



## COVID-19 MHAA Emergency Grant Guidelines

Revised 4-14-2020

**Eligibility** – Nonprofit heritage tourism organizations located within the boundaries of a Certified Heritage Area that are experiencing disruption of operations due directly to the economic implications and ramifications of the State of Emergency declared on March 5, 2020.

**Eligible Expenditures** – Operating costs associated with the COVID-19 State of Emergency, beginning March 5, 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, staff salaries, utilities, insurance, contractor services, rent and mortgage payments.

### **Additional Eligibility Criteria -**

- Grantees may receive a maximum of \$20,000 in aggregate emergency operating awards per fiscal year.
- Grantees who chose to convert an existing grant to cover emergency operating expenditures are not eligible to apply for an emergency grant until the following fiscal year.

**Maximum award amount** - \$20,000, which must be matched 1 to 1 with any combination of cash and in-kind non-state support; there is no minimum award amount.

### **How to Apply**

All applications must be submitted online here:

<https://bit.ly/MHAACOVIDGrant>

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, and all applications received by the first of the month will be reviewed as a group. The first deadline for applications is May 1, 2020.

Grants will be reviewed by a review committee and awarded by the Administrator of the Maryland Heritage Areas Program. Award decisions will be made by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month until funds are exhausted.

### **Review Criteria**

- **Alignment with program and heritage area goals and objectives**

- Do your organization’s mission and activities align with MHAA<sup>1</sup> and local Heritage Area goals?
- **Heritage Tourism and/or Historic Preservation Significance and Value**
  - How significant is the heritage tourism value and historic preservation value of your site or organization?
- **Level of Reduced Operations and Anticipated Lost Revenue/Increased Costs**
  - What is the degree of your reduced operations and anticipated lost revenue and/or increased costs due to the crisis?
  - Examples:
    - Cancelled Fundraisers
    - Cancelled School Trips and Tour Groups
    - Lost Rental Revenue
    - Lost Visitor Income
    - Decreased Donations and Memberships
    - Decreased Funding from Local Municipalities
    - Extra Cleaning Costs
    - Extra Staffing Costs
    - Costs for setting up telework and remote meetings
    - Costs for virtual experiences and learning opportunities
    - Marketing expenses to maintain awareness and target audiences
- **Severity and Urgency of Need**
  - What actions will your organization be forced to take due to the impacts detailed above if you are not able to secure alternative sources of funding? How quickly will your organization hit a point when the organization leadership needs to take these actions?
    - Examples:
      - Reduction of staff
      - Unable to pay rent/utilities
      - Potential closure of organization
      - Have spent all reserves and will need to take action in the next month
- **Intended Use of Emergency Funds**
  - How will the funds be used and how will they help your organization?
  - Examples:
    - Allow organization to keep staff on payroll for an additional period of time
    - Cover utility bills for X months
- **Other Considerations – These will not be scored, but will be part of the committee discussion**

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<sup>1</sup> MHAA goals include developing heritage tourism product, building partnerships, and sustaining regional identity. Read more here: [https://mht.maryland.gov/documents/PDF/MHAA/MHAA\\_StrategicPlan.pdf](https://mht.maryland.gov/documents/PDF/MHAA/MHAA_StrategicPlan.pdf)

- Availability of other emergency funds awarded to the organization – has your organization applied for other emergency operating assistance? If known, have these applications been successful or unsuccessful in securing funds?
- Geographic Diversity
- Organizations that represent Maryland's cultural and human diversity

### **Award of Grants**

Applications received by the first of each month will be reviewed by a grants review panel made up of MHAA members, and decisions will be made by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month until funds are exhausted. Grant agreement and payment processing will be expedited as possible, but probably would take at least 45 days after the grant agreement is signed.

If funds available for emergency grants in a fiscal year are exhausted, any eligible, unawarded applications will be rolled into the next fiscal year's round, if applicable, for consideration

### **Disbursement of Funds and Reporting**

Funds, if awarded, will be disbursed in a single lump sum upon execution of a simplified grant agreement. A final report will be submitted at the end of the grant period, including a certification of expenditures. Grantees will be subject to random spot-checking of financial documentation.

### **Questions?**

Contact Jennifer Ruffner ([jen.ruffner@maryland.gov](mailto:jen.ruffner@maryland.gov)) or Ennis Barbery Smith ([ennis.smith@maryland.gov](mailto:ennis.smith@maryland.gov))