



OPERATING EXPENSES MINI-GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES – FY2021

Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area

Overview of Program

This year only, the Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area has been authorized by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority to apply mini-grant funds to support heritage tourism entities struggling with operating expenses as a result of COVID-19.

Every year, the Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area also offers project mini-grants to fund heritage tourism non-capital projects undertaken by nonprofit organizations and government entities. **These guidelines pertain to the operating expense mini-grants only.** For details about the project mini-grant program, please see the separate guidelines here: <https://visitdorchester.org/heritage-area-mini-grants/>

Mission of the Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area

As one of the Maryland Heritage Area Authority's 13 regions designated as Certified Heritage Areas, the Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area:

1. Leverages public and private partnerships to assist individuals, organizations and government entities protect, preserve and promote Dorchester County's unique historic, cultural and natural resources.
2. Broadens and deepens the beneficial effect of heritage tourism on the local economy through advocacy, interpretation and preservation that enhances assets and people's awareness, understanding and appreciation of those assets.

Goals of the Heritage Area

- Enhance heritage resources
- Raise visibility
- Strive for compatible economic redevelopment
- Practice stewardship

Heritage Area website: www.visitdorchester.org/about-dorchester/for-heritage-partners

Eligibility

Operating expense mini-grants are available to nonprofit heritage tourism organizations located within the boundaries of the Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area (Dorchester County).

Eligible Expenses

Operating costs associated with the COVID-19 State of Emergency, beginning July 9, 2020, and extending until 90 days after the end of the State of Emergency. Operating costs include any expenses that allow an organization to continue operations and to safeguard heritage resources during and after the pandemic, including, but not limited to, masks, hand sanitizer, staff salaries, utilities, insurance, contractor services, rent and mortgage payments.

Award Amounts & Match

Emergency operating mini-grants share the same pool of funds (\$25,000) as ordinary, non-capital project mini-grants. Emergency operating expense mini-grants may be awarded from \$500 to \$5,000. Awards must be matched 1 to 1 with any combination of cash and in-kind non-state support. Organizations may also apply for a conventional non-capital project mini-grant; however, the combined amount of the applications for the two mini-grant programs may not exceed \$5,000.

Review Criteria

- Shown urgency of need with concrete examples
- Clearly outlined the intended use of emergency funds
- Demonstrated interruption to operations due to the coronavirus with estimates of lost revenue and increased expenses
- Pursued other avenues of funding open to them
- Adapted to provide some level of engagement with their public under coronavirus restrictions (i.e. online programming, social media, socially distant and masked tours)
- Has a mission consistent with interpretive themes, goals and/or suggested programs, projects, and activities in the Heart of Chesapeake Country Strategic Plan. See the plan here: <http://bit.ly/hccha-plan2018>

Completed Operating Expense Mini-Grant applications should include:

- Completed online form, including budget
- Proof of non-profit status, mission statement, and names of Board of Directors
- Letter of support from a partner organizations, elected or governmental official, or other outside party

Timeframe

- Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, beginning Oct. 1.
- Funds, if awarded, will be disbursed in a single lump sum upon execution of a grant agreement.
- A final report must be submitted, including a simple budget of actual expenses and the application of the mini-grant funds. The final report, with receipts, will be due within 60 days of the Governor terminating the State of Emergency or by Aug. 21, 2021 – whichever comes first.

Terms & Conditions

- Grant recipients will participate in a Grant Recipient Partnership Seminar in Spring 2021.
- Grant recipients will prepare a display about their organization for the HCCHA awards reception in 2021.

Application Procedure

A fully completed application must be submitted online: <http://bit.ly/heritage-covid-grant>

For Assistance and Questions

Julie Gilberto-Brady, Manager, Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area

julie@visitdorchester.org

Dorchester County Visitor Center

2 Rose Hill Place

Cambridge, MD 21613