

**U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**Financial Assistance
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**



NOFO Title	NPS Chesapeake Gateways Tourism and Economic Development Grants
NOFO Number:	P25AS00020
Announcement Type:	Initial
CFDA Number:	15.930

Issue Date:	July 29, 2024	
Application Due Date:	October 21, 2024	Time: 11:59 PM Eastern

Note: Per 2 CFR 1402.204 (f) Bureaus and offices must consider the timeliness of the application submission. Applications that are submitted beyond the announced deadline date must be removed from the review process.

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Section A: Program Description

A.1. Legislative Authority

Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (Pub. L. [105-312](#), title V, Sec.502(a), Oct. 30, 1998)

TITLE V—CHESAPEAKE BAY INITIATIVE

SEC. 501. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998”. SEC. 502.

SEC. 502. CHESAPEAKE BAY GATEWAYS AND WATERTRAILS.

(a) CHESAPEAKE BAY GATEWAYS AND WATERTRAILS NETWORK.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”), in cooperation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (referred to in this section as the “Administrator”), shall provide technical and financial assistance, in cooperation with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector—

(A) to identify, conserve, restore, and interpret natural, recreational, historical, and cultural resources within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed;

(B) to identify and utilize the collective resources as Chesapeake Bay Gateways sites for enhancing public education of and access to the Chesapeake Bay;

(C) to link the Chesapeake Bay Gateways sites with trails, tour roads, scenic byways, and other connections as determined by the Secretary;

(D) to develop and establish Chesapeake Bay Watertrails comprising water routes and connections to Chesapeake Bay Gateways sites and other land resources within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and

(E) to create a network of Chesapeake Bay Gateways sites and Chesapeake Bay Watertrails.

Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Number: 15.930 Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network

Federal Regulations: 2 C.F.R. § 200, 2 C.F.R. § 1402

A.2. Program Background, Objectives and Goals:

Background

Through Chesapeake Gateways, the National Park Service (NPS) Chesapeake Gateways Office inspires and helps people discover, experience, and connect with the natural and cultural heritage and recreational opportunities of the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers, landscapes, and communities across its watershed. We work with people and partners to conserve and steward special places important to communities, visitors and the nation, for this and future generations.

Chesapeake Gateways is a network of places and their partners, providing opportunities to enjoy, learn about and help conserve the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Included in the network are diverse natural, cultural, historical and recreational sites, trails, museums, parks, refuges and

interpretive and orientation facilities. These places serve as entry points and the key guide for experiencing the Chesapeake watershed. Definitions can be found in Section H2.

Chesapeake Gateways recognizes the watershed's heritage is a living history played out over a large landscape. Sustaining livelihoods while conserving resources is a core component of our work. As a network, we employ interpretive themes at multiple scales, communicating from the local level at a particular site, to community-wide programming, to sharing regional and watershed-wide stories. Interpretive themes can be found in Section H3.

Goal: Develop Chesapeake Gateways Communities as Strategic Focal Points

Chesapeake Gateways communities aspire to connect people, places and stories across all of our great watershed **in a whole-community approach**. Chesapeake Gateways communities are where a combination of geography, location, transportation systems, economic uses and services concentrate people in the watershed.

These communities enhance public education of and access to the Chesapeake by:

- Elevating their visitor experience efforts, connecting to sites, water and land trails, and other local programmatic assets.
- Providing an outstanding welcoming orientation for locals and visitors, encouraging exploration, and offering a host of inclusive opportunities for people to experience a range of authentic Chesapeake resources and stories.
- Embracing a commitment to linking nature, culture, history, and recreation-based tourism with economic initiatives for local resiliency and community sustainability, especially tied with sectors closely linked with Chesapeake heritage.

Objectives

The NPS Chesapeake Gateways Office is offering this competitive grant opportunity to strengthen communities' ability to enhance public education of and access to the Chesapeake Bay watershed as detailed in the *Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998*.

Though this grant opportunity, the NPS Chesapeake Gateways Office will:

- Support community collaboration projects that link local nature, culture, history, and/or recreation-based tourism to economic impact of the community.
- Support the development and implementation of community events that celebrate the rich cultural, historical, natural, or recreational legacy and ongoing story of the Bay as a way of engaging with residents and visitors.

Chesapeake Gateways Place Requirement

Submitted projects are meant to reflect community needs and a collaboration among different partners. At a minimum, one partner must be from a federal or non-federal Chesapeake Gateways place (see definition in H.2.b), or from an organization that is pursuing self-nomination to be a Chesapeake Gateways place. The applicant can also be a Chesapeake Gateways place. Only non-federal Chesapeake Gateways places are eligible to apply.

Please note: Applicants with a pending Chesapeake Gateways place self-nomination or partnering with an organization that has pending Chesapeake Gateways place self-nomination that is rejected as a Chesapeake Gateway place would be ineligible to move forward to merit review.

To get a list of current or pending Chesapeake Gateways places by state, see: <https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/ven-pending.htm>.

To become a Chesapeake Gateways place, prospective partners or applicants need to submit self-nomination through the Chesapeake Gateways portal: [Join the Chesapeake Gateways Visitor Experience Network](https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/join-ven.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/join-ven.htm>). Once the self-nomination is received and approved, the status will be added to the current or pending list mentioned above. Self-nominations do not need to be approved by the application deadline, but any applicants or partners that have their self-nominations rejected after the deadline would be ineligible to move forward to merit review.

