Proposal Guidelines and Application Instructions *(for Trust Fund Grants)*

The guidelines and instructions apply to proposals submitted for the Chesapeake & Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund through DNR's CCS Grants Online website. All applicants are expected to comply with these guidelines and the applicable federal award conditions. If an applicant cannot comply with these provisions, the applicant should provide a written justification indicating why an exception is warranted.

SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL USING *CCS GRANTS ONLINE*

To submit a proposal, applicants will first need to visit the *CCS Grants Online* website at: **http://dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/grantsonline.asp** and create a profile. You will be prompted to create a profile consisting of a username and password. Your username and password will be used to submit proposals for project funding and progress reports for funded projects. Please store your user name and password in a secure location for later reference.

Once a profile has been created, the user will be guided through the proposal process which is broken into four steps:

- **Step 1a: Create a Proposal**
- **Step 1b: Upload Proposal Narrative**
- **Step 2: Create and Upload a Budget**
- **Step 3: Upload Additional Documents**
- **Step 4: Review and Submit**

*Note: Another feature of *CCS Grants Online* is a rolling submittal process for Letters of Intent. If you are in need of funding for a specific project but do not think your project matches up with one of our open project solicitations, we invite you to create a profile and rather than apply for a specific source of grant funds, submit a Letter of Intent. CCS staff will use your Letter of Intent to match you with an appropriate funding source, if available, or will try to recommend other resources that may be available.

STEP 1: CREATE A PROPOSAL

Once you have logged in to *CCS Grants Online*, select "Submit a Proposal" from the left menu bar on the page. Next you will be asked to select the funding source for which you want to apply. If you are responding to a project solicitation, please refer to the funding guidance. If not responding to a project solicitation, please submit your request as "Letter of Intent."

Step 1a: Basic Information

Once you have done that, you will advance to a new page where you will be asked to provide some basic information about the applicant, the proposed project, the project location, contact information, etc.

Please be sure to provide ALL requested information in the forms to ensure project consideration. Specific guidelines for completing the sections of the application in *CCS Grants Online* appear below:

1. Proposal Title: Provide a short, descriptive title of the proposed project.
2. Funding Recipient: Legal name of organization that would facilitate project implementation and to whom funds would be provided.
3. Federal Identification #: The Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or the Federal Tax Identification Number is a unique nine-digit number assigned by the Internal Revenue Service to

business entities operating in the United States for the purposes of identification. It is similar in purpose to the Social Security Number that is assigned to individuals.

4. Applicant Name: Name of the person submitting this proposal/letter of intent.
5. Applicant Street Address: Physical address of the community, agency, organization to whom funds would be provided. This will be the address used on all formal correspondence.
6. Applicant City:
7. Applicant State:
8. Applicant Zip Code: Postal code of organization to who funds would be provided.
9. Applicant Email Address: E-mail address of the person submitting this proposal/letter of intent.
10. Applicant Phone: Primary phone number of person submitting this proposal.
11. Total Request: Total amount requested through this proposal.
12. Total Leveraged Funds (if applicable): Total leveraged funds, in-kind and cash match, available to support the proposed project.
13. Total Project Cost: Total cost of the project to complete; typically Request + Leveraged = Total.
14. Cost per project: If multiple project sites, please use the field box to detail cost per project.
15. County: County where the project is to take place. If multiple, please choose the county that will be most heavily influenced and detail in your narrative.
16. Maryland 8-digit Watershed(s): Watershed basin where the project occurs. If multiple, please choose the watershed that will be most heavily influenced and detail in your narrative. Can be determined using the Trust Fund Mapper: http://1.usa.gov/1wh0Ub4
17. 2012 Legislative District: Legislative district where the project occurs. If multiple, please choose the watershed that will be most heavily influenced and detail in your narrative. Can be determined using the Trust Fund Mapper: http://1.usa.gov/1wh0Ub4
18. Location(s): Please include all latitude and longitude site information for each location. Must be in decimal degrees separated by a comma. **i.e. 38.984999, -76.503152**
19. Current project status: Please choose from the following; Concept; Partial Design; 100% Design; Permits initiated; Permits in-hand. If multiple projects, more than one option can be chosen.
20. Anticipated Start Date: Based on current status, if funded, when do you anticipate beginning the grant term.
21. Anticipated Date of Completion: Based on the current status, if funded, this is when the project(s) will be fully implemented.
22. Permit Numbers: If applicable, please provide any associated permit numbers with the project. May be MDE Agency Interest numbers, etc.
23. Proposal Summary Statement/Abstract: Please limit to 4-5 sentences.
24. Estimated Nitrogen Reduction (lbs): Detail the expected annual Nitrogen reduction consistent with Bay Model where applicable.
25. Estimated Phosphorus Reduction (lbs): Detail the expected annual Phosphorus reduction consistent with Bay Model where applicable.
26. Estimated Annual Sediment Reduction (tons): Detail the expected annual Sediment reduction consistent with Bay Model where applicable.
27. Implementation Targeting: Please indicate the priority area of the proposed project. This can be determined here: http://1.usa.gov/1B9gdUM

