

2022 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

EJ4Climate: Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience Grant Program

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is accepting applications for projects to fund under the EJ4Climate Grant Program. Proposals are due by 11 November 2022 and projects will start in March 2023.

The second cycle of EJ4Climate grants will address the theme “Integrating community-led environmental education in support of Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience.”

What is the EJ4Climate Grant Program?

Initiated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2021, the CEC established this grant program to fund projects that target underserved and vulnerable communities, and Indigenous communities, in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, to prepare them for climate-related impacts. This program provides funding directly to community-based organizations to help them develop community-driven solutions to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

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 environmental education in support of environmental justice and community resilience to climate-related impacts. Community-led environmental education can enable communities and individuals to analyze their problems and include a variety of perspectives in a learning-by-sharing approach. It helps transform local knowledge into innovative actions or solutions and promotes the active participation of all members of society. It also allows individuals to see themselves and others as leaders of their own education and helps them create tools for driving positive change to obtain tangible, equitable benefits for local communities.

The EJ4Climate program is to support underserved and vulnerable communities, Indigenous communities, low-income communities, and communities with heightened risk and increased sensitivity to climate change. These communities often already face greater exposure to/risks from climate impacts and have less capacity and fewer resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from them. The degree of risk and sensitivity stems from physical, social, political, and/or economic factors, which interact with each other and are exacerbated by climate impacts. These factors include, but are not limited to, race, class, gender, sexual orientation and identification, national origin, and income inequality.

This program seeks to support environmental justice by facilitating the involvement and empowerment of underserved and vulnerable communities, and Indigenous communities searching for solutions and the development of partnerships to address their environmental and human health vulnerabilities, including

those due to climate change impacts. In Mexico, the concept of environmental equity (*equidad ambiental*) is analogous to and entails an equal distribution of environmental benefits and impacts.

The grant program also seeks to foster climate resilience by improving the capacity of communities to prepare for, withstand, respond to, and recover from hazardous events or disturbances related to climate change, which poses risks to human health, the environment, cultural resources, the economy, and the quality of life. These changes are expected to create further challenges to protecting human health and welfare and the environment, and impact the vulnerable and underserved, and Indigenous communities, disproportionately.¹

Possible projects under this grant program could include addressing extreme weather impacts, transitioning to clean energy and/or transportation systems, carrying out conservation or restoration works, or utilizing traditional ecological knowledge to address climate change impacts. In compliance with the theme, priority will be given to projects that significantly integrate formal or informal community-led environmental education approaches such as, but not limited to: hands-on activities and place-based learnings, citizen-science initiatives, knowledge exchange with elders, training and capacity building, awareness campaigns, and the involvement of youth as agents of change, and have the active involvement and leadership of vulnerable and underserved communities, and/or organizations serving these communities, in their design and implementation plans.

Selection criteria

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

- Address the focus area identified by the CEC Council in the Call for Proposals;
- Have or will strengthen the organizational capabilities and include other elements/resources to successfully perform the project and contribute to a continued and long-lasting impact once funding has concluded;
- Have a sound implementation plan, involving the community-based/grassroots leadership, that identifies actors, actions, beneficiaries, goals, 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), non-governmental organizations, or the private sector, that respond to community-identified challenges.

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

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

- How the project integrates community-led environmental education in support of environmental justice and climate resilience.
- How and why their 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.
- How the project benefits underserved and vulnerable communities, and/or Indigenous communities, and the extent to which it engages with these communities, to ensure the meaningful participation of local residents in the design, planning, implementation/performance of the project.
- How the proposed project will address the environmental needs and concerns of underserved and vulnerable communities, and Indigenous communities, and other interested parties, groups, or populations.
 - This includes evaluating the quality and extent to which the applicant demonstrates how it will engage and work with community-based organizations and other appropriate parties to enhance the effectiveness of the project.
 - The extent of support and involvement of the local community, including the community-based/non-profit organizations, for the concept and project write-up.
- How the project will address the disproportionate and adverse human health, environmental, climate-related, and other cumulative impacts² resulting from industrial, governmental, commercial, and/or other actions that have affected and/or currently affect the underserved communities.

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

- Promote actions and policies that generate synergies between mitigation and adaptation and that contribute to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Align with the [CEC's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan](#).
- Focus actions on areas of greatest economic disadvantage and climate vulnerability, and which involve the grassroots/community-based leaders.
- Encourage participation and connection of people to their communities.
- Identify areas of opportunity to confront climate change from a gender and intercultural perspective.

² 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 (NGOs), civil society groups, environmental groups, community-based associations, faith-based organizations, tribal nations, and Indigenous Peoples and communities.³ 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 are able to be involved by teaming up with community-based organizations to support their applications and serve as community partners. Grantees must be located in Canada, Mexico or the United States.⁴

Restrictions

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 whose employee or officer is an immediate family⁵ 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.

³ For organizations or associations having no legal registration, recourse to a fiscal sponsor may be necessary. Please contact us in case of any doubt.

⁴ 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.

⁵ “Immediate family” includes spouses, parents, siblings and children.

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);
- 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\$200,000 and will consider additional funds (where available) for exceptional projects.

The CEC recognizes that a project can have a great impact at a low cost; therefore, no minimum grant amount has been established.

How are proposals evaluated?

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

Grant applications will be reviewed and approved or declined by the Selection Committee, based on the grant selection criteria detailed above.

Once an application is submitted, the Secretariat will not provide oral or written feedback on its evaluation.

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

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.

What are the key dates?

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| • Proposals due | 11 November 2022 (5:00 p.m. EST) |
| • Evaluation of grant applications | November 2022-January 2023 |
| • Official grants announcement | February 2023 |
| • Project implementation begins | March 2023 |

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 form** by providing the information described above.

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. Explain how the project will provide community-driven solutions to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Describe the specific climate change-related impacts in your area, relevant environmental justice issues that the project will address, how the project integrates community-led environmental education, the objectives of the project, and desired results. (Max. 500 words)

4. Budget requested. Total budget requested and its detailed breakdown (in Canadian dollars). Use the worksheet template to provide details of the project budget. Break this information into the following categories:

1. Salaries and benefits
2. Equipment and supplies
3. Travel⁶
4. Consultant services (if applicable)
5. Overhead (not to exceed 15 percent)⁷
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.

⁶ The CEC will not fund expenses related to travel in excess of 15 percent of the total grant amount.

⁷ 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 (Max. 200 words).

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 (max. 200 words).

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 (max. 100 words).

11. Innovation. Describe any innovative approach to be adopted in this project (Max. 100 words).

12. Replicability/Scalability. Explain how this project could inspire or be replicated (or scaled up) in other North American communities (max. 100 words).

13. Sustainability. Explain if/how this project or its impacts could carry on successfully after the funding from this grant ends (max. 100 words).

14. Mission of the lead organization/ institution/group/community (Max. 50 words).

15. Applicant Organization. Please upload a certificate of non-profit status of the applicant organization. If not certified or registered, it is not disqualifying, but recourse to a fiscal sponsor may be necessary. Please contact us in case of any doubt.

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.

17. Declaration of acceptance of Impartiality and Independence. Please print, sign, and upload the Declaration of Impartiality and Independence.

For more information or assistance regarding this grant application process, please contact: Grant Programs Coordinator at (514) 350-4346, or by e-mail at: ej4climate@cec.org.