



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

Maritime Heritage Grant Program FY26 Program Guidelines

Introduction

The Maritime Heritage Grant Program, administered by [Preservation Maryland](#) (PM) in collaboration with the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) (DNR), provides direct assistance to promote the preservation of Maryland's irreplaceable maritime heritage. From fertile farmland to bountiful waters, Maryland's history is intrinsically linked to the Chesapeake Bay, and this unique and diverse maritime story deserves to be told in its entirety. A competitive grant open once a year, the Maritime Heritage Grant Program will provide much needed support to serve the historic preservation needs of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Eligibility

The Maritime Heritage Grant Program is open to [applications](#) from non-profit organizations and instrumentalities of the state, counties, and municipalities engaged in maritime heritage preservation, interpretation, and conservation. Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to complete their project within one calendar year of the award. Extensions and modifications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are not automatically granted.

This grant program is intended to support education and preservation projects that advance the maritime heritage of Maryland. Funded activities include capital and non-capital projects.

Capital Projects: Capital projects support "bricks-and-mortar" projects, specifically those that involve the repair, restoration, rehabilitation, preservation or reconstruction of historic resources, including structures, sites, landscapes, objects, and archeological resources.

Non-Capital Projects: Non-capital projects support projects that do not involve physical construction or repairs. Eligible projects include activities like research, surveys, documentation, and educational programs.

Private property owners are not eligible for funding. Organizations with active Maritime Heritage Grant Program awards are not eligible to apply in new rounds of funding until their previous grant has been completed and closed out.

Grant Awards

For FY26, the Maritime Heritage Grant Program will have \$200,000 in funding available, supported by Maryland's Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF). Grants range from the minimum award of \$10,000 to the maximum award of \$50,000. As this is a competitive grant program, submitted applications do not guarantee full or partial funding approval.

The program requires that each applicant provides a cash or in-kind match of at least 10% of the total project cost. The required match must be reflected in the budget submitted as part of the grant application.

The Maritime Heritage Grant Program Fund is a reimbursable grant program. Once projects are completed, grantees will submit a [Reimbursement Request and Grant Final Report](#) to process their grant award payment and close out. Reimbursement may not exceed the grant award amount and can only be made to the applicant and not to any contractors, consultants, or other project vendors.

Grantees may submit a one-time partial reimbursement for up to 50% of the grant award. Partial grant payments will reimburse the grantee for actual expenditures made in the support of the project to date. While requests for partial payments are accepted, they are not guaranteed and are approved on a case-by-case basis. The project must be completed before submitting the final Reimbursement Request.

Criteria For Grant Awards

Applications are evaluated by PM staff, in consultation with an independent Maritime Heritage Committee. The evaluation is based on how successfully the application meets the purpose and priorities of the Maritime Heritage Grant Program and the FY26 Criteria and Scoring Rubric (see last page).

The spirit and intent of the Maritime Heritage Grant Program is to support projects that promote and protect Maryland's deep historical and cultural connections to the Chesapeake Bay. Competitive applications will consider the many roles waterways and their related architecture and historic resource have played in our state history.

Application Procedure

Applications are submitted through the [online grant application](#) platform, SmarterSelect, a link to which is also accessible on the Maritime Heritage Grant Program website. This platform is free but does require creating an account. The application will be open from **August 3 to October 2, 2026**. No emailed information or documents will be accepted. All applications must be submitted by the deadline; no expectations will be made or granted.

As part of the application, you'll be required to upload support documentation. Depending on project type, an applicant should expect to provide the following, or similar, items:

- IRS Determination Letter and EIN confirmation
- Maryland Secretary of State Charitable Organization Standing Confirmation
- Photographs of the building, project, and/or organization
- Project Budget
- Consultant estimates or quotes for the proposed professional services
- Letter(s) of Support
- Letter of Support from Property Owner (if applicable)

It is recommended that potential applicants contact PM before beginning an application to confirm program eligibility. PM staff will be available virtually via Zoom on the following dates and times to discuss grant requirements and answer questions:

Wednesday, August 19, 2026, 6:00 PM – Virtual Info Session

This will be a webinar presentation providing an overview of the program followed by Q&A.

