



Environmental Justice Fund

2026 Application Guidelines

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About the Fund

Seattle's [Environmental Justice Fund](#) provides grants to support projects led by or co-developed with those most affected by environmental and climate inequities: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders.

Launched in 2018, the EJ Fund aims to improve environmental conditions, address climate change impacts, and advance environmental justice. It is administered by Seattle's Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE).

OSE works with Seattle's Environmental Justice Committee (EJC) to make funding recommendations to the City of Seattle. EJC members are deeply rooted in their communities to advance environmental and climate justice. Members advance racial equity, environmental justice, and climate action in those communities disproportionately impacted by environmental issues and climate change.

Visit the [Equity & Environment Initiative](#) to learn about the community work that led to the creation of this fund.

What We Fund

Across the United States, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil. It is for this reason that the EJ Fund supports efforts that benefit and are led by, or in partnership with, those most affected by environmental and climate issues: people who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders.

Eligible projects/programs must:

- Focus on advancing climate and/or environmental justice
- Be led by or co-developed with those most affected by climate change and environmental hazards (as previously defined)
- Benefit people who live, learn, work, worship and play in Seattle.

Funding Priorities

The EJ Fund seeks to support a variety of projects and programs that align with one of our priority funding areas. Proposals selected for funding will directly align with these funding priorities *and* demonstrate how the project will meaningfully contribute to their advancement:

- 1. Developing the leadership of communities impacted first and worst by climate change:** This funding priority supports projects that build leadership and decision-making power within communities most impacted by climate change and environmental injustices. Funded projects help frontline communities lead and influence solutions that address the root causes of environmental inequities. Grants may fund activities such as community organizing and advocacy to address climate and environmental injustices, and education or outreach for priority communities to grow their awareness of climate change impacts and environmental justice.
- 2. Supporting community-led climate or environmental solutions:** This funding priority supports projects that are designed and led by or in partnership with priority communities to address the disproportionate impacts they experience from environmental pollution and climate change. Grants may fund activities such as efforts to reduce pollution and improve air, water, or soil quality; climate solutions that are rooted in Traditional Ecological Knowledge; and restoring waterways and urban greening.
- 3. Training and exposure to climate careers:** This funding priority supports projects that offer programming and environmental education for members of our priority communities to increase their exposure to careers that are important to adapt to or mitigate the impacts of climate change. Grants may fund activities such as youth participation in climate or environmental-focused internships or mentorship programs, paid internships focused on restoring ecosystems, training focused on Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and skills building to extend the lifecycle of products to reduce waste and conserve resources.
- 4. Building resilience to protect health and community wellbeing:** This funding priority supports projects that strengthen community's ability to be prepared for and recover from climate events. Funded projects build climate resilience in ways that protect people's health and improve community wellbeing. Grants may fund activities such as education and outreach to prepare for climate threats (ex: extreme heat, flooding, sea level rise, wildfire smoke, air pollution), climate-informed mental health programs, neighborhood support networks for climate emergencies, and traditional ecological practices that support health and resilience.

Funding Details

The 2026 EJ Fund Request for Proposals (RFP) offers **up to \$1.6 million** for two-year grants and applicants must select one of the following funding options:

- **Option 1:** \$60,000 - \$80,000, disbursed over 2 years
- **Option 2:** \$80,001 - \$120,000, disbursed over 2 years

By offering two funding levels, we create space for organizations who have different types of projects and/or are at different stages of capacity and experience to develop feasible proposals that are strongly aligned with the EJ Fund.

Eligible Project Period: All projects must take place between February 2027 and November 2028. Projects may last up to 22 months. **Please note** grants will be disbursed in two equal amounts: once in 2027, and once in 2028.

The Environmental Justice Fund will not issue an RFP in 2027; the next RFP will open in 2028.

Wondering which funding option is right for your organization or group?

If you are trying to figure out which funding option is the best fit for your organization or group, we encourage you to consider the following:

1. Choose a funding option that feels realistic and sustainable for your team at this moment.
2. Ask for the amount your project truly needs to be completed successfully.
3. The amount you request may or may not be the maximum funding level allowed. Choose what fits your project realistically.

Below are some reflection questions you might consider to help your team determine which funding option would help you implement your project:

- What size of grant has your organization comfortably managed in the past?
- What experience does your organization have with managing multi-year grants?
- Which level of funding aligns best with your organization's current capacity and your ability to successfully complete your project?
- If awarded a grant, do you have financial processes and administrative systems that can support you to administer the award amount you are seeking?

