Maryland Coastal Bays Program
2025 Research Grant Program

Research 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.

MCBP is accepting grant proposals for the 2025 Research Grant Program. These grants are being offered to MCBP's partners to assist in filling research needs identified in the Maryland Coastal Bays Program Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). The CCMP represents a consensus of the best means needed to preserve the economic and ecological prosperity of the Coastal Bays for the future. The strategies in the plan include reachable scientific goals and the most effective means for implementing them. Existing and on-going projects that seek to augment or add an additional element to an existing scope of work may also be considered for funding.

Research Grant Program Details

Grant requests up to $25,000 per project will be considered. However, there is a strong likelihood that funding will be available for following years, so studies that are larger in scope can be proposed with the initial year considered a pilot year or feasibility study. Indirect costs should be capped at 10% of total project budget. This is a reimbursable based grant, but an advance can be discussed on a case by case basis.

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.

The research funding can be used to support a wide range of projects. Projects should address research needs for Maryland's Coastal Bays which primarily revolve around building an understanding of the factors that influence resilience. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- SAV and tidal marsh migration processes and requirements.
- Extent of tidal marshes and document changes through the years.
- Efficacy of tidal marsh enhancement techniques.
- Efficacy of dredging for restoration.
- Techniques to intercept nutrients from agriculture and stormwater conveyance.
- Dynamics that influence the transitioning food web of the Coastal Bays.
- Emerging Contaminants
- Ground water dynamics

Who can apply?

Eligible organizations for funding include any nonprofit organization, state or local government agency, interstate agency, college or university. Federal agencies and federal agency personnel are NOT eligible for direct funding under this request.

The MCBP Research Grant program will not fund the following:

- Projects that occur outside of the Coastal Bays watershed
- 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.

Applicants may submit more than one proposal but each must be submitted separately and must follow the format requirements. Two or more organizations may combine for the purposes of responding to this request for proposals. Project sites must be located within the Maryland Coastal Bays watershed.

It should be noted that funds are provided through a federal funding source. Therefore, each funding recipient must be capable of meeting federal guidelines for expending funds. Please note that federal funds may not be used for T-shirts, hats, or other promotional type clothing. Equipment purchases or sub-contracts must also follow federal guidelines.

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 proposals must be submitted as one Adobe PDF document (.pdf). Only electronic submissions will be accepted. All proposals **must** contain the following:

1. A project proposal cover sheet (see below).
2. A description of the proposed project following the "Project Outline" described below.
3. Any figures or maps as an appendix (optional). 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.

Proposals must be submitted via email to MCBP Science Coordinator, Roman Jesien, at rjesien@mdcoastalbays.org, 443-521-5202. Before applying, it is strongly encouraged to contact Roman to ensure the intended proposal aligns with funding goals.

The deadline for submission is March 7, 2025. Award notification will be March 21, 2025. Final report/deliverables are due March 1, 2026 and final invoice is due on April 1, 2026.

MCBP Research Grant Proposal Cover Sheet

Project Title:	
Applicant:	
Contact Person:	
Address:	
Email:	
Phone:	

Budget Summary

Total Cost	$
In-Kind Match	$
Cash Match	$
Amount Requested	$

Schedule

Starting Date: _____

Duration: _____

_____ _____

Authorized Signature Date

Project Outline

Each category must be addressed in a single paragraph. The entire project description must not exceed two pages of text. The font used must be at least 12 point in size. Any information that exceeds the two-page limit will not be considered. Figures and graphs may be attached as additional pages, but must be described in the "project description".

I. Abstract

A. Please summarize your proposed project in one paragraph.

II. Eligibile Projects

A. Projects should address research needs for the Coastal Bays. Research needs in the Coastal Bays primarily revolve around building an understanding of the factors that influence resilience. A summary is presented below.