Once the basic details section has been completed, the applicant will need to click on the **"Detailed Proposal"** link to download the proposal template and/or guidance – a Word document that details the project narrative and description along with other required information as outlined in the project solicitation.

Step 1b: Detailed Proposal Template

The Detailed Proposal Template is simply an outline. Applicants may download, edit, and save the document until the proposal document is finalized and ready to be uploaded back into CCS Grants Online. The completed proposal should be no more than 7 pages using 12-point Times New Roman font. The 7-page limit does not include the transmittal letter and supplemental documents (i.e. letters of support, landowner agreements, etc.).

Once completed, the applicant will upload the completed "Detailed Proposal" document to complete Step 1 and advance to Step 2: Upload a Budget.

If you have any questions about this application process, please contact the solicitation issuing officer or your Trust Fund project manager for assistance.

STEP 2: CREATE A BUDGET

Detailed Budget Spreadsheet

Once you have uploaded the proposal, you will then need to download the **"Detailed Budget Template"**. Once you have downloaded the Budget Template, a Microsoft Excel worksheet, you should fill it out completely, provide adequate detail in the footnotes, save changes to your computer, and upload the file to the website. Detailed guidance for the specific budget elements is provided below.

*Note: While budget estimates are used for creation of a proposal, estimates do not qualify as support for charges to approved projects. If this project receives funding, actual project expenditures must be documented for requested funds.

Please identify your vendor(s)/subgrantee(s) and estimated funding amount(s) for each vendor/subgrantee in the Contractual category of your budget. If you are subcontracting a large portion of funds, please use the budget tabs in the template to detail their budgets. The sub-budget needs to be broken out by the same budget categories noted below.

1. Budget Columns
   - Request: Information entered into to this column identifies the funds being requested through this proposal.

   - Leveraged: Information entered into this column identifies the local and other in-kind services and cash match that will be used as leveraged funds. Please refer to the solicitaion for specifics regarding leveraged funds.

   - Total: This figure represents total project costs by budget category (Personnel, Fringe, etc.), by total Trust Fund request, by total leveraged provided (if applicable) and overall project costs.

2. Budget Categories (rows)

   The following is guidance for each budget category in the overall budget.

   - **Personnel (Salary)**: Needed Information includes: Title, Grade/Step, % of time to be funded, Salary information (% of the funded person's time), and duration (# of months working on the project).

     In the budget footnotes, indicate the following:

- the % of time to be expended on the project. (50% of a full-time employee would have an expected 20 hrs/week specific to the project.)
- the number of months this person will be working on the project. (For full-time employees - if 12 months at 50%, should equal 50% of employees annual salary)

▪ **Fringe**: This includes the amount of fringe requested/matched and the types of benefits provided. Fringe is expressed as a % of the total salary. In the "% Fringe" field, enter in the % of fringe associated with 100% of this position. In the "Other" field at the bottom of the fringes list, please type in any other fringe types not checked (e.g. retiree's health, match subsidy, etc.)

  In the budget footnotes, please indicate the following:
  - the fringe % associated with this position
  - identify any fringes that will be charged/matched on this position. If there are no fringes associated with this position, please leave blank.

