

Local Government Technical Assistance Inventory and Gap Analysis Project

Environmental Policy Innovation Center, May 2026

The Chesapeake Bay Program's wide-ranging, multi-state effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay is largely implemented at the local level. Because of that, its Local Government Advisory Council recently recommended that technical assistance programs for local governments be expanded in the Bay states. To guide resource allocation decisions, the Local Government Technical Assistance Inventory and Gap Analysis Project was implemented in order to provide information to the Bay Program and constituent states on the scale and scope of current TA providers and programs (TAPs) across the Bay watershed.

The project focused on free TA available to municipal and county governments across the six Chesapeake Bay watershed states (did not include DC) that is relevant to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals. Through desk research, interviews, and circulation of a standardized data collection tool, the project identified 122 Technical Assistance Providers (TAPs) that support achievement of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement goals and collated them into a TAP inventory. The TAPs include academic institutions, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and various collaborations and partnerships. The TAPs cover a broad range of Bay Agreement goals and provide TA to many different kinds of communities across Bay states.



Gaps in Technical Assistance

- More TA resources relevant to Bay Agreement goals are available in states closer to the Chesapeake Bay, especially The Delmarva Peninsula
- TA is concentrated in the early stages of the project cycle, such as education for local government officials, but free engineering services are much less common.
- Water quality-related goals exhibited strong TA support in the inventory, but toxic contaminants, public access, and fish passage were low.
- Most TAPs in the inventory work on other projects in addition to TA. Only a small portion of TAPs allocate 75-100% of their time to TA.
- Lack of sustained funding makes longer-term work with local governments—where it takes time to build trust and see projects through to completion—difficult.



Recommendations to Close Gaps in Technical Assistance

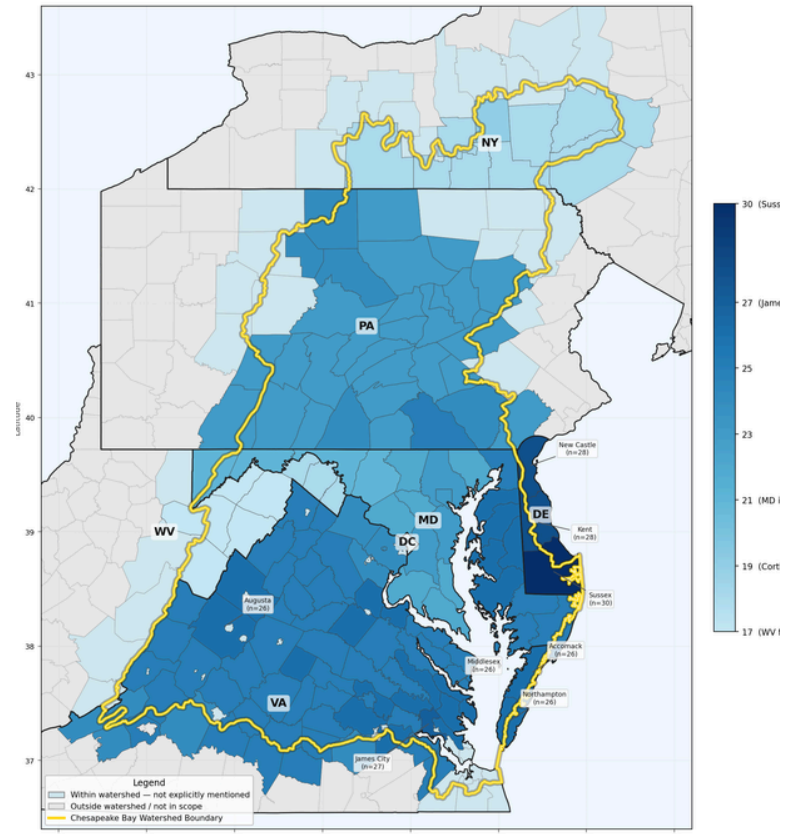
Implementation of these recommended actions to close these gaps in TA could strengthen the Chesapeake Bay Program's relationship with TAPs across the Bay watershed and empower local governments to increase the pace and scale of restoration.

Short-term actions

- **Publicly maintain data.** Support development of a living, online TAP inventory tool for the Chesapeake Bay that would be useful to both TAPs and local governments.
- **Encourage collaboration.** Establish a network or community of practice for TAPs that could foster information sharing to identify duplicative work and collaboration opportunities.
- **Target available TA resources.** The Bay program should facilitate targeting currently available TA to priority geographic regions and Bay Agreement goals.

Medium-term actions

- **Evaluate the effectiveness of TA models.** To inform resource allocation, support research to determine the relative effectiveness of existing TA models identified in the TAP inventory (e.g., grant-funded circuit rider program or county-level coordinators).
- **Evaluate demand.** Commission a study that evaluates on demand for TA from local governments, including what part of the project stage they need, what model they prefer, and what they think of the current TA landscape.
- **Expand the inventory to private sources of TA.** The scope of the current inventory was limited to TAPs that provide free TA to local governments, but private, fee-based sources of TA are a commonly-used resource for local governments.
- **Align TA and project implementation funding.** The Bay Program should ensure that funding for TA will be spent where funding for projects the TA is facilitating is also available.



Number of technical assistance providers serving each county
(Results reflect only those who completed data collection form)



While EPIC worked diligently to capture data on as many TAPs as possible, the project team recognizes that some may have been missed. For questions or to be included in future versions of this inventory, please contact Local Government Advisory Committee Staff at lgac@allianceforthebay.org.