



Request for Proposals: Assistance in Developing an Outreach Strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program
Deadline: Sunday, November 17, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. EST

Introduction:

The [Chesapeake Bay Program](#) (CBP) is a partnership guided by the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), which sets goals and outcomes for restoring the Bay and provides a framework to hold us accountable for our work. We are conveners, bringing together experts in all areas of Bay restoration to collaborate, educate and guide, while making available the most up-to-date policy, science, data and resources.

Partners include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government; and advisory groups of stakeholders, scientists and local government officials.

The CBP Communications Office is staffed by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency cooperative agreement. In early 2024, an Outreach Specialist was hired to join the CBP Communications Office to help expand efforts to meet the outreach and engagement needs of the partnership, including the [six Goal Implementation Teams \(GITs\), workgroups and three advisory committees](#).

The CBP Communications Office is seeking qualified firms or consultants to provide contractual support in helping to develop a comprehensive outreach strategy. This strategy will document the outreach needs of the partnership, assist in their prioritization and provide guidance in increasing engagement, awareness and participation in CBP programs, projects, initiatives, tools and services through networks and to target audiences across the watershed.

As the CBP Communications Office works across the 64,000-square-mile Chesapeake Bay watershed, the Outreach Specialist seeks to build and expand on the partnership's current networks to meet the outreach needs of the CBP. One person cannot reach every individual or organization in this region, but by connecting with other organizations and their networks, the power of collective action will help maximize the impact of our work by facilitating collaboration and deeper connections across the watershed.

Objectives:

The Alliance is seeking assistance in drafting an outreach strategy for the CBP, in addition to providing guidance and feedback on information gathering activities. The CBP Outreach Specialist will conduct meetings with relevant GITs, workgroups and advisory committees to gather their outreach needs. The contractor will use this information to synthesize the partnership's outreach needs, advise on short-term and long-term recommendations and draft an outreach strategy.

- 1) Convene a kick-off meeting with the CBP Communications Office to determine project schedule and confirm deliverables. The selected contractor is expected to maintain regular contact with project leads and schedule progress meetings as needed.

- 2) The contractor will provide guidance to the Outreach Specialist in the development of an agenda and questions to guide the meetings with GITs, advisory committees and workgroups. Please note that the contractor is not expected to attend these individual meetings unless time and resources allow for it. Feedback gathered from these interviews may include, but is not limited to:
 - Current activities related to outreach efforts.
 - Future vision for CBP outreach efforts.
 - Challenges or barriers to the effectiveness of CBP outreach efforts.
 - Priority audiences to be engaged through CBP outreach efforts.
 - Existing organizations, individuals or efforts working on these issues.

- 3) The Outreach Specialist will make meeting notes, recordings and a database of collected outreach needs available to the contractor to guide development of the outreach strategy. The outreach strategy should be a companion document to the recently refreshed CBP Communications Office strategic plan and therefore take into consideration the internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities of the CBP Communications Office when developing short- and long-term outreach recommendations (e.g., currently there is only one Outreach Specialist for the partnership). The outreach strategy should include the following elements:
 - Prioritized list of outreach needs and audiences determined from the meetings with GITs, advisory committees and workgroups.
 - Short- and long-term recommendations for engaging organizations, partners or stakeholders that consider current efforts in place to reach target audiences.
 - Framework for engaging with key organizations and their networks that includes current best practices for building networks, relationship-building techniques and outreach methodologies.

- 4) Provide guidance to the Outreach Specialist throughout this process as needed and required.

Deliverables:

The contractor will be expected to provide:

- Project schedule and work plan.
- Regular progress updates to the CBP Communications Office, including meeting agendas and notes when required.
- Review and feedback on draft agenda and interview questions for meetings with the GITs, workgroups and advisory committees.
- Draft outreach and engagement strategy in Word, taking into account the above details under the Objective 3.
- Final outreach and engagement strategy in Word.
- PowerPoint presentation that provides a high-level overview of the outreach and engagement strategy once finalized. This presentation will be utilized internally, and will provide the summary of the outreach strategy to be shared with GITs, workgroups, and advisory committees.



Evaluation Criteria:

The Alliance is looking for organizations that are a match with our organizational culture, adhering to our core values:

1. We believe in partnering across sectors and regions to achieve a larger collective impact.
2. We are partners who demonstrate integrity and amplify diverse voices for equitable impact.
3. We drive with data, promote informed action, and hold ourselves and our partners accountable for measurable impact. Our commitment to an inclusive, equitable and diverse process can be viewed on our website: [Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay Resolution on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#).

In addition, we are seeking the following:

- Responsiveness of the written proposal to the purpose and scope of the project.
- Knowledge and experience in outreach and engagement strategies, as well as network science.
- Familiarity with the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Three references, and resumes of all team members assigned to the work.
- Ability to provide a first draft of the outreach strategy on or before February 15, 2025 and all final materials on or before March 31, 2025.
- Must be able to operate within budget.

Deadline for submission:

Proposals must be received on or before 11:59 p.m. EST on Sunday, November 17, 2024, and should be emailed to Rachel Felver, CBP Communications Director, at rfelver@chesapeakebay.net. No phone calls, please.

Budget: Not to exceed \$20,000.

About the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay:

For over 50 years, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay has brought together communities, companies and conservationists to improve our lands and waters. We strive for clean streams and rivers flowing through resilient landscapes, cared for by the people who live, work and play in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We value collaboration, inclusivity and driving with results for collective, equitable and measurable impact. We have offices in Annapolis, Md., Lancaster, Pa., Richmond, Va. and Washington, D.C. Our organization focuses on encouraging the health and quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through on-the-ground restoration efforts, and just as our name suggests, we build relationships with organizations and communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Our initiatives fall under four main programmatic areas: agriculture, forestry, green infrastructure and stewardship and engagement. Learn more about the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay at www.allianceforthebay.org.

About the Chesapeake Bay Program:

The [Chesapeake Bay Program](#) is a diverse federal/state/non-government partnership established in 1983. It works to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and the thousands of streams, creeks and rivers in the watershed through collaborative policy making, scientific assessment and public communication. The Communications Office is managed by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay under grant funding provided by the Environmental Protection Agency.