

# Frequently Asked Questions – Community Change Grants Program

August 2023

*Note: Details in this document are subject to change and do not supersede the requirements that will be shared in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).*

## How much money will be awarded under the Community Change Grants program?

Approximately \$2 billion in funding will be awarded under the Community Change Grants program (Community Change Grants). EPA expects most awards will be between \$10-20 million for multi-faceted projects addressing a range of pollution, climate change, and other priority issues. A limited number of smaller awards between \$1-3 million will be awarded for projects focused on facilitating the engagement of disadvantaged communities in governmental processes.

Further information on award amounts and ranges will be in the Community Change Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

## What is the timeline for the Community Change Grants?

EPA expects the Community Change Grants NOFO to be issued in early autumn of 2023 and applications will remain open 12 months. Applications will be reviewed and selected on a rolling basis based on available funding. This process will allow EPA to expeditiously award grants – consistent with proper oversight and our fiduciary responsibilities – to support disadvantaged communities in recognition of the urgency for climate action and environmental justice.

Further details about the Community Change Grants application and evaluation process, and dates for webinars to address questions about the program, will be outlined in the NOFO.

## Who can apply for the Community Change Grants?

- A partnership between at least two community-based non-profit organizations (CBOs).
- A partnership between a CBO and one or any combination of the following:
  - a Federally-Recognized Tribe;
  - a local government; or
  - an institution of higher education.

In addition, other organizations and entities may be able to participate and be involved in the Community Change Grants projects as collaborating subrecipients and/or procurement contractors selected in compliance with competition requirements.

Further details about applicant eligibility and partnership requirements will be outlined in the NOFO.

## How is “Community-Based Organization” defined for purposes of the Community Change Grants?

Congress did not specifically define CBO in Section 138 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). The Community Change Grants NOFO will contain further information on how EPA is defining the term CBO. At a minimum, a qualifying CBO must meet the definition of “nonprofit organization” stated below from grant regulation 2 CFR 200.1 and must also include documentation in their application demonstrating that they are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization as designated by the Internal Revenue Service or are recognized as a nonprofit organization by the state, territory, commonwealth, tribe, or other governmental entity within which they are located. This can be done, for example, by submitting a letter from the state where the organization is located that recognizes them as a nonprofit organization. In addition, intertribal consortia may be able to qualify as a CBO depending on whether these and other requirements in the Community Change Grants NOFO are met.

[2 CFR 200.1 definition](#): Nonprofit organization means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), that:

- Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;
- Is not organized primarily for profit; and
- Uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

## How is “local government” defined for purposes of the Community Change Grants

Local government, as defined in the 2 CFR 200.1 [grant regulations](#), means any unit of government within a state, including a:

- County;
- Borough;
- Municipality;
- City;
- Town;
- Township;
- Parish;
- Local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937;
- Special district;
- School district;
- Intrastate district;
- Council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law; and
- Any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-, regional, or intra-State or local government.

## How is “Federally-Recognized Tribe” defined for purposes of the Community Change Grants?

For the purposes of eligibility for grants authorized by Section 138 of the CAA, EPA uses the definition of “Indian Tribe” in Section 302(r) of the CAA which provides that the term “...means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village, which is Federally recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.” Note that this definition does not include Alaskan Native Corporations or State-recognized tribes.

## What type of projects can the Community Change Grants be used for?

The activities to be performed under the grants may generally fall under the following categories:

- Climate resiliency 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.

EPA will further clarify eligible and ineligible projects, and other project specific requirements, in the NOFO.

## How is a “disadvantaged community” defined for the purposes of the Community Change Grants?

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) requires funding under this program “benefit disadvantaged communities, as defined by the [EPA] Administrator.” Disadvantaged communities may be geographically and/or non-geographically defined.

Geographically defined disadvantaged communities under the Community Change Grants will be identified as any community that meets at least one of the following characteristics:

- Identified as disadvantaged by the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST);
- Any census block group that is at or above the 90th percentile for any of EJScreen’s Supplemental Indexes when compared to the nation or state; and/or
- Any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in EJScreen.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Tribal Lands category in EJScreen to use for this purpose includes [Alaska Native Allotments \(EPA Metadata Record\)](#), [Alaska Native Villages \(EPA Metadata Record\)](#), [American Indian Reservations \(EPA Metadata Record\)](#), [American Indian Off-reservation Trust Lands \(EPA Metadata Record\)](#), [Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas \(EPA Metadata Record\)](#).

Examples of non-geographically defined communities include migrant farmworker communities. EPA's Community Change Grants NOFO will contain additional clarifying information and guidance on what constitutes geographically and non-geographically disadvantaged communities.

## What is the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool and EJScreen?

The [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#) is a tool used to identify disadvantaged communities in furtherance of the Justice40 Initiative from EO14008. EPA's [EJScreen](#) is an environmental justice mapping and screening tool that provides demographic and environmental information at a fine geographic resolution across the United States. These tools are used to help ensure that projects benefit disadvantaged communities.

## How long will recipients have to perform the grants?

Awards under the Community Change Grants are limited by statute to three years in duration. Therefore, Community Change Grants proposals must be designed to be performed and completed within three years from award date. No project extensions will be considered or granted beyond the three years due to statutory requirements.

## Will there be technical assistance to help applicants under the Community Change Grants?

Yes, in addition to broad technical assistance that can be provided by the EPA Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (EJ TCTACs) [network](#), there will be dedicated technical assistance available to help applicants apply for, manage, implement, and report on Community Change Grants projects. Further details will be outlined in the NOFO.

## What should I do to prepare to apply?

All applicants must have an active SAM.gov and Grants.gov registration to apply for a grant under the Community Change Grants. You should register in these systems **now** if you think you may apply for a Federal grant

***The process can take a month or more for new registrants.*** [Information about how to register.](#)

## Who can I contact with questions about the Community Change Grants?

Further information about the Community Change Grants will be in the NOFO once it is released. In the interim, please contact [CCGP@epa.gov](mailto:CCGP@epa.gov) with any additional questions.