

Readiness Checklist for School Districts

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.

GAINING SUPPORT

- ☐ Review the requirements of the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO).
- ☐ Send the NOFO or the provided summary to school district leadership, potential partners, and others to gain their feedback and interest.
- ☐ Discuss requirements and share the readiness checklist with school district decisionmakers.

IDENTIFYING A RELEVANT PROJECT

Can a project be identified that meets the following requirements?

- ☐ Project is in disadvantaged area (meets grant requirements for a disadvantaged area defined in Appendix A in the NOFO, page 67)
- ☐ Project accomplishes one or more of the listed “Climate Action Strategies” (Appendix C in the NOFO, page 72)
 - To take advantage of coaching hours that our group will provide, the project needs to pursue Climate Action Strategy #3: Energy-Efficient, Healthy, and Resilient Housing and Buildings
- ☐ Project accomplishes one or more of the listed “Pollution Reduction Strategies” (Appendix D in the NOFO, page 79)
 - To take advantage of coaching hours that our group will provide, the project needs to pursue Pollution Reduction Strategy #1: Indoor Air Quality and Community Health Improvements
- ☐ Project can be completed within three years of the award of the contract; this time restriction may mean that the project needs to be an expansion of something already in the school district’s pipeline.
- ☐ Community support is identified for the project, there is an existing pathway to engage the community, and/or the project is supported by the community.

DETERMINING SCHOOL DISTRICT READINESS

Does the school district have the capacity to apply for and work on this grant?

PROGRAMMATIC

- ☐ Does the school district and/or partners have experience leading and managing a project similar to the one proposed?
- ☐ Does the school district and/or partners have experience with indoor air quality projects?
- ☐ Does the school district and/or partners have experience with construction projects that address the impacts of climate change?
- ☐ Does the school district and/or partners have experience in managing construction projects?

FISCAL

- ☐ What is the capacity of the school district and/or partners to manage the financial reporting for federal grants?
 - Does the lead applicant have the accounting systems in place to appropriately categorize and record relevant expenses?
 - Does the lead applicant have individuals on staff who have experience with financial reporting for federal grants? If not, is the lead applicant comfortable issuing and managing a contract for services to assist in the management of the grant?

ADMINISTRATIVE

- ☐ Does the school district and/or partners have experience administering a federal grant?
- ☐ If no experience, does the school district and/or partners have experience with complex projects that it could describe in the grant application?
- ☐ Does the school district and/or partners have experience in providing project management and meeting reporting requirements on a federal grant or other complex project?
- ☐ Given the requirements in the NOFO, what potential roadblocks might the school district confront in executing the project in a timely way? Is prior planning needed to overcome these potential roadblocks?
 - Procurement processes
 - Decision-making processes
 - Political and community support
 - Other potential delay points
- ☐ Can an internal lead (within the school district) for the grant proposal and the grant management be identified, even if some grant management work will be contracted?
- ☐ Can the partners assist in the preparation of the grant application and in the management of the grant, if awarded?

IDENTIFYING PARTNERS THAT STRENGTHEN THE PROPOSAL

Assess the existing and potential partnerships that can be leveraged for the project.

IDENTIFYING THE PARTNERS

- ☐ Are partnerships in place that can be leveraged for the grant application and proposed project?
- ☐ What partners could strengthen the part(s) of the grant application and proposed project where the school district is lacking?
 - Is at least one partner a community-based organization (as defined in the NOFO in Sec. III (A)(1) on page 29)?
 - Do the partners represent the community and/or offer community input and feedback?

WHEN INITIAL CONVERSATIONS WITH PARTNERS HAVE BEGUN

- ☐ What are the specific roles and responsibilities for all partners?
- ☐ Can potential partners provide the expertise and flexibility that is needed to execute the proposed project?
- ☐ Which entity makes the most sense to take on the lead applicant role?
- ☐ Does the lead applicant have the capacity to manage the grant, including procurement ability for contractors and appropriate financial systems in place?

Next, we recommend reviewing the
Application and Submission Information document.