



**MARYLAND HERITAGE AREAS AUTHORITY
GRANTS PROGRAM**

**BLOCK GRANT FOR MINI-GRANTS
GUIDELINES
Fiscal Year 2025**



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INTRODUCTION

The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (“MHAA”) Grant Program is a source of funding designed to assist and encourage the preservation of historical, archaeological, natural, and cultural resources and **support economic development through heritage tourism** within heritage areas certified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. Heritage area grant awards are made from the Maryland Heritage Areas Financing Fund, a non-lapsing, revolving fund into which up to \$6 million is deposited annually. The following is general information about the Heritage Areas Grant Program and instructions for completing the Certified Heritage Area Block Grant application.

Heritage Tourism is traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural, and natural resources.
– National Trust for Historic Preservation

DISCLAIMERS

Each applicant shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and departmental policies and programs regarding drug-, alcohol-, and smoke-free workplaces, disabled access and equal opportunity in employment, housing and credit practices, and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, familial status, or physical and/or mental disabilities in any aspect of the grant project.

Please be advised that in accordance with provisions of Executive Order 01.01.1983.18, if your application contains any information that may constitute personal information as defined below, you should be aware of the following:

1. Any personal information (“personal information” means any information about a natural person or his/her immediate family which identifies or describes any characteristics including but not limited to education, financial transactions or worth, medical history, criminal or employment record or things done by or to that natural person or his/her immediate family) requested by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (“MHAA”) and supplied by the applicant will be used principally for MHAA’s determination of the feasibility of the application;
2. Failure to accurately and adequately supply requested information may seriously jeopardize MHAA’s approval of the application;
3. MHAA will permit the subjects of any personal information in an application to inspect, amend, and correct such personal information;
4. Any document supplied to or obtained by MHAA may be a public record generally available for public inspection under the Maryland Public Information Act and COMAR 05.01.02; however, under the Maryland Public Information Act trade secrets, information privileged by law, confidential commercial data, and records describing an individual person’s finances may not be disclosed; and,
5. Personal information supplied to MHAA in an application may be shared with other state, local, or federal government agencies involved with the proposed financing or project.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include the following:

- **Non-profit organizations, local jurisdictions, and state agencies** that have been identified as **management entities** of Certified Heritage Areas (“Heritage Area”).
- **Non-profit organizations, local jurisdictions, and state agencies** to which Certified Heritage Area management responsibilities have been delegated by a Heritage Area management entity.

Non-profit organizations must be in good standing, qualified to do business in Maryland, and have the legal capacity and authority to incur obligations under the grant program.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The block grants provided to Heritage Areas from MHAA have a specific purpose: To fund smaller (compared with MHAA Project Grants), non-capital grants that will be awarded by the Heritage Area to organizations conducting projects within the Heritage Area’s boundaries. These smaller grants are often referred to as “mini-grants.”

The mini-grant projects should be consistent with the goals, objectives, strategies, and actions outlined in the approved Management Plan and/or Five-Year Action Plan for the applicant Certified Heritage Area.

Funds awarded as a block grant can only be utilized to provide mini-grants to organizations within boundaries of the Certified Heritage Area. They cannot be used for any other purpose.

GRANT AMOUNTS AND MATCHING FUND REQUIREMENTS

Block grants can be requested for up to **\$25,000**. This amount is contingent upon sufficient funding being made available in the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund.

Note: If a heritage area elects to use the Block Grant to fund mini-grants in a given fiscal year, their MHAA Management Grant for the same fiscal year cannot include funding for mini-grants.

All grants must be matched in an amount at least equal to the grant (dollar-for-dollar match).

Ineligible Match:

- State of Maryland funds, except for staff time from state employees
- Expenditures made prior to the award of the grant or after the completion of the grant period

Match requirements for the block grant can be met in two ways: either the Heritage Area provides an equal amount of non-state funds for mini-grants; or, the Heritage Area requires their mini-grantees to provide matching funds.

MINI-GRANT GUIDELINES

Heritage Areas must ensure that their mini-grantees follow these guidelines.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities **must** take place within the boundaries of a Certified Heritage Area, and be consistent with the goals, objectives, strategies, and actions outlined in the approved Certified Heritage Area Management Plan and/or Five-Year Action Plan for the Heritage Area where the mini-grant will take place.

