

# 2024 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## EJ4Climate: Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience Grant Program

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is accepting applications for projects to receive funding under the EJ4Climate Grant Program. Proposals are due by 14 November 2024, and projects will start in April 2025.

The fourth cycle of the EJ4Climate Grant Program will address the theme “Community-led education programs to increase environmental justice and climate adaptation knowledge.”

### What is the EJ4Climate Grant Program?

In 2021, the CEC established this grant program, with supplementary funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to support projects that target underserved and vulnerable communities, and Indigenous communities, in Canada, Mexico and the United States, to prepare them for climate-related impacts and to advance environmental justice. This program provides funding directly to community-based organizations to help them develop community-driven solutions.

Examples of recent EJ4Climate projects can be found at: <http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/>.

For this grant cycle, the CEC is calling for project proposals that will integrate community-led education programs in support of environmental justice and climate adaptation<sup>1</sup>. Education, whether formal or informal, is crucial to advance environmental justice, especially in cases where community members are not aware of the injustices (or the causes and impacts of the injustices) they face and how to address them, because they lack access to information and knowledge<sup>2</sup>. Community-led education programs can enable individuals to understand and analyze their problems and include a variety of perspectives in a learning-by-sharing approach. Such programs can help community members to transform their local knowledge into innovative actions or solutions and can lead to their active participation in decision-making. They also allow individuals to see themselves and others as leaders of their own education and help them create tools for driving positive change to obtain tangible, equitable benefits for local communities. Education is also recognized as essential in addressing the issue of climate change<sup>3</sup> and a key element of climate adaptation, as it enhances the adaptive capacity and empowers people with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary to take action against climate change<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> As additional support, the definitions of the concepts mentioned in this call for proposals can be found at: <http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/>.

<sup>2</sup> Discussion Paper – Environmental Justice: Origins, Evolution, and Common Grounds in North America, p.9. (<http://www.cec.org/wp-content/uploads/EJ-Discussion-Paper-English-5-June-2024.pdf>)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/climate-solutions/education-key-addressing-climate-change>

<sup>4</sup> <https://gca.org/educate-to-adapt-the-interconnected-paths-of-learning-and-climate/>

The EJ4Climate Grant Program is dedicated to supporting underserved and vulnerable communities, Indigenous communities, low-income communities, and communities with heightened risk and increased sensitivity to climate change. These communities often endure greater exposure to and risks from climate impacts, while possessing fewer resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from them. Intersectional<sup>5</sup> factors such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation and identification, age, national origin, citizenship or resident status, visible or invisible disabilities and income inequality interact with each other and are exacerbated by climate impacts, contributing to these heightened risks and sensitivities. This program aims to advance environmental justice by facilitating the involvement and empowerment of these underserved and vulnerable communities, and Indigenous communities, seeking solutions and partnerships to address environmental and health vulnerabilities caused by climate change impacts.

Additionally, the EJ4Climate Grant Program fosters climate resilience by enhancing the capacity of communities to prepare for, withstand, respond to, and recover from climate-related hazardous events or disturbances. Climate change poses risks to human health, the environment, cultural resources, the economy, and quality of life; and it disproportionately affects vulnerable and underserved communities, including Indigenous Peoples. Resilient communities are better able to make informed decisions that reduce their vulnerability to environmental hazards and reduce impacts to their social well-being and economies.

Potential projects supported under this grant program could promote the acquisition of climate adaptation knowledge related to the following themes: extreme weather impacts, transition to clean energy sources, conservation or restoration initiatives, traditional ecological knowledge to address climate change impacts and/or food sovereignty. In accordance with the theme, priority will be given to projects that significantly integrate formal or informal community-led education programs. Approaches put forward may include, but are not limited to: hands-on activities, place-based learnings, community-science initiatives, knowledge exchange with elders, training and capacity building, awareness campaigns, and engaging youth as agents of change. Successful projects will feature the active involvement and leadership of vulnerable and underserved communities and/or organizations serving these communities, in their design and implementation plans. Selected applicants will also have to demonstrate how they expect their project to have a direct and long-term impact on communities, their well-being and health, local environments and capacities to address and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

## **Selection criteria**

Applicants will be evaluated based on how well and the extent to which they demonstrate that they:

- Address the focus area(s) identified by the CEC Council in the Call for Proposals;

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<sup>5</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, professor at Columbia Law School, [defined](#) intersectionality as: “a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood within conventional ways of thinking.”

- Have or will strengthen the organizational capabilities and include other elements/resources to successfully carry out the project and contribute to a continued and long-lasting impact once funding has concluded;
- Have a sound and clear implementation plan, involving the community-based/grassroots leadership, that identifies actors, actions, beneficiaries, goals, budget (the more specific the better) and tangible, measurable results that will be achieved at the community level within the timeframe;
- Will implement a project that could inspire or be replicated in other regions or communities; and
- Create formal or informal partnerships, collaborations or linkages among relevant stakeholders, such as different levels of government, local or indigenous communities, academia (and/or youth), nongovernmental organizations, or the private sector, that respond to community-identified challenges.

