

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FUND



2025

## Application Guidelines



Seattle  
Office of Sustainability  
& Environment



Environmental  
Justice Fund

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# ABOUT THE FUND

Seattle's [Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Fund](#) is a grant opportunity to support efforts led by or co-developed with those most affected by environmental and climate inequities: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders.

Launched in 2018, the EJ Fund aims to improve environmental conditions, address climate change impacts, and advance environmental justice. It is administered by Seattle's Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) and is funded through the Seattle Payroll Expense Tax, a local revenue source not connected to federal funding.

OSE works with Seattle's Environmental Justice Committee (EJC) to make funding recommendations to the City of Seattle. EJC members are deeply rooted in their communities to advance environmental and climate justice. Members advance racial equity, environmental justice, and climate action in those communities 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 co-developed 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 co-developed 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

## Eligible Project Period: November 2025-April 2027\*

\* Due to upcoming changes to the funding schedule, next year's EJ Fund opportunity will support projects in 2027 and 2028.

There is a total of \$740,000 available for grants via three funding options:

Funding Option	Award Sizes	Total Funding
Mid-Size	\$10,000 - \$40,000	\$160,000
Large-Size	\$40,001 - \$90,000	\$400,000
Duwamish Valley Projects	\$10,000 - \$90,000	\$180,000

## WHO SHOULD APPLY?

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

Eligible applicants must:

- 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

[Click here](#) to apply online through the City of Seattle's grants portal

## New to the FLUXX Grants Portal?

To submit a proposal, the first step is to register in the City's grant portal. Click on "**Create an account now**" to start.

You will not be able to edit your profile after submission. Please ensure you have entered accurate information (including email address) when completing the registration form. After submitting the registration form, you will receive an email notification from the City of Seattle with login information and steps to set your password. This will give you access to the grant portal and the Environmental Justice Fund application. If you receive an award, this grant portal will also give you access to submit invoices & reports.

**Need help with FLUXX?** Drop in during TA office hours (see page 6) or reach out to [equityenviro@seattle.gov](mailto:equityenviro@seattle.gov) (please allow up to two business days for a response).

## Once logged into the Grants Portal:

1. Navigate to Office of Sustainability and Environment in the left-hand column.
2. Click to open the OSE window with the Environmental Justice Fund application.
3. Click the Environmental Justice Fund "Begin New Application" link to enter your responses.
4. When you start the application, you will be prompted to enter your organization's name.
5. If your organization has applied for a City of Seattle grant through FLUXX before, your profile will appear automatically, and the fields will pre-fill with your organization's details.  
**Important:** If your organization already has a profile, do not create a new one.
6. If this is your organization's first time applying for a City of Seattle grant through FLUXX, click the "Add New" link to create a profile before continuing.

An application worksheet can be found [here](#) to help you prepare your proposal offline before submission. We've also prepared a [sample application](#) to help you get your application started.

**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH THE GRANTS PORTAL BY JUNE 3, 5 PM. LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

# 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, 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 inaccessible to 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.

2

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.

3

Black, Indigenous, and youth of color have asked their trusted community-based organization to develop programming that will prepare them to join the environmental workforce. The community organization works with the youth to develop and facilitate a 10-week training series that will prepare them to join apprenticeship programs. Participants provide feedback to inform the programming for future cohorts.

5

# INFO SESSIONS

Join a virtual information session to learn more about the EJ Fund, the review process, qualities of a strong proposal, and to ask questions!

**SESSION 1:**  
**Friday, April 11; 12-1:15pm**  
[Register here](#)

**SESSION 2:**  
**Monday, April 28; 6-7:15 pm**  
[Register here](#)

*To request interpretation or other accommodations,  
email [equityenviro@seattle.gov](mailto:equityenviro@seattle.gov) one week before the session you plan to attend.*

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical Assistance (TA) consultants support is available for free. Applicants are encouraged to request TA. Those who consult with TA advisors before drafting their proposals tend to be more successful. **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](#).

**Complete [this form](#) to request Technical Assistance by Thursday, May 15.**

*If TA requests exceed capacity, priority will go to smaller organizations and those led by individuals whose first language is not English. Interpretation will be provided as requested.*

**Drop-in TA Office Hours are available:**

- [Wed, 4/23 Noon-1P](#)
- [Thurs, 5/8, 6-7P](#)
- [Thurs, 5/29, 2:30-3:30P](#)
- [Mon, 6/2, 6-7P](#)

*To request interpretation or other accommodations,  
email [equityenviro@seattle.gov](mailto:equityenviro@seattle.gov) one week in advance*

# GRANT APPLICATION SCHEDULE

## 2025

**Apr 2** - Application period opens

**Apr 11** - Info Session #1 [Register here via ZOOM](#)

**Apr 28** - Info Session #2 [Register here via ZOOM](#)

**May 15** - Last day to [request TA](#)

**Jun 3 - APPLICATIONS DUE BY 5 PM PT**

**July 1** - Review Team questions are sent to applicants

**July 17 - APPLICANT RESPONSES TO REVIEW TEAM QUESTIONS DUE BY 5 PM PT, if applicable**

**Week of Sept 22** - Applicants notified of funding decisions via email\*

**Sept 29-Oct 14** - Contracting period to finalize grant agreements\*

**Oct 15** - Grant agreements signed and projects may begin\*

# KEY PROGRAM DATES

## 2026

**April** - Informal project check-in

**July** - Reporting meeting

## 2027

**April 30** - Project deadline

**May** - Final report due *unless* the project is extended through a continuation grant

**\*Dates are subject to change**

# APPLICATION PROCESS

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Date	Application Stage	Who
April 2 - June 3	Application Period	Applicants
June 9 - June 26	Initial Proposal Review	Review Team Members
July 1 - 17	Written Response Period to Review Team's Questions	Applicants
July 18 - August 7	Final Proposal Review and Scoring	Review Team Members
August 11 - 24	Deliberation and Decision-Making	Review Team Members
August 25 - September 19	Funding Recommendations Approval Process	OSE Staff
Week of September 22	Notification of Funding Decisions to Applicants	OSE Staff