Grant submissions must clearly provide a public purpose. Public purpose means for the purpose of providing facilities, programs, or services for the benefit of the public. These grants should represent a public purpose by enhancing public education of and public access to the Chesapeake Bay and its waterways and landscapes, by targeting communities and the general public, and contributing to local economic impact. (See Section H.2. for a definition of public access and public purpose).

Grant Categories

This grant opportunity provides support in two categories:

a) Linking Tourism and Economic Development Grants

Proposals submitted should demonstrate that the projects reflect a community need; link local recreation, culture, history, and/or nature tourism to economic impact of the community; and involve a collaboration among community partners.

Projects should link nature-based and cultural tourism with economic initiatives for local resilience and community sustainability, especially tied with sectors closely linked with Chesapeake heritage, such as historical or cultural crafts and trades, working lands, or maritime activities.

Projects can:

- Enhance visitor experience amenities and/or improve the overall visitor experience for communities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Support Indigenous tourism development and/or connect visitors to Indigenous history and culture.
- Enhance local tourism and economic development capacity through trainings, workforce development, or strategic planning.

- Facilitate visitor experiences that increase duration and depth of visit.
- Commemorate and promote local recreation, history, heritage, or culture.
- Transform Main streets in advance of key events.
- Make visitor experiences and facilities more physically and programmatically accessible for all ages and abilities and expand the audiences served.
- Improve and/or promote connectivity between outdoor spaces or facilities and communities, such as between waterways and land trails, parks, museums, and target neighborhoods.
- Make public lands and open spaces more welcoming and accessible to diverse communities. Share and advance standards for equitable access to parks, green space, water, etc. Expand access to outdoor spaces in communities where they are needed.
- Develop and encourage new and enhanced opportunities to connect with underrepresented communities through inclusive and welcoming events, festivals, places, and programming as part of a larger economic development plan.
- Develop inclusive volunteer programs and campaigns to engage new audiences in Chesapeake stewardship.
- Support local or regional visitor experiences through visitor outreach and/or tourism messaging.

The following types of projects will not be selected for funding:

- Archeology projects
- Building acquisitions
- Lobbying
- Endowments

Award Range: \$50,000-\$100,000

b) Event Support Grants

Proposals should demonstrate how the event or festival celebrates the rich cultural, historical, natural, or recreational legacy and ongoing stories of Chesapeake Gateways communities. Public events and festivals should encourage exploration and enjoyment of the wealth of cultural, historical, natural, and recreational experiences available in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The events encourage new and enhanced opportunities to connect with underrepresented communities through inclusive and welcoming events, festivals, places, and programming.

These events may be, but are not limited to:

- Main streets transformation in advance of key events.
- Events in partnership with community organizations representing target audiences.
- Local events that connect to major national, state-wide, or regional celebrations, such as America250 [[National Park Service and America 250 Launch Countdown to 25 - America250](#)].
- Events that:

- Advance equality and justice for all
- Acknowledge and honor Indigenous peoples
- Acknowledge and honor people of African descent
- Acknowledge and honor the contributions of women
- Deliver authentic inclusivity, focusing on an area of importance to a site, such as Indigenous perspectives, gender equity, LGBTQ rights, or immigrant rights movements, or helping correct an intersectional story or history that is inaccurate, biased, or offensive.
- Actively include or serve people of all ages and abilities.
- Draw a wide and diverse audience to the community, including new users and people from underrepresented populations.
- Use art, including theater and music, to highlight the richness of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Highlight local products or foods or food systems (farming, oystering, etc.) or trades that connect to the area's culture or history.
- Expand economic development to include overnight stays and/or use of a variety of local assets and amenities.

Funds cannot be used to:

- Purchase alcohol for the events.
- To lobby at the events.
- To support any unallowable costs as described in 2 CFR 200.

Award Range: \$10,000-\$25,000

A.3. Application Support

Chesapeake Gateway Grants Webpage

Please go to the Chesapeake Gateways Grants webpage to access application information, frequently asked questions (FAQ), training schedule, and other resources:

<https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/grants.htm>.

Grant Workshops

The NPS Chesapeake Gateways Office will be holding trainings on the grant opportunity to assist in understanding the components of the application and submission process. Current available training dates are listed on the Grants webpage at

<https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/grants.htm>. Future trainings may be added.

To be alerted to future webinars, send an email with your contact information to Chesapeake_Grants@nps.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

NPS Chesapeake Gateways has compiled a list of frequently asked questions. They can be found on the Grants webpage: <https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/grants.htm>.

Section B: Federal Award Information

B.1. Estimated Total Funding: \$1,000,000

The amount of funding available per award for this NOFO will be determined once final fiscal year (FY) 2025 appropriations have been made. This NOFO will be cancelled if FY 2025 appropriations are insufficient to support new awards.

B.2. Expected Award Amount:

- An estimated range of \$50,000 To \$100,000 of funding is anticipated for each Linking Tourism and Economic Development award.
- An estimated range of \$10,000 to \$25,000 of funding is anticipated for each Event Support award.

The amount of funding available per award for this NOFO will be determined as part of the application review process based on applications received and funding made available through appropriations.

B.3. Anticipated Award Date: Summer 2025. Projects receiving funding through this NOFO will start once funding has been secured and awards have been made. Anticipated Term of the Agreement: June 1, 2025 – May 30, 2027

Agreement terms for funded projects can range between one and five years, depending on the negotiated project statement of work. Agreements are not effective until fully executed by the NPS Financial Assistance Awarding Officer.