1. SAV and tidal marsh migration processes and requirements. Upland migration of tidal marshes and SAV is a crucial response to relative sea level rise. Understanding the processes that control the successful migration of these critical habitats is vital to future restoration or mitigation attempts.
2. Extent of tidal marshes and document changes through the years. Estimates of the past and current extent of tidal marsh is vital to plan for enhancement of critical habitat for state and federally listed species.
3. Efficacy of tidal marsh enhancement techniques. Techniques for salt marsh enhancement through runnels and ditch filling requires research to test their effectiveness in the Coastal Bays environment.
4. Efficacy of dredging for restoration. Dredging for marsh restoration is a concept that needs to be explored to optimize best use of material and diminishing habitats especially in light of relative sea level rise.
5. Techniques to intercept nutrients from agriculture and stormwater conveyance. Interception of nutrient runoff from both agricultural and urban stormwater using innovative techniques like denitrifying 'woodchip' bioreactors, phosphorus binding clays, or biofilm reactors require research to test their efficacy for the Coastal Bays.
6. Increased understanding of sediment dynamics especially as it relates to island erosion. The issue of island loss that has led to the collapse of colonial waterbirds requires a better understanding of hydrodynamics and sediment movement in the Coastal Bays.
7. Dynamics that influence the transitioning food web of the Coastal Bays. The eutrophication transition that the Coastal Bays is poised to undergo from a benthic-dominated ecosystem with submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) to a pelagic-dominated ecosystem with phytoplankton represents

an ecological 'tipping point'. The dynamics that control this transition need to be better elucidated to help avoid an unwanted transition.

8. Emerging Contaminants - Risk assessment of emerging contaminants such as PFAS, pharmaceuticals and plastics pose potential threats to the Coastal Bays.
9. Ground water – A better understanding of the locations and quality of groundwater discharge areas remotely will help to elucidate the changing characteristics of the transitioning from benthic to pelagic dominated system.
10. Other - If you would like to propose an alternative research topic, please contact Roman Jesien at rjesien@mdcoastalbays.org or at (410) 213 2297 ext. 108.

III. Project Cost, Matching Funds, and Timeline

A. Please provide the following information: Total project cost, matching funds provided, matching funds provider, and time required to complete the project. Matching funds must be from non-federal sources, and meet federal requirements for costs and recruiting requirements. Please note that although matching funds are not required, they will aid in the decision and will given more consideration.

B. Please describe any seasonal limitations to conducting your project, including possible impacts to endangered species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will review any construction or earth-moving projects selected for possible impacts to endangered species.

IV. Other Partners

A. Describe any additional organizations or funding sources that may be used to support the proposed project

V. Detailed Project Description

A. Describe in further detail the proposed project as succinctly as possible. The total length of the project description (I-VIII) cannot exceed two pages in length. You may attach any maps or tables as an appendix, but no additional text may be added beyond the two-page limit.

VI. Budget

A. The respondent shall provide salaries and the estimated percentage of time of involvement (based on the project period) for each member of the proposed project team. Projected travel costs, equipment, communication, supplies, and contractual services should be clearly detailed. If certain activities, phases, or tasks have already been funded by other means, these funding sources and their

purposes should be detailed. The Program reserves the right to offer funding for a particular phase or task, rather than funding the entire project.

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VII. Quality Assurance

A. Some of the funding that supports this solicitation is provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Therefore, proposals that include environmental measures will be required to comply with the Quality Assurance requirements of the EPA. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process in their proposed projects. Environmental data are defined as any measurement or information describing the environmental processes, location or condition; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data also include information collected directly from measurements, produced by models, and obtained from other sources, i.e. databases or published literature. Guidance on these requirements can be found at http://www.epa.gov/quality. Particular attention should be directed to 40 CFR 30, 31 and 35.

B. Successful applicants will be required to submit a copy of the Quality Assurance Management Plan for their organization and a Quality Assurance Project Plan for the proposed project. Guidance in preparing these documents can be found on the above referenced website. For further information on the Quality Assurance Program of the MCBP, please contact MCBP Environmental Scientist, Billy Weiland at bweiland@mdcoastalays.org.