Who Should Apply

Tribes, tribal organizations, non-profit organizations, and community groups whose work is led by or co-developed with Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and/or elders.

Eligible applicants must:

- Have **501(c)3 nonprofit status**; or
- Have a **fiscal sponsor with 501(c)3 nonprofit status**; or
- Be willing and able to **secure a fiscal sponsor with 501(c)3 nonprofit status** within four weeks of being notified of receiving a grant.
 - For groups that need a fiscal sponsor, a fee of 8% to 15% of the total grant award is typically charged. This fee may be included in your proposed budget.
 - During the contracting period, EJ Fund staff can assist groups in identifying and connecting with potential fiscal sponsors if they have not already selected one.

Note: Only one proposal per organization is allowed, except if the organization serves as a fiscal sponsor for multiple projects.

How To Apply

The online application has two steps that must be completed through Fluxx which is the City of Seattle's grant portal.

Step 1: Check if you are eligible to [apply](#) by **July 14 at 5 PM**

- **IMPORTANT:** This is a **required** step to submit your full application.
- Once you complete this step, *if you are new to applying for grants*, you will be assigned a consultant who will help you complete your application.

Step 2: Submit your complete application by **August 4 at 5 PM**

Helpful resources:

- The [application worksheet](#) can help you prepare your proposal offline before official submission.
- The [sample application](#) is provided for your reference as you prepare your proposal.

(Instructions continued on the next page)

New to the FLUXX Grants Portal?

To submit a proposal, the first step is for you to register in our grant portal. Please click on "[Create an Account Now](#)" to start.

You will not be able to edit your profile after submission. Please ensure you have entered accurate information (including email address) when completing the registration form. After submitting the registration form, you will receive an email notification from the City of Seattle with login information and steps to set your password. This will give you access to the grant portal and the application form. If you are selected for a grant, you will use this portal to submit invoices and complete reporting requirements.

Need help with FLUXX?

Drop in during office hours or reach out to equityenviro@seattle.gov (please allow up to two business days for a response).

Once you are logged into your Fluxx account:

1. Navigate to **Office of Sustainability and Environment** in the left-hand column.
2. Click on it to open the **OSE** window which will show the **Environmental Justice Fund** application.
3. Click on the Environmental Justice Fund "**Begin New Application**" link to start an application.
4. When you start the application, you will be prompted to enter your organization's name.
5. **If your organization has previously applied for a City of Seattle grant through FLUXX:** Your organization's profile will automatically appear, and the fields will begin to fill in with your organization's details. *Important: If your organization already has a profile, do not create a new one.*
6. **If this is the first time your organization is applying for a City of Seattle grant through FLUXX:** You need to click the "**Add New**" link to create a new organization profile before continuing with the application.

Info Sessions

Join a **virtual** information session to learn more about the EJ Fund, the review process, qualities of a strong proposal, and to ask questions!

- **Session 1:** Wednesday, June 10th from 6 to 7:15 pm
 - [Click here to register](#)
- **Session 2:** Tuesday, June 30th from 12 to 1:15 pm
 - [Click here to register](#)

Office Hours

The EJ Fund Team will host Office Hours to answer questions about project ideas, the application process, or general questions to help applicants move through the application process with confidence. Join at any point to ask question(s) and stay for as long as you need. Office Hours will take place on Zoom during the following days.

- **Day 1:** Wednesday, June 17th from 12 to 1 pm
 - [Click here to join the session](#)
- **Day 2:** Wednesday, July 8th from 12 to 1 pm
 - [Click here to join the session](#)

To request interpretation or other accommodations for office hours or info sessions, email equityenviro@seattle.gov at least 3 business days before the session you plan to attend.

Helping You Prepare Your Application

Consultants will be available to support eligible applicants who are new to applying for grants **or** have limited experience with managing grants. If you are one of these applicants, you will be automatically matched with a consultant AFTER you complete the eligibility step of the application by **July 14 at 5 PM**. Working with a consultant is not a required part of the application, but we highly encourage it. Please note that engaging with a consultant does not guarantee that you will be awarded a grant.