B.5. Estimated Number of Agreements to be Awarded:

- Linking Tourism and Economic Development Grants: approximately 7-8 grants expected
- Event Support Grants: approximately 8-12 grants expected

Proposals may include more than one action or activity, but the maximum award for any proposal is \$100,000 for the tourism grants and \$25,000 for the event grants.

B.6. Funding Instrument Type:

Grant Agreement - A legal instrument of financial assistance between The National Park Service and a non-Federal entity that, consistent with 31 U.S.C. § 6302, 6304:

(1) Is used to enter into a relationship the principal purpose of which is to transfer anything of value from the Federal awarding agency to the non-Federal entity to carry out a public purpose authorized by a law of the United States (see 31 U.S.C. § 6101(3)); and not to acquire property or services for the Federal awarding agency's direct benefit or use.

(2) Is distinguished from a cooperative agreement in that it does not provide for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award.

Other Information: Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards provided the projects meets the program goal of connecting tourism to economic development.

Section C: Eligibility Information

C.1. Eligible Applicants

In accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998, this funding opportunity is open to the following entities:

- 00 – State governments
- 01 – County governments
- 02 – City or township governments
- 04 – Special district governments
- 05 – Independent school districts
- 06 – Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- 07 – Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- 08 – Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities
- 11 – Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- 12 – Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- 13 – Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- 20 – Private institutions of higher education
- 22 – For profit organization other than small businesses
- 23 – Small businesses

PLEASE NOTE: While applicants can be from outside the Chesapeake watershed, only projects that provide a public purpose and take place within the watershed will be considered. Projects that take place outside the watershed will not be considered. A link to all of the counties in the watershed can be [found here](#).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Non-Federal cost sharing or matching is not required to be eligible for an award under this NOFO.

C.3. Other

Excluded Parties

NPS conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The NPS cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

Foreign Entities or Projects

This program does not provide funding to foreign entities or for projects conducted outside the United States.

Section D: Application and Submission Information

D.1. Address to Request Application Package

A complete application package is described in this Section and has been included within this NOFO for your convenience, in Appendix A. The application package contains both mandatory standard forms (SF) and various optional templates that may be used to satisfy other stated application requirements. The application package can also be accessed and downloaded from the Related Documents tab on the Synopsis page of this announcement in Grants.gov.

The grant application announcement can be accessed at <https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/grants.htm> and in the full PDF announcement in Grants.gov.

D.2. Contents and Form of Application Submission

You must complete the mandatory standard forms and any applicable optional forms, in accordance with the instructions below, as required by this NOFO. Do not include any proprietary or personally identifiable information. A complete application should include:

Mandatory Requirements

- Standard Form 424 (SF 424) - Application for Federal Assistance. Complete this form as much as possible with all applicable information.
- Standard Form 424A or C (SF 424A/C) - Budget Information. Applicants must provide an estimated cumulative budget for the total project in the proposal. The estimated budget must align with the projected scope of work presented in the application.
- Project Abstract Summary – The project abstract form must be completed to meet Federal award reporting requirements. Ensure the project abstract succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. If the application is funded, this information will be made available for public access including on USA Spending.gov.

- Detailed Budget Table and Narrative – The project budget shall include a table and narrative with detailed information on all cost categories and must clearly identify all project costs. Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors or sub-recipients. In addition, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the project budget, including the value of in-kind contributions of goods and services provided to complete the project when cost share is identified to be included (reference section C of this announcement). Cost categories can include, but are not limited to, those costs items included on the SF424A and SF424C.
- Standard Form 424B or D (SF 424B/D) – Assurances
This form must be signed and submitted with your application.
- Project Narrative - Proposal Submission Format
The project narrative is an opportunity to describe and provide details on the proposal that specifically address at least one of the grant categories (see **Section A4**) and each of the review criteria (see **Section E**). The proposal text must be no longer than 8 pages, no smaller than font size 11, and have 1-inch margins. The 8-page limit includes all text, figures, and references. (Project team resumes, and Forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL **are not** counted as part of the 8-page limit.) Only information that is pertinent to the proposal should be included in the narrative. Extra information will not be considered. Hyperlinks to external information will also not be considered.

Narrative Components

- **Project Overview**
 1. Purpose, Goal(s), and Objective(s)
 2. Deliverable(s) - specific product(s) or project outcome(s)
 3. Project Location within the watershed (**Please note: projects outside the watershed will not be considered.**)
 4. Identify the Chesapeake Gateways Place that will serve as a project partner.
 5. Key Tasks and Milestones
- **Strategic Intent**
 1. **Connection to Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act** - All projects must provide public benefit. How well do projects identify, conserve, restore, and or interpret natural, recreational, historical, and or cultural resources within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and (B) identify and utilize the collective resources as Chesapeake Bay Gateways sites **for enhancing public education of and access to the Chesapeake Bay.**
 2. **Connection to Chesapeake Economic Development**-- Did the application link the project deliverables to economic impact? What are the project's economic development goals and objectives and how will the applicant attain those goals and objectives? Is the visitor experience that will be provided by the project clear? Do proposals facilitate an integrated

approach to interpreting the themes and stories of the Chesapeake Bay watershed? Does the project help visitors explore, enjoy and better connect with these places and their diverse themes in the context of the Bay and its watershed?

3. **Connection to Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Engagement**

Objectives—Projects must include a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and community engagement. How does the project address community engagement, equity, inclusion, and/or accessibility? Does the project build long-term relationships with underrepresented communities to address community identified needs?