  If there are additional personnel, you need to enter additional budget footnotes for each position.

▪ **Equipment**: <u>Equipment is rarely an approved budget item. Please discuss with your current project manager before requesting any funds for equipment.</u> Identify each item of equipment to be purchased which has an estimated acquisition cost of $5,000 or greater either as an individual piece or as a group of pieces intended to be used together. Enter into the table the total cost for all Equipment, and use the budget footnotes to breakout the cost for each specific grouping of pieces. The equipment listed should be a necessary tool for the completion of the proposed project. Describe the purpose(s) and need for equipment identified.

  In the budget footnotes, please be sure to indicate the:
  - name of the equipment (e.g. YSI 6000 Datalogger),
  - the number of unit (pieces) you intend to purchase, and
  - the unit cost of the equipment.

▪ **Field Supplies**: "Field Supplies" means all tangible property other than "equipment" that will be used for project implementation in the field (i.e. trees, shovels, filtering systems, etc.). These are items that will be procured and purchased by the Grantee, as opposed to being purchased by a subgrantee through a contractual agreement. Enter the total estimate for supplies in the spreadsheet and use a budget footnote to provide details.

  In the budget footnotes, please be sure to indicate the:
  - name of the field supply (e.g. 2" caliper Atlantic White Cedar),
  - the number of unit (pieces) you intend to purchase
  - the unit cost of the field supply, and
  - total cost (# units x unit cost)

▪ **Travel**: In most cases, there is minimal travel expense associated with funded projects. If funds are needed for routine in-state travel (site visits, project meetings, contractor meetings, etc.), then enter the total estimate for travel in the spreadsheet and use a budget footnote to breakout estimates for the number of miles and the cost per mile (current federal rate), estimated parking fees, tolls etc.

- **Office Supplies:** "Office Supplies" refer to tangible property that will be used for the implementation of the project (i.e. paper, clipboards, etc.) In most cases, office supply costs are minimal and are viewed as a component of the 1.5% Administration fee allowable by the fund.

- **Contractual Services**: Enter the total estimate for contractual services in the spreadsheet and use a budget footnote to identify each proposed contract and specify its purpose, nature, and estimated costs (includes, but not limited to: consultants, printing, and copying). Use of this category is generally for acquisition and construction projects. Enter the total estimate for construction in the spreadsheet and use a budget footnote to provide details. If the contractor is TBD, include a short description of their activity as it relates to the scope of work and identify the estimated amount of Contractual funds needed. Example: "Grantee will use their procurement process to hire a contractor to…" In the budget, enter the estimated funding request (e.g. $10,000). If the contractor is known, please provide a sub budget in the footnotes that details the anticipated expenditures (salary, fringe, supplies…etc).

- **Other**: Any miscellaneous requests not addressed in other line items.

- **Administration (1.5% cap)**: The Trust Fund allows a 1.5% administration fee by legislation. This is in place of any indirect charge despite approved indirect rates.

Once the budget is complete, please double check any formulas and be sure detail in budget footnotes is adequate and consistent with budget table. At this point a saved version of the completed budget table may be uploaded to *CCS Grants Online*.

STEP 3: UPLOAD ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Applicants will have an opportunity to upload additional documents to accompany their proposal and budget. Check the solicitation you are responding to for a list of required documents or other attachments.

Attachments shall be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal (i.e. detailed sub-award budget information, letters of support, landowner agreements, maps, photographs, references, etc.).

STEP 4: REVIEW AND SUBMIT

The final step before submitting your proposal is to review the entire proposal. You should scroll through the document and make additions or changes. When you feel that your entire proposal is in final form – complete with basic proposal information, a Detailed Proposal document, a Detailed Budget spreadsheet, and any additional attachments – simply click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page.

Once you've submitted your proposal, you should be taken back to your *CCS Grants Online* dashboard. Your dashboard is the default view each time you log in and provides a "Projects Submitted by Me" section to review your submission(s).

