ALLIANCE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND INNOVATION FUND

Purpose:
Because the Alliance professional staff is heavily engaged in on-going contracts, grants and projects, we wish to establish a fund that will allow for program innovation, creativity, the exploration of new initiatives and training and conferences. Therefore, the Alliance is offering a Professional Growth and Innovation Fund (Fund) to promote novel projects or extensions of projects currently administered by Alliance staff and augment staff training and exposure to new approaches through conference attendance. This is an opportunity for staff to be creative and pursue ideas and support for program or project elements that could lead to enhancing and inspiring your work, your colleagues’ work, and the Alliance’s mission. The Fund is intended as a benefit for individual staff to innovate programs while also promoting the collective learning of the full staff by the sharing of lessons learned and new skills.

Staff are encouraged to get approval from their supervisor on a proposal prior to submission.

Staff and supervisors are encouraged to consider submissions to the Fund as a part of annual goal setting and personnel evaluation process.

Eligibility:
• Part and Full time employees after 6 months of employment or by recommendation by supervisor

Proposed Scope of Projects:
Approximately $20,000 has been dedicated to the Innovation Fund in the 2019 calendar year, with awards for individual projects expected to not exceed $5,000. Proposals should reflect an innovation or enhancement of the staff’s work, requests for training for professional development that enhances staff’s ability to perform, or relevant conferences that showcase Alliance’s programs and provides for exposure to new ideas and networks. Proposals must be aligned with the mission and strategic goals of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Eligible proposals might be:
• A new initiative within a program area
• An extension of an existing project to:
  o broaden participation
  o create a new audience
  o apply different techniques to yield better results
  o modify existing procedures
• Time to study and develop a concept
• Exploration of the potential for a new initiative
• Acquisition of resources
• Testing a new software product
• Investigating different methods for outcomes assessment
• Acquire certification skills or training that will benefit the Alliance and the employee’s job
• Allow for attendance at a conference or workshop to help with professional development. Conferences do not have to be within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and conference presentations are not a requirement. Funds for conference attendance are capped at $1,000 per staff per year and include travel, registration, meals and lodging.

The Fund is not intended to be used solely to satisfy match for existing grants or supplement resource gaps for fundamental project grant deliverables.

Submission and Review of Proposals:
The application procedure is purposefully simple and restricted to one to two pages. Guidelines for submitting applications are below. Applications are accepted throughout the year and awarded based on availability and alignment with the Funds intent. The Alliance Management Team will review applications as they are received and recommend to the Executive Director for funding. 2-3 weeks is the typical time it takes for review. Recipients will commit to reporting to the staff on their project, training or conference experience during one of the Alliance staff’s monthly conference calls and if appropriate, write an Alliance blog post and/or social media post.

Acceptance of Funds
Given that the Fund is considered an individual benefit, staff recipients will sign their application to serve as acceptance of the agreement to reimburse the cost (or a portion) of the fund to the Alliance if they were to elect to leave the organization within one year of the award. This would not apply in the following cases like decline in health/disability, family emergency, and pregnancy. It would apply if the employee leaves the Alliance for another job offer or leave the Alliance to return to school.

ALLIANCE FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY
INNOVATION FUND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Please be succinct and limit your application to 1-2 pages.

Name (and, as necessary, other participants)

Title

Brief Background / Project (item) Description / Context / Justification

Goal and Intent of Proposal

Describe how your proposal aligns with one or more of the Alliance’s strategic goals:
• Build and lead strong partnerships of individuals, communities, businesses, NGOs and governments across the watershed States and District of Columbia
• Inspire the people and communities of the watershed to be stewards of their local streams and take part in the work of restoration.
• Create and support innovative local and regional programs that produce measurable results.

Time frame

Budget

Anticipated outcomes that will improve and enhance your work

Transferability to other Alliance programs

Proposed Dates for Presentation during a Staff Conference Call

As indicated by my signature below, I understand that in accepting this award I agree to reimburse 100% of the cost if I leave the organization within 1-6 months and 50% of the cost if I leave within 6-12 months of the receipt fund.

________________________      _______________________
Name         Date

Send completed applications to Jessica Blackburn jblackburn@allianceforthebay.org