EPA Community Change Grants: Overview of NOFO
Hosted by EPA and EnDyna
January 30, 2024

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Key Takeaways

- Prospective applicants can access free pre-award and post-award technical assistance. The Community Change Technical Assistance webpage is now live at: https://communitychangeta.org/
- Questions about the Community Change Technical Assistance can be sent to EJ_TechAssist@epa.gov
- Interested parties should subscribe to the grant opportunity on Grants.Gov to receive notifications when there are updates or modifications.

- EnDyna (EPA's technical assistance partner) will be hosting a series of technical assistance webinars every Tuesday at 3pm ET. Register for upcoming webinars at: https://communitychangeta.org/webinars

A webinar recording and presentation slides will be posted at:
https://communitychangeta.org/webinars

Community Change Technical Assistance Webinar Series

EnDyna's Role
- Under contract to the EPA to deliver technical assistance under the Community Change Technical Assistance Program

Webinar Series Goals
- To give a clear understanding of how EnDyna is providing technical assistance
- To provide an overview of the NOFO, covering topics such as:
  o Eligibility and partnership dynamics
  o Strategies for project implementation and community needs
  o Policy frameworks, capacity enhancement, engagement and governance strategies
 o Compliance mandates, budgeting methods

All sessions at 3pm ET, Tuesdays

30 JAN
Kickoff & Program Overview
TA Process, CCG Overview

6 FEB
Eligibility & Partnerships
Applicant Criteria, Partnership Dynamics

13 FEB
Defining Disadvantaged Communities
Community Mapping, EJ Indicators

20 FEB
CCG NOFO Track I Overview
Project Strategies, Community Needs

27 FEB
CCG NOFO Track II Overview
Policy, Capacity Building

5 MAR
Community Engagement & Governance
Engagement Models, Governance Strategies

12 MAR
Federal Grants Requirements & Compliance
Compliance Requirements

19 MAR
Preparing a Grant Budget
Budgeting Techniques

TBD MAR/APR
Project Evaluation
Output, Impact Assessment

- Register for upcoming events at: https://communitychangeta.org/webinars

Community Change Technical Assistance Website

https://communitychangeta.org/
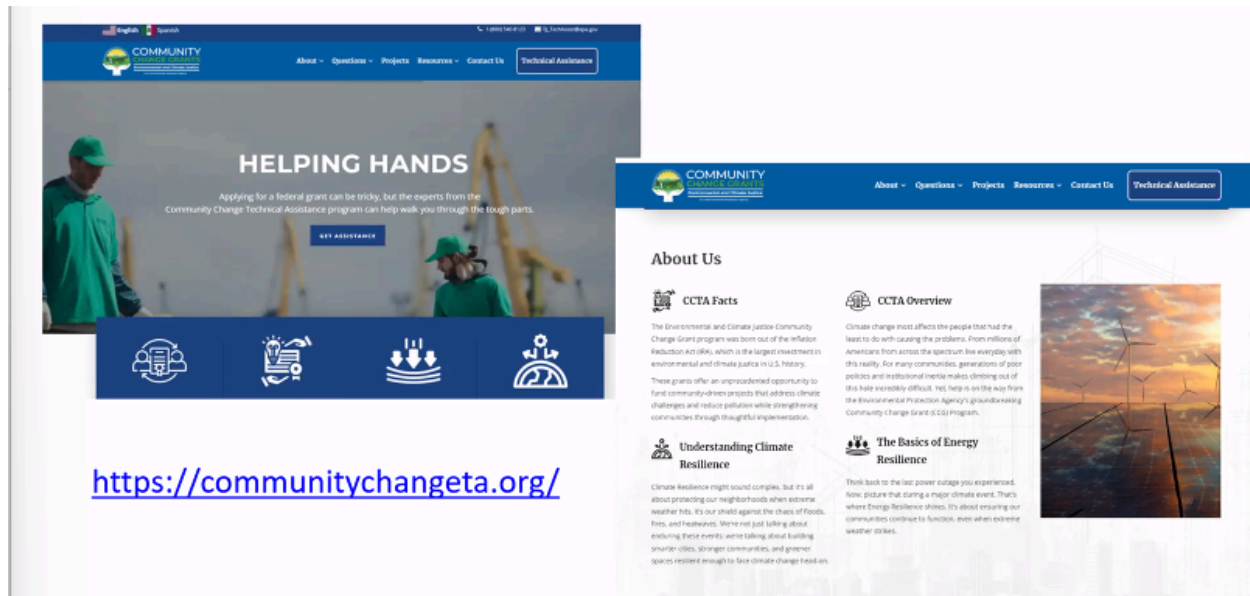
- This resource is designed to help communities apply for the Community Change Grants
- Will provide example projects and a newsletter for Community Change Grants TA updates
- Visit https://communitychangeta.org/

