

Climate and Equity Grant Program – Frequently Asked Questions

Definitions and Background Information

How do I know if my organization is a Community-Based Organization?

Your organization is considered a Community-Based Organization (CBO) if it is a private non-profit or for-profit organization that seeks to improve a community's well-being, provides services to a community based on input from community members, and has leadership and/or membership representative of the community it serves. CBOs may be 501(c)3 organizations, religious organizations, neighborhood revitalization groups, and other non-governmental organizations. If you would like to discuss your organization with CIRCA staff to confirm eligibility, please contact mary.buchanan@uconn.edu.

Updated 11/1/2022: Quasi-public entities such as housing authorities do not meet the definition of a community-based organization, as CBO's are private organizations.

What does “vulnerable community” mean?

A “vulnerable community” means a population that may be disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, including, but not limited to,

- Low- and moderate-income communities,
- [Environmental justice communities](#)
- Communities eligible for community reinvestment
- Populations with increased risk and limited means to adapt to the effects of climate change, including:
 - Communities of color
 - Children and seniors
 - Low-income communities
 - People with disabilities
 - Pregnant people
 - People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
 - Other historically disadvantaged people
 - People impacted by the social determinants of health
 - Populations identified by the American Public Health Association (children, older adults, communities of color, and low-income communities).
- Or as further defined in consultation with community representatives

What does “community-scale project” mean?

By “community-scale project”, we mean a project that is rooted in a specific place – this place could be a neighborhood, a school, the service area of a CBO, tribal lands, etc. – and that involves a group of people with a shared concern or need. Importantly, input and involvement from community members should be central to the project.

Where can I learn more about the climate risks that might impact my community and the roles of community-based organizations in addressing these risks?

- CIRCA has fact sheets on [Sea Level Rise and Coastal Flooding in Connecticut](#) as well as [Rising Temperatures and Precipitation in Connecticut](#).
- [AdaptCT](#) is a partnership between Connecticut Sea Grant and UConn’s Center for Land Use Education & Research (CLEAR). [This video](#) from AdaptCT presents an overview of climate change in Connecticut and the associated risks to human health and safety, as well as the difference between mitigation and adaptation.
- [The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) is a mapping tool from the Council on Environmental Quality identifying census tracts overburdened by climate risks.
- [The Climate Explorer](#) is a mapping tool from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that you can use to explore climate impacts on your area.
- The [Governor’s Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3) website has an overview of the GC3’s history and goals as well as links to associated reports.
- [Centering Equity in Climate Change Resilience Planning: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities](#), prepared for the GC3’s Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group, presents a framework for resilience planning centering those who are most vulnerable to climate change impacts. An executive summary and worksheets can be found [here](#).
- The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has an [Equity and Environmental Justice in Climate Solutions Webinar Series](#) with multiple recordings exploring how climate change affects populations at increased risk in Connecticut.
- If you have questions about how your organization’s mission and activities might connect to climate change risks and impacts, please contact mary.buchanan@uconn.edu.

Projects and Applications

What types of expenses are covered by this grant program?

Eligible costs include:

- Staff time / salary (including organization employees and/or sub-contractors)
- Materials / supplies
- Food for community events
- Travel expenses
- Indirect admin costs (up to 10% of total grant request)

Updated 11/1/2022: Grantees may give stipends to other community groups and/or community members from the grant funds, as long as the purpose of doing so falls within the scope of the grant project.

Updated 11/4/2022: Grantees may purchase gift cards / grocery store cards to incentivize community participation in grant project activities.

When are grant applications due?

Applications are due 5 pm on November 18th 2022. Please submit applications through the online form on the [CIRCA Climate and Equity grant webpage](#).

What is the range of grant amounts?

Applicants may apply on Track 1 (Small Grants) for amounts of \$2,000 - \$10,000, or on Track 2 (Large Grants) for amounts of \$10,000 - \$50,000. The goal of this two-track division is to ensure that the final grant selections include projects with a range of sizes. CIRCA expects to award grants totaling \$150,000 in this funding cycle. There is no match requirement.

How long is the grant period?

The grant period is one year, from January – December 2023.

What deliverables are expected at the end of the grant period?

