

Advisory Committees

Local Government Advisory Committee

Chair: Daniel Chao, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner 2E07, District of Columbia

The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) was created by the Chesapeake Executive Council through the *1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement*. The purpose of LGAC is to advise the Chesapeake Executive Council on how to effectively implement projects and engage the support of local governments to achieve the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. LGAC's mission is to share the views and insights of local elected officials with state and federal decision-makers and to enhance the flow of information among local governments about the health and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee

Chair: Larry Sanford, PhD, Vice-President for Education and Professor, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science Horn Point Laboratory

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) provides scientific and technical guidance to the Chesapeake Bay Program on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. Since its creation in December 1984, STAC has worked to enhance scientific communication and outreach throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed and beyond. STAC provides independent scientific and technical advice in various ways, serves as a liaison between the region's scientific community and the Chesapeake Bay Program, and ensures close cooperation among and between the various research institutions and management agencies represented in the Bay watershed.

Stakeholders Advisory Committee

Chair: Chuck Herrick, PhD, Adjunct Professor, New York University

The Stakeholders' Advisory Committee represents a diversity of stakeholders across the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including: watershed organizations, funders, environmental justice advocate, agricultural and business interests, restoration specialists, educators and retired state and federal government. They advise the leadership of the Chesapeake Bay Program by advocating for accountability to the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, community engagement and protection of the watershed's vital habitats and resources. Since 1984, this Committee has provided a non-governmental perspective on the restoration effort, and on how Chesapeake Bay Program policies and programs impact people who live, work and recreate throughout the watershed.

CHAIR
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District of Columbia

VICE-CHAIR – DC
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District of Columbia

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Pennsylvania

The Hon. Bruce Williams
Maryland (Emeritus)

The Hon. Phil Briddell
Pennsylvania (Emeritus)

The Hon. Susan Ryan
New York (Alternate)



Local Government Advisory Committee

to the Chesapeake Executive Council

November 18, 2024

Governor Wes Moore
Chair, Chesapeake Executive Council
Office of the Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Moore,

As Chairperson of the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC), I represent the collective voice of local elected officials throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. LGAC was created by the Chesapeake Executive Council through the 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement. LGAC's mission is to share the views and insights of local elected officials with state and federal decision-makers and to enhance the flow of information among local governments.

Over the past nearly 40 years, LGAC has offered recommendations on a range of issues. However, the following long-term priorities have remained consistent:

- Funding and technical assistance for local governments
- Communication and engagement with local governments
- Workforce development and training for local governments
- Alignment of state and federal plans with local government priorities
- Meaningful engagement with the Partnerships' advisory committees

Based on LGAC members' diligent work over the last year, I am pleased to present the attached 2024 Annual Recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council. We look forward to discussing these with you at the annual Executive Council Meeting and to collaborating with your staff to address these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Daniel Chao, LGAC Chairperson

CC: Chesapeake Executive Council
Martha Shimpkin, Director, Chesapeake Bay Program

Enclosure



Laura Cattell Noll, Local Government Initiative Director / LGAC Coordinator
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2024 Annual Recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council



Each year, LGAC collectively invests a significant amount of time and effort to understand the many issues affecting our local governments' ability to participate in and more fully benefit from watershed restoration and conservation. Based on our work in 2024, LGAC offers the following recommendations for Chesapeake Executive Council consideration:

Principals' Staff Committee Statement on the Advisory Committees

LGAC's Progress in 2024: In February, the Advisory Committee Chairs collaborated to send [a letter to the Principals' Staff Committee](#) expressing interest in an increased level of engagement with Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) leadership. LGAC members presently feel encouraged by the series of productive discussions that the Advisory Committee Chairs have had with the Management Board, the Principals' Staff Committee, and others since then.

LGAC devoted our March 2024 Quarterly Meeting to revamping our [bylaws](#), updating our [strategic plan](#), and creating a new [LGAC member position description](#); all with the goal of streamlining our efforts, increasing our effectiveness, and maximizing our value to the CBP partnership.

For their part, CBP leaders have sought opportunities to hear more from LGAC, including dedicating time on recent PSC and MB agendas, participating in a panel discussion at the July 2024 *Local Government Forum*, and engaging in more robust meetings with our Jurisdiction delegations. Following the July *Local Government Forum*, [LGAC comments](#) on the draft Beyond 2025 Steering Committee report reiterated our support for 'a more robust role for the Advisory Committees that includes deeper engagement with state and federal decision makers'.

Both LGAC members and CBP leaders have demonstrated their mutual commitment to forging a stronger relationship with each other and to fostering collaboration that results in actionable, impactful, and timely guidance from your advisory committees.