Overview of Technical Assistance

- Technical assistance will be available for:
  - **pre-award** support including but not limited to designing a project, preparing an application, grants.gov support, or facilitating partnerships, and
  - **post-award** support to help grant recipients manage, oversee, perform, and report on the grants.

- TA does not include writing an application *for* an applicant.

- Receiving technical assistance does not guarantee that applicants will be selected for funding.

## Matching TA Needs with Expert TA Providers

TA Request → Eligibility Review → Needs Assessment → Lead Technical Assistance Provider (LTP) → Specific Technical Support

- EnDyna will be using a five-step process to match TA requests with support

Step 1: Request for Technical Assistance

- Contact Information
- Type of Organization
- Intent to apply
- Applying with Partner
- Location of Community

- Project benefits for Disadvantaged Community
- Type of Project
- Type of TA needed
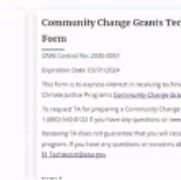
Questions about how to make a TA Request: 1(800)540-8123
Email: EJ_TechAssist@epa.gov

- Fill out the TA request form at: https://communitychangeta.org/technical-assistance

Step 2: Eligibility Review

- Is the organization eligible for TA?
  - Community Based Organization
  - Local Government
  - Tribe
  - Institute of Higher Learning
- Is the community disadvantaged?
- Do they intend to apply with a partner?
- Are they requesting the type of TA that EnDyna can provide?

- This is separate from the eligibility criteria for submitting a grant application
- Disadvantaged status aligns with the NOFO

Step 3: Needs Assessment

- Direct contact with requester
- Brief conversation to discuss the project and needs
- Match-making between TA Request and Lead Technical Assistance Provider (LTP)
  - Geographic connection
  - Familiarity with similar projects
  - Expertise with requested TA

Step 4: Lead Technical Assistance Provider (LTP)

- Individual level contact for applicant
- One-on-one support for community
- Experienced working with communities and grant programs
- Continuous, consistent relationship
- Conduit to Subject Matter Experts

- One of the first steps once you're matching with an LTP will be to create a workplan with the types of technical assistance needed

Step 5: Specific Technical Support - Project Development

- Readiness Approach
- Compliance Plans
- Meaningful Engagement
- Linkage to EPA Strategic Plan
- Environmental Results
- Performance Measurement Plans
- Budget, Indirect Costs, etc.

- Climate Action Strategies
  - Green Infrastructure
  - Mobility and Transportation
  - Energy-Efficient, Healthy and Resilient Housing and Buildings
  - Microgrid Installations
  - Community Resilience Hubs
  - Brownfield Redevelopment
  - Waste Reduction and Management
  - Workforce Development

- Pollution Reduction Strategies
  - Indoor Air Quality
  - Outdoor Air Quality
  - Safe Management and Disposal of Solid and Hazardous Wastes
- Construction
- Design and Engineering
- Mapping (CJEST and EJ Screen)
- Outcomes and Outputs
- Community Engagement
- Community Strength Plan

Community Change Grants: Program Overview

EPA received $3 billion through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to fund environmental and climate justice activities to benefit disadvantaged communities.

