



FY27 Mini-Grant Program

www.chesapeakecrossroads.org/grants/mini-grants/

Grant Application Guidelines for FY27

Round One Applications Open: August 10, 2026

Round One Applications Due: September 18, 2026 (11:59 PM)

Round One Awards Announced: October 2, 2026

Round Two Applications: Accepted on a rolling basis from Oct. 2, 2026 thru April 1, 2027.

All projects must be completed within one year of the grant award.

APPLICANTS MUST EMAIL AN INTENT TO APPLY
GRANTS@CHESAPEAKECROSSROADS.ORG
before beginning the application

The Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area (CCHA) provides mini-grants of up to \$5,000 to partner organizations and local governments. These funds support programs, activities, and products that advance the Chesapeake Crossroads mission: to enhance and promote heritage tourism, preservation, and the stewardship of historical, cultural, and natural resources.

Who is Eligible?

- Non-profit organizations in good standing
- Municipalities and local governments
- Projects located within Heritage Area boundaries

[Check here to confirm if your organization is located within the Heritage Area Boundary.](#)

Mini-Grants- A Bit of Housekeeping

- Applications must be submitted online via the grants portal:
www.ChesapeakeCrossroads.org/mini-grants/FY27Application
- You must email Grants@ChesapeakeCrossroads.org **BEFORE** beginning your application.
- *Note: Review the application requirements first. We recommend preparing your responses in a separate document to copy and paste into the portal. Accepted file types include PDF (preferred), DOC, DOCX, JPG, PNG, XLS, and CSV (max 5MB).*
- After awards are announced, grant agreements with a scope of work and approved budget will be sent and signed/ executed digitally.
 - ANY CHANGES TO YOUR APPROVED SCOPE OF WORK OR BUDGET DURING THE COURSE OF THE GRANT PERIOD MUST BE APPROVED BY CCHA GRANT ADMINISTRATOR IN WRITING.
- A mid-project “check-in” is required.
- ADVANCE Disbursement Requests of up to 40% of the total award will be considered on a case-by-case basis, if there is a clear and compelling case for the need. Advance funds if approved, will be distributed upon execution of the grant agreement

- To close your grant and receive reimbursement, you must submit a written report and provide financial documentation of how you spent the grant funds and how you achieved your matching requirements. RECEIPTS and PROOF OF PAYMENT ARE REQUIRED. See details below.
- Acknowledgment: In addition to acknowledging CCHA by including our logo on any printed or digital products, mini-grantees should also acknowledge the support of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) by including either the MHAA logo, or the following statement, without any alterations:
 - **This project has been financed in part with State funds from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, and the Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area, but does not necessarily reflect its views or policies.**
 - MHAA's logo can be downloaded in the "Resources for grantees" section:
 - <https://mht.maryland.gov/planning-protection/maryland-heritage-areas-program/maryland-heritage-areas-program-project-grants>

What can the CCHA Grant Funds be used for?

This program supports **non-capital** projects only. Funds may not be used for staff salaries, general operations, administrative expenses, alcohol, or capital improvements. Eligible projects include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ● Research and Documentation | ● Lectures and Workshops |
| ● Heritage or Cultural Events | ● Hiking, Paddling, Guided Tours, or Maps (In-person or Virtual) |
| ● Oral History Projects | ● Heritage-Related Arts Programming (Plays or Performances) |
| ● Exhibits and Wayfinding Projects | ● Historic Markers or Interpretive Signs |
| ● Feasibility and Planning Studies | ● K–12, Homeschool, and After-School Educational Programming |
| ● Natural Resource or Gardening Projects | ● Interpretation Planning |
| ● Videos or Webinars | ● Internship Stipends or Board Development |
| ● Educational Seminars, Workshops, and Conferences | |
| ● Website Development | |
| ● Brochures and Rack Cards | |

Application Process & Requirements:

Completed applications must be received by the deadline of September 18, 2026 (11:59 pm).

The online application includes the following sections:

1. Applicant Information
2. Project Description
 - a. Proposed Deliverables
 - b. Project Timeline
 - c. Key Team Members
 - d. Collaborative Partners
3. Selection Criteria:
 - a. How will you track and measure your success?
 - b. What is the intended or anticipated audience for the project and with whom do you hope to engage or inspire?
 - (for example: *Age range or "generation", locals vs. tourists, students, high school interns, underserved or marginalized populations, EAL (English as an Additional Language)*)
 - c. Consistency and relevance to the Management / Strategic Plans
 - d. Special Priorities for FY27 funding
4. BUDGET: Upload a complete and Accurate Budget Form from the provided template
5. Organization Documents & Supplemental Information

Selection Criteria and Process:

A panel of up to 5 reviewers selected by the CCHA Board will review and score each application and select projects for awards based on the following criteria and scoring rubric:

Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area FY27 Mini-Grant Review Scoring Rubric	
Evaluation Criteria	Possible Points
1. Organizational Capacity & Project Readiness: Application is complete; applicant is eligible; organization demonstrates the administrative and financial capacity to successfully manage the grant, complete the project on time, and comply with grant requirements.	20
2. Project Budget: The budget is clear, complete, accurate, well organized, mathematically correct, reasonable, and directly supports project goals.	10
3. Goals, Outcomes & Evaluation: Clear objectives, measurable outcomes, and evaluation methods.	15
4. Urgency, Timeliness, Innovative, or has Model Potential: Time is of the essence, Creative or model project. New approaches or first time event/program	5
5. Heritage Impact & Public Access: Expands access, preserves/interprets resources, or highlights underrepresented stories.	15
6. Strategic Alignment & Regional Impact: Advances CCHA Mission and Action Plan, Applicable to the current Heritage Area Boundary and Interpretive Framework. Advances Tourism, Community Engagement, and/or Sustainability Goals.	20
7. FY27 Funding Priorities: Maryland Day; Semiquincentennial/B&O 200th/Maryland's 400th birthday; permanent interpretive signs.	15
TOTAL	100

