

# Application Outline

## U.S. EPA Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants

**READINESS CHECK:**  
This document is part of a series of tools for school districts created by a collaborative of non-profit partners and funded with generous support from Flu Lab.

Within the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) for this grant, application materials are outlined for applicants. Here, we summarize the parts and include the point value that each part has been given within the scoring rubric for application reviewers.

### PROJECT NARRATIVE – 20 page maximum

Track I applications include a Project Narrative with two sections, (A) Executive Summary and (B) Project Workplan.

- Section A. Executive Summary – 3 page maximum
- Section B. Project Workplan – 17 page maximum

The Project Workplan is in three parts; the first describes the community-led aspects of the plan, the second describes the capabilities of the applicant team, and the third describes the feasibility of the project plan.

#### PART 1. COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INVESTMENTS FOR CHANGE (80 POINTS)

- 1.1 Community Vision Description (10 points)
  - Community Challenges
  - Community Vision
- 1.2 Selected Strategies (45 points)

Applications must address at least one Climate Action Strategy and at least one Pollution Reduction Strategy. Accordingly, applications should address the following requirements:

- Strategy Overview
  - Provide an overview of the strategy and associated projects and describe how they will be implemented during the grant term.
  - Describe how the strategies and associated projects in the application are integrated and/or designed to complement each other to provide impactful benefits to the residents of disadvantaged communities within the Project Area.

- Explain how the amount/proportion of the requested funding was determined for each strategy and associated project in the application.

○ Climate Action Strategies

Describe how the project(s) associated with the Climate Action Strategy(ies):

- Will address the climate impacts, risks, and / or challenges facing the Project Area and especially the residents of disadvantaged communities within the Project Area as defined in Appendix A;
- Will decrease GHG emissions within the Project Area and increase the overall resilience of the Project Area to current and anticipated climate impacts; and
- Are responsive to the Project Area needs and challenges identified in the Community Vision Description.

*Note that the non-profit partnership that is providing these tools to help school districts apply for funding is focusing on Climate Action Strategy 3: Energy-Efficient, Healthy, and Resilient Housing and Buildings.*

○ Pollution Reduction Strategies

Describe how the project(s) associated with the Pollution Reduction Strategy(ies):

- Will address the localized pollution challenges facing the Project Area and especially the residents of disadvantaged communities within the Project Area as defined in Appendix A;
- Will make substantial and measurable (i.e., quantifiable) progress towards preventing, reducing, and / or mitigating existing and future sources of pollution to benefit the Project Area; and
- Are responsive to the Project Area needs and challenges identified in the Community Vision Description.

*Note that the non-profit partnership that is providing these tools to help school districts apply for funding is focusing on Pollution Reduction Strategy 1: Indoor Air Quality and Community Health Improvements.*

▪ 1.3 Community Engagement and Collaborative Governance Plan (15 points)

The Project Workplan will contain a short version of the full plan, which is explained below, in the section on “Attachments.”

▪ 1.4 Community Strength Plan (10 points)

The Project Workplan will contain a short version of the full plan, which is explained below, in the section on “Attachments.”

## **PART 2. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, CAPABILITY, AND CAPACITY (35 POINTS)**

- **2.1 Performance Management Plan, Outputs, and Outcomes (6 points)**

- Describe the environmental results of the proposed project.
- Describe how the recipient plans to track and measure project performance.
- Describe how the recipient selected the expected outputs and outcomes and how they will lead to improvements to the environmental conditions and public health of the community members of the Project Area in the short and long term.
- Describe how the expected project outputs and outcomes are specific and include achievable and reasonable target measures within the project period.
- Describe how the recipient will conduct program evaluation activities.

- **2.2 Project Linkages to the EPA Strategic Plan (4 points)**

Applications should describe how the proposed project activities support and advance EPA Strategic Plan Goal 2 (Take Decisive Action to Advance Environmental Justice and Civil Rights), Objective 2.1, (Promote Environmental Justice and Civil Rights at the Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Levels).

