



**Citizens Advisory Committee**  
TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Photo Credit: Will Parson/Chesapeake Bay Program

## **December 1, 2022**

### **Local Government Advisory Committee**

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# CAC Subcommittee 2022 Priority Panel Topics

(February) Water Quality: Conowingo Dam

(May) Emerging Issues: Large-Scale Solar Development and impacts on land use and water quality

➡ (September) Stewardship & Engagement:  
Equitable Access to Grants

# Panel Goals: Equitable Access to Grant Awards and Administration Practices

1. understand if grant eligibility requirements and priorities set by resource providers/funders lead to **funding disparities**, and
2. **identify barriers and solutions** to advance the capacity of organizations that do not meet these requirements

# CBP's Influence on Grant Making

**Congress directs \$19.25 M of EPA Chesapeake Bay Program budget toward:**

- Small Watershed grants

- Innovative Nutrient & Sediment Reduction grants

**Administered by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) through a cooperative agreement with EPA**

- Closely tied to CBP priorities

- Many NGOs and local government compete for the grant funds

# DEIJ Lens

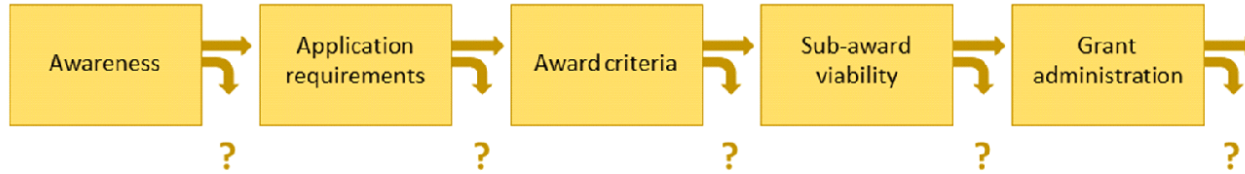
In 2020 the [Executive Council](#) (EC) of the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) signed a [Statement in Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice](#). In 2021, the EC approved a wide-ranging [DEIJ Implementation Plan](#) to:

- Strengthen the Chesapeake Bay Programs' authorizing environment for DEIJ
- Advance DEIJ Internally
- Advance DEIJ through mission-related work
- Advance DEIJ performance of partners

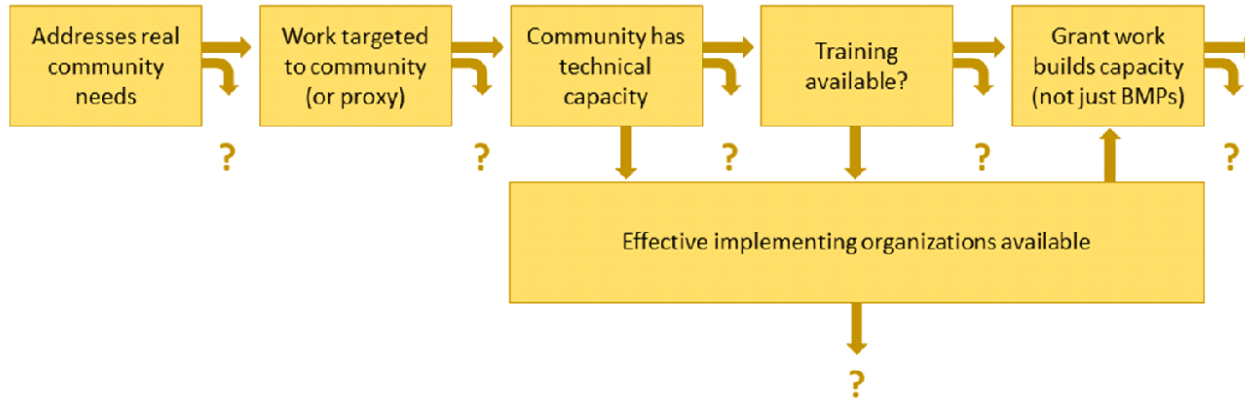
To best advance the Stewardship Goal and Outcomes in the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), the Bay Program best practices must be understood, valued, and essentially **“owned” by the communities** in which they are situated

# Equity and Inclusiveness as a Process: Where Things Can Go Wrong

## Grant Making Process



## Grant Execution Process



- Impediments in the grant making and grant execution process can combine to create a sequence of problems that exclude frontline groups from accessing important resources.

\*\*Entries in table capture panel planning discussions based on experiences and insights from the CAC Stewardship & Engagement Subcommittee members.

