



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FUND

## 2024 APPLICATION GUIDELINES



**Seattle**  
Office of Sustainability  
& Environment

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# ABOUT THE FUND

Seattle's [Environmental Justice Fund](#) is a grant opportunity to support efforts that benefit and are led by, or in partnership with, those most affected by environmental and climate inequities: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders. The EJ Fund launched in 2018 to improve environmental conditions, respond to impacts of climate change, and get us closer to achieving environmental justice. The EJ Fund is administered by Seattle's Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE).

OSE partners with Seattle's Environmental Justice Committee (EJC) to make funding recommendations to the City of Seattle. EJC members are individuals with deep community roots working closely with communities to advance environmental and climate justice. Members understand how to advance racial equity, environmental justice, and climate justice for and with communities who have been disproportionately impacted by environmental issues and climate change.

Visit the [Equity & Environment Initiative](#) to learn about the community work that led to the creation of this fund.

## WHAT WE FUND

Across the United States, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, water, or soil. It is for this reason that the EJ Fund supports efforts that benefit and are led by, or in partnership with, those most affected by environmental and climate issues: people who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders.

Eligible projects/programs must:

- Focus on advancing climate and/or environmental justice
- Be led by or in partnership with those most affected by climate change and environmental hazards (as previously defined)
- Benefit people who live, learn, work, worship and play in Seattle.

# FUNDING DETAILS

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**In 2024, \$250,000 is available for grants.** Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until the total funding is awarded or until October 20, whichever comes first.

*Applicants may select to apply for a **\$10,000** or a **\$25,000 grant**.*

## WHO SHOULD APPLY?

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Tribes, tribal organizations, non-profit organizations, **of any size** or community groups whose work is led by or in partnership with Black, Indigenous, people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and/or elders.

Eligible applicants must:

- Have an average **operating budget of \$500,000 or less** for the current and previous fiscal year (*applies to applicant, not the fiscal sponsor*)
- Have **501(c)3 nonprofit status; or**
- Have a **fiscal sponsor with 501(c)3 nonprofit status; or**
- Be willing and able to secure a fiscal sponsor with 501(c)3 nonprofit status within four (4) weeks of grant award and before project begins
  - *Fiscal sponsors often charge a fee of 8-15% of the total grant award. This fee may be included in your project budget.*
  - *During the contracting period, EJ Fund staff can help connect groups to potential fiscal sponsors if needed*

Note: Only one proposal per organization is allowed, except if the organization serves as a fiscal sponsor for multiple projects.

# HOW TO APPLY

- Request Technical Assistance at no cost (*strongly encouraged*).
- **Complete** the [Application Form](#) which will include your narrative responses, project timeline, and project budget.
  - A [sample application form](#) is available for reference.
- **Submit** the Application Form [online here](#).

Please note that because the applications are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis, funding ***may be exhausted prior to October 20***. Please stay up-to-date on our website.

# INFO SESSIONS

**Attend an info session** to learn about the EJ Fund, the review process, and to ask questions!

## SESSION 1:

**Tuesday, Aug. 27 from 12-1 pm**

**[ZOOM Link here](#)**

*This session will be bilingual in English & Spanish*

## SESSION 2:

**Monday, Sept. 9 from 6-7 pm**

**[Zoom link here](#)**

*To request interpretation or other accommodation, email [equityenviro@seattle.gov](mailto:equityenviro@seattle.gov) by Sept. 5*

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONSULTANTS

Technical Assistance (TA) consultants are available at no cost. All applicants are **strongly encouraged** to request TA. This should occur prior to drafting their proposal. TA consultants will be able to:

- Discuss your project idea for EJ Fund alignment
- Review your draft proposal and provide feedback
- Provide *high-level* edits on your draft proposal

## **Consultants will not be able to:**

- Help you design your project idea
- Draft your application responses

**Learn about the consultants [here](#)**

**Email us at [equityenviro@seattle.gov](mailto:equityenviro@seattle.gov) to request Technical Assistance**

*If the number of requests for TA exceeds consultant capacity, applicants will be prioritized by organizational budget and staff sizes in order of smallest to largest. In addition, groups and organizations led by individuals for whom English is not a first language will be prioritized and interpretation will be provided.*



# ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

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The EJ Fund seeks to support a variety of projects and programs that advance climate justice or environmental justice. The following activities are eligible for funding and proposals may incorporate more than one activity.