Reporting and Invoicing Guidelines

All applicants are expected to comply with these guidelines and the applicable award conditions. If an applicant cannot comply with these provisions, the applicant should provide a written justification indicating why an exception is warranted.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Once a proposal has been funded, it will appear as a funded project in *CCS Grants Online*. When the project manager logs into the system and views their dashboard, the project title will appear as a shaded row in a table with the links "View", "Summary", and "Reporting" appearing on the right side of that row.

"View" will allow the user to view the original proposal. "Summary" will allow the user to see additional project details. "Reporting" will allow the user to view the reporting schedule and to download the **Progress Report Template**. Once downloaded, the **Progress Report Template** should be completed, saved, and uploaded to *CCS Grants Online* once complete. The same template is used for each type of report below, however it is expected that the user will be sure to indicate the reporting period for which the report is being submitted. CCS expects that all reports are well-written and error-free, and composed of complete sentences.

Quarterly Reports: Quarterly reports document progress toward achievement of the Task Outcomes and deliverables. They contain information about 1) activities scheduled for the quarter, 2) activities conducted during the quarter, and 3) an explanation of any discrepancies between the two, if necessary. Quarterly report templates are used for reports due January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15.

Depending on the start date of the project, the final Quarterly Report will be the Final Report. **Please contact your project manager for the Final Report template**. The Final Report includes a side-by-side analysis of the expected deliverables from the Scope of Work and the actual deliverables after project completion.

Success Story: With the final report, project managers **must** submit a Success Story – suitable for distribution in newsletters, magazines, online, etc. – documenting a significant achievement as a result of the activities conducted through the grant. This can focus on one specific project site, or detail the overall impact of multiple project sites funded through the grant. **Success Stories** should be written with the public in mind as the audience.

Funding recipients will submit (at least) one Success Story highlighting an example or instance where a Trust Fund project has been successful in addressing nonpoint source pollution issues. The narrative for success stories should include:

- Identification and description of the nonpoint source reduction practice implemented;
- If applicable, a geographic location of the project should be identified including community name, watershed, Legislative district, and other location information;
- Description of how the Trust Fund dollars impacted the implementation;
- Summary of the accomplishment and outcomes such as improvements in water quality, reduction value, long-term impacts, community impacts & engagement, on-going monitoring efforts; etc.
- Quantitative information on the degree of improvement (e.g., acres of wetlands restored as a result of the funding); and
- Total Cost of the project detailed by Trust Fund dollars (total cost, construction and materials as well as associated salary, fringe, etc.) and local funds leveraged for the project.

It is recommended that success stories be approximately one single- spaced page in length. The description should include enough information that CCS can use the report without requesting additional information. Funding recipients can attach any digital photos, reports, press releases, or other work products associated with the success story.

REMEMBER: THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE POSTED ONLINE AND DISTRIBUTED VIA OTHER MEANS. PLEASE ENSURE THAT THIS IS A WELL-WRITTEN, ERROR-FREE DOCUMENT PRIOR TO SUBMISSION.

INVOICING GUIDELINES

Funds provided are reimbursable. Specifically, funds are expended by the contracted local government/funding recipient and then reimbursed by DNR. Advance payments are considered on a case-by-case basis, but are not common or encouraged. Invoices with appropriate back-up documentation must be submitted via mail for reimbursement and match on a quarterly basis with a Quarterly Status Report and work products as described in the project Scope of Work. **Invoices cannot be submitted through the *CCS Grants Online* system.**

OTHER GUIDELINES

Incurring Costs – The Chesapeake & Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund is not liable for any cost incurred by the funding recipient or any subcontractor prior to the recipient receiving a fully executed contract (i.e., signed by both parties.) The recipient shall require that all subcontractors comply with all DNR award conditions and documentation requirements.

This funding will not fund any of the following:
- Refreshments and T-shirts.
- Promotional collateral, ex. Pens, key chains, etc.
- Endowments, deficit financing, individuals, building campaigns, annual giving, research, fund raising or venture capital.
- Reimbursement for a project that has been completed or materials that have been purchased prior to the award or project period.

All proposed expenditures will be evaluated and approved at the discretion of the review team and Issuing Officer.

Lobbying Activities – The recipient agrees that it will **not** use project funds, including the Federal and non-Federal share to engage in political lobbying activities.