**Overview of the HCWHA Operating Mini-Grant Program**

This year only, the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area has been authorized by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority to apply mini-grant funds to support heritage tourism entities struggling with operating expenses as a result of COVID-19.

Every year, the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area also offers project mini-grants to fund heritage tourism non-capital projects undertaken by nonprofit organizations and government. **These guidelines pertain to the operating mini-grants only.** For details about the project mini-grant program, please see their separate guidelines on the [mini-grant page](https://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/stakeholders/mini-grants).

**Eligibility**

Operating mini-grants are available to nonprofit heritage tourism organizations located within the [**boundaries**](http://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/stakeholders/participating-municipalities) of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (portions of Carroll, Frederick and Washington Counties). Organizations may apply for a conventional non-capital project mini-grant OR an emergency operating mini-grant, **they may not apply for both**.

**Eligible Expenses**

Operating costs associated with the COVID-19 State of Emergency, **beginning July 9, 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.

**Award Amounts**

Emergency operating mini-grants share the same pool of funds ($25,000) as ordinary non-capital project mini-grants. Emergency operating mini-grants may be awarded from $500 to $3,000. Awards must be matched 1 to 1 with any combination of cash and in-kind non-state support.

**Review criteria**

* Shown urgency of need with concrete examples
* Clearly outlined the intended use of emergency funds
* Demonstrated interruption to operations due to the coronavirus with estimates of lost revenue and increased expenses
* Pursued other avenues of funding open to them
* Adapted to provide some level of engagement with their public under coronavirus restrictions (i.e. online programming, social media, socially distant and masked tours)
* Has a mission consistent with interpretive themes and/or suggested programs, projects, and activities in the [Management Plan](http://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/stakeholders/management-plan) and/or [Five-Year Action Plan](http://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/stakeholders/action-plan). Your organization does not need to be Civil War-focused, but it should serve heritage tourists.

**Application procedure**

* Attend the online grant workshop on **September 11** ([register here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/heart-of-the-civil-war-heritage-area-grants-mini-grants-webinar-tickets-117403375657)), or view the webinar recording.
* Contact your local mini-grant contact.
  + Washington County contact: Rachel Nichols, [rachel@heartofthecivilwar.org](mailto:rachel@heartofthecivilwar.org)
  + Carroll and Frederick Counties contact: Emily Huebner, [emily@heartofthecivilwar.org](mailto:emily@heartofthecivilwar.org)
* Review the Heritage Area [Management Plan](http://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/stakeholders/management-plan) and/or [Five-Year Action Plan](http://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/stakeholders/action-plan) (note: the Management Plan is broken into nine different sections. To search a PDF for a specific word, press Ctrl+F).
* Download the application document and fill in all questions, noting word limits. You may send a draft mini-grant application to Emily Huebner ([emily@heartofthecivilwar.org](mailto:emily@heartofthecivilwar.org)) for review prior to October 9, if desired.
* Submit the [online application](http://www.heartofthecivilwar.org/mini-grant-application) by 5:00 PM on **Friday, October 16**.
* Be prepared to answer follow-up questions, if required.
* Expect to receive grant results before the end of November, 2020.

**Terms and conditions**

Funds, if awarded, will be disbursed in a single lump sum upon execution of a grant agreement. A final report will be submitted, including a simple budget of actual expenses and the application of the mini-grant funds. The final report will be due within 60 days of the Governor terminating the State of Emergency. Mini-grantees will not be required to show receipts as part of the final report, but will need to preserve financial documentation for five years after completion of the mini-grant.

For more information, contact Emily Huebner, Assistant Director, Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area: emily@heartofthecivilwar.org, (240) 608-5177.

**Goals stated in the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area**

**Management Plan**

Economic Benefit

* Thematically link and market the area’s heritage resources, thereby creating synergy among varied historic sites, recreational resources, and cultural assets.
* Support the creation of economic gains for new and current visitor-serving businesses within the heritage area by generating greater visitation; in so doing, deemphasize county borders and focus effort on the heritage area at large.
* Guide visitors to places of unique character, such as Main Street communities and small town centers that provide visitor services.

Stewardship

* Help stewardship and preservation organizations become more effective through networking and coordination of effort.
* Foster stronger appreciation for sacred historic places, pristine landscapes, crisp town edges, and one-of-a-kind historic, recreational, and cultural resources in the heritage area among residents – newcomers as well as long-time landowners – and their elected officials.
* Help the region and its communities plan for the future of historic resources, including managing development pressures on historic sites and their surrounding grounds. Connect those seeking conservation of sites, such as battlefields, with relevant organizations and programs.

Storytelling & Interpretation

* Expand on Maryland’s status as a border state, in both geographical and ideological terms, to explore issues related to the Civil War period.
* Expand interpretive activities to the human-interest dimension of the conflict: differing views on secession, divided loyalties within families, how civilian life was impacted by the war, and the difficulties people faced afterward in returning to normal life.
* Continue to promote accuracy in information about Civil War military action and troop movement. Frame military actions within a national context, relating their importance to the outcome of major battles and of the war.

Coordination

* Foster a regional perspective that allows progress on heritage area goals regardless of jurisdiction.
* Serve as an umbrella organization for connecting and protecting the diverse, valuable heritage resources in the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area and making its stories more accessible to visitors and residents.
* Support collaboration among the three counties’ destination marketing organizations and other tourism marketing vehicles to facilitate regional marketing activities.