Friday, September 4, 2026, 12:00 PM – Virtual Office Hours

Tuesday, September 15, 2026, 12:00 PM – Virtual Office Hours

These will be unstructured, drop-in discussions and Q&A where attendees can ask specific questions about program eligibility and completing the application.

Application Timeline	
Application Opens	Monday, August 3, 2026
Virtual Info Session	Wednesday, August 19, 2026
Virtual Office Hours 1	Friday, September 4, 2026
Virtual Office Hours 2	Tuesday, September 15, 2026
Application Deadline	Friday, October 2, 2026
Award Public Announcement (anticipated)	November 2026

Grant Conditions

All applicants awarded grants through the Maritime Heritage Grant Program will be required to comply with the following grant requirements. Failure to comply may result in the termination of the grant award.

1. Complete the Grant Acceptance Forms which confirms the project name, description, and award amount.
2. Submit current W-9.
3. Complete your project within one year of the award date. Extensions and modification requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and are not automatically granted.
4. As appropriate, all work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, and contractors/consultants should meet the appropriate Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (36 CFR Part 61).
5. Post a Maritime Heritage Grant Program identification sign at the project site and/or organizational headquarters as appropriate. Any materials or publicity produced about the project must include the following citation:

The <project name> was supported in part by a grant from the Maritime Heritage Grant Program, administered by Preservation Maryland in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.
6. Once completed submit a Reimbursement Request and Grant Final Report which includes a summary of the project, and documentation confirming that the project was completed and payment was made on project expenses.

Questions?

Preservation Maryland will host a total of three virtual programs where prospective applicants will be able to learn more about the Maritime Heritage Grant and ask questions about the application process. To sign up for the info session or one of the office hours, please visit [Preservation Maryland's calendar](#) for registration links. Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend these events. For further questions, contact Christiana Limniatis, Program & Outreach Manager at climniatis@PresMD.org or 410-685-2886 x302.

About Preservation Maryland

[Preservation Maryland](#) is a non-profit harnessing the power of historic places by revitalizing and reinvesting in communities, advocating, and building the historic trades workforce for the benefit of all Marylanders.

Maritime Heritage Grant Program

FY26 Criteria and Scoring Rubric

FY25 Criteria – Max Total Points: 25

Program Objectives – Max Points 5

Extent to which the project meets the program objectives to promote the preservation of Maryland's maritime heritage. Does the project include the curation, instruction, interpretation, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or repair of maritime heritage collections, traditional maritime skills, historic maritime properties, or maritime history topics? Does the project approach maritime heritage in an innovative or creative way?

Educational Component – Max Points: 5

Extent to which the project demonstrates the potential for reaching a broad audience with effective educational outreach. Does the project provide public access to new information made possible by recent scholarships or investigations? Does the project aim to conduct new research or survey work to further document a topic, event, location, resource, etc., that has not previously been studied? Does this project facilitate a public connection and access to maritime heritage and resources?

Significance – Max Points: 5

Relative historical and cultural significance of the resource (s) the project involves. Has the resource been landmarked at the local, state, or national level? Is there an MIHP form? Is the resource a rare example of its style, typology, or cultural community?

Feasibility – Max Points: 5

Relative readiness and administrative capacity of the applicant to initiate and complete the project. Can the project be completed in the one-year grant term? Is the budget reasonable to complete the project objectives? Is the organization experienced enough to complete the project and/or have the most suited project team? If a cash match is provided, is it in-hand or pending?

Urgency of Need – Max Points: 5

Extent of need, urgency, or threat to significant historic maritime resources, including response to climate change adaptation and building resiliency.