunities for formal, non-formal, and community educators
- Outreach and education efforts designed to engage disadvantaged communities
- Community clean ups, including marine debris collection efforts
- Environmental/outdoor education opportunities for youth and adults
- Projects that promote reduction of nutrient loads
- Watershed-wide outreach efforts that promote energy conservation and more knowledgeable community decisions
- Climate change resiliency projects
- Projects that provide or improve disability access to local natural areas
- Community enhancement projects such as improving recreational spaces
- Public/community events
- The program can also provide financial assistance to acquire, build, repair, renovate, upgrade, or expand, public-use community spaces to support community enhancement and outdoor access.

How much can be awarded? A total of \$25,000 is available and individual requests can be made for up to \$5,000. Smaller requests will be accepted to allow for funding of more projects.

Is a match required? No, however, the strongest applications will show committed partnerships that provide funding, technical assistance, and/or in-kind resources to support implementation.

Who can apply?

MCBP welcomes grant requests from the following organizations within Worcester County:

- 501 (c)3 nonprofit organizations
- Service, youth, and civic groups
- Community organizations and associations
- Faith-based organizations
- Municipal, county, regional, state, and federal public agencies
- Public and independent K-12 schools, and higher education institutions

For Profit organizations are NOT eligible for funding through this program. The MCBP Mini Grant program will also not fund the following:

- Endowments, individuals, building campaigns, annual giving, fundraising, or venture capital
- Political lobbying
- Reimbursement for a project that has been completed or materials that have already been purchased
- Budget items that are considered secondary to the project's central purpose, including promotional materials such as pens and keychains, or cash prizes.

MCBP evaluates each proposal on a case by case basis. MCBP reserves the right to fund projects and budget items that advance its mission and meet its specific funding priorities and criteria.

How to Apply:

All applicants must submit a detailed narrative of up to three pages that contains the following as headings:

- Proposed project description
- Need for the project
- Project goals and activities
- CCMP challenges that will be addressed
- Proposed outcomes, including numbers of person reached/impacted and types of communities engaged
- Implementation Timeline - please list specific months and dates if available, as well as tasks completed
- Key personnel
- If providing match, please detail out if it is in-kind or cash, and whether it is in-hand or pledged

Any applicable maps, photos, and/or tables may be attached as appendices. Letters of Support may also be submitted as appendices (optional). Applicants must also submit a completed version of the attached Budget Management Spreadsheet. Download the Budget Management Spreadsheet and save as *Applicant Name - Budget Submission*.

The detailed narrative must be in Adobe PDF format (.pdf). The Budget Management Spreadsheet should be submitted in Microsoft Excel format. Both application materials (the PDF and Excel documents) should be emailed as attachments to eturnbaugh@mdcoastalbays.org.

Proposals must be submitted by **March 7, 2025**. Applicants may request up to \$5,000 and will be notified of MCBP's decision no later than **April 1, 2025**. Final reports should be submitted by **March 7, 2026**. This is a reimbursable based grant. Advance payment can be discussed on a case by case basis. Final invoices should be submitted by **April 7, 2026**.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Ellen Turnbaugh, MCBP Education Program Manager, at eturnbaugh@mdcoastalbays.org. If this is your first time completing a grant application, or if your organization is new to the process, please also contact Ellen and she can provide any assistance.