Mini-grants can fund non-capital projects that support and create heritage tourism resources and experiences within the 13 Certified Heritage Areas. Non-capital projects often fall into the broad categories of planning, interpretation, programming, digital resources, and research. Mini-grant recipients can also use the funds for marketing activities.

Ineligible Activities

Mini-grants and matching funds cannot be used for the following:

- **Capital expenditures** (including building repairs, painting, trail construction and other bricks and mortar or construction activities);
- **Overhead expenses** (rent, utilities, etc.);
- **Salaries and/or benefits** of permanent or temporary staff of the grantee organization, although staff time working on the grant-funded project can be used as match; or
- **Alcohol**

If a Heritage Area has non-state funds that are in addition to their required mini-grant match that they wish to award for capital grant projects, they must establish a separate, stand-alone capital mini-grant program to ensure that there is no overlap between the allowable state-funded non-capital projects and the non-state-funded capital grant projects.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

See **Appendix A** for the list of criteria that are considered when applications are reviewed.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND DEADLINE

Block Grant applications are submitted directly to MHAA. FY25 applications must be submitted to MHAA by no later than 11:59 p.m. on May 17, 2024.

GRANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All successful grantees will be required to enter into a grant agreement with MHAA. It is important that you understand these terms and conditions prior to applying for grant funds because you will need to abide by them if a grant is awarded. See **Appendix B** for full terms and conditions.

GRANT SCHEDULE

Full Application –

- Due no later than **11:59 p.m. on May 17, 2024.**

Grant Review and Awards –

- MHAA Staff will review all Block Grant applications and make recommendations to MHAA in **May and June**
- MHAA takes final action on grant awards on **July 11, 2024**
- Applicants are notified by email after **July 11, 2024**
- If awarded, the grant period begins **July 11, 2024** and all mini-grants can be awarded after that date

APPLICATION FORMAT

A link to the Block Grant application will be emailed to all heritage area directors. All applications must be submitted online. All other online grant materials are available [here](#). See the [Quick Start Guide](#) on the MHT grants page for full details on the online submission process.

In addition to answering the questions in the online application form, applicants will be required to upload samples of the heritage area's mini-grant application and guideline materials.

APPENDIX A - PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be considered by MHAA when reviewing block grant proposals:

MINI-GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

- Is the application process well thought out?
- How will the Heritage Area spread the word about their mini-grant opportunities?

MINI-GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

- Is the review process well thought out?
- Does the review process include consideration of how potential mini-grant projects support the goals, objectives, strategies, and actions outlined in the approved Management Plan and/or Five-Year Action Plan for the applicant Certified Heritage Area?

APPENDIX B - GRANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All grantees will be required to enter into a grant agreement with MHAA, which generally contains the following standard terms and conditions:

- **Grant Term** - All grant funds generally must be expended within no more than 24 months of the date the grant agreement is signed by all parties, unless MHAA agrees to a longer term or approves in writing an extension of the grant period. Written progress and final reports must be submitted to MHAA during the grant term, generally at the mid-point and end of the project (grant agreements will specify reporting requirements). You may also be required to submit supporting financial documentation with progress and final reports identifying project costs incurred to date.
- **Grant Disbursements** – Grant funds shall be disbursed in a single lump sum payment upon submission of a disbursement request to MHAA via the online portal that can be submitted at any time after award notification. To close the grant project, grantees must provide a list of mini-grant recipients, copies of grant agreements that document the amount and purpose of the mini-grant funds, as well as the match requirements for the mini-grant (if applicable).
- **Nondiscrimination** - Each applicant shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and policies and programs regarding drug, alcohol and smoke free workplaces, disabled access and equal opportunity for employment, housing, credit practices and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, familial status or physical and/or mental disabilities in any aspect of the grant project.
- **Acknowledgment** - Grant and mini-grant recipients are required to provide appropriate acknowledgment of MHAA assistance for all projects in accordance with requirements outlined in the grant agreement. Grant recipients may also be required to provide appropriate acknowledgment of the local Certified Heritage Area management entity.
- **Compliance with Applicable Laws** – Recipients of funds are responsible for complying with all federal, state, and local laws applicable to the project. This responsibility includes, but is not limited to, compliance with local zoning, building and public safety codes, review by local historic preservation commissions, and federal and state licensing, permitting and environmental requirements.