Applications will be evaluated based on how well and the extent to which the applicant demonstrates:

- How the project integrates community-led education program(s) to increase climate adaptation knowledge;
- How the project will significantly benefit underserved and vulnerable communities, and/or Indigenous communities, and the extent to which it engages with these communities, to ensure it addresses their needs and concerns and includes the meaningful participation of local residents in the design (project write-up), planning, implementation/performance of the project;
- How the project will address the disproportionate and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts<sup>6</sup> resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial, and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect the underserved communities; and
- How and why the project will help protect human health and the environment more effectively, and help communities and ecosystems become more sustainable and resilient to the effects of climate change.

Applications will be given additional consideration if the applicant describes how the proposal will:

- Align with the [CEC's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan](#);
- Promote actions and policies that generate synergies between mitigation and adaptation and that contribute to the [2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#); and
- Identify areas of opportunity to confront climate change from a gender and intercultural perspective and promote the engagement of youth.

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<sup>6</sup> Factors that may indicate disproportionate and adverse impacts include: differential proximity and exposure to adverse environmental hazards; greater susceptibility to adverse effects from environmental hazards (due to causes such as age, chronic medical conditions, lack of health care access, or limited access to quality nutrition); unique environmental exposures because of practices linked to cultural background or socioeconomic status (for example, subsistence fishing or farming); cumulative effects from multiple stressors; reduced ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes (due to causes such as lack of or ineffective language access programs, lack of programs to make processes accessible to persons with disabilities, inability to access communication channels, or limited capacity to access technical and legal resources); and degraded physical infrastructure, such as poor housing, poorly maintained public buildings (e.g., schools), or lack of access to transportation.

## Who should apply?

Eligible applicants include nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, civil society groups, environmental groups, community-based associations, faith-based organizations, tribal nations, and Indigenous Peoples and communities.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, applicants should be a “community-based organization,” meaning a nongovernmental organization that has demonstrated effectiveness as a representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and that helps members of that community or segment obtain environmental, educational, or other social services. Universities, and academic and public research institutions are not eligible to apply but may be involved by teaming up with community-based organizations to support their applications and serve as community partners. Grantees must be located and projects be implemented in Canada, Mexico or the United States<sup>8</sup>.

This program does not provide support to businesses; private individuals; universities and academic and public research institutions; or municipal, provincial/state, territorial and federal governments, except for tribal nations, and Indigenous Peoples and communities. However, proposals from qualified organizations partnering with the private sector or local government entities are eligible. Additionally, grants cannot be used to support potential applicants who are currently receiving or applying for funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada for their proposed projects.

The CEC cannot accept applications from an applicant organization whose employee or officer is an immediate family<sup>9</sup> member of:

- An official from any of the Parties to the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (ECA) (i.e., the Government of Canada, the Government of the United States of America, or the Government of the United Mexican States), or who served in that position within the past year;
- An official of the CEC Secretariat or one who has served in that position within the past year;
- A present or past member (within the past year) of the CEC Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC); or
- A present or past member (within the past year) of the domestic advisory committees.

### **The following projects and activities are not eligible for funding:**

- Activities for which the local, state/provincial or federal government is responsible (e.g., construction of roads, bridges, sewage treatment plants);

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<sup>7</sup> For organizations or associations having no legal registration, recourse to a fiscal sponsor (who must already be identified when applying) may be necessary. Please contact us in case of any doubt. Also, in the case of groups, all members have to be informed and support the proposal.

<sup>8</sup> As an applicant, if you are not part of the community/ies where the project activities will take place, please provide a letter of support from an authorized representative or your main point of contact in this community/ies. This letter should explain how, as an external partner, you have been involved with the community/ies over time and how you will contribute to or promote the long-term emancipation of the community/ies. This requirement helps ensure that projects supported by this grant program are built and carried out by and for the communities involved and with their consent.

<sup>9</sup> “Immediate family” includes spouses, parents, siblings and children.

- Purchase of motor vehicles, property, or land;
- Renovations;
- Pursuing legal action;
- Projects dedicated exclusively to planning;
- Projects meant only to beautify an area;
- Lobbying or advocacy;
- Annual or regular organizational events/campaigns;
- Expenses to attend general conferences; and
- Projects implemented outside the territory of the three ECA member countries.

## **Funding**

**Projects are funded for a duration of 12 (twelve) to 24 (twenty-four) months.**

The CEC encourages applicants to submit proposals up to C\$175,000. The CEC recognizes that a project can have a great impact at a low cost; therefore, no minimum grant amount has been established.

Successful candidates will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the CEC before any contribution is made to their projects. Grant funds are disbursed based on progress reports and financial statements that demonstrate how the funding is being used to generate the intended results.

## **How are proposals evaluated?**

Applicants should submit a proposal by the due date in electronic format through the online application portal, as described below.