# The Process

- **A Three Part Panel**

- Facilitated discussion with three community organizations (Latino Outdoors, ReBUILD Metro, and Ward 8 Woods Conservancy) that have environmental components to their work
- Overview of findings from a contractor who evaluated systematic community engagement barriers within the Chesapeake Bay Program
- Conversation with NFWF on the changes the organization is making to incorporate DEIJ into their grant making.





# Compilation of Barriers and Solutions

Grant Making Process	
Barriers	Potential Solutions
<p><i>Awareness (GM1):</i> Community groups not aware of grant and other support offerings.</p> <p>*Grant availability notification only through specialized outlets</p> <p>*Lack of active outreach to impacted communities (e.g., EPA CWSRF opportunities listed only on state web sites)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Advertise the availability of grant programs through “community hub” newsletters, universities, faith-based groups, recreation centers, and other community media.</li> <li>(2) Publish annual or semi-annual forecasts of all Chesapeake Bay related grant availability, including local and jurisdictional opportunities, in one location.</li> <li>(3) Help pair organizations to create teams with expertise. This will also spread the word on grant availability.</li> <li>(4) *Consider having a percentage of grant monies go to new applicants and awardees over time.</li> </ol>
<p><i>Awareness (GM1):</i> Diversity, equity, and inclusiveness require significant cultural change within grant making and other support agencies.</p>	<p>*Reduce reviewer values and perspectives that perpetuate inequalities with training to address bias. When a reviewer uses logic like, “X organization has a long track record in this work” and thus their proposal is ranked highly, even if the project itself might not be that critical, it perpetuates an uneven playing field where it is more difficult for less-known organizations to get grant awards.</p> <p>*Co-develop proposals with and invite proposal reviewers who are members of the community subject to or potentially impacted by contemplated grant interventions.</p>
<p><i>Application Requirements (GM2):</i> Often grant eligibility is limited to 501c3 IRS status (not community groups or individuals)</p>	<p>*Create a hub or event where community groups without nonprofit status can meet and partner with nonprofits for local implementation. Be mindful of gatekeeping by administrative implementing organizations that inhibit authentic relationships with service providers.</p>
<p><i>Application Requirements (GM2):</i> Grant language is confusing, in particular, ‘inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact’.</p>	<p>Simplify grant language.</p> <p>*Include definitions in the same Requests for Application (RFA) instead of requiring the applicant to locate another resource, like a grant guidance document.</p>

\*\*Excerpt from the Grant Making Process chart found in the CAC Report of Findings: September 2022 Panel Discussion on Equitable Access to Grant Awards and Administration Practices



# Common Barriers

- **Confusing language.** Often, the language comprising applications is very technical, requiring the applicant to have advanced knowledge of scientific and administrative terminology and previous experience in grant writing.
- **Human capital.** Some small, frontline groups lack the human and experiential resources to develop the type of proposal required by federal agencies and other Bay Program partners.
- **Upfront costs.** Many grants reimburse recipients for costs spent to start their project. However, not all organizations have the financial capacity to make these upfront investments.

# Common Barriers, con't.

- **Federal requirements.** Federal grant requirements, such as submitting financial audit reports, using approved accounting systems, providing various insurances, etc., are prohibitive in many ways.
- **Matching fund requirements.** Grants that require organizations to match the funds being allocated excludes those with limited liquid capital.
- **Award criteria.** The metrics used to evaluate grant proposals tend to be technical, quantitative and built around pollution reduction calculations, while benefits related to education, community engagement and other public benefits are overlooked.

# Observations

- Small, community groups may not seek Chesapeake Bay funding because their primary focus is not Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment reduction.
- Grant application and grant execution should be treated differently and there are opportunities to advance viable applications from small community organizations.
- The existing funding should emphasize community determination of what and where green infrastructure projects are installed and good designers/engineers must find ways to achieve community priorities while reducing nutrient pollution to the region's waterways.

# Overall Findings

- CAC supports the nutrient and sediment reduction requirements for the Chesapeake Bay grants currently administered by NFWF.
- However, many of the existing Chesapeake Bay grants may not be effective in meeting the Chesapeake Bay Program's DEIJ goals.

Therefore, **expanded and new grant funding should be developed to explicitly support capacity building for frontline community organizations. This could serve as a pipeline for better access to substantial environmental funding.**

- CAC recommends this new funding consider developing a measurable "community uplift or "capacity building" outcome.



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# Thank you!

# Questions?

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