Consultants will be able to support you in the following ways:

- Discuss your project idea for EJ Fund alignment
- Provide guidance on the funding level that best aligns with your project scope and your organization's readiness and capacity
- Review your draft proposal and provide feedback
- Provide high-level edits on your draft proposal

Consultants **cannot** help you design your project idea or write your application responses. **Learn about the consultants [here](#).**

Eligible Activities

Applicants will select an EJ Fund Funding Priority and may incorporate one or more of the following activities that are eligible for funding:

- Climate resilience and adaptation solutions
- Community planning and visioning
- Cultural knowledge preservation and/or education
- Environmental or climate focused arts and storytelling
- Environmental or climate education, outreach, and/or engagement
- Climate career exposure programs
- Organizational and community capacity building*

*Capacity building is “the process of building and strengthening the systems, structures, cultures, skills, resources, and power that organizations need to serve their communities.” “Transformational Capacity Building” Stanford Social Innovation Review. April Nishimura, Roshni Sampath, Vu Le, Anbar Mahar Sheikh, and Ananda Valenzuela. Fall 2020.

Ineligible Activities & Funding Restrictions

- Scholarships
- Purchase of land or buildings
- Capital projects including construction and renovation of facilities or site improvements
- Maintenance of existing facilities and physical improvements to non-natural areas of parks or existing recreational facilities that do not have a clear environmental justice purpose. This includes things like park benches, shelters, and sidewalks.
- Projects inaccessible to the public
- Purchase of equipment including cameras, video recording equipment, laptops, tablets, phones, cellphones, etc. (*Note: The EJ Fund may support rental of this equipment.*)
- Organization’s overhead costs not related to the EJ Fund project or program
- Individuals, for-profit businesses, and 501c4 organizations are ineligible for funding.

What if my project idea includes activities including growing, cooking, teaching about, or distributing food? If your organization or group seeks funding for these activities, consider applying to the [City of Seattle’s Food Equity Fund](#) specifically designed to support food systems work.

What if my project idea focuses on developing workforce training programs, apprenticeships, and preparing individuals for careers tailored to construction and clean energy deployment? If your project centers these activities, consider the [City of Seattle’s Climate Workforce program](#) specifically designed to support workforce training programs for economically distressed communities in the construction and clean energy trades.

Project Examples

Below are project examples that align with each EJ Fund funding priority. These examples are not exhaustive. They are provided to help applicants envision potential project approaches.

1. Developing the leadership of communities impacted first and worst by climate change

A trusted community-based organization seeks funding to help residents build leadership skills and organize around climate and environmental issues affecting their community. Through workshops, community discussions, and advocacy training, participants deepen their understanding of environmental justice and how climate change impacts their daily lives. Together, they develop a community action plan to advocate for cleaner air and investments that protect their community from climate threats.

2. Supporting community-led climate or environmental solutions

A local Native-led group works with community members to restore a degraded ecosystem using practices grounded in Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Together, they replant native species, rebuild habitat for wildlife, and teach participants about cultural practices connected to caring for the land. The project deepens participants' connection to the land while restoring an ecosystem that protects the neighborhood from climate impacts.

3. Trainings and exposure to climate careers

A youth-serving organization offers workshops that introduce students to different climate careers and provide professional development opportunities. Through the workshops, participants meet with different climate professionals who share their educational and professional backgrounds and answer questions about their careers. The project gives young people from priority communities direct exposure to climate-focused careers. Participants provide feedback to inform the programming for future cohorts.

4. Building resilience to protect health and community wellbeing

A neighborhood coalition creates a community-led resilience network to help residents prepare for heat and wildfire smoke. The project trains community members to conduct wellness checks, share emergency resources in multiple languages, distribute air filters, and coordinate support for elders and vulnerable neighbors during climate emergencies.

Application Schedule

May 27, 2026: RFP Opens

June 10, 2026: Info Session #1 ([Registration is required](#))

June 30, 2026: Info Session #2 ([Registration is required](#))

July 14, 2026: Last day to complete the Eligibility Step by 5 PM PST

August 4, 2026: Complete Applications due by 5 PM PST *only* from applicants that completed the eligibility step

December 7, 2026: Applicants notified of funding decisions via Fluxx*

December 10, 2026 to January 16, 2027: Contracting period to finalize grant agreements*

End of January 2027: Grant agreements signed

February 2027: Projects begin

*Dates are subject to change and the EJ Fund team will update applicants, if needed.