# REVIEW PROCESS & EVALUATION CRITERIA

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All proposals will be screened for basic eligibility before being sent to the Environmental Justice Committee (Review Team) for evaluation.

The Review Team will conduct an initial review of eligible projects. If they have questions, they will be sent to applicants during the **Q&A period** (July 1-17). Applicants must submit written responses via the grant portal by July 17. The Review Team will then consider these responses, finalize their evaluation, and submit scores.

Using a deliberative process, the Review Team will assess proposals based on feasibility, alignment with EJ Fund criteria, and project diversity. Their final recommendations will include a range of:

- Geographic areas most impacted by climate and environmental inequities, using the City's Racial and Social Equity Index to identify priority neighborhoods
- Populations served
- Project types and size
- Experience in the climate or environmental field
- Groups previously funded by the EJ Fund ("deepening impact")
- Groups not previously funded by the EJ Fund ("broadening impact")

*The Review Team may recommend a different award amount than requested.*

Funding recommendations will be approved by the City of Seattle's Mayor's Office. Once approved, EJ Fund staff will work with grantees through the contracting phase. Approval of an application does not guarantee funding. To receive funding, grantees must 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

Grantees will meet with EJ Fund staff **twice** during the grant cycle to complete reporting requirements:

- Mid-point progress meeting to discuss project progress and provide a budget update.
- Final reporting meeting to close out the project and provide a final budget update.

- Written reports are generated by EJ Fund staff during the reporting meetings and grantees will review to approve the content. Grantees will need to provide budget updates, photos, videos, flyers, and other materials prior to the meetings.
- Grantees may contact EJ Fund staff anytime to discuss project opportunities or challenges, such as changes to staffing, timeline, or budget.

## Grant Disbursement

The EJ Fund award is paid in two equal installments. The first half is disbursed after the grant agreement is signed. The second half is disbursed after the midpoint progress meeting and budget update have been completed.

Grantees must keep records and receipts for all grant fund expenditures. While receipts do not need to be submitted to the City, the grant agreement gives the City the right to audit these records. Grantees are expected to retain copies and provide them to EJ Fund staff upon request.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

Organizations or community groups should show that: 1) their work is led by or co-developed with those most affected by environmental and climate issues, 2) they understand their community's environmental and climate justice issues, and 3) their proposed project/program is informed by their community. Please review the [scoring rubric](#) for more details.

## ***Why are there funds allocated for projects that specifically serve the Duwamish Valley?***

The EJ Fund has set aside \$180,000 for climate justice projects that benefit residents of the Duwamish Valley. This was previously known as the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund. The region's South Park and Georgetown neighborhoods face a legacy of pollution from the heavy industry and highways nearby, increased flood risks due to climate change affecting sea level rise and rainfall, and disproportionately low-incomes and job opportunities.

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

1. Carefully review the eligibility requirements before starting.
2. Discuss your project idea with a TA consultant **before** drafting your proposal.
3. Allow plenty of time to develop your project idea with your team members.
4. Carefully review the scoring criteria when preparing your responses. The strongest proposals will cover all the items in the "green" sections of each category.
5. Be sure to hold time during the Q&A Period (July 1-17) to prepare and submit responses to the review team's questions.

## ***How can we make sure we're providing the Review Team with the information they need?***

- Clearly show how the project outcomes will address environmental and climate justice in your community.
- Be specific about how many community members will directly benefit—avoid vague statements like "the whole community will benefit."
- Ensure budget details clearly explain how the project funding will be used.
- Keep responses simple, clear, and direct to make them easy to understand and evaluate.

## ***What uploaded documents are required?***

If your project is on land not owned by your organization, please provide a letter of authorization from the landowner. Additionally, if your organization has an annual budget, please provide a copy of the organizational budget.

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

Yes, overhead expenses must be directly tied to the proposed EJ Fund project.

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

If you don't have a fiscal sponsor yet, we recommend including a fiscal sponsor fee at 12% in your project budget. (Most fiscal sponsors range between 8% - 15%). If you receive a grant, you will be able adjust your budget to match the actual fee.

***If my organization has received a grant from the Environmental Justice Fund before, can we apply again in the 2025 grant cycle?***

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) **before** drafting or submitting a proposal.

***My office is not in Seattle, but we are serving a community in Seattle. Can we apply?***

Yes, if your project directly 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?***

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.

***If I have questions about the application, whom do I contact?***

Please email [equityenviro@seattle.gov](mailto:equityenviro@seattle.gov). We are happy to answer questions, help you understand the application and the application process, or connect you to a Technical Assistance Consultant at no cost.

***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 \(Vietnamese\)](#).