



An EPA Thriving Communities Initiative

Cycle 2 Application Launch & Overview

March 11, 2025



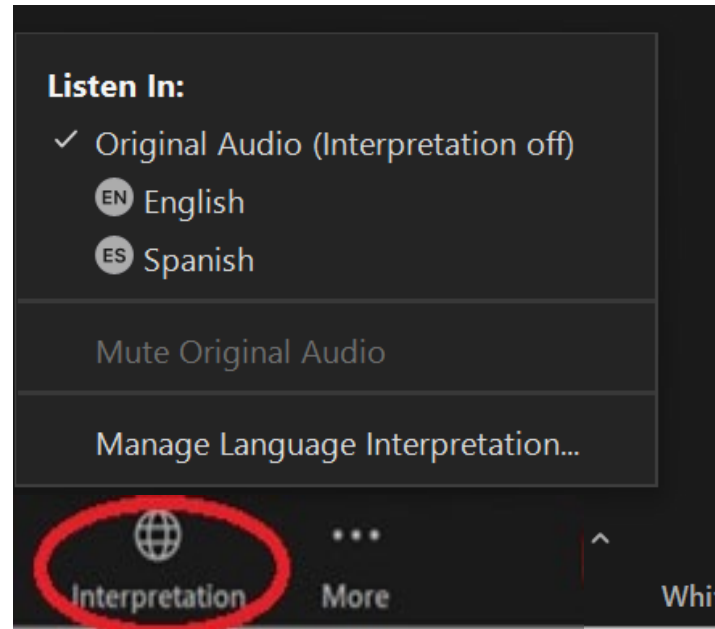
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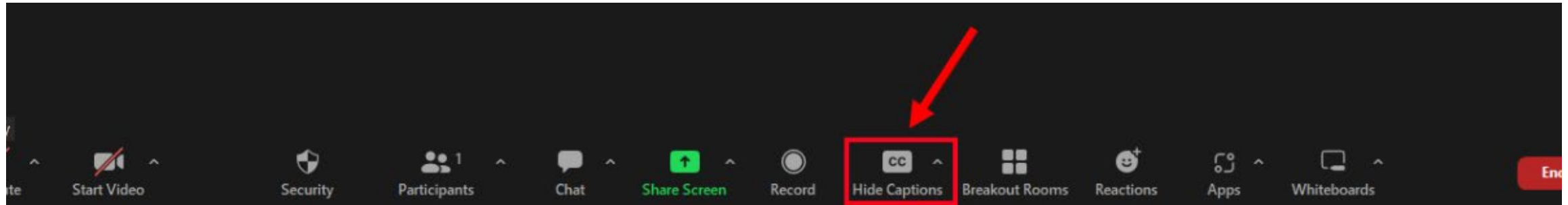
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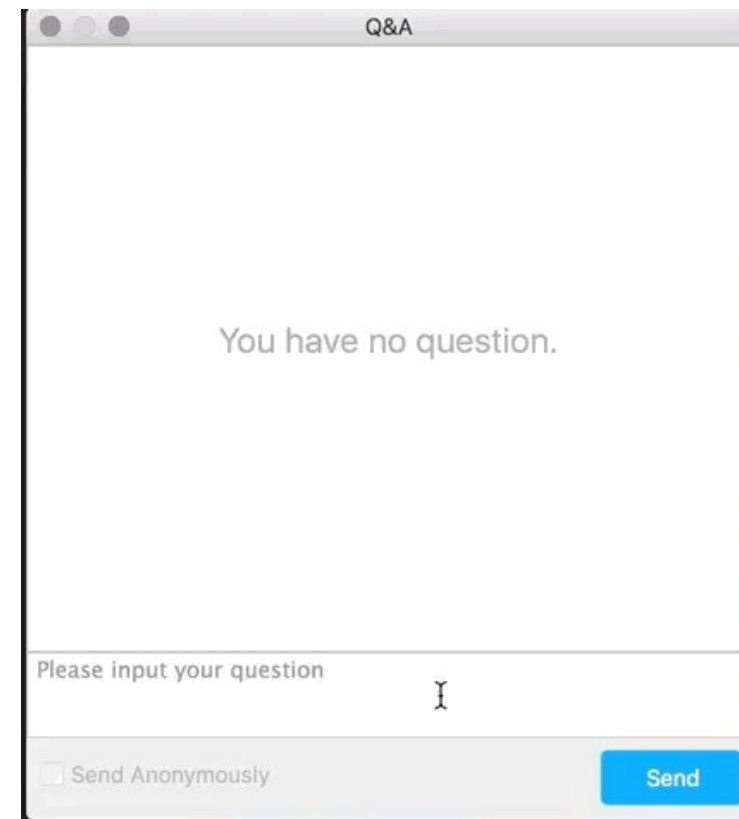
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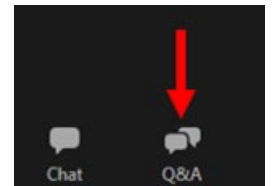
How to Ask a Question