Application Process

Date	Application Stage	Who
May 27 to August 4	Application Period Note: Eligibility step due July 14	Applicants
August 7 to October 30	Proposal Review, Scoring, and Deliberations Meetings	Review Team Members
November 2 to December 4*	Funding Recommendations Approval Process	OSE Staff
December 7*	Notification of Funding Decisions to Applicants	OSE Staff

*Dates are subject to change and the EJ Fund team will update applicants, if needed.

Review Process

All proposals will be screened for basic eligibility before being sent to the Environmental Justice Committee (Review Team) for evaluation.

Using a deliberative process, the Review Team will assess proposals based on feasibility, readiness, alignment with EJ Fund funding priorities, and overall criteria. Their final grantee recommendations will reflect a balanced mix of projects that collectively advance the funding priorities of the EJ Fund and will include a diversity in:

- Geographic areas most impacted by climate and environmental inequities, using the City's Racial and Social Equity Index to identify priority neighborhoods
- Populations served
- Project types and sizes
- Applicant's experience in the climate or environmental field
- Groups previously funded by the EJ Fund
- Groups not previously funded by the EJ Fund

The Review Team may recommend a different award amount based on these factors.

Funding recommendations will be approved by the Director of the Office of Sustainability & Environment. Once approved, EJ Fund staff will work with grantees to begin the contracting phase. Approval of an application does not guarantee funding. To receive funding, the grantee must sign a completed grant agreement that meets program and City requirements.

Aspects of Strongly Aligned Proposal

Want to learn what makes a strongly aligned application? To support applicants in preparing competitive proposals, consider the following characteristics of a strongly aligned application. These reflect the criteria the Review Team uses in its evaluation:

1. **Community Need:** Who is/are the priority community(ies) this project will serve? What climate or environmental impacts are they facing, and how are these affecting their health, livelihoods, or wellbeing? *Priority communities: Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders.

Characteristics: A strong application clearly identifies the priority community(ies) the project will serve and shows direct connection to one or more EJ Fund priority communities. It demonstrates a specific, well-informed understanding of the community's environmental or climate-related challenges and explains how these issues affect community health, livelihoods, or overall wellbeing.

2. **Project Idea:** How did this project idea come about? How was the priority community(ies) involved with its design?

Characteristics: A strong application shows that the priority community(ies) identified the project idea AND designed the project to address their community's needs.

3. **Project Description:** What will you do through your proposed project, and how will you do it? Where will it happen? How will your project address the disproportionate climate or environmental impacts on your community/communities?

Characteristics: A strong application provides key project activities with specific details on location(s) and who will be served, including the number of people who will benefit. It explains how the project addresses disproportionate climate or environmental impacts experienced by the priority community(ies) and shows that the approach is meaningful, community-centered. It also shows the project activities are closely aligned with the applicant's selected EJ Fund funding priority.

4. **People:** Who will implement the project? What lived experiences or skills do they bring? How is the priority community(ies) involved in leading the project and engaged in the decision-making process? If applicable, who are your partners and what are their roles in this project?

Characteristics: A strong application demonstrates the project team members have skills, lived experiences, and expertise to lead the work effectively. It demonstrates that priority community members take a lead role in the decision-making throughout the project implementation. When partners are involved, the applicant describes authentic,

reciprocal collaboration, including meaningful roles and appropriate inclusion in the budget.

5. **Impact:** Describe what success will look like to you throughout the duration of your project. Include any milestones and the positive impacts you anticipate for your community(ies) and/or the environment.

Characteristics: A strong application demonstrates that success is specific, realistic, and directly connected to the proposed activities and the priority communities the project seeks to benefit. Milestones and impacts are clear, specific, well connected to project activities, and directly address the community needs that have been described.

6. **Racial Justice Commitment:** What practices and approaches does your organization or group use to advance racial justice? How does this show up in your work, partnerships, or decision-making?

Characteristics: A strong application demonstrates that racial justice is a core organizational value and provides specific examples of how this value guides internal practices and external work. This may include decision-making processes, staffing, community engagement, program design, and efforts to address systemic inequities, support BIPOC leadership, advocate for structural change, or implement equitable policies.

7. **Project Timeline & Budget:**

Characteristics: A strong application includes a clear and realistic project timeline with key activities and milestones. The budget is complete, aligned with the proposed activities, and demonstrates that costs are reasonable and feasible. Together, the timeline and budget show that the project is well thought out and achievable.

8. **Overall Alignment and Potential to Contribute to Environmental Justice Fund's Funding Priorities**

Ultimately, the Review Team will look for proposals that are strongly aligned with the selected EJ Fund funding priority and demonstrate meaningful potential to advance that priority area. All information in the application will be considered when making this assessment.