4. **Investments in Community Collaborations**—How well does the proposed project collaborate across the community to address tourism and economic development? How is the project innovative to the community and visitors or the broader programmatic landscape? Is this the first time the community has done such a project or partnered with the noted partners?

- **Organization/Applicant Overview**

1. **Organization mission alignment**—How does the project fit into the proposing organization’s mission and does the organization have the capacity to fulfill the project?

2. **Project Team’s skills and experience, including staff, volunteers, partners and consultants**—Name, title, and responsibilities. Optional resumes may be submitted. Resumes do not count toward the 8-page limit.

- **Proposed Partners**—Does the project include existing or new partnerships? At a minimum, one identified partner should be a Chesapeake Gateways place, or an organization pursuing a Chesapeake Gateway place self-nomination. (For a list of pending places, [click link here.](#)) Please note: Applicants with a pending Chesapeake Gateways place self-nomination or partnering with an organization that has pending Chesapeake Gateways place self-nomination that is rejected as a Chesapeake Gateway place would be ineligible to move forward to merit review.

- **Optional Resumes (Do not count towards 8-page limit.)**

Proposals may include resumes of key project contacts (no more than 3 pages per resume). Resumes must be submitted with the Grants.gov application to be considered.

- Indirect Costs

Projects budgets can add up to 15% of specific project funds as an indirect expense to cover operational expenses of the organization.

If your proposed budget includes indirect costs, the rate as proposed must meet the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200, Section 200.414 and 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix III through Appendix VII, as applicable. If fully negotiated indirect cost rates are applied,

the associated negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) must be provided with your proposal. Proposals that fail to document their indirect costs may have those costs disallowed.

The indirect is applied to the *Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)*. The *MTDC* means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$50,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$50,000.

Optional Requirements:

- **Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), [2 CFR §1402.112](#), applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

Applicability.

- This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.
- In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by sub recipients, the conflict of interest provisions in [2 CFR §200.318](#) apply.

Notification.

- Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with [2 CFR §200.112](#).
- Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by sub recipients.

Restrictions on lobbying. Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under a grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to [43 CFR §18](#) and [31 USC §1352](#).

Review procedures. The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict-of-interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.

Enforcement. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR §200.339](#), Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also [2 CFR §180](#)).

- **Uniform Audit Reporting Statement**

U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System](#), in accordance with 2 CFR 200 subpart F. U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#) website.

- **Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

- **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the [SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities"](#) form if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than \$100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 and 31 USC 1352 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

- **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

If the project proposed in this application is funded through another Federal financial assistance award, in part or in whole, the applicant must provide a statement detailing the potential funding overlap in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted or copy of Federal financial assistance award covering activities covered under this proposal. The statement and the description of overlap or duplication, when applicable, may be

provided within the proposal or as a separate attachment to the application. Any overlap or duplication of funding between the proposed project and other active or anticipated projects may impact selection and/or funding amount. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, “There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects”.

If selected for award, NPS reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Other budget information
- (b) Financial capability
- (c) Evaluation of risk
- (d) Name and phone number of the Designated Responsible Employee for complying with national policies prohibiting discrimination (See 43 C.F.R. § 17)

D.3. Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration

This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as an individual (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own, operate, or work within), or any entity with an exception to bypass SAM.gov registration with prior approval from the funding bureau or office in accordance with bureau or office policy. All other applicants are required to register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application and obtain a [Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#) which replaces the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet in April 2022. A Federal award may not be made to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. Federal award recipients must also continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s).

- **Register with the System for Award Management (SAM)**

Applicants can register on the [SAM.gov](#) website. The “Help” tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov “[Register with SAM](#)” page also provides detailed instructions. Applicants can contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities will be assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been made to the entity’s IRS information. There is no cost to register with SAM.gov. There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with SAM.gov; please be aware you can register and request help for free. If applicable, foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

D.4. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants are held responsible for their proposals being submitted to the National Park Service. Applications must be received by October 21, 2024, 11:59pm Eastern. Applicants are encouraged to submit the application well before the deadline.

Note: Per 2 CFR 1402.204 (f) Bureaus and offices must consider the timeliness of the application submission. Applications that are submitted beyond the announced deadline date must be removed from the review process.

Application preparation time may take several weeks, so please start the application process as soon as possible. If it is determined that a proposal was not considered due to lateness, the applicant will be notified during the selection process.

D.5. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order (EO) 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” Applicants subject to EO 12372 must contact their State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the State’s process. The names and addresses of the SPOC’s are listed in the OMB’s home page at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>

D.6. Funding Restrictions

Costs incurred by the applicant prior to the start date of the period of performance of a signed Federal award are only allowable with written approval by a Financial Assistance Awarding Officer.

D.7. Other Submission Requirements

Applications must be submitted to the National Park Service via the grants.gov grants announcement by the deadline identified in paragraph D.4. above. Applications submitted by other means or not received by the deadline will not be considered.

In the event the applicant experiences technical difficulties with submitting their application, please contact the program administration contact in Section G.

START THIS PROCESS EARLY DON’T DELAY!

Section E: Application Review Information

E.1. Criteria

NPS will evaluate and consider only those applications that separately address each of the merit review criteria in the project Narrative application requirement. Each applicant is required to provide a detailed project narrative, in accordance with section D.2., of the following criteria elements. Your project narrative should address each criterion.