**A maximum of one application per organization per country will be considered.**

Grant applications will be reviewed and approved or declined by the Selection Committee, based on the grant selection criteria detailed above. Please note that, in the context of a Call for Proposals, the CEC generally supports 10 to 15 projects with a grant (in similar proportions across the three countries).

Applicants will be notified in writing of decisions about their proposal (to the email address provided in the online application portal). The Secretariat will not provide feedback on its evaluation, due to the high volume of proposals received.

The 2024–2025 EJ4Climate grant recipients will be publicly announced through CEC’s communication platforms.

## What are the key dates?

- Proposals due 14 November 2024 (5:00 p.m. EST)
- Evaluation of grant applications November 2024 – January 2025
- Selection process February 2025
- Notification of decisions March 2025
- Project implementation begins April 2025

## How to apply?

Proposals must be submitted in electronic format through the online application portal, available at <https://www.grantinterface.ca/Process/Apply?urlkey=cec>. **To submit a proposal, applicants must create an account and complete the online form** which consists of the following questions:

**1. Project lead contact information.** First name, last name, telephone and e-mail.

**2. Organization contact information.** Name, address, country, e-mail, phone number, website, Twitter, Facebook, etc.

**3. Project title (Max. 15 words), Objectives and Results.** Please describe: 1) the specific climate change-related impact(s) the community/ies is/are facing in the area(s) where the project will take place; 2) relevant environmental justice issue(s) that the project will address; 3) how the project will integrate community-led education programs and how it will increase climate adaptation knowledge; 4) the objectives of the project and desired results. *Character Limit: 5000 (with spaces)*

**4. Budget requested.** Total budget requested (only from the EJ4Climate grant program) and its detailed breakdown (in Canadian dollars). Use the worksheet template to provide details of the project budget (the more specific the better). Break this information into the following categories and provide the document in Excel (not pdf):

1. Salaries and benefits
2. Equipment and supplies
3. Travel (not to exceed 15 percent)<sup>10</sup>
4. Consultant services (if applicable)
5. Overhead (not to exceed 15 percent)<sup>11</sup>
6. Other costs

**5. Project duration.** Number of months, project starting date and project end date (maximum duration 12–24 months).

**6. Geographic location of the project.** Indicate the country or countries where the project will take place.

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<sup>10</sup> The CEC will not fund expenses related to travel in excess of 15 percent of the total grant amount.

<sup>11</sup> The CEC will not fund expenses related to overhead and administration (such as rent, telephone, fax, and photocopies) in excess of 15 percent of the total grant amount.

**7. Beneficiaries.** Describe the vulnerable and underserved community/ies that will benefit directly from the project, the target population, and number of individuals to be served. *Character Limit: 2000 (with spaces)*

**8. Detailed work plan.** Describe in detail the project's objectives, expected results and the performance indicators that will be used to measure these results. Results must be measurable and must be achieved within the timeframe of the grant. Also describe the main activities to be undertaken to meet the project objectives, including actors and the corresponding budgets and timelines. Use the template provided.

**9. Partnerships.** Please provide the names of any other organizations involved in the project, including partners and/or beneficiaries, and indicate what is their contribution to this project, if applicable. *Character Limit: 1500 (with spaces)*

**10. Other funding sources and/or leverage opportunities.** List other funding sources (including the names of funders and the amounts provided) and/or leveraging opportunities. *Character Limit: 750 (with spaces)*

**11. Innovation.** Describe any innovative approach to be adopted in this project (in comparison to other similar initiatives). *Character Limit: 750 (with spaces)*

**12. Replicability/scalability.** Explain how this project could inspire or be replicated (or scaled up) in other North American communities. *Character Limit: 750 (with spaces)*

**13. Sustainability.** Explain if/how this project or its impacts could carry on successfully after the funding from this grant ends. *Character Limit: 1500 (with spaces)*

**14. Mission of the lead organization/institution/group/community.** *Character Limit: 750 (with spaces)*

**15. Applicant organization.** Please upload a certificate of nonprofit status of the applicant organization. If not certified or registered, it is not disqualifying, but recourse to a fiscal sponsor may be necessary. Please provide the name and a proof of support from the fiscal sponsor (who must be an eligible applicant as described above).

**16. Letter of support.** (Required only if the applicant organization is not part of the community/ies where the project activities will take place.) Please provide a letter of support from an authorized representative or your main point of contact in this community/ies. This letter should explain how, as an external partner, you have been involved with the community/ies over time and how you will contribute to or promote the long-term emancipation of the community/ies. This requirement helps ensure that projects supported by this grant program are built and carried out by and for the communities involved and with their consent.

**17. Declaration of acceptance of impartiality and independence.** Please print, sign, and upload the declaration of acceptance of impartiality and independence.

For more information or assistance regarding this grant application process, please consult the [Q&A](#) section or contact us at: [ej4climate@cec.org](mailto:ej4climate@cec.org).