Two ways to ask a question:

1. Use the Q&A box at the lower-left of your screen to chat with the presenter.
1. You may also email questions to mapejgrants@jsi.com after the webinar.



A screenshot of a web browser window titled "Q&A". The main content area displays the text "You have no question." in a light gray font. Below this is a text input field with the placeholder text "Please input your question" and a cursor. At the bottom left of the input area is a checkbox labeled "Send Anonymously". At the bottom right is a blue "Send" button.



Agenda

- I. Introduction to TCGM
 - A. Who are we?
 - B. What do we do?
- II. Grant Overview
 - A. Tiers
 - B. Eligibility
 - C. Timeline
 - D. Example projects
 - E. Additional considerations
- III. Application Overview
 - A. Competitive
 - B. Non-competitive



Overview: EPA Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program

Purpose: To reduce barriers and make it easier for small, community-based organizations to access federal environmental justice funds.

Funding: \$600 million from Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Who and what: Nationally 10 grantmakers covering all EPA regions will distribute thousands of grants over 3 years.



What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice is the **fair treatment** and **meaningful involvement** of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws policies. Fair treatment means that no one group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the **negative environmental consequences** resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations; the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal environmental programs and policies; or changing environmental conditions.

COMMUNITY OF FOCUS

No one group of people should bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences

**Who is being disproportionately affected?
What specific communities or populations need to have a specific focus?**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Those who are disproportionately affected have the opportunity to participate in decision-making

Who currently has decision-making authority? How will the project support the Community(ies) of Focus to lead and/or participate in decision-making?

MAP
EJ GRANTS
HUB
Environmental
Justice
Framework

NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

**What disproportionate negative environmental harms is your Community of Focus experiencing?
What do these environmental consequences result from?
How do these issues relate to Climate Change?**

ACTION

**What project activities will address the environmental justice issue(s)?
What community environmental justice strategies already exist or are in progress?
What stage are these activities in?**

Overview: MAP EJ Grants Hub

Mountains and Plains Environmental Justice (MAP EJ) Grants Hub

Who we are?

The MAP EJ Grants Hub is made up of community-based partner organizations across EPA Region 8.