Recommendation #1: Building on the momentum started earlier this year, LGAC recommends that the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) begin 2025 by releasing a statement on the Advisory Committees. Such a statement could affirm the unique role of each individual independent Advisory Committee, highlight opportunities for collaboration with the full partnership, clarify the duties of the Advisory Committee Chairs as non-voting members of the Management Board (MB) and PSC, and document plans for deeper engagement with the Advisory Committees.

LGAC's Commitment for 2025: LGAC members are excited to continue collaborating with the other Advisory Committees, including welcoming the new Agricultural Advisory Committee. The LGAC Chair looks forward to deeper engagement with CBP leadership, inclusive of recurring meeting time on the Management Board and the PSC agendas and the collaborative identification of proposed 'special assignments' for LGAC.



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LGAC's Comments on Beyond 2025 Are Relevant for Phase II

LGAC's Progress in 2024: Over the last 18 months, LGAC has had strong representation on the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee, including participating in all monthly committee meetings, the 'People' small group, the 'Shallow Waters' small group, and the Beyond 2025 Symposium.

In addition, LGAC convened a [Local Government Forum: Looking Beyond 2025](#) on July 11, 2024 that engaged more than 73 local officials and invited guests. LGAC members also hosted a series of roundtable discussions that engaged more than 70 additional local government officials and staff from around the watershed (see [Report](#) and [Appendices](#) for full details). These robust discussions with a broad range of local government stakeholders informed [LGAC's comments](#) on the draft Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Report, titled *A Critical Path Forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Beyond 2025*.

LGAC Chairperson Daniel Chao's [opinion piece in the Bay Journal](#) succinctly summarized the needs of local governments during this pivotal moment.

Recommendation #2: As the partnership moves into Phase II, LGAC's feedback on the draft Beyond 2025 Steering Committee report is more relevant than ever. Local governments continue to be critical partners in protecting and restoring local waterways. Several of the key issues raised by LGAC in Phase I have not been fully resolved and therefore LGAC recommends the following in Phase II:

- investing in plain language communication materials to more effectively engage constituents
- increasing technical and administrative assistance to local governments and their partners
- convening key stakeholders to discuss how to balance conservation efforts and development pressure throughout the watershed

LGAC's Commitment for 2025: LGAC is committed to participating in Phase II of the Beyond 2025 work, including but not limited to: consulting on plain language communication materials, supporting the design and roll-out of new or expanded local government technical assistance programs, and helping to lead any future conversations related to land use, land preservation, and conservation.

Regulatory Sandboxing is an Opportunity to Innovate While Minimizing Risk

LGAC's Progress in 2024: [LGAC's 2023 Annual Recommendations letter](#) highlighted regulatory sandboxing as an opportunity to drive innovation and suggested that local governments could be valuable partners for exploring regulatory sandboxes. The [CBP response letter](#) proposed utilizing a 2024 LGAC quarterly meeting to *'have further discussions with LGAC to better understand what regulatory sandbox examples exist that could perhaps serve as a model for potential replication.'*

To this end, [LGAC's September quarterly meeting](#) included two sessions on regulatory sandboxing: one to further understand the concept, and one to explore two potential opportunities for regulatory sandboxing. Expert speakers defined regulatory sandboxing as *'a space, crafted and controlled by a regulator, designed to allow the testing of novel products or processes to be conducted under supervision prior to their full entry into the marketplace'* ([full presentation](#)). Discussions yielded a few key takeaways:

- a clear process to identify and set-up regulatory sandboxes is needed
- interest in regulatory sandboxes is higher in the regulated community than in the regulator community



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- regulatory sandbox opportunities for best management practices (BMPs) can be divided into three key categories: implementation, verification, and crediting
- innovative solutions could lower costs for local governments and scale up benefits to communities
- regulatory sandboxing is one opportunity to test out innovative solutions, but other options (pilots, exemptions etc.) could also be appropriate
- regulatory sandboxes are a clear opportunity for public/private partnerships
- successful regulatory sandboxes create clear guardrails for regulatory flexibility
- to fully determine it's potential, regulatory sandboxing needs to be strategically tested in different contexts, not just discussed

LGAC members welcome regulatory sandboxing as a possible opportunity to grant local governments flexibility to meet regulations in cost-effective and innovative ways, but implementation of regulatory sandboxes needs to be carefully managed to avoid undermining existing regulations or negatively impacting natural resources.