- **2.3 CBO Experience and Commitment (5 points)**

Applications should describe the following for the community-based non-profit organization (CBO) that is part of the project, whether they are the Lead Applicant or Statutory Partner for the proposed grant.

- Their history and experience as a CBO
- The depth of their commitment, connections, and relationships with the disadvantaged communities the application is intended to benefit

- **2.4 Programmatic and Managerial Capability and Resources (15 points)**

Applications should provide information demonstrating the Lead Applicant's and Statutory Partner's ability to successfully complete, oversee, and manage the award including:

- Their organizational experience and capacity, including staffing
- Financial stability, controls in place, and capacity to manage taxpayer dollars
- A projected milestone schedule for the proposed projects (up to three years) with a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and timeframes for completion of tasks.

- **2.5 Past Performance (5 points)**

Describe federally funded and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include grants and cooperative agreements but not contracts) that the Lead Applicant performed within the last three years (no more than three agreements in total). EPA agreements are preferred to be included.

### **PART 3. FEASIBILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND BUDGET (40 POINTS)**

- **3.1 Readiness Approach (8 points)**

Describe how grant performance will be initiated upon award, or generally no later than 120 days after award, leading to successful completion of the grant within the three-year period of performance.

- **3.2 Feasibility (9 points)**

Demonstrate that all the projects in the application can be successfully and effectively performed within the three-year grant period of performance, and the degree of risk that they cannot be.

- **3.3 Sustainability (5 points)**

Demonstrate the extent to which the benefits and outcomes from the projects can be sustained after the three-year grant period of performance.

- **3.4 Program Budget Description (8 points)**

Provide a detailed budget description and estimated funding amounts for each project component/task, similar to that on the budget found in the SF-424A form, which includes the EPA funding requested to be expended over the three-year period of performance. This section provides an opportunity for a narrative description of the budget, or aspects of the budget, found in SF-424A.

This section also requires a description of the Lead Applicant's history in successfully meeting outputs and outcomes and meeting reporting requirements of similar past projects, including submitting acceptable final technical reports.

Failure to (1) provide any information about past performance on Federal grants, or (2) include a statement that you do not have any relevant or available past performance or reporting information may result in a zero score for these factors.

- **3.5 Compliance Plan (10 points)**

Applicants must submit a Compliance Plan that describes how they will: (1) ensure compliance with the grant's terms and conditions, including [2 CFR § 200.302\(b\)](#) (financial management), [2 CFR § 200.303](#) (internal controls), and [2 CFR § 200.332](#) (requirements for pass-through entities); and (2) manage broader legal and compliance risks.

## ATTACHMENTS

### ATTACHMENT A

Program Budget Template SF-424A

### ATTACHMENT B: PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

All the partners must sign this agreement. The agreement should:

- List all the partners and the role they will play.
- Clearly indicate who the Lead Applicant will be and who will undertake the actions required of a Lead Applicant. Required actions include the overall management, performance, oversight, and reporting responsibilities under the grant; making subawards to Collaborating Entities; and the receipt of federal funds from EPA and the proper expenditure of these funds. The Lead Applicant is also expected to bear liability for unallowable costs, be responsible for compliance and legal issues, and be responsible for managing risks associated with the project.
- The roles and responsibilities of the Lead Applicant and Statutory Partner for project activities (described in work plan).
- Describe how disputes between and among the partners will be handled and resolved.
- Describe the procedures for replacing a Statutory Partner with another Statutory Partner and for ensuring the replacement has the comparable expertise, experience, knowledge, and qualifications of the replaced Statutory Partner to ensure successful grant completion within 3 years.
- Agreement of the Lead Applicant and Statutory Partner that, if the proposed application is selected for award, they will enter a subaward agreement that complies with the subaward requirements in the grant regulations at [2 CFR 200.331](#) and in [EPA's Subaward Policy](#) and related guidance and that contains terms and conditions, including those above.

### ATTACHMENT C

Any other documents or information not listed above.