Criterion 1	
Connection to Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act (5 Strong Connection – 0 No Connection)	Weight 20%
CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS financial support is made under authority by the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998. The language of the Act specifically states that projects must: (A) identify, conserve, restore, and interpret natural, recreational, historical, and cultural resources within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and (B) identify and utilize the collective resources as Chesapeake Bay Gateways sites for enhancing public education of and access to the Chesapeake Bay. Reviewers will evaluate how successfully projects connect to the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act: How well projects identify, conserve, restore, and interpret natural, recreational, historical, and cultural resources within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and how well projects enhance public education of and access to the Chesapeake.	

Criterion 2	
Connection to Economic Development (5 Strong Connection – 0 No Connection)	Weight 20%
CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS recognizes the Watershed's heritage is a living history played out over a large landscape. Sustaining livelihoods while conserving resources is a core component of our work. Chesapeake Gateways supports strategies for linking natural, historical, recreational, and cultural-based tourism of communities in the watershed with economic initiatives for local resilience and community sustainability, especially tied with sectors closely linked with Chesapeake heritage, such as agriculture and maritime activities. Reviewers will evaluate how successfully projects connect local experiences to economic development. Did the application link the project deliverables to economic impact? What is the project's economic development goals and objectives and how will the applicant attain those goals and objectives? Is the visitor experience that will be provided by the project clear? Do proposals facilitate an integrated approach to interpreting the themes and stories of the Chesapeake Bay watershed? Does the project help visitors explore, enjoy and better connect with these places and their diverse themes in the context of the Bay and its watershed?	

Criterion 3	
Connection to Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, & Engagement Objectives (5 Strong Connection to 0 No Connection)	Weight 15%
CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS is a network of people, places, programs, and stories providing opportunities to enjoy, learn about, and help conserve the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Included in the network are assorted natural, cultural, historical, and recreational sites, trails, museums, parks, refuges, and interpretive and orientation facilities. The NPS Chesapeake Gateways strategic plan stems from a recognition that the benefits of the watershed have not been equally shared by all people or all communities. Reviewers will evaluate how well the proposal addresses equity, inclusion, accessibility, and engagement objectives. Does the project build long-term relationships with underrepresented communities to address community identified needs? How is the intended audience engaged in the project?	

Criterion 4	
Investments in Community Collaborations (5 More Collaborative to 0 Not Collaborative)	Weight 15%
The vision for CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS is a network that welcomes people to the Chesapeake watershed's outstanding benefits and provides inclusive experiences that inspire a robust stewardship ethic. Investments in community collaborations, planning, programming, and projects in equitable public access, conservation, community engagement, education, and recreation are critical parts of the work to restore and protect the nation's largest and most productive estuary. Community collaborations will be essential to expand storytelling to be inclusive of untold stories or under told stories. Innovation in community engagement will be essential to include all communities in project planning and implementation. Community collaborations take many forms. Reviewers will evaluate how well the proposed project collaborates across the community to address tourism and economic development. How is the project innovative to the community and visitors or the broader programmatic landscape? Is this the first time the community has done such a project or partnered with the noted partners?	

Criterion 5	
Clarity of Project's Operational Plan (5 Strong Plan to 0 No Plan)	Weight 15%
Projects need to have well defined objectives, activities, costs, deliverables, and expected outcomes. A well-crafted budget and project narrative of your scope of work must clearly convey to reviewers your intent and your plan for accomplishing your objectives Uncertainty about your fiscal and operational approach will undermine your proposal.	

Reviewers will evaluate how effectively the budget and project narrative convey the intent of the project.

Criterion 6

Team's Capacity to Implement Project (5 Strong Capacity to 00 No Capacity)

Weight 15%

CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS depends on a network of people and partners to conserve and steward the special places in the watershed important to communities, visitors, and the nation, for this and future generations. Success of each project will depend on the capacity of each proposing organization and the team of volunteers, staff, partners and/or consultants assembled to plan and implement the project.

Reviewers will evaluate whether each proposing organization has envisioned and assembled a team with the necessary skills to accomplish the project Does the project team have the relevant subject matter expertise and experience? How well does the applicant demonstrate the ability to meet administrative and technical grant requirements? Do partners demonstrate a commitment and connection to the project?

E.2. Review and Selection Process

NPS personnel, and in some cases independent reviewers, will review all proposals. All proposals for funding will be considered using the criteria outlined above. A summary of the review panel comments may be provided to the applicant if requested.

a. Initial Review

Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory partner and content requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; and (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO (program determination). If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from further review.

b. Comprehensive Merit Review

All applications that satisfactorily pass the initial review will be eligible for the Comprehensive Merit Review. Each criteria element will be scored on a 0-5 point scale:

5	Superior	(100 % of weighted average)
4	Good	(80 % of weighted average)
3	Satisfactory	(60 % of weighted average)
2	Marginal	(40 % of weighted average)
1	Poor	(20 % of weighted average)
0	Not Acceptable	(No score)

The following numerical rating values may be assigned: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0. The scoring of each criterion must be based on the strengths and weaknesses of the application narrative. To assist in assigning an appropriate score, the following will be used as a guideline:

Rating	Descriptive Statement
5	Superior: Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates that it will meet the Government's performance requirements and demonstrates no weaknesses.
4	Good: Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion, convincingly demonstrates a likelihood of meeting the Government's requirements, and demonstrates only a few minor weaknesses.
3	Satisfactory: Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet the Government's performance requirements. The Application contains weaknesses and/or a number of minor weaknesses.
2	Marginal: Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet the Government's performance requirements. The Application contains significant weaknesses and/or a significant number of minor weaknesses.
1	Poor: Applicant addresses some aspects of the criterion and demonstrates some doubt in the likelihood of successfully meeting the Government's requirements. Significant weaknesses are demonstrated and clearly outweigh any strength presented.
0	Not Acceptable: Applicant does not address all aspects of the criterion and the information presented indicates a strong likelihood of failure to meet the Government's requirements.

c. Selection

Merit review recommendations will be forwarded to NPS Chesapeake Gateways Superintendent for review and consideration. The NPS Chesapeake Gateways Superintendent may also consider geographic distribution within the Chesapeake watershed, diversity of awardees, and thematic distribution of the applications in determining the final recommendations for funding. The final recommendations will be forwarded to the Selection Official for final selection. The Selection Official may consider the merit review recommendation, additional Superintendent feedback, and the amount of funds available to select applications for funding.

d. Discussions and Award

The Government may enter into discussions with a selected applicant for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to: (1) only a portion of the application is selected for award; (2) the Government needs additional information to determine that the applicant is capable of complying with the requirements of DOI Financial Assistance Regulations, and/or (3) additional specific terms and conditions are required. Failure to satisfactorily resolve the issues identified by the Government may preclude award to the applicant.

E.3. CFR – Regulatory Information

See the National Park Service’s Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. The Service will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their notices of award.

Evaluation of Applicant Risk

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205, applications selected for funding will be subject to a pre-award risk assessment which may include a review of information contained within the applicant’s proposal, past audits, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and/or past performance on previous Federal financial assistance awards. Negative information that leads to an applicant being designated as “Medium Risk” or “High Risk” may result in specific conditions, as identified in 2 C.F.R. § 200.207, being incorporated into the final award.

E.4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Estimated date of Federal Award: Summer of 2025. Estimated date notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants: Spring of 2025.

Section F: Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. Federal Award Notices

Upon being selected for the award, successful applicants will receive a notification of the selection of their application for funding. NPS estimates it will notify the applicant selected for award by May 31, 2025. A notice of selection is not an authorization to begin performance on an agreement. This notice will detail the next steps in the awarding process. Once all clearances and reviews have been conducted, a grant agreement will be sent for signature.

Work cannot begin before the non-Federal entity receives a fully executed copy of the grant agreement which contains the signature of the Financial Assistance Awarding Officer. Any pre-award costs incurred prior to the receipt of a signed agreement or written notice signed by a Financial Assistance Awarding Officer authorizing pre-award costs, is at the applicant’s own risk. A signed grant agreement signed by a Financial Assistance Awarding Officer is the only authorizing document to begin performance.

Organizations whose applications have not been selected will be advised as promptly as possible.

F.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See the “[DOI Standard Terms and Conditions](#)” for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to DOI awards.

Data Availability

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), [2 CFR §1402.315](#):

(a) All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including

textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.

(b) The Federal Government has the right to:

(1) Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and

(2) Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

F.3. Reporting

a. **Financial Reports:** Financial reports are submitted through Grant Solutions, the grant management tool used by all the grantees. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a final financial report due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

b. **Performance Reports:** Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. Items may include:

- Photos/Videos
- Testimonials from participants
- Social media posts
- Press releases
- Project presentations

Final performance reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim performance reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

c. **Real Property Reports:** Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Bureau will include recipient-

specific real property reporting requirements, including the required data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, in the Notice of Award when applicable.

- d. **Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the [U.S. Office of Government Ethics website](#) for more information on these restrictions. The Service will examine each conflict-of-interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, the Service will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.339 Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of the award.
- e. **Other Mandatory Disclosures:** The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.339 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Significant Developments Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the Service in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

Section G: Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Program Technical Contact:

Eddie Gonzalez

National Park Service Chesapeake Gateways
1750 Forest Drive, Suite 140 Annapolis, MD 21401
202-868-0175
Chesapeake_Grants@nps.gov

Additional information is available at the program website (<https://www.nps.gov/locations/chesapeakebaywatershed/grants.htm>) and on the full, PDF version of this announcement.

Program Administration Contact:

Monica Marcus
National Park Service
1849 C St NW
Main Interior Building National Park Service
267-817-0203
Monica_Marcus@nps.gov

Application System Technical Support:

For Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or Support@grants.gov.

Section H: Other Information

H.1. Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

H.2. Definitions

Following are the definitions of key terms used throughout this document:

- a. **Accessibility** means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them. Accessibility includes the provision of accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment and participation in activities for people with disabilities, the reduction or elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities, a commitment to

ensuring that people with disabilities can independently access every outward-facing and internal activity or electronic space, and the pursuit of best practices such as universal design.