LGAC's Commitment for 2025: LGAC is eager to work collaboratively with the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), EPA, the jurisdictions, and others in 2025 to further explore opportunities and barriers related to regulatory sandboxing and local governments. LGAC members are ready and willing to support state partners who wish to implement and expand sandboxing, especially as it relates to engaging or partnering with local governments.



Chesapeake Bay Program
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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December 10, 2024

Hon. Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland, Chair
Chesapeake Bay Partnership Executive Council
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Moore and Distinguished Members of the Executive Council,

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) supports the CBP's commitment to advancing science-based decision-making by coordinating a range of collaborative efforts to guide established priorities and characterize emerging concerns. Our members from 35 institutions across the Bay watershed contributed nearly 3000 hours in 2024, valued at more than \$300,000.

STAC plays a vital role in the partnership's commitment to developing evidence-based policy and implementing effective management through tools such as technical reviews, workshops that convene scientific experts and stakeholders, and synthesis projects. Over the past year, STAC has sponsored one workshop, published six reports, participated on numerous CBP committees, and held four regular quarterly meetings that engaged both internal and external scientific experts in wide-ranging discussions on science supporting Chesapeake Bay restoration. The workshop reports published in the past year have addressed critical emerging issues with important implications for achieving the Bay watershed agreement goals, as well as human health and social and economic well-being. A full list of STAC's activities and products from this past year is provided as an attachment to this letter.

STAC also participated actively in the CBP Beyond 2025 effort and is satisfied that our recommendations and opinions were considered and incorporated appropriately in the final Beyond 2025 Report. We appreciate the attention given to the 2023 STAC Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR) Report during Beyond 2025 deliberations.

Looking forward to 2025, a pivotal year for the Partnership, STAC offers the following five primary recommendations as the program works on Beyond 2025 Phase 2 and considers the future:

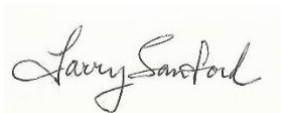
1. **The Partnership should integrate public perspectives and participation to the greatest extent possible.** Without the full consent, support, and participation of the public, restoration of Chesapeake Bay and its watershed will always be an uphill battle. There are several ways in which public engagement can be further enhanced, most of which already exist. One is through greater engagement between CBP management and the CBP Advisory Committees, especially those representing local governments, stakeholders, and the agricultural community. STAC already enjoys an effective working relationship with the CBP due to its historic emphasis on natural science and environmental technology, but it has also established a new Social Science standing workgroup to explore specific ways in which social science expertise can be brought to bear on restoration efforts in the Bay watershed.
2. **The Partnership should articulate engagement opportunities with the advisory committees.** Building on the momentum started earlier this year, the Stakeholders' Committee recommends that

the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) begin 2025 by releasing a statement on the Advisory Committees. Such a statement could affirm the unique role of each individual Advisory Committee, highlight opportunities for collaboration with the full partnership, clarify the duties of the Advisory Committee Chairs as non-voting members of the Management Board (MB) and PSC, and document plans for deeper collaboration.

3. **Likely climate change impacts can and should be built into all CBP planning and implementation efforts.** Climate change will impact many, if not most, CBP goals and outcomes in interconnected ways that have yet to be fully identified or explored. Several recent STAC workshops and reports have considered likely climate change impacts and made recommendations for mitigation and adaptation. Consideration of climate response may actually accelerate achievement of some CBP outcomes. STAC is prepared to help identify and prioritize climate change impacts and responses. .
4. **The Partnership should elevate the importance of living resources in its program goals.** Conservation and restoration of living resources throughout the Bay and its watershed are often among the highest priorities for the public. While water quality is an important prerequisite for improved living resource habitat, achieving water quality goals does not guarantee living resource restoration. The quality of shallow water habitat is particularly important for many species of concern, for example. A locally focused and holistic approach to prioritizing living resource conservation and restoration is needed, including clear articulation of desired outcomes and metrics.
5. **The Partnership should expand its capacity for flexible responses to changing conditions and improved understanding, embracing adaptive management approaches at multiple program levels to improve the CBP's capacity to learn while doing.** STAC believes that the CBP Strategy Review System (SRS) can serve as a basis for this expansion through revision, re-organization, and re-evaluation on a regular basis, assessing not only the capacity to address current outcomes but also whether the outcomes themselves need reassessing or revising.

STAC thanks the partnership for its ongoing commitment to using scientific evidence to design and implement effective management of this valuable ecosystem and its watershed. STAC looks forward to working with the Executive Council and the rest of the partnership to continue to apply sound, independent science to effectively restore and conserve Chesapeake Bay and its watershed for the benefit of its myriad stakeholders.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Larry Sanford". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Lawrence P. Sanford, Ph.D.

Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee

Attachment

Summary of STAC Activities June 2023- June 2024

STAC-sponsored Scientific and Technical Workshops (1)

- Chesapeake Bay Program Climate Change Modeling III: Post-2025 decisions

Planned Activities June 2024 – June 2025

STAC-sponsored Scientific and Technical Workshops (4)

- Striped Bass Survey Assessment and Habitat Connections
- Blueprint for Building Partnerships and Recommendations for Scaling Brook Trout Restoration in Stronghold and Persistent Patches
- Identifying Natural and Social Sciences Gaps to Support Market-Based Approaches to Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration
- Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to Advance Chesapeake Bay Research and Management: A Review of Status, Challenges, and Opportunities

Reports Published by STAC June 2023 – July 2024 (6)

Links to reports are available on STAC's website at chesapeake.org/stac.

- *Using Carbon to Achieve Chesapeake Bay (and Watershed) Water Quality Goals and Climate Resiliency: The Science, Gaps, Implementation Activities and Opportunities*
- *Evaluating an Improved Systems Approach to Crediting: Consideration of Wetland Ecosystem Services*
- *Best Management Practices to Minimize Impacts of Solar Farms on Landscape Hydrology and Water Quality*
- *Using Local Monitoring Results to Inform the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Model*
- *Using Ecosystem Services to Increase Progress Toward, and Quantify the Benefits of Multiple CBP Outcomes*
- *The State of the Science and Practice of Stream Restoration in the Chesapeake: Lessons Learned to Inform Better Implementation, Assessment, and Outcomes*



Stakeholders' Advisory Committee

TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

November 19, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor of Maryland
Chair, Chesapeake Executive Council

Dear Governor Moore,

On behalf of the Stakeholders' Advisory Committee (Stakeholders' Committee) to the Chesapeake Executive Council, we are pleased to offer the below annual recommendations for your consideration. We represent a diversity of stakeholders, including experts in land use, water quality, and community engagement, from across the Chesapeake Watershed and embrace the shared value of healthy, sustainable Rivers and Chesapeake Bay. Created in 1984, the Stakeholders' Committee continues to serve as independent volunteers bringing nonpartisan advice on restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Over the past year, the Stakeholders' Committee has reflected on the findings of the [Charting a Course to 2025](#) report of progress on the 2025 targets for the 31 Outcomes in the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (Watershed Agreement)*. We note that 18 outcomes are on course, 11 outcomes are off course, and 2 are uncertain. Most notably, we acknowledge the report's ongoing challenges to get 100% of practices needed to be in place to support clean water as mandated by the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. These challenges include: "insufficient regulatory and voluntary measures not being in place to incentivize implementation in the nonpoint source sectors, water quality standards attainment needed for the deep waters of the Bay and continually changing conditions such as climate change and increasing development pressures throughout the watershed." (pg.8)

Our members have been engaged in this year's work to explore [A Critical Path Forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program Beyond 2025](#) across science, restoration and conservation, and the partnership. We support the charge to the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) to propose amendments to the *Watershed Agreement* and streamline the Chesapeake Bay Program. The coming years will bring change. We believe the partnership is well positioned to use its state-of-the-art scientific knowledge, lessons learned over the years, and commitment to collaboration to shepherd this change in an effective way. As the ERG consultant's report [Chesapeake Bay Program Beyond 2025 Evaluation](#) recommended, we strongly encourage a culture of transparency to support productivity and trust as the Chesapeake Bay Program undertakes these initiatives. Additionally, we encourage you and the partnership to rely on the varied expertise your independent advisory committees offer.

CHAIR
Charles Herrick
Washington, DC

John Dawes
Pennsylvania

Andrew Der
Maryland

Matt Ehrhart
Pennsylvania

William Fink
Pennsylvania

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Maryland

Tim Rupli
Virginia

BeKura Shabazz
Virginia

Charlie Stek
Maryland

Dana Wiggins
Virginia

Below are our annual recommendations as it relates to the work that lies ahead in 2025 and beyond. The key points provided by your volunteer advisors fall under the rubric of (1) accountability to water quality targets, (2) locally driven land conservation, and (3) increased engagement of community-based organizations.

