

Climate & Equity Grants 2024: Request for Applications

PURPOSE: In collaboration with CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and in support of recommendations from the Governor’s Council on Climate Change (GC3), UConn Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) is requesting grant proposals for projects that increase the capacity of vulnerable communities to mitigate, plan for, and respond to climate change impacts. This funding supports the Equity and Environmental Justice recommendations of the Governor’s Council on Climate Change (GC3).¹

For the purposes of this grant, and in accordance with previous definitions in Connecticut General Statutes § 16-243y and § 22a-20a, “vulnerable communities” means populations that may be disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, including, but not limited to the following:

- 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

The impacts of climate change are likely to compound existing vulnerabilities and challenges faced by these communities within Connecticut. This grant program aims to fund community-scale projects to increase mitigation of and resilience to climate threats.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Community-based organizations (CBOs), tribal organizations, and tribal governments are eligible to apply to this grant program.

¹ Governor’s Council on Climate Change January 2021 Report: [GC3 Phase1 Report Jan2021.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#)

Community-Based Organization (CBO) – By “community-based organization”, we mean a private non-profit (incorporated or unincorporated) or for-profit organization that...

... is aimed at making desired improvements to a community's social health, well-being, and overall functioning

... is representative of a community or significant segments of a community,

... provides services to individuals in the community based on input from community members, and

... has existing relationships within a community prior to the start of the grant.

Community-based organizations may be 501(c)3 organizations, religious organizations, neighborhood revitalization groups, and other non-governmental organizations. Multiple CBOs may apply as a partnership. Public or quasi-public entities such as municipalities or housing authorities are not eligible to apply, unless in partnership with a CBO, tribal organization, or tribal government as the lead applicant.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS: Planning, capacity-building, or education projects that advance community-scale climate adaptation and/or climate mitigation efforts.

Eligible costs include:

- Staff time / salary (including organization employees and/or sub-contractors)
- Materials / supplies
- Food for community events
- Travel expenses
- Participation incentives for community engagement, such as gift cards
- Stipends to partnering CBOs
- Indirect admin costs (up to 10% of total grant request)

Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Develop a climate action or climate resilience plan for the CBO or the community
- Participate in training for climate planning, mitigation, or adaptation
- Participate in GC3 or other climate-related state planning initiatives
- Community outreach, education, and awareness campaigns
- Outreach to connect community members to existing resources for climate adaptation and/or mitigation activities
- Build-a-bike workshops and other projects to increase carbon-neutral mobility
- Develop a proposal for an adaptation/mitigation project to seek additional funds, such as a state or federal grant

For additional examples, please see the FAQ on [CIRCA's Climate and Equity Grant webpage](#).

GRANT AMOUNTS: Applicants may apply on Track 1 (Small Grants) for amounts of \$2,000 - \$9,999, or on Track 2 (Large Grants) for amounts of \$10,000 - \$50,000. The goal of this two-track division is to ensure that final grant selections include projects with a range of sizes. CIRCA expects to award grants totaling \$200,000 in this funding cycle. There is no match requirement.

OPTIONAL PARTICIPATION ADD-ON: In order to support participation of CBOs in state planning efforts, applicants may choose to increase their budget to include attendance at state planning meetings, such as those held by the [Governor's Council on Climate Change](#) (GC3), the [Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Committee](#) (CEEJAC), or associated subcommittees. Applicants may choose either the \$2,500 (5 meetings) add-on or the \$5,000 (10 meetings) add-on. For example, an organization applying for a Track 2 project who is also interested in participating in 10 state meetings over the grant period could apply for up to \$55,000. For more information, see the FAQ.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: An original and complete application must be received no later than 5pm on September 30th, 2024 through the online form on [CIRCA's Climate and Equity Grant webpage](#). A webinar to learn more about this grant program will be held on August 13th, 2024 from 12:00 – 1:00 pm, with a recording available afterward.

AWARD NOTIFICATION: Funding decisions will be made and applicants notified via email by early November. Please check spam folders if you do not see an email.

PROJECT PERIOD: The project period is January 2025 to December 2025.

FUNDING PROCEDURES: 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.

DELIVERABLES: 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. A report template will be provided. Additional deliverables will vary by project and should be indicated in the project work plan. Possible additional deliverables may include community climate action or resilience plans, workshops, presentations of lessons learned and next steps, etc. Grantees who choose the optional add-on funding for participation in state planning meetings should include a record of attendance at these meetings in their final report. 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Please contact Mary Buchanan at mary.buchanan@uconn.edu with any questions. If questions are in a language other than English, the response may come from another staff member at CIRCA or DEEP.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS: All materials should be submitted through the online application form accessible on [CIRCA's Climate and Equity Grant webpage](#).