- Arts and storytelling
- Capacity building\* for the organization, group, and/or community
- Climate change adaptation and/or resilience
- Climate or environmental justice education
- Climate or environmental justice engagement, and/or outreach
- Coalition building to advance climate or environmental justice
- Community organizing
- Cultural knowledge preservation and/or education
- Neighborhood and community planning or visioning, *including the design phase*
- Skills building and trainings related to green jobs\*\*

**\*Capacity building** is “the process of building and strengthening the systems, structures, cultures, skills, resources, and power that organizations need to serve their communities.” *“Transformational Capacity Building” Stanford Social Innovation Review. April Nishimura, Roshni Sampath, Vu Le, Anbar Mahar Sheikh, and Ananda Valenzuela. Fall 2020.*

**\*\*for the purpose of the EJ Fund, for the purpose of the EJ Fund, green jobs are defined as jobs and careers within the context of addressing climate change and sustainability.**

# INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES & FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

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- Scholarships
- Purchase of land or buildings
- Capital projects including construction and renovation of facilities or site improvements
- Maintenance of existing facilities and physical improvements to non-natural areas of parks or existing recreational facilities that do not have a clear environmental justice purpose. This includes things like park benches, shelters, and sidewalks.
- Projects that are not accessible by the public
- Purchase of equipment including cameras, video recording equipment, laptops, tablets, phones, cellphones, etc. *The EJ Fund may support rental of this equipment.*
- Organization’s overhead costs not related to the EJ Fund project or program
- Individuals, for-profit businesses, and 501c4 organizations are ineligible for funding

# PROJECT EXAMPLES

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1

A trusted community-based organization seeks funds to conduct a visioning process with their community members. The process involves understanding the priorities for a community hub that can provide benefits to the community including cooling during extreme heat events, distribution of air filters, and intergenerational programming throughout the year.

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A mosque works with their members to collect stories about the efforts their community members are leading to advance environmental and climate justice. These stories are captured on video and are assembled into a short film. The completed film is shown at a community screening and used for climate and environmental justice education.

2

# APPLICATION PROCESS

**Note:** Projects should start at **least 60 days after** the proposal has been submitted.

Example: for a proposal submitted on September 4, the project start date should be no sooner than November 3

| Timeline  | Application Stage  |
|-----------|--|
| 1-2 days  | Once the proposal is received, it is verified for eligibility. Eligible proposals are sent to review team members. |
| 2-4 weeks | Review team members read, score proposals, and make funding recommendations.                                       |
| 1-2 weeks | Award recommendations approved by Mayor's Office.  |
| 1-2 weeks | Applicants is notified and the contracting process begins.   |



# REVIEW PROCESS & EVALUATION CRITERIA

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All proposals will be pre-screened for basic eligibility requirements before being sent to the Environmental Justice Committee, which is the group that will review proposals (Review Team).



A subset of the Review Team members will read and score proposals on a weekly basis, ensuring that projects are regularly reviewed on an ongoing basis.



An award amount may be different from the requested amount based on remaining available funding.



Funding recommendations will be approved by the City of Seattle's Mayor's Office. Once approved, EJ Fund staff will work with grantees to develop a grant agreement to proceed with their project/programming. An application that is approved is not guaranteed funding. To receive funding, the grantee must complete and sign a grant agreement that meets program and City requirements.

**The EJ Fund Scoring Rubric is available [here](#)**

# WHAT TO EXPECT IF AWARDED

If funded, groups, organizations, and fiscal sponsors (if applicable) will be required to:

- Participate in an introductory meeting with EJ Fund Staff
- Work closely with EJ Fund Staff to finalize project/program outcomes to be included in a grant agreement
- Sign a grant agreement with the City of Seattle to accomplish the project
- Participate in reporting meetings

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & GRANT DISBURSEMENT

**\$10,000**

Grantees will be required to meet with EJ Fund staff **once** during the grant cycle for a final reporting meeting.

The EJ Fund award is disbursed in one installment. The award is disbursed after the grant agreement is signed.


**\$25,000**

Grantees will be required to meet with EJ Fund staff **twice** during the grant cycle:


- Mid-point progress meeting: Grantees will meet with staff to discuss project progress and provide a budget update.
- Final reporting meeting: Grantees will meet with staff to close out their project and provide a final budget update.