MONTANA
ASSOCIATION of
CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS



Meet the Team



Alexia Eslan
Project Director



Elizabeth White
Deputy Director



Meredith Lee
Grantmaking Director



Meghan Guevara
Senior Grant Manager
MT Grant Manager



Lesly Fajardo-Feaux
Senior Grant Manager
ND Grant Manager



Hannabah Blue
Senior Grant Manager
SD Grant Manager



John Karikas
WY Grant Manager



Ali Witonsky
CO Grant Manager



Savannah Smith
Tribal Grant Manager



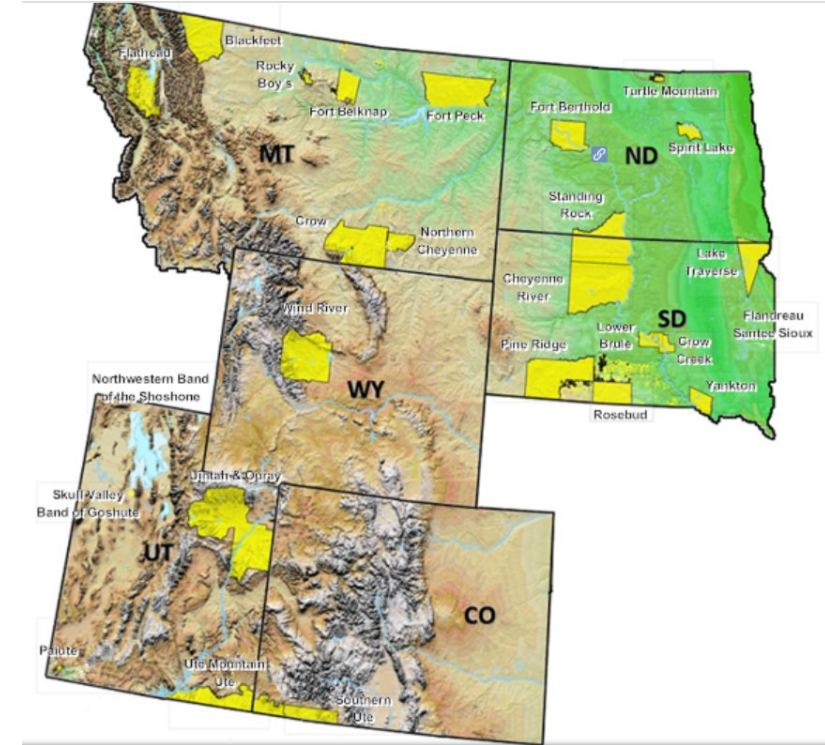
Natalie Youssef
UT Grant Manager

Overview: MAP EJ Grants Hub

Purpose: Provide **\$48 million in grants** over 3 years to **communities across EPA Region 8** (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY, 28 Tribes) working on **environmental justice** efforts.

Goals:

1. Get money and resources to the environmental justice communities
2. Reduce the burden of getting and managing a federal grant
3. Strengthen the capacity of local organizations to support long-term sustainability





Grant Overview

Tier 1 Grants: Assessment

Budget: Up to \$150,000

Project Period: 1 year

Intended to **explore and/or measure** an EJ issue **to better understand its impact** on a community of focus, and/or **to inform a future intervention.**

Can inform the **initial stage** of a project through **assessing** environmental and public health concerns.

Applicants are **not expected to propose an intervention or solution to the issue.**

Examples include:

- Research
- Sampling
- Testing
- Monitoring
- Investigations
- Surveys and studies

Tier 2 Grants: Planning

Budget: Up to \$250,000

Project Period: 1-2 years

Intended to **engage, educate, or coordinate partners and community members to prepare to address** an EJ issue in a community of focus.

Involves working with a community to **lay the groundwork for an intervention** and/or to **involve and mobilize the community**.

Planning phase of a project, for applicants who already have a strong understanding of their local issues and are ready to formulate a plan to address those issues.

Examples include:

- Planning
- Partnership-building
- Public outreach and education (as part of the planning process for future work)
- Coordination with community stakeholders to address environmental issues
- Training activities for community organizations and community members to build capacity for future action
- Projects and activities to spur community involvement
- Smaller land purchases and acquisitions *that require less than half of the total amount of subgrant funding*

Tier 3 Grants: Development

Implementing or moving toward an implementation of an intervention for an identified EJ issue with a community of focus

Describes **clearly defined implementation steps for an intervention**

Implementation phase of a project, for applicants who already have a strong understanding of their local environmental and/or public health issues, have already formulated a community-wide plan addressing those issues, and/or are now ready to develop the **technical aspects** of the project (i.e., implement the project on the ground).

Budget: Up to \$350,000

Project Period: up to 2 years

Examples include:

- Implementation of project plans
- Public outreach and education
- Blueprints for construction or cleanup projects, schematics, and technical development
- Work to get permits in place directly related to an environmental project
- Smaller land purchases and acquisitions that require less than half of the total amount of subgrant funding

Non-competitive Tier 1: Assessment

Eligible: Wyoming, Utah, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Tribes

Non-competitive awards are designed for **severely capacity-constrained organizations**. Applicants will go through a non-competitive process where they will need to include an **organizational capacity assessment** and **provide a project description**.

Intended to **explore and/or measure** an EJ issue **to better understand its impact** on a community of focus, and/or **to inform a future invention**.

Can inform the **initial stage** of a project through **assessing** environmental and public health concerns.

Applicants are **not expected to propose an intervention or solution to the issue**.

Budget: Up to \$75,000

Project Period: 1 year

Examples include:

- Research
- Sampling
- Testing
- Monitoring
- Investigations
- Surveys and studies

Eligible Grant Recipients

Nonprofit organizations

Tribal governments (both federally recognized and state-recognized) and intertribal consortia

Local governments

