Drinking from the Firehose: Technical Assistance for Accessing State and Federal Resources

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Overview

o Environmental Finance Center (EFC) Overview

o Federal Funding
  o How much funding is available?
  o How do you access federal funding?

o Technical Assistance
  o TCTAC
  o Region 3 WaterTA

o Funding Opportunities

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Environmental Finance Centers (EFC)

Environmental Finance Centers

- Network of centers across the country

- UMD EFC works throughout the mid-Atlantic

- Provide the information, tools and resources to build community capacity to pay for resource protection and restoration priorities

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Capacity Building & Training
- Local Government Leadership Training
- On-line and Virtual Workshops
- Municipal Online Stormwater Training (MOST) Center

Policy Analysis & Financial Assessment
- Policy Review
- Financing Strategies
- Budget Analysis
- Program Evaluation

Community Outreach & Facilitation
- Designing outreach campaigns
- Facilitating stakeholder engagement
- Conducting focus groups
- Managing community surveys and interviews

Capacity Building Technical Assistance

o Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC)

o WaterTA Program (focused on IRA funds)

o Small Systems Capacity Building Program

o MOST Center

o Advancing Energy Justice in Maryland

o Maryland Local Government Climate Action Support Program
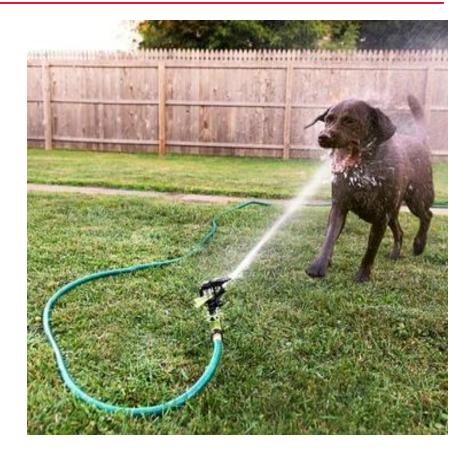
o Maryland Solar for All

Federal Funding

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

- BIL
  - $1.2 trillion
  - Infrastructure and jobs
  - 350 programs, 12+ agencies
  - Grants and Loans
- IRA
  - $370 billion
  - Clean energy and jobs
  - 100s more programs
  - Grants, loans, rebates, and incentives

The Challenge…
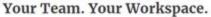
Funding is not the only limiting factor:

- o Navigating hundreds of programs
- o Competing timelines
- o Prioritizing needs
- o Proposal development capacity
- o Grants management capacity
- o Loan payback requirements
- o Procurement and reporting requirements

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Finding Relevant Opportunities: Federal

Finding Relevant Federal Opportunities:

Search Filters on Grants.gov

- Opportunity Status
- Funding Instrument Type
- Eligibility
- Category
- Agency

Finding Relevant Opportunities: Federal

Sign up for EPA's listserv:
https://www.epa.gov/grants/forms/subscribe-epa-grants-update-listserv

Consider partnering with the US Forest Service:
https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/partnerships

Sign up for DoE's competitions and prizes listserv:
https://www.energy.gov/eere/funding/eere-prizes-and-competitions

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Technical Assistance

Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (TCTAC) Program

Program Goals:

o April 2023 - EPA announced TCTAC, which provides grant funding to establish technical assistance centers nationwide to provide TA, training, and related support to EJ communities

o 16 TCTACs in partnership with the US Department of Energy will receive a total of $117 million to help overburdened communities
  o Region 3 received $12 million

Region 3 Team:

o National Wildlife Federation (NWF), UMD Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice & Health (CEEJH), and UMD EFC

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TCTAC Objectives

o Provide outreach to underserved, overburdened, rural, and capacity strained communities through TA to increase capacity to:

  o Assess environmental and energy justice concerns, obtain funding, and engage policymakers and government agencies to evoke change

o Technical Assistance Opportunities

  o Wayfinding – how to use grants.gov, how to register in SAM.gov

  o Training on grants administration

  o Capacity building and organization growth
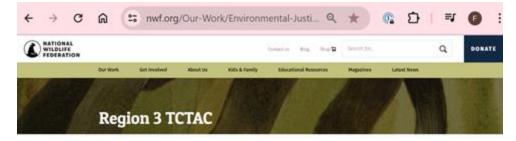
  o Partnership development

TCTAC Approach

Community partners serve as "hubs" to ensure services are easily accessible both in location and culture.