Respectfully submitted,



Chuck Herrick
Chair, Stakeholders' Advisory Committee



Stakeholders' Advisory Committee
TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

2024 Stakeholders' Advisory Committee Annual Recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council

Since the October 2023 Executive Council meeting, the Stakeholders' Advisory Committee (Stakeholders' Committee) traveled throughout the watershed to meet with agency representatives, thought leaders, and practitioners. We held quarterly meetings and panel discussions, hosted virtual learning sessions, and discussed our role in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion both internally and at the Chesapeake Bay Program. We learn from our diverse membership as well as from communities and organizations about their economic and social connections to the health of their local waterways. We follow the progress of the *Watershed Agreement* Outcomes and the Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), while we learn about emerging issues. We appreciate the substantial progress toward Bay restoration in the light of many challenges. We recognize and thank the many persons, organizations, agencies, and others who have made a difference. Based on these discussions, the following recommendations are respectfully submitted to the executive leadership of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Recommendation #1:

Articulate Engagement Opportunities with the Advisory Committees

Building on the momentum started earlier this year, the Stakeholders' Committee recommends that the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) begin 2025 by releasing a statement on the Advisory Committees. Such a statement could affirm the unique role of each individual Advisory Committee, highlight opportunities for collaboration with the full partnership, clarify the duties of the Advisory Committee Chairs as non-voting members of the Management Board (MB) and PSC, and document plans for deeper collaboration.

Recommendation #2: Confirm Accountability to Water Quality Targets

The Stakeholders' Committee emphasizes the importance of responsibility to and accountability for the jurisdictions to meet all of the water quality and living resources goals of the *Watershed Agreement* and the Bay TMDL, including the Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). We understand that setting a new deadline for achieving the Bay TMDL is a complex undertaking made more uncertain by modeling and other technical needs and challenges, system lag times, land use changes, climate, and a potential additional approach to tiered implementation for shallow waters. Realistic timeframes for monitored water quality attainment in the deep channel are estimated in decades.

Recent reports highlight the need for strategies to address nonpoint source pollution, including the 2023 Office of Inspector General Report: [EPA Should Update Its Strategy, Goals, Deadlines, and Accountability Framework to Better Lead Chesapeake Bay Restoration Efforts](#). We acknowledge in EPA's September 15, 2023 response to the IG report that the EPA Region 3 will "lead the Chesapeake Bay Program in developing a new strategy to specifically address nonpoint source pollution" (pg.2). In addition to encouraging the jurisdictions to fully and consistently use the existing regulatory and enforcement authorities, we encourage you to set an ambitious target for implementing the existing WIPs to provide public assurance and accountability to the water quality goals until the new targets are finalized. Specifically:

- We strongly encourage the Bay Program to commit by the end of 2025 to a new deadline for implementation of the existing Watershed Implementation Plans as a part of the revision of the *Watershed Agreement*.
- Additionally, we recommend revising the water quality accountability framework to include a new near-term deadline for the Bay TMDL and a nonpoint source pollution reduction strategy.

Recommendation #3:

Support Locally Driven Watershed Plans that Incorporate Land Conservation

We uplift an important healthy watersheds consideration from the [Beyond 2025 Steering Committee's Small Group Findings](#) to elevate conservation and stewardship as key guiding pillars for the Chesapeake Bay Program- "Leverage knowledge of local, state, and federal programs to conserve 30% of the land by 2030, achieve longer-term goals, and build an interconnected network of conserved landscapes". (pg 14) We believe tributary-based watershed restoration and conservation plans informed by Chesapeake Bay Program land use tools would prioritize areas that are most vulnerable to development and climate change to protect habitats and water quality and address local nonpoint source pollution.

- We recommend the jurisdictions approach their next phase of Watershed Implementation Plans to support locally driven river basin strategies to delist a target number of rivers by a future date with interim milestones along the way. This approach should include initiatives to engage communities, officials, watershed and conservation groups, land trusts, and local service providers to incentivize and allocate funds for the protection of tributaries with an emphasis on existing forests and wetlands.

Recommendation # 4:

Increase Engagement of Community-Based Organizations by Lowering Grant Barriers

Since our 2022 report on [Equitable Access to Grant Awards and Administrative Practices](#), we have heard that entities distributing Chesapeake Bay related funding pass through non-negotiable federal and state requirements as provisions of administering grants. A clear understanding of where grant reporting requirements originate, a conversation about barriers and potential solutions, and the identification of administrative flexibility could help to increase engagement of Community-Based Organizations, thereby advancing the *Watershed Agreement's* Stewardship and Diversity Outcomes. Specifically,

- We recommend the Chesapeake Bay Program partners convene a forum and action-oriented workgroups with members of the Stakeholders' Committee and include agency leaders, prevalent bay watershed foundations, and federal and state contractual, budgetary, and financial officials to identify and implement institutional and procedural changes to grant application and administrative requirements that lower barriers for Community-Based Organizations.