

Mountains and Plains Environmental Justice Grants Hub

All About the Non-Competitive Subgrants

Information on eligibility, capacity assessment, and subgrant review.

Last updated: October 2024



Non-Competitive Tier 1 Subgrants

Non-competitive Tier 1 awards are intended for severely capacity constrained organizations who would be unlikely to obtain funding through a competitive process. The MAP EJ Grants Hub anticipates awarding a minimum of ten \$75,000 fixed-amount awards in the first round of funding using a non-competitive subgrant process. Payments under these awards will be based on the achievement of project milestones. Entities can only receive one non-competitive subgrant, but they are eligible to apply for competitive subgrants in subsequent cycles.

For a non-competitive application, applicants must provide a project description and complete an organizational capacity assessment. Applicants will also be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview via phone or videoconference.

Eligibility for Non-Competitive Subgrants

- Be located in, or providing services in, EPA Region 8, which includes Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming, and 28 Federally Recognized Tribes.
- Be one of the following entity types:
 - Nonprofit organizations
 - Tribal governments (both federally recognized and state-recognized) and intertribal consortia
 - Native American organizations
 - Local governments
 - Institutions of higher education
- Not have another active federal grant/contract/cooperative agreement (it is ok to have been a contractor or subrecipient on another federal award).
- Not have served as the primary recipient of a competitive federal grant/contract/cooperative agreement within the past 3 years.
- Have an annual operating budget of \$300,000 or less.
- Be proposing project activities that address an environmental justice issue in a community of focus, as defined by the [Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map](#)
- Examples of potential applicants*
 - Newly formed nonprofits

- Organizations building capacity to address emerging environmental justice issues in their community
- Organizations that are volunteer-run or who have a small staff (less than 5 people)
- Organizations who are restructuring or have recently had a significant turnover of leadership, staff, or board
- Organizations that have never won a competitive contract or bid
- Organizations who have been told in the past that they do not meet minimum criteria to receive federal funds (or have never applied due to application requirements)
- Organizations who have basic financial and administrative infrastructure in place, but could use support in developing this capacity

*This list is not exhaustive and should not discourage applicants who do not meet these criteria from applying. These are examples and should not be construed as formal evaluation criteria.

Non-Competitive Subgrant Review

Each eligible application will be evaluated individually. Reviews will consider:

- The project being proposed, including:
 - Whether it addresses an environmental justice issue
 - Whether it will benefit a community of focus within Region 8
 - Whether it engages members of the community of focus in project leadership, design, and implementation
- The capacity of the organization, as reported in the [organizational capacity assessment](#) section of the online application
 - The organization must meet minimum capacity criteria to receive funds, including being a legal business entity, and having a process for tracking subgrant funds.
 - Capacity constraints will be considered in a variety of areas, including board engagement, financial and management systems, funding and fundraising, staffing, infrastructure, and strategy.

- The results of an interview with the MAP EJ Grants Hub team, which will review the results of the capacity assessment, and may ask for additional information and documentation

Organizational Capacity Assessment

Organizations seeking a non-competitive subgrant will complete an organizational capacity assessment. Applicants then participate in an informational interview with a JSI grants manager to review the organizational assessment and ask any follow-up questions.

Organizational Capacity Assessment

1. Board Governance and Engagement	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
a. Board members attend and actively participate in regular board meetings						
b. Board members participate in fundraising activities						
c. We have clear strategy for recruiting new board members with relevant skills and backgrounds						
d. Our board understands, reviews, and approves budgets and financial statements						
e. Our board formally reviews and evaluates our Executive Director at least annually						
f. The roles of the board and Executive Director are clearly defined and respected						
g. New board members are oriented to the organization, including our mission, bylaws, policies, programs, key stakeholders						
If N/A for any items, please explain						

2. Financial Operations and Management	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
a. We track and report financial activities to board and staff management						
b. Key staff and board members review regular updates on our organization's financial health						
c. We have access to loans, reserves, and/or working capital to manage cash flow (e.g., to make payroll)						
d. Financial operations are carried out in alignment with budgeting, decision-making, and organizational goals						
e. We have written systems and controls that govern financial operations (policies and guides)						
If N/A for any items, please explain						

3. Fund Development	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
a. We have an appropriate funding model or structure in place that supports core infrastructure and programs and is integrated into our organization's long-term budget projections						
b. Has sufficient capacity from staff and/or volunteers to implement fund development activities						
c. We have a staff person (other than the ED/CEO) whose primary responsibility is fund development						

3. Fund Development	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
d. We use up-to-date results from fundraising efforts to inform planning and implementation						
If N/A for any items, please explain						

4. Staff and Infrastructure	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
a. Our current staffing <u>structure</u> allows us to effectively do our administrative work						
b. Our staffing <u>structure</u> allows us to effectively do our programming work						
c. Our staffing <u>size</u> allows us to effectively do our administrative work						
d. Our staffing <u>size</u> allows us to effectively do our programming work						
e. We provide and/or support ongoing staff development opportunities, including for our Executive Director						
f. Staff turnover is a problem for our organization						
g. We have the technology and information systems in place that are necessary to operate efficiently and effectively						
h. Our staff are compensated for their work						
i. We regularly review and update compensation policies to ensure fairness and competitiveness.						
If N/A for any items, please explain						

5. Client/Constituent Engagement	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
a. We solicit feedback from clients/constituents						
b. We have mechanisms in place to seek and incorporate client/constituent input on key decisions (e.g., advisory groups, needs assessments)						
c. We have staff position(s) that include client/constituent engagement activities						
If N/A for any items, please explain						

6. Diversity	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
a. We have staff who reflect the diversity of people and key interests the organization serves						
b. We have recruiting processes that encourage diverse candidates to apply for staff positions						
c. We have board members who reflect the diversity of people and key interests the organization serves						
If N/A for any items, please explain						

7. Cultural Responsiveness	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
a. Our services/programs are responsive to the cultural needs of clients/consumers/constituents						

b. We make outreach and communication materials available in the primary language(s) spoken by stakeholders						
c. We provide training in cultural competence to our staff						
If N/A for any items, please explain						

8. Organizational Strategy and Adaptability	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
a. We have an organizational strategy for achieving our goals and objectives that is developed and actively used by staff and board						
b. We periodically review our vision, mission, and major programs to analyze opportunities and challenges, strengths and weaknesses						
c. We anticipate challenges in advance and consider different scenarios for responding to them						
d. Board members participate in strategic/organizational planning on a regular basis						
e. Our budget allocations are realistic and based on mission, strategies and goals						
f. Evaluation processes are integrated into program activities and used to inform our work						
g. We engaged with others (e.g., partnerships, advocacy activities) when necessary in order to advance our mission						

8. Organizational Strategy and Adaptability	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
If N/A for any items, please explain						