o Community hubs include
- o Appalachian Voices
- o Centro de Apoyo Familiar (CAF)
- o Empower DC
- o Overbrook Environmental Education Center
- o Sentinels of Eastern Shore Health
- o South Baltimore Community Land Trust
- o Sussex Health & Environmental Network
- o UrbanKind

o HBCU hubs include
- o Morgan State University
- o Virginia State University
- o West Virginia State University

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TCTAC Intake Process

https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Environmental-Justice/Region-3-TCTAC

Grants Database

Start Date

4/30/2024

Program	**Funder**
Urban Trees Mini-Grant Program	Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT)

Focus Area

Environmental Justice Tree Planting

Summary

Mini grant to fund small tree planting projects in underserved urban areas of Maryland

Eligible Applicants

Faith-based organizations Nonprofits Community Based Organizations
Homeowner Associations Community Associations Schools Communities
Service, Youth, and Civic Groups

Match or Cost Share Requirement

Match is encouraged but not required

Total Funding Available	**Individual Award Amount**
Applications accepted on a rolling basis "until funds for this fiscal year are exhausted"	Up to $5000

Award Period

Lump sum -- "Most awardees will receive 90% of their funds up front... and 10% of the total award after the final report is submitted and approved."

Notes

(1) Only specific areas of Maryland are eligible applicants (see map here)

(2) Full proposals are not required up front; provide CBT with basic information, and they will work with you to develop a more detailed plan

Application type	**Status**
Online Application	OPEN (Rolling basis)

Resources

(1) Program Assistant: Bridget Robey, at (410) 974-2941 x 117 or brobey@cbtrust.org

(2) Website link; scroll down for an informational webinar

(3) MD underserved community map

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Region 3 WaterTA

https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/water-technical-assistance-waterta

EPA Region	EFC
1	University of Maine System
2	Syracuse University
3	University of Maryland
4	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
4	Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project Inc.
5	WSOS Community Action Commission Inc.
5	Delta Institute
6	University of New Mexico
7	Wichita State University
8	National Rural Water Association
9	Rural Community Assistance Corporation
9	Hawaii Community Foundation
10	Rural Community Assistance Corporation

EFC's Region 3 WaterTA Goals

o   Provide direct TA to communities

o   Support communities to take steps toward accessing water infrastructure funding (state revolving funds)

o   Coordinate and collaborate to support effective delivery of TA

   o   If we aren't the right fit, connect communities with whoever is

o   Prioritize underserved communities

   o   40% Justice40

o   10 "deep dive" and 30-50 "light touch" annually

Technical Assistance Services

Planning & Assessment	Project Development	Partnerships & Engagement	Funding & Financing	Program Management
Community Engagement	Preliminary Engineering Reports	Ongoing Engagement & Outreach	Rates & Revenues Analyses	Bid Support
Plan Development & Coordination	Asset Management Inventories	Decision-Maker Education	Financial Planning	Change Order Review
Studies & Assessments	Project Design	Partnerships	Identify Funding Options	Project Inspection
Asset Management	Environmental Reviews	Capacity Building & Training	Application Support	Domestic Preference & Davis Bacon Assistance

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How to Reach Us

EPA Intake Form
https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/forms/water-technical-assistance-request-form

UMD - EFC Intake Form
https://arch.umd.edu/research-creative-practice/centers/environmental-finance-center/project-areas/technical-assistance/region-3-waterta-program

State Referral

Direct Email

https://arch.umd.edu/research-creative-practice/centers/environmental-finance-center/project-areas/technical-assistance/region-3-waterta-program

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Funding Opportunities

Community Change Grants

o Provide resources for **community-driven projects to address environmental and climate challenges** in communities facing disproportionate and adverse health, pollution, and environmental impacts, and suffering from generations of disinvestment.

o Invest in strong **cross-sectoral collaborations** with partners who bring a robust commitment to working with and for communities.

o Unlock access to **additional and more significant resources** to advance environmental and climate justice goals.

o Empower communities and **strengthen their capacity** to drive meaningful positive change.

o Strengthen community **participation in government decision-making** processes that impact them.

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The Basics: Two Tracks

Track One: Community-Driven Investments for Change

- o Awards of $10-20 million *each*

- o Climate action and pollution reduction strategies that improve the environmental, climate, and resilience conditions affecting disadvantaged communities.

Track Two: Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance

- o Awards of $1-3 million *each*

- o Facilitate the engagement of disadvantaged communities in governmental processes to advance environmental and climate justice.