### ATTACHMENT D: PROJECT AREA MAP

For Track I, applicants must identify the specific census block groups designated as disadvantaged communities that the project(s) and supporting activities will directly benefit by submitting to EPA one contiguous Project Area Map with an outlined boundary.

The Project Area Map should also reflect where each project submitted under the application is located within the Project Area. The Project Area may include multiple census block groups that are designated

as a disadvantaged community by EPA (in Appendix A of the NOFO), but the disadvantaged census block groups need not be fully contiguous with each other.

The submitted map should include the following:

- The Project Area with an outlined boundary
- Main streets, landmarks, or both
- Community assets (e.g., parks or play areas, schools, community center)
- Jurisdictional boundaries, including incorporated and unincorporated areas
- Any other attributes that may provide important context about the Project Area

## **ATTACHMENT E: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE PLAN**

### **– 10 PAGE MAXIMUM**

To help ensure that the community itself drives project development and implementation, applicants must submit a Community Engagement and Collaborative Governance Plan, which should demonstrate how the applicant will inform, respond to, and engage community members throughout project development and implementation. The plan should expand on the content written within the Project Narrative, described above. This plan should include:

- Past Community Outreach and Engagement Conducted: The applicant should demonstrate what outreach and engagement methods were used to engage with the Project Area community, including any with specific neighborhoods or groups, and how this impacted the selection of the strategies and associated projects as well as the applicant's implementation approach.
- Community Engagement Plan Implementation: The applicant should demonstrate the specific community engagement methods, as well as how they will mitigate barriers and involve relevant governmental stakeholders, necessary to support overall implementation.
  - Collaborative Governance Structure: The applicant should provide details regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Applicant, Collaborating Entities, and community residents and/or community-selected representatives for implementing, managing, and overseeing the application's project activities, including how they should meet regularly to discuss project implementation. An outline of the planned decision-making processes between the Lead Applicant and Collaborating Entities, including procedures to ensure that decisions are transparent and can be made in an expedited manner when necessary.
  - Processes for replacing a Collaborating Entity to ensure that the replacement entity has comparable skills, qualifications, expertise, community support, and experience to avoid any adverse impact on grant performance. EPA approval of the qualifications, expertise, and experience of the replacement Collaborating Entity will be required pursuant to 2 CFR 200.308l(2) and l(c)(6).

## ATTACHMENT F: COMMUNITY STRENGTH PLAN – 5 PAGE MAXIMUM

Applicants must submit a Community Strength Plan that describes how their proposed projects will enhance the overall strength and economic prosperity of the community, including maximizing the benefits of the projects for existing residents and minimizing potential risks associated with investing significant resources into the Project Area. This Community Strength Plan should expand on the content written for the Project Narrative.

The plan should include strategies for how the projects will promote inclusive economic development, drive benefits of the projects to existing residents, and proactively address unintended displacement consequences. The plan should speak to how the projects will enhance the overall wellbeing of the community, ensuring existing community members receive the benefits of these investments and can build on those benefits for future generations.

## ATTACHMENT G: READINESS APPROACH – NO PAGE LIMIT

Applicants must demonstrate their ability and readiness to proceed with grant performance for the project(s) in the application upon receiving an award, and generally no later than 120 days after award, to ensure that the projects can be completed within the statutory three-year grant period. This Readiness Approach attachment should expand on the content written for the Project Narrative.

## ATTACHMENT H: COMPLIANCE PLAN – 5 PAGE MAXIMUM

Applicants must submit a Compliance Plan that expands on the compliance plan described in the Project Narrative. The plan should describe how they will: (1) ensure compliance with the grant's terms and conditions, including [2 CFR § 200.302\(b\)](#) (financial management), [2 CFR § 200.303](#) (internal controls), and [2 CFR § 200.332](#) (requirements for pass-through entities); and (2) manage broader legal and compliance risks.

## ADDITIONAL FORMS

- EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54
- EPA Pre-award Compliance Review Report Form 4700-4

Next, we recommend reviewing the *Readiness Checklist* document.