The EJ Fund award is disbursed in two installments. The first half of the award is disbursed after the grant agreement is signed. The second half is disbursed after the midpoint progress meeting is completed and a budget update has been provided.


## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & GRANT DISBURSEMENT CONTINUED



Written reports are generated by EJ Fund staff during the reporting meeting(s) and grantees will review to approve the content. Grantees will be asked to share a budget update, photos, videos, flyers, and other written materials prior to these meetings.



Grantees may reach out at any time to discuss opportunities or challenges that may impact their scope of work such as staffing changes that impact the project timeline, and/or budget changes.



The grant agreement will require grantees to maintain records and receipts documenting all uses of the grant funds. Receipts will not be submitted to the City, however, the City does include in the grant agreement the right to audit the records. As a result, grantees are expected to retain those copies and provide them to the City upon request of EJ Fund Staff.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## ***Are the eligibility requirements different this year from previous years?***

Yes! The applicant group/organization must have an average operating budget of \$500,000 or less for the current and previous fiscal year. Please note that this applies only to the applicant and not the fiscal sponsor.

## ***What is the application process like this year?***

For 2024, the EJ Fund application process is rolling. This means that proposals will be accepted and reviewed as they are received. Grants will be awarded while the application is still open and available funding will decrease over time. The application may close prior to October 20 based on remaining funds. Please visit the [EJ Fund website](#) for updates.

## ***What qualities are you looking for in the groups that apply?***

Organizations or community groups should be able to demonstrate the following: 1) their work is led by or in partnership with those most affected by environmental and climate issues, 2) they have ties to their community and understand their community's(ies') environmental and climate justice issues, and 3) their proposed project/program is informed by their community.

## ***What steps can we take to develop a strong proposal?***

1. Carefully review the eligibility requirements before you get started
2. Discuss your project idea with a Technical Assistance consultant before investing time in drafting your proposal
3. Allow plenty of time to develop your project idea with your fellow team members
4. Carefully review the scoring criteria while developing your responses. (The strongest proposals will address all the items outlined in the "green" sections of each of the criteria categories.)

## ***How do we make sure we're providing the information the Review Team is looking for?***

Carefully review the scoring criteria while developing your responses. (The strongest proposals will address all the items outlined in the "green" sections of each of the criteria categories.)

***Can our project budget include general operating expenses?***

Yes, the EJ Fund can support general operating expenses that are directly related to the proposed project.

***Are there insurance requirements?***

Yes, Commercial General Liability insurance should be obtained at a minimum of \$500,000. If you are working directly with minors 16 and younger, you may also need Sexual Misconduct Liability insurance. You may include these insurance costs in your project budget. Contact us at [equityenviro@seattle.gov](mailto:equityenviro@seattle.gov) if you have questions.

***We are not a 501c3 and don't have a fiscal sponsor yet. How should we account for the fiscal sponsor fee in our project budget?***

We encourage you to include an estimated fiscal sponsorship fee of 8-15% in your project budget. If selected for a grant, you will be able to revise your project budget to match the actual fee.

***If my organization has received a grant from the Environmental Justice Fund in the past, can we submit a proposal?***

Yes, but if your project is less than 75% complete at the time of application, please reach out to EJ Fund Program Manager, Ximena Fonseca Morales at [ximena.fonseca-morales@seattle.gov](mailto:ximena.fonseca-morales@seattle.gov) prior to drafting your proposal.

***My office is not in Seattle, but the community my group serves is based in Seattle. Can we apply?***

Yes. You may apply **if** your project/programming takes benefits people who live, learn, work, worship and play in Seattle.

***Can a collaborative submit a proposal?***

Yes, but one group in the collaborative must serve as the lead applicant group

***Can I submit more than one proposal?***

No, only one application per nonprofit organization or community group is allowed, except if the nonprofit organization is serving as a fiscal sponsor for multiple proposals.

***Where can I find more information about the Equity & Environment Agenda?***

Download the [Equity & Environment Agenda](#), which is also available in [繁體中文](#) (Chinese), [Soomaali](#) (Somali), [Español](#) (Spanish) and [Tiếng Việt](#) (Vietnamese).