APPLICATION PREVIEW:

A. General Information (to be filled out on online form):

- Organization name:
- Contact address (include suite # if applicable):
- Contact city, state, and ZIP code:
- Head of organization name:
- Head of organization title:
- Organization contact email:
- Organization phone:
- Organization website (if applicable):
- EIN (if applicable):
- Select One: Track 1 (\$2,000 - \$9,999) or Track 2 (\$10,000 - \$50,000)
 - Optional: Select optional add-on to support participation in state planning meetings: (\$2,500 / 5 meetings or \$5,000 / 10 meetings)
- Total Grant Request (\$):

B. Data for Climate Funders Justice Pledge (to be filled out on online form):

Please select any/all of the attributes that apply to your organization (list adapted from <https://www.climate.donorsofcolor.org/>):

- Over 50% of my organization's Board (or equivalent group) is comprised of Latin, Black, Indigenous, or other people of color (BIPOC) members
- Over 50% of my organization's senior staff (or equivalent group) is comprised of BIPOC members

- My organization's mission statement, guiding principles, strategy, or other foundational texts explicitly commit to building power within BIPOC communities

Note: The above attributes will not affect an organization's eligibility for this grant award, but will be considered as part of the multi-step application evaluation described later in this document.

C. Narrative Document (to be uploaded as an attachment to the online form)

In addition to the above form, please upload a PDF document containing the following:

1. Description or screenshot of your organization's mission or activities demonstrating a commitment to environmental justice. (1 paragraph or screenshot)
2. Description of the need the proposed project seeks to address, and how addressing this need will increase the community's adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change and/or climate mitigation action efforts. This description should include at least one clear and measurable goal for the project. (1 paragraph)
3. Description of the community to be served by the project, and how community members are involved in planning and carrying out the project. (1 paragraph).
4. Description of how the proposed project will advance equity for vulnerable communities within Connecticut. (1 paragraph).
5. Description of the proposed work plan following the provided template on [CIRCA's Climate and Equity Grant webpage](#), including major stages of work and project deliverable(s), as well as a general timeline for accomplishing each stage. Please specify who will be responsible for completing the work plan, and if you are partnering with an outside organization, please describe the partnership and the respective roles of the partners. It is not necessary to attach resumes. (3 paragraphs, or 2 paragraphs and a timeline in list or table form)

D. Budget Document (to be uploaded as an attachment to the online form):

Please upload a project budget indicating how grant funds will be spent. An optional budget template is available on [CIRCA's Climate and Equity Grant webpage](#).

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION (this is how we will evaluate all who apply):

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. Written feedback may be provided to unsuccessful applicants upon request for full transparency about selection decisions.

Evaluation Criteria	Points
<p>Eligibility (based on question 1 and organization information):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant is a community-based organization, tribal government, or tribal organization in Connecticut 	Pass/Fail
<p>Project Need and Relevance to Climate Goals (based on question 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed project clearly identifies and addresses a concern caused or worsened by climate change. (5 points) The proposed project has the potential to achieve at least one of the following (20 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase community resilience to climate change or to concerns caused or worsened by climate change Reduce emissions or otherwise mitigate the impacts of climate change Increase community knowledge of climate change mitigation or adaptation activities and resources 	25
<p>Community Engagement and Equity (based on questions 3 and 4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the community to be served are involved in designing and carrying out the proposed project. (20 points) The proposed project will address the uneven impacts of climate risks, bring attention and/or resources to an area that has experienced past environmental injustice, or otherwise advance equity for vulnerable communities in Connecticut. (20 points) 	40
<p>Demonstrated Potential for Success and Work Plan (based on question 5):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work plan has clearly defined tasks and the applicant has the demonstrated readiness and capacity to carry out these tasks within the grant period and within budget. (10 points) The people responsible for completing the work plan tasks have a successful track record of similar projects. Any partners are clearly identified and their roles in the project are explained. (10 points) The proposed project has at least one well-defined and measurable goal. (10 points) The project budget is appropriate for the project scope. (5 points, based on budget) 	35
Total Points	100
Participation Bonus (based on whether optional participation add-on is selected)	+2

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Please see [CIRCA's Climate and Equity Grant webpage](#) for additional resources, including an FAQ document, a document explaining the goals for each application question, a work plan template, and a budget template.

FOIA STATEMENT

The information and materials submitted to CIRCA for consideration under this funding program are subject to the terms of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") and all applicable rules, regulations and administrative decisions regarding their disclosure to third parties. The University is subject to the CT Freedom of Information Act, found in Chapter 14 of the CT General Statutes. Two exceptions may apply are as follows: (1) Conn. Gen. Stat. sec. 1-210(b)(24) permits the University to withhold records related to the procurement process while bidding and contract negotiations are underway (this moratorium is temporary and lasts only until the contract has been executed or negotiations are abandoned); and Conn. Gen. Stat. sec. 1-20(b)(5) permits the University to withhold records in its possession in the event they contain trade secrets (or really any intellectual property). In the event that the University determines that Conn. Gen. Stat. sec. 1-210(b)(5) may apply to a given request for the records in questions, the responsibility to substantiate claims that said would reveal trade secrets and meet the exemption requirements would need to be borne by the owner of said trade secrets, not the University.

(In plain language this means: After we select participants, all the information you submit becomes public information and can be seen by anyone who asks to see it. We are required to include the second part of this statement; however, it is not applicable for this project.)