

Fact Sheet:

What You Need to Know about Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants

On November 21st, the U.S. The Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) **announced \$2 billion to fund Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants**. These funds will support community-driven projects to reduce pollution and improve public health, the environment, and climate resilience in disadvantaged communities overburdened by high levels of pollution and climate risks. The \$2 billion for **Community Change Grants** is the largest single investment in environmental justice in U.S. history, and is part of the \$3 billion provided by the Inflation Reduction Act for **Environmental and Climate Justice Grants** through the U.S. EPA. The Equitable and Just National Climate Platform (EJNCP) played an essential role in conceptualizing, advocating for the creation of, and shaping the design of the \$3 billion Environmental and Climate Justice Grants program. Unlike many other types of federal funding, these grants provide direct support to community-based nonprofit organizations and their partners, including local governments and academic institutions, in implementing projects that advance environmental and climate justice. More details about this historic funding opportunity for community-based organizations in environmental justice communities are below.

Grant application period:

November 21, 2023 - November 21, 2024. The EPA cannot guarantee that funding will be available through the end of the 12-month application period. Applying as soon as possible is strongly advised.

Funding type:

Competitive agreements.

Total funding available:

Approximately \$2 billion.

How to apply:

The U.S. EPA is accepting applications on a rolling basis. To apply, view the **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on Grants.gov** or **here**. Applications can be submitted under two separate tracks:

- ▶ Track I: Community-Driven Investments for Change, expected to award approximately \$1.96 billion for 150 projects for \$10-20 million each and
- ▶ Track II: Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance, expected to award approximately \$40 million for 20 projects at \$1-3 million each.

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Why community-based organizations should apply:

Community-based organizations should apply with their partners to implement community-driven projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to address environmental and climate justice challenges in communities most adversely and disproportionately impacted by climate change, legacy pollution, and historical disinvestments.

Activities supported by Community Change Grants:

The U.S. EPA expects to support the following activities through these grants:

- ▶▶ “Climate resilience and adaptation.
- ▶▶ Mitigating climate and health risks from urban heat islands, extreme heat, wood heater emissions, and wildfire events.
- ▶▶ Community-led air and other (including water and waste) pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation.
- ▶▶ Investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure.
- ▶▶ Workforce development that supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.
- ▶▶ Reducing indoor toxics and indoor air pollution.
- ▶▶ Facilitating the engagement of disadvantaged communities in state and federal advisory groups, workshops, rulemakings, and other public processes.”

Upcoming milestones:

- ▶▶ The U.S. EPA will host multiple informational webinars while the NOFO is open
- ▶▶ March 2024: Initial award selections
- ▶▶ May / June 2024: Anticipated start of period of performance for initial selections

Eligible recipients:

- ▶▶ A partnership between two community-based non-profit organizations (CBOs)
- ▶▶ A partnership between a CBO and one of the following: a Federally-Recognized Tribe, a local government, an institution of higher education

Grant program purpose:

- ▶▶ Provide resources for community-driven projects to address environmental and climate challenges in communities facing disproportionate and adverse health, pollution, and environmental impacts, and suffering from generations of disinvestment.
- ▶▶ Invest in strong cross-sectoral collaborations with partners who bring a robust commitment to working with and for communities with environmental and climate justice concerns.

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- Unlock access to additional and more significant resources to advance environmental and climate justice goals from across the federal government and other sources.
- Empower communities and strengthen their capacity to drive meaningful positive change on the ground for years to come. Strengthen community participation in government decision-making processes that impact them.

Technical assistance: Applicants who are eligible for the Community Change Grants can receive technical assistance both when applying for funds (pre-award) and after selection (post-award) through the Community Change Technical Assistance (CCTA) program.

Key program features

- 100% of the program funds are directed to disadvantaged communities.**
Entities eligible to receive the funds include community based organizations (CBOs), partnerships between CBOs, and partnerships between CBOs and a tribe, an academic institution or a local government.
- Projects in communities overburdened by legacy pollution are prioritized.**
EPA has identified five Target Investment Areas (Tribes in Alaska, Tribes, Territories, Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities, US-Southern Border Communities) to help ensure that communities with unique circumstances, geography, and needs can equitably compete for funding. Applicants applying under a specified Target Investment Area will compete against other applicants under the same Target Investment Area, as opposed to the broader application pool.
- Substantially increased EJ project funding:**
Awards under the “Community-Driven Investments for Change” Track I are expected to be between \$10-20 million each, but cannot exceed \$20 million. EPA expects to award approximately 150 Track I awards. Awards under the “Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance” Track II are expected to be between \$1-3 million, but cannot exceed \$3 million. EPA expects to award 20 Track II awards.
- Technical assistance provided to applicants and grantees throughout the grant cycle.**
Technical assistance will be available for pre-award technical assistance including but not limited to designing a project, preparing an application, or facilitating partnerships, and for post-award technical assistance to help grant recipients manage, oversee, perform, and report on the grants
- Anti-displacement strategies incorporated.**
Applicants are directed to incorporate strategies for how the projects will promote inclusive economic development, drive benefits of the projects to existing residents, and proactively address unintended displacement consequences.
- Rolling applications and oral presentations.**
EPA will allow applications to be submitted on a rolling basis over a 12-month period, through November 21, 2024. Applicants for Track I whose applications score well following the written application review will be invited to participate in an oral presentation.

Why Environmental and Climate Justice Grants are needed

- Environmental and Climate Justice Grants are essential to protecting the fundamental right of all people in America to a clean and healthy environment. These grants create a crucial opportunity to tackle environmental and climate injustice in low-income and Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities that have for too long been on the front lines of our nation's most dangerous environmental and health hazards. These funds are essential to reducing and preventing disproportionate pollution burdens in communities of color and low-income communities.
- Power plants and other industrial facilities are disproportionately sited in communities of color and low income areas, creating air and water pollution that leads to higher rates of cancer, asthma, and other life-threatening health problems.
- Roads and highways, many of which were intentionally built through communities of color, bring pollution from gas-powered cars and diesel-fueled trucks to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Environmental justice communities also experience inequitable living conditions tied to chronic disinvestment and structural racism (such as the continued harmful legacy of mortgage redlining practices), including crumbling infrastructure and lack of green spaces and tree canopy, that increase their vulnerability to climate change and limit the resources available to cope with and recover from climate impacts. For example, heat waves are responsible for more deaths every year than any other extreme weather event—with the highest risks in Black, brown, and Indigenous communities, where many don't have access to air conditioning and neighborhoods lack parks, green spaces and tree cover, which help to bring down temperatures.
- Environmental and Climate Justice Grants improve and save lives by funding community-driven projects to reduce pollution and improve public health, the environment, and strengthen climate resilience in disadvantaged communities overburdened by high levels of pollution and climate risks.

About Us

The Equitable & Just National Climate Platform launched on July 17, 2019. In 2019, signatories to the platform achieved consensus on a historic plan calling for national climate action that confronts racial, economic, and environmental injustice as it enacts deep cuts in climate pollution and accelerates a pollution-free energy future that benefits all communities. Members include leaders from thirteen environmental justice organizations and six national environmental groups. Learn more at [AJustClimate.org](https://www.AJustClimate.org)