- $2.8 billion for grants including $2 billion for the Community Change Grants (CCG) Program
- $200 million for technical assistance related to the grants
- Grants cannot exceed three years (no extensions)
- All grants must be awarded by September 30, 2026

- There will likely be a modification of the NOFO next week
- Should subscribe to the grant opportunity on grants.gov
- This does not mean that the project needs to be completed by September 30, 2026

Goals

Goals

Designed with meaningful community, Tribal, and other stakeholder input, the investments EPA makes through the Community Change Grants are intended to achieve the following goals:

$ Fund community-driven pollution and climate resiliency solutions

🌱 Invest in strong cross-sectoral collaborations with partners working with and for communities

🔓 Unlock access to more significant resources

🎧 Deliver technical assistance and capacity-building support

🔗 Strengthen communities' decision-making power

Track I

Community-Driven Investments for Change
Funding Available: approx. $1.96 billion
Number of Awards: approx. 150
Per Award Amount: $10M - $20M each (cannot exceed $20M)

Track II

Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance
Funding Available: approx. $40 million
Number of Awards: approx. 20
Per Award Amount: $1M - $3M each (cannot exceed $3M)

TOTAL $2 BILLION
TRACK I - $1.96B
$40M
TRACK II

- Track 1: You may apply for a project under $10 million. However, please note that the program is designed for larger-scale projects. Small projects will be less competitive.

Overview of Threshold Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility

Applications must meet **all** eligibility criteria, as outlined in Section III of the NOFO, to be considered for funding.

✓ Comply with the content and submission requirements

✓ Meet the eligibility and statutory partnership requirements in Section III.A

✓ Meet threshold criteria in Section III.D, including that the projects will benefit disadvantaged communities

✓ Projects must be completed within three years

✗ Applications to conduct scientific research; assessment, removal, or remediation of Superfund sites; or community relocation are ineligible.

Statutory Partnership

Applicants must either be a partnership of two community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs) or a partnership between a CBO and a federally recognized Tribe, local government or institution of higher education.

Partnerships must be documented and meet certain legal requirements (see Appendix B).

Additional information on eligibility and partnerships can be found in Section III of the NOFO.

Lead Applicant + Statutory Partner

CBO + CBO

CBO + Federally Recognized Tribe

CBO + Local Government

CBO + Institution of Higher Education
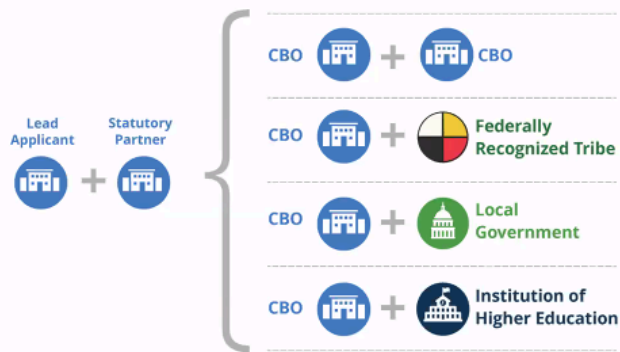
Note: While the CBO does not have to be the "Lead Applicant," all statutory partnerships must include a CBO.

- Statutory partnership is between two entities only.
    - Other entities can be involved as sub awardees or collaborating entities
- You determine who of the two entities in the statutory partnership will be the lead applicant
- There is not a template for a statutory partnership agreement; however, there is a list of requirements for this agreement in Appendix B

Collaborating Entities

Collaborating Entities

Other entities can be involved in projects as **collaborating entities**.

Collaborating Entities may include entities that legally could be Statutory Partners (CBOs, Federally-recognized Tribes, local governments, and institutions of higher education) and entities that cannot legally be Statutory Partners (e.g., states and territorial governments).