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The Basics: Timeline

o Rolling submissions through November 21, 2024

o Approximately monthly reviews

o Originally suggested first reviews in February 2024, awards March/April 2024, and projects to begin May/June 2024

o Projects must be completed within 3 years. There are *no extensions*.

o Lead applicants can submit 2 proposals, max

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The Basics: Submission

o Submission is through Grants.gov, which requires registration.

o Submission through Grants.gov requires SAM.gov registration and a UEI number (Unique Entity ID).

o Registering with SAM.gov will generate a UEI.

These processes take time, and you need to budget for them in your timeline.

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Important Things to Consider

o *Are you registered with Grants.gov and SAM.gov?*

o *Can you meet the timeline?* There is a lot of writing, plan development, and required documentation. This is not a proposal you can start 2 weeks or even a month before it is due.

o *Do you have the capacity to manage this large amount of money?* You can not apply for less than the minimum amount. Awards of this size come with a lot of reporting, auditing, and financial implications.

o *Do you know who your partners would be?* There are specific partner eligibility requirements, including a formal partnership agreement.

o *This might not be the best opportunity to take a new partnership with no history for a "test drive."*

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Track One: Summary

Community-Driven Investments for Change

Anticipating: 150 awards of $10 - $20 million

Goals:

- o Increase community resilience

- o Reduce local pollution

- o Center meaningful community engagement

- o Build community strength

- o Reach priority populations

- o Maximize integration across projects

Track One: Required Elements

In addition to the project narrative, every application must include the following six elements:

1. Climate Action Strategy
2. Pollution Reduction Strategy
3. Community Engagement and Collaborative Governance Plan (10 pages)
4. Community Strength Plan (5 pages)
5. Readiness Approach
6. Compliance Plan (5 pages)

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Track Two: Summary

Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance

Anticipating: 20 awards of $1 - $3 million

Goals:

- Build capacity of communities to have a meaningful voice.
- Support direct community participation in the development and implementation of solutions, policies, and programs.
- Break down systemic barriers to community participation.
- Create two-way engagement and feedback mechanisms.
- Inform communities about issues.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure community needs are integrated into government processes and policies.

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Resources

o EFC's proposal templates with guidance

o EFC Track One and Track 2 recordings

o Environmental Protection Network's resources

 o Application guides

 o Informational webinars

 o Example documents

 o https://www.environmentalprotectionnetwork.org/ffog-january-25-2024/

Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program

Provides funding to historically underserved communities that have been disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards. Grants may address a wide range of environmental issues including (but not limited to) the following:

- Air quality & asthma
- Fence line air quality monitoring
- Monitoring of effluent discharges from industrial facilities
- Water quality & sampling
- Improving food access to reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Lead and asbestos contamination
- Pesticides and other toxic substances
- Healthy homes that are energy/water use efficient and not subject to indoor air pollution
- Illegal dumping activities, such as education, outreach, and small-scale clean-ups
- Emergency preparedness and disaster resiliency

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The Basics

Grants will be available for three (3) distinct tiers of community readiness and action. The criteria and process for the severely capacity-constrained communities will be managed outside of this RFA process.

Tier	Award Focus	Expected # of Awards	Amount	Award Period	Application Deadline
I	Assessment Projects	60	Up to $150,000	1 Year	Rolling and no later than April 30, 2025
II	Planning Projects	51	Up to $250,000	1-2 Years	Rolling; 2-year grants: no later than November 30, 2024 1-year grants: no later than April 30, 2025
III	Implementation Projects	50	Up to $350,000	2 years	Rolling and no later than November 30, 2024
N/A	Noncompetitive Capacity-Building for severely capacity constrained communities	10	$75,000	1 year	

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Eligibility Criteria

o   Applicants and projects must be in EPA Region 3, which includes DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, and WV

o   Proposed activity must be in and benefit an area considered disadvantaged, as defined by the Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map

o   Eligible entities include:

- o   Nonprofit organizations

- o   Community-based and grassroots organizations

- o   Philanthropic and civic organizations with nonprofit status

- o   Local governments

- o   Institutes of higher education

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Application

o   Submit applications through GHHI's Thriving Communities application portal located on GHHI's Thriving Communities website

o   Required materials include:

    o   Proposal Narrative

    o   Budget

    o   Work plan

    o   Most recent organization financial statement is required for Tier II and Tier III applicants. Tier I applicants who do not have a financial statement may explain how the project will be financially managed.

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Questions???

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