General Considerations:

- Projects will be evaluated on their ability to help Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area achieve its strategic goals as described in the [NEW Six-Year Action Plan FY27-FY32](#) by demonstrating their:
 - Tourism Impact – Attracting visitors, encouraging heritage tourism, and increasing awareness of the region.
 - Community Engagement – Building meaningful connections through partnerships, education, volunteerism, and public participation.
 - Sustainability – Creating lasting benefits through preservation, stewardship, organizational capacity, or long-term community impact.
- Projects will also be assessed on how well they support and highlight the [following CCHA interpretive framework](#) and priorities through one or more of the following themes:

- Crossroads of Place
- Crossroads of Culture
- Crossroads of Struggle for Equality and Freedom
- Crossroads of Social Change
- **CCHA PRIORITIES FOR FY27:**
 - Launch or take place during Maryland Day Celebration (March 19–25, 2027).
 - Observe or commemorate significant historical anniversaries, including the U.S. Semiquincentennial (250th- *thru* 2034), the 200th anniversary of the founding of the B&O Railroad (1827–2027) or planning projects that look toward Maryland's 400th anniversary in 2034.
 - Creates or installs permanent interpretive resources, such as historic wayside markers or interpretive signs.

Funding Requirements and Grant Conditions for Awards

All CCHA Mini-Grant awards are subject to the following requirements. Please review these conditions carefully before submitting your application.

Grant Awards

- Applicants may request up to **\$5,000**.
- Funding is competitive, and **CCHA reserves the right to award the full amount requested, a partial award, or no award** based on available funding and the strength of the application.
- Grant funds may only be used for **eligible project expenses incurred after the official grant award announcement date**. Expenses incurred before the award date are not eligible for reimbursement.

ROLLING APPLICATIONS: Pending funds available, a rolling application process is anticipated after the initial round of grants are awarded on Oct. 1, 2026

- Email your intent to apply for funds before starting the application.
- FY27 requests must be reviewed before April 1, 2027.
- The grant request and a decision on funding will be completed within 1 month of the submittal date.
- The date of notification of award shall serve as the “Start Date” for your project
- A grant agreement and notice to proceed will be forwarded for signatures within 2 weeks of the announcement.

Matching Requirement: All grants require a **one-to-one (1:1) non-state match**.

For every **\$1 of grant funding requested**, the applicant must provide **at least \$1 in matching contributions** from **non-state sources**. As a result, grant funds awarded may not exceed **50% of the total project cost**. Matching funds may include:

- Cash contributions from the applicant or other non-state sources
- Private foundation or corporate grants
- Individual donations
- Earned income
- In-kind contributions such as donated professional services, materials, equipment, or volunteer labor

State funds may not be used as matching funds. Because Mini-Grants are funded through the Maryland Heritage Areas Program, applicants may not use any state grant or other state funding source to satisfy the required match.

Eligible Match: Examples of eligible matching contributions include:

- Staff time directly dedicated to the funded project (salary only; employee benefits may **not** be included)
- Volunteer Labor and Mileage
- Donated goods or professional services
- Donated equipment or materials
- Cash expenditures paid with non-state funds

Indirect Costs: !! Nonprofit organizations may include **indirect or administrative costs of up to 10% of the grant request**, provided the costs are directly related to administering the funded project.

Required Documentation: Applicants must submit all required supporting documentation with their application, including:

- Proof of nonprofit or governmental status (if applicable)
- Any required organizational documents
- Completed budget and budget narrative
- Signature of an authorized representative

Financial Recordkeeping: Grant recipients are required to maintain complete financial records for **three (3) years** following the later of:

- the final expenditure of grant funds; or
- the termination of the grant agreement.

Recipients must retain documentation supporting **both grant-funded expenses and all required matching contributions**. Examples of acceptable documentation include:

- Invoices
- Receipts
- Contracts
- Payroll records or timesheets
- Accounting system reports (such as QuickBooks)
- Purchase records

Proof of payment (such as canceled checks or bank statements) is generally required for reimbursement to be approved, and recipients are strongly encouraged to retain these records in the event of a financial review or audit by the State.

Documenting In-Kind Contributions

All donated goods and professional services used as matching funds must be documented at the time they are received with a signed invoice, voucher, letter, or similar documentation that identifies the contribution and its reasonable market value. **Volunteer labor used as match must be documented** using volunteer logs or timesheets that include:

- Volunteer name
- Date(s) of service
- Description of work completed
- Hours worked
- Hourly rate used to calculate the contribution

[THIS TEMPLATE CAN BE USED FOR TRACKING VOLUNTEER HOURS AND MILEAGE.](#)

Volunteer time should be valued using the current [Independent Sector Maryland Volunteer Hourly Rate](#), and applicants should use the same published rate throughout the life of the project.

Monitoring and Audit: As a condition of receiving funding, grant recipients agree to provide financial documentation upon request. The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), the Maryland Heritage Areas Program, and Chesapeake Crossroads Heritage Area reserve the right to review financial records during the grant period and for up to three years following submission of the final report as part of monitoring activities, financial spot checks, or state audits.

Have Further Questions?

Email us at grants@chesapeakecrossroads.org if you have additional questions or would like to discuss your project ideas. If you have any technical challenges as you work through the application, or would prefer to submit a hard copy of your application, please contact us as soon as possible to make arrangements.