- b. **Chesapeake Gateways Places** means the diversity of places associated with the Chesapeake Gateways program and network. Places include:
 - 1. **Chesapeake Gateways Communities** provide a host of inclusive opportunities for people to experience multi-faceted Chesapeake resources and stories and orient visitors for further exploration.
 - 2. **Chesapeake Gateways Sites** are primary individual destinations to which people are directed to access, experience, enjoy, learn about, and contribute to a particular natural, cultural, historical, or recreational resource illustrative of the Chesapeake watershed. For a list of pending places, [click link here](#).
 - 3. **Heritage Areas and Landscapes** include dozens of the types of places described above and, in effect, are regional networks that also participate in the Chesapeake Gateways network.
 - 4. **Land-based Connecting Routes and Trails** link multiple communities and sites providing thematic or geographic approaches to exploring the network. Land trails serve as walking, hiking and biking routes.
 - 5. **Public Water Access Sites** focus on opportunities for personal experiences with minimal interpretive information on site.
 - 6. **Watertrails** provide water-based recreational experiences for boaters and, in the case of longer trails, may serve as physical and programmatic connections between multiple Chesapeake Gateways communities and sites.
- c. **Chesapeake Watershed** means the full 41 million acres—all the land that drains via the tributary network into the Chesapeake Bay. A link to all of the counties in the watershed can be [found here](#).
- d. **Diversity** means the practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of the American people, including underserved communities.
- e. **Equity** means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.
- f. **Inclusion** means the recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of people of all backgrounds.
- g. **Public Access** means the physical access by the general public to the Bay, its tributaries and local waterways across the watershed for viewing, fishing, swimming, boating and other water-based activities. Public access and enjoyment are fundamental to fostering a shared sense of responsibility and increased stewardship. Increased public access to the Bay and waterways inspires people to care for critical landscapes and honor the region's heritage, culture, and connected stories. Places or programs that are open to public visitation for

regularly scheduled daily or weekly hours throughout the visitor season meet a characteristic of public access under Chesapeake Gateways.

- h. **Public purpose** means for the purpose of providing facilities, programs or services for the benefit of the public.
- i. **Underserved Communities** refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, who have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. In the context of the Federal workforce, this term includes individuals who belong to communities of color, such as Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, Native American, Alaska Native and Indigenous, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and North African persons. It also includes individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity (including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (LGBTQ+) persons); persons who face discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions; parents; and caregivers. It also includes individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on their religion or disability; first-generation professionals or first-generation college students; individuals with limited English proficiency; immigrants; individuals who belong to communities that may face employment barriers based on older age or former incarceration; persons who live in rural areas; veterans and military spouses; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality. Individuals may belong to more than one underserved community and face intersecting barriers.

H.3. Background Resources

The following resources listed and linked below offer useful background and guidance on making impact in the Chesapeake Bay watershed:

1. [Chesapeake Gateways Strategic Plan \(2021-2026\)](#)
2. [Refreshing the Chesapeake Gateways Network: An Updated Framework](#)
3. [Virginia Tourism Corporation Visitor Data VATC.org/research](#)
4. [Maryland Office of Tourism Development-Chesapeake-Bay-Visitor-Research-FULL-REPORT-FINAL-4-24-23.pdf \(visitmaryland.org\)](#)
5. [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#)
6. [Chesapeake Bay Program DEIJ Statement](#)
7. [Chesapeake Bay Program: Restoration from the Inside Out: A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Strategy](#)
8. [Chesapeake Conservation Partnership Goals](#)
9. [Marking Milestones - Progress in Conserving Land in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#)
10. [Executive Order 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)
11. [Executive Order 14305: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#)

12. [Executive Order 14008: Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad - The White House](#)

H.4. Sample Chesapeake Gateways Interpretive Themes

This appendix includes an overview of the NPS Chesapeake Gateways interpretive themes as presented in the *NPS Chesapeake Gateways Updated Framework Document*:

Introduction

Chesapeake Gateways uses a thematic structure for organizing Chesapeake stories. The structure is based on current research as well as ongoing interpretive programs.

An interpretive theme is a tool that helps interpreters affect their audience. Its purpose is to provide focus for the audiences' personal connections. An interpretive theme articulates a reason or reasons for caring about and caring for a resource. Using a theme, an interpreter hopes to provoke an audience to know the resource is meaningful and feel that its preservation matters.

As a Network, we employ interpretive themes at multiple scales, communicating from the local level at a particular site, to community-wide programing, to sharing regional and watershed-wide stories.

The thematic structure here does not prescribe specific themes for particular sites. Rather, it fosters our collective ability to create cohesive interpretation by placing specific stories in broader Chesapeake watershed-wide context.

Interpretive Themes

The Living, Natural Chesapeake: A complex interaction of water, land, climate, geological formations, and topographical features creates a unique ecosystem that supports the Chesapeake's remarkable diversity and abundance.

Long before humans came to the Chesapeake region, natural forces were shaping the Bay and its watershed. With a surface area of 2,500 square miles, the Bay is one of the largest estuaries in the world, serving as home for a wide variety of plant and animal life. Today, both natural and human forces continue to impact and change the Chesapeake watershed.

- Geology and Formation of the Bay
- Biological Diversity
- Bay Geography and Topography
- Native Plant Communities
- Area Mineral Deposits
- Finfish and Shellfish
- The Bay's Waters
- Wildlife and Waterfowl
- Estuarine Ecology

- Migratory Patterns in the Bay and the Atlantic
- Tidal Wetlands
- Natural Disasters
- Natural Productivity and Abundance of the Bay
- The Changing Climate

Peoples of the Chesapeake: From early settlement to today, the natural environment of the Chesapeake and the diverse population it attracted gave shape to distinctive cultural traditions.

People from all over the world settled side-by-side along the Bay, with both cooperation and conflict marking their communities. Racial, religious, ethnic, political and economic divisions have been counterbalanced by united efforts, common concerns and shared values. Throughout the history of its peoples, the water and land of the Bay influenced and transformed the cultures taking root. This heritage has given the region a distinctive style and identifiable sense of place.