Grantees are expected to prepare a brief final report at the end of the grant period summarizing project activities and outcomes as well as a brief account of project expenditures. Additional grantee deliverables will vary by project and should be indicated in the project work plan. Possible additional deliverables may include completed community climate action or resilience plans, records of attendance at climate planning trainings or GC3 meetings, site visits, workshops, presentations of lessons learned and next steps, etc. Acknowledgement shall be given to CIRCA on any final products and presentations using information and guidance [here](#), and to DEEP as the funding agency. CIRCA reserves the right to edit the final report or other products for publishing on the CIRCA website and/or including in print materials. This is a pilot grant program and grantees may be asked for their input on how to improve the program for potential future funding.

What are some examples of “a well-defined and measurable goal”?

Examples of project goals may include but are not limited to:

- Create a community climate action or resilience plan with specific recommendations
- Attend a specific number of training sessions or GC3 meetings
- Hold a specific number of outreach or educational events
- Create outreach materials tailored to a specific community
- Create a demonstration site or other public education product

What are some examples of projects that this grant program might fund?

Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to (this list is an expanded version of the list in the Request for Applications):

- Develop a climate action or climate resilience plan for the CBO or the community
- Participate in training for climate planning
- Participate in GC3 or other climate-related state planning initiatives
- Community outreach, education, and awareness campaigns related to climate risks or climate actions (documentary series, community classes, creation of educational materials, etc.)
- Outreach to connect community members to existing resources for climate adaptation and/or mitigation activities (for example, weatherization for buildings; preparing for heat waves, storms, and floods, including impacts like power outages; energy efficiency and savings measures; and accessing solar and heat pumps)
- Create a demonstration site for public education about adaptation or mitigation techniques (rain barrels; gardens; shade trees; bus, bike, scooter, or walking routes; energy efficient homes, electric vehicles, etc.)
- Planting trees / greening urban areas (along with community engagement and technical assistance)
- Community-driven cultural asset mapping to inform a neighborhood resilience plan
- Build-a-bike workshops and other projects to increase carbon-neutral mobility
- Develop a proposal for an adaptation/mitigation project to later seek additional funds, such as a state or federal grant

What is included in a complete application?

A complete application includes:

- A. Organization information, contact information, and grant request amount
- B. Brief questionnaire for tracking progress toward the goals of the Climate Funders Justice Pledge (this does not affect eligibility but will be considered during evaluation)
- C. Narrative document as described in the Request for Applications
- D. Budget document as described in the Request for Applications

What are you looking for in each part of the application?

Descriptions of what we're looking for in each section of the application can be found in the explainer document on [CIRCA's Climate and Equity Grant webpage](#).

Do I need to include letters of support?

Letters of support may be included with the narrative document but are not required.

How will applications be evaluated?

There is a two-stage process for evaluating applications. CIRCA staff will review every application received and will evaluate each application based on the scoring rubric below. The

top-scoring applications will then be reviewed by an external grants advisory committee, who will select the final grantees. During the final evaluation by the grants advisory committee, the scoring rubric below will be considered alongside additional factors such as diversity of geographic location, diversity of organization leadership, and diversity of project size. DEEP staff will provide review and comment on the selected projects before any awards are announced.

Notification and Awards

When will I find out if I've been awarded a grant?

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by mid-December 2022.

How are grant funds distributed?

The funding structure for this grant will be flexible to match the needs of the project, although University of Connecticut award procedures must be followed by all entities selected to receive funds. Projects that involve regular staff time or attending trainings may receive the funds in the form of a monthly stipend, while projects that require expenditures upfront may receive up to 25% of the total grant award as an advance, with additional funding at later project milestones. Grantees will be expected to provide an accounting of expenditures before additional funds can be released. In cases where grant funds are spent on community meetings or events, grantees should count attendance and include attendance numbers in their final report. CIRCA staff will work with grantees and the UConn Procurement Office to set payment terms at the time of award and to provide guidance throughout the grant period. Participants must submit a W-9 form to receive payment.

Updated 11/1/2022: A W-9 form is a tax form used by the IRS to confirm a person/organization's identity so that they can receive payment. The form must list a tax identification number, which could be an employer identification number (EIN) for a business or a social security number (SSN) for an individual. A W-9 form looks like [this](#).

Have other questions?

Additional or more detailed questions can be directed to Mary Buchanan, Community Resilience Planner at CIRCA, at mary.buchanan@uconn.edu