- Every project should have collaborating entities
- Contractors are NOT considered collaborating entities and need to follow EPA's procurement guidelines

How It Works
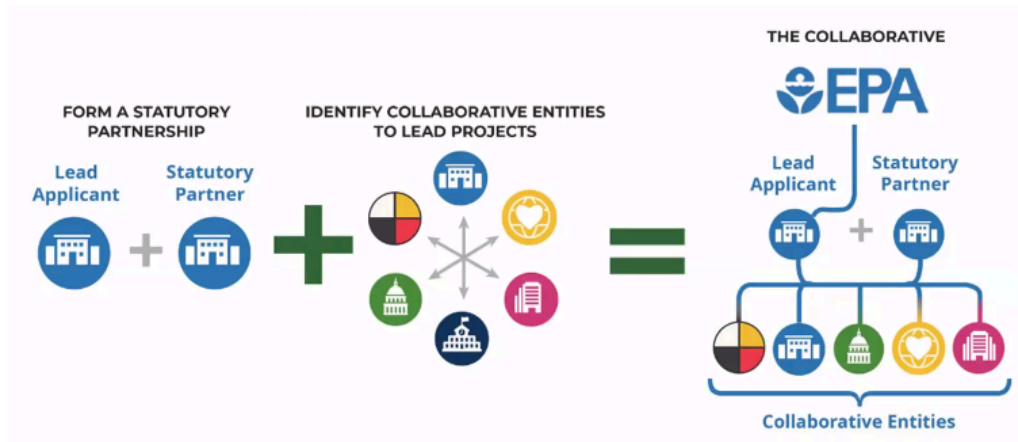
- Funds will flow from the EPA to the Lead Applicant

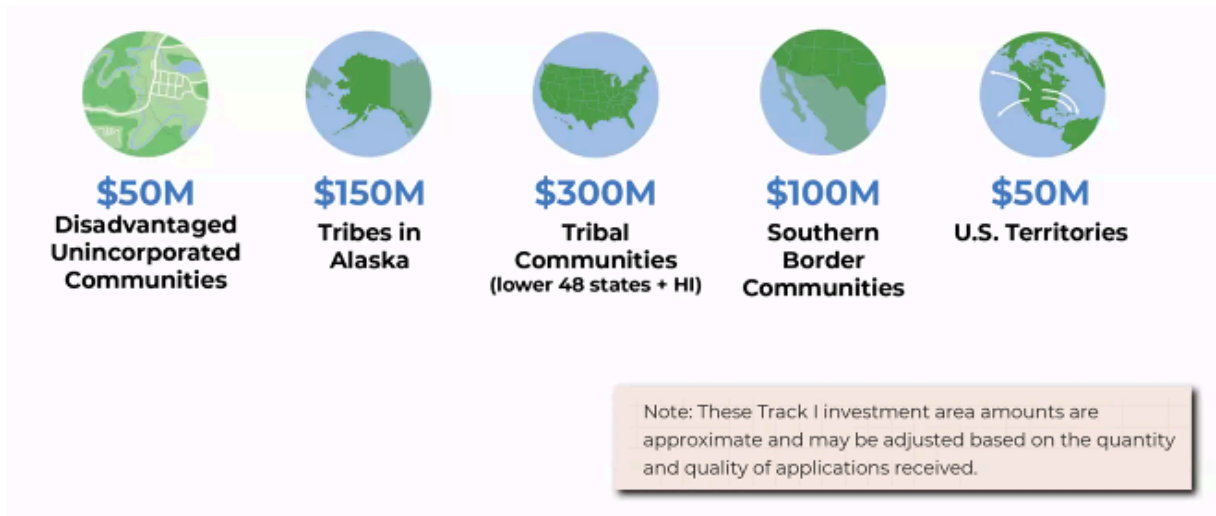## Disadvantaged Communities

- Disadvantaged Communities Map:
  https://epa.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=f3be939070844eac8a14103ed6f9affd
- You need to demonstrate that the primary benefits will go to disadvantaged communities. Ancillary benefits may flow to other areas, but the focus needs to be on DACs

Target Investment Areas

$50M
Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

$150M
Tribes in Alaska

$300M
Tribal Communities
(lower 48 states + HI)

$100M
Southern Border Communities

$50M
U.S. Territories

Note: These Track I investment area amounts are approximate and may be adjusted based on the quantity and quality of applications received.

- Projects do not need to be in the Target Investment Areas to apply

Track I Overview: Community-Driven Investments for Change

Projects under this track should ensure generations of future enjoyment and growth by meeting the below objectives:

TRACK I OBJECTIVES

1 **Increase** community climate resilience

2 **Reduce** local pollution & improve public health

3 **Center** meaningful community engagement

4 **Build** community strength

5 **Reach** priority populations

6 **Maximize** integration across projects

Track I Requirements

1. Climate Action Strategy

2. Pollution Reduction Strategy

3. Community Engagement and Collaborative Governance Plan

4. Community Strength Plan

5. Readiness Approach

6. Compliance Plan

- Readiness Approach: Need to demonstrate that the grant can be completed in three years

#1: Climate Action

Applications must address at least one climate action strategy that serves to increase a community's resilience or adaptive capacity:

- Green Infrastructure & Nature-Based Solutions
- Mobility & Transportation Options
- Energy-Efficient, Healthy and Resilient Housing & Buildings
- Microgrid Installation
- Community Resilience Hubs
- Brownfield Redevelopment
- Waste Reduction & Management
- Workforce Development

See *Appendix C* for project examples

#2: Pollution Reduction

Applications must include at least one pollution reduction strategy that focuses on pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation of quantifiable and health harming pollutants:

- Indoor Air Quality & Community Health
- Outdoor Air Quality & Community Health
- Clean Water Infrastructure
- Hazardous Waste Management

See *Appendix D* for project examples

#3: Engagement and Governance Plan

- **Community Engagement:** Applicants should address the following elements:
  - Past community outreach and engagement conducted
  - Methods for implementation
  - Measures to minimize and mitigate barriers
  - Government involvement
- **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.

#4: Community Strength Plan

- Advancing environmental and climate justice requires bolstering the strength and economic prosperity of a community for the benefit of local residents, while also ensuring those residents can remain within the community and benefit from the investments over the long term.
- This plan should describe how the projects are intended to:
  - maximize the economic benefits of the projects for existing residents in the Project Area, and
  - avoid unintended consequences for existing residents in the Project Area including the displacement of residents in the Project Area.

#5: Readiness Approach

To ensure projects can begin shortly upon award and be completed within 3 years, applicants must demonstrate:

- **Government Approvals:** Obtained government approval if needed.
- **Federal Requirements for Construction:** Complies with any statutory and EO requirements that apply to construction projects.
- **Alignment with Existing Plans:** Project is consistent with governmental land use restrictions.
- **Site Control:** Owns, controls or has legal access to the site of a project.
- **Operations and Maintenance:** Operations and maintenance of the investment will be assured during and after the grant award.

#6: Compliance Plan

Applicants must submit a Compliance Plan that describes how they will:

1. **Ensure compliance with the grant's terms and conditions**, including:
   - Financial management: 2 CFR § 200.302(b)
   - Internal controls: 2 CFR § 200.303
   - Requirements for pass-through entities: 2 CFR § 200.332

2. **Manage broader legal and compliance risks**

Track II Overview: Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance

Objectives

- To build the capacity of communities to evaluate and redress environmental and climate injustices
- To give disadvantaged communities a meaningful voice in government decision-making processes

- The lead applicant may submit up to two applications. You can submit separate applications to both Track 1 and Track 2.
    - The lead applicant may be a collaborating entity on other applications beyond their two submissions