- Peoples of the Bay: 13,000 Years of Immigration and Diversity
- Religious Groups, Activities and Influences on Culture and Society
- Changing Societies and Cultures Throughout History
- Racial and Ethnic Heritage
- Occupations of Bay Inhabitants
- Sources of Conflict and Cooperation
- Political Issues, Events and Developments in the Region
- Values and Social and Multi-cultural Endeavors of the Peoples of the Chesapeake

Settlement of the Chesapeake: The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries have attracted settlement by humans throughout time, resulting in patterns that shape the region's landscape and reflect the nation's history.

First, indigenous peoples, much later Europeans and soon after, Africans established footholds in the Chesapeake region. With each wave of settlement, those arriving dispersed along shorelines creating patterns of settlement dramatically influencing the United States and reflected to this day. Later arrivals fueled the growth of the region's metropolitan centers. Throughout, the Bay has served as magnet and crucible, attracting, defining, shaping and reconfiguring the patterns of settlement.

- Impact of Geography and Topography on Settlement
- Settlement Patterns in the Chesapeake Region
- Indigenous Communities
- European Exploration and Settlement
- Africans and African Americans
- Later Immigration to the Bay
- The Built Environment of the Bay
- Growth: Communities, Colonies, Towns, Cities

An Economic Resource: Commerce, Productivity & Transportation: The rich, natural abundance of the Chesapeake has been a powerful incentive for commercial development, influencing the region's economy, transportation and productivity.

The watershed's resources and geography shaped the economic development of the region. Terrestrial and marine creatures, as well as the land and waterways, led to development of specific industries, harvesting methods, modes of transportation and even boat designs. It is this resource-based economy and its connections to other parts of the nation and the world that are responsible for producing much of the image of the Chesapeake area. Despite modern transformations, natural resources remain a fundamental component of the Chesapeake economy.

- Marine Resources, their Harvesting and Harvesters
- Shipbuilding
- Land and Mineral Resources: Their Harvesting and Harvesters
- The Evolution of Transportation Throughout the Region and to and from the Nation
- Agriculture in the Chesapeake
- Recreation and Tourism in the Bay
- Trade Relationships and the Chesapeake
- Area Manufacturing and Industrialization
- The Bay and Its Tributaries as Highways
- The Chesapeake Economy in the 21st Century

Military and Naval Presence on the Chesapeake: Because of its vast waters and strategic location, the Chesapeake Bay has long played a critical role in the military and naval history of the United States.

As the site of the nation's capital, historic battles and significant military installations, the Bay has long been intricately involved in a complex and dramatic web of national and international affairs. Today the Chesapeake region continues to be home to a sizable military and naval presence.

- Conflicts between Indigenous Peoples & Colonists
- United States Naval Academy
- The Battles and Impact of the Revolutionary War
- Naval Ports and Military Installations
- The Chesapeake in The War of 1812
- Naval Shipbuilding, Design and Weaponry
- The Civil War in a Divided Region
- The Bay's Role in Developing Modern Weaponry
- Bay Installations in Twentieth Century Wars

The Chesapeake as a Source of Recreation and Renewal: Abundant opportunities for a broad range of leisure-time activities, involving sport, education, culture and stewardship, spring from the vast resources and exquisite landscapes of the Chesapeake watershed.

The traditional uses of the Chesapeake's waters by area residents—boating, fishing, hunting—have long attracted visitors for recreation and renewal. Especially in recent decades, Chesapeake related recreation has become an economic force in the region. Today, the Chesapeake watershed represents a source of inspiration and personal renewal through its diverse recreational opportunities and the natural and cultural heritage on which they are based.

- Public Lands and Public Health
- Water Sports in the Bay
- Birding and Wildlife Viewing
- Fishing
- Emergence of Bay Heritage Tourism and Ecotourism
- Exploring the Bay's Terrain: Hiking, Camping, Hunting, Sightseeing
- The Bay in Art: Photography, Painting, Literature and Poetry
- Decoy Carving
- Regional Music and Folklore

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability: The Chesapeake and its living resources are suffering from the cumulative effects of human use and exploitation. But new environmental attitudes, policies and behaviors offer hope for the Chesapeake's renewal and sustainability.

Realizing that an ecological crisis exists has impelled residents, visitors, governments, and organizations to reassess the ways in which humans interact with the Chesapeake watershed and use its resources. The changes resulting from this attention are helping to restore the watershed and creating a world-wide model for environmental programs. Restoration and conservation are crucial to sustaining the Bay and its tributary rivers and streams which make such fundamental contributions to our well-being, our heritage, and our spirit.

- Changing Perspectives on the Chesapeake
- Conservation and Sound Land Use
- Changing Environmental Attitudes and Behaviors
- Sustainable Regional Economic Development
- Resiliency and Responding to a Changing Climate
- Wildlife, Fish and Plant Protection and Restoration
- Individual Responsibility for the Bay
- Vital Habitat Protection and Restoration
- Community Engagement with Stewardship
- Water Quality Restoration and Protection

H.5. Chesapeake Watershed Map

PLEASE NOTE: While applicants can be from outside the Chesapeake watershed, only projects that take place within the watershed will be considered. Projects that take place outside the watershed will not be considered. A link to all of the counties located in the watershed can be [found here](#).



Map credit: [Kmusser, Wikimedia Commons](#)

**Appendix A - Application Package
Forms SF424, SF424A, SF424B**