What to Expect If Awarded

If funded, groups, organizations, and fiscal sponsors (if applicable) will be required to:

- Participate in an introductory meeting with EJ Fund Staff
- Work with EJ Fund Staff to finalize project/program outcomes for the grant agreement
- Sign a grant agreement with the City of Seattle to accomplish the project
- Participate in reporting meetings

Reporting Requirements

Grantees will meet with EJ Fund staff three times during the grant cycle to complete formal reporting requirements:

- Reporting meeting 1: September 2027
- Reporting meeting 2: May 2028
- Final Report: December 2028

The purpose of reporting meetings 1 and 2 is to discuss project progress, troubleshoot any challenges, identify areas for the EJ Fund team to support, and provide a budget update. The purpose of the final reporting is to close out project and provide a final budget update.

During these meetings, EJ Fund staff will generate written reports for grantees to review and approve. Grantees will need to provide a budget update, photos, videos, flyers, and other materials prior to the meetings for inclusion in the reports.

Grantees can contact EJ Fund staff anytime to discuss project opportunities or challenges, such as changes to staffing, timeline, or budget.

Grant Disbursements

The EJ Fund award will be paid in two equal installments. The first half will be disbursed in 2027 after the grant agreement is signed. The second half will be disbursed in 2028 after the second reporting meeting and budget update have been completed.

Grantees must keep records and receipts for all grant fund expenditures. While receipts do not need to be submitted to the City, the grant agreement gives the City the right to audit these records. Grantees are expected to retain copies and provide them to EJ Fund staff upon request.

Frequently Asked Questions

What qualities are you looking for in the groups that apply?

Organizations or community groups should be able to demonstrate the following: 1) their work is led by or co-developed with those most affected by environmental and climate issues, 2) they understand their community's environmental and climate justice issues, and 3) their proposed project/program is informed by their community. Please review page 12 which outlines the aspects of a strongly aligned proposal.

What steps can we take to develop a strong proposal?

1. Attend an info session and/or office hours to ensure your project idea is aligned with the EJ Fund BEFORE you begin an application.
2. Carefully review all eligibility requirements before starting.
3. If you are eligible to receive application support from a consultant, we encourage you to discuss your project idea with them BEFORE you draft your proposal.
4. Allow plenty of time to develop your project idea with your team members
5. Carefully review the aspects of a strongly aligned proposal while writing your responses and be sure to include the characteristics listed in each category.

Can our project budget include general operating expenses?

Yes, grants can support general operating expenses (overhead) but they **must** be directly tied to the proposed EJ project.

We are not a 501c3 and don't have a fiscal sponsor yet. How should we include the fiscal sponsor fee in our project budget?

If you don't have a fiscal sponsor yet, we recommend including a fiscal sponsor fee at 12% in your project budget. (Most fiscal sponsors range between 8% - 15%). If you receive the grant, you can adjust your budget to match the actual fee.

My office is not in Seattle, but we are serving a community in Seattle. Can we apply?

Yes. You may apply if your project/programming benefits people who live, learn, work, worship and play in Seattle.

How do you disburse funds to grantees?

The EJ Fund disburses grants in two equal installments. The first half will be disbursed in 2027 after the grant agreement is signed. The second half will be disbursed in 2028 **after** the second reporting requirement is completed **and** a grantee successfully submits a budget update that shows the grant spenddown. If awarded, this process will be shared in detail during the introductory meeting.

Can a collaborative submit a proposal?

Yes, but one group in the collaborative must serve as the lead applicant group.

Can I submit more than one proposal?

Only one application per nonprofit organization or community group is allowed, except if the nonprofit organization is serving as a fiscal sponsor for multiple proposals.

Will there be an opportunity to apply to the EJ Fund in 2027?

No. The Environmental Justice Fund will not issue an RFP in 2027. The next RFP will open in 2028.

Where can I find more information about the Equity & Environment Agenda?

Download the [Equity & Environment Agenda](#), which is also available in [繁體中文 \(Chinese\)](#), [Soomaali \(Somali\)](#), [Español \(Spanish\)](#) and [Tiếng Việt \(Vietnamese\)](#).

If I have questions about the application, whom do I contact?

Please email equityenviro@seattle.gov. We are happy to answer questions, help you understand the application and the application process, or connect you to a Technical Assistance Consultant at no cost.