Track II: Project Examples

- Educational and Training Programs
- Environmental Advisory Boards (EABs)
- Collaborative Governance Activities
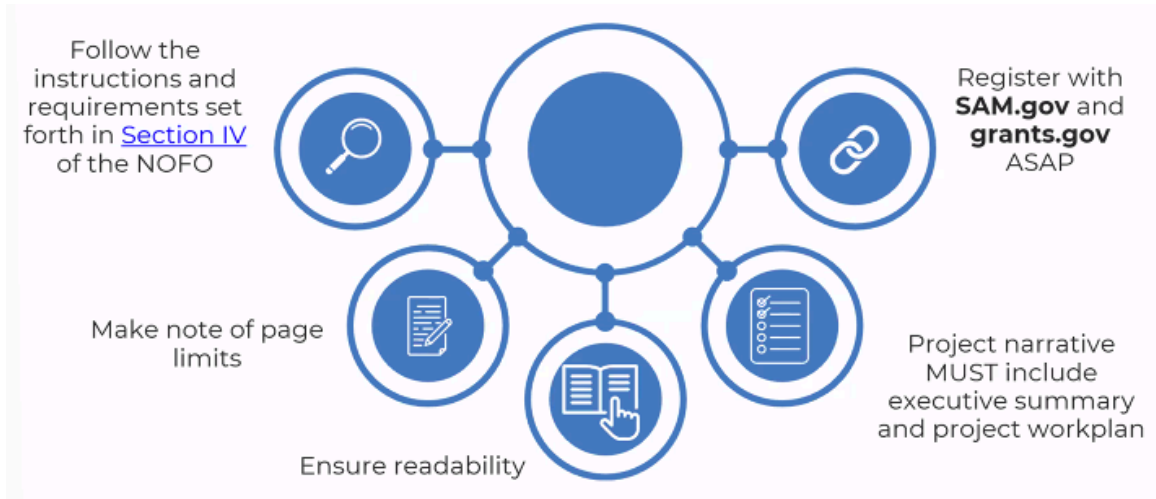- Participation in Governmental Funding and Budgeting Processes

Overview of Application Submission, Evaluation, and Selection Process

Rolling Application

November 21, 2023

Applications Open

Applications will be accepted, reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis.

November 21, 2024

Applications Close

Application packages will be accepted until November 21, 2024, at 11:59 PM (Eastern Time) through grants.gov.

- Hope to make initial selections in March

Application Submission

Follow the instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of the NOFO

Register with **SAM.gov** and **grants.gov** ASAP

Make note of page limits

Project narrative MUST include executive summary and project workplan

Ensure readability

- Questions regarding technical issues with the grants.gov website need to be sent to the grants.gov help desk

Evaluation Criteria: Track I

Community Driven Investments for Change (80 pts)

Program Management, Capability, and Capacity (35 pts)

Readiness to Proceed, Feasibility, and Sustainability (40 pts)

Oral Presentations (45 pts)

Evaluation Criteria: Track II

Program Objectives (35 pts)

Project Collaboration and Participation (20 pts)

Project Linkages (4 pts)

Budget (8 pts)

Environmental Results (6 pts)

CBO Experience and Commitment (5 pts)

Programmatic and Managerial Capability and Resources (16 pts)

Past Performance (6 pts)

- There are no oral presentations for Track II evaluation.

Selection Process

	Eligibility	Written Evaluation	Oral Presentations	Final Consideration
Track I	Applications reviewed for threshold eligibility.	Written applications that receive a score of 110 or higher (out of 155) will be invited to give an oral presentation.	Worth a maximum of 45 points. Applications with a combined score of 170 or more, based on written and oral, move to final selection consideration.	Applications receiving a combined score of between 110 and 169 will be ranked and reviewed approx. monthly for final selection consideration.
Track II	Applications reviewed for threshold eligibility.	Written applications that receive a score of 85 or higher (out of 100) will move to final selection consideration.	⊗	Applications receiving a score below 85 will be ranked and reviewed approx. monthly for final selection consideration.

Debriefings and Disputes

Applicants who are deemed ineligible or who are not selected for funding may request a debriefing.

For more information on the debriefing and dispute process, see Section VI of the NOFO.

Resubmission

Applicants who are deemed eligible but are not selected for funding may, after timely requesting and receiving a debriefing on the application, resubmit.

For more information see Section II.C of the NOFO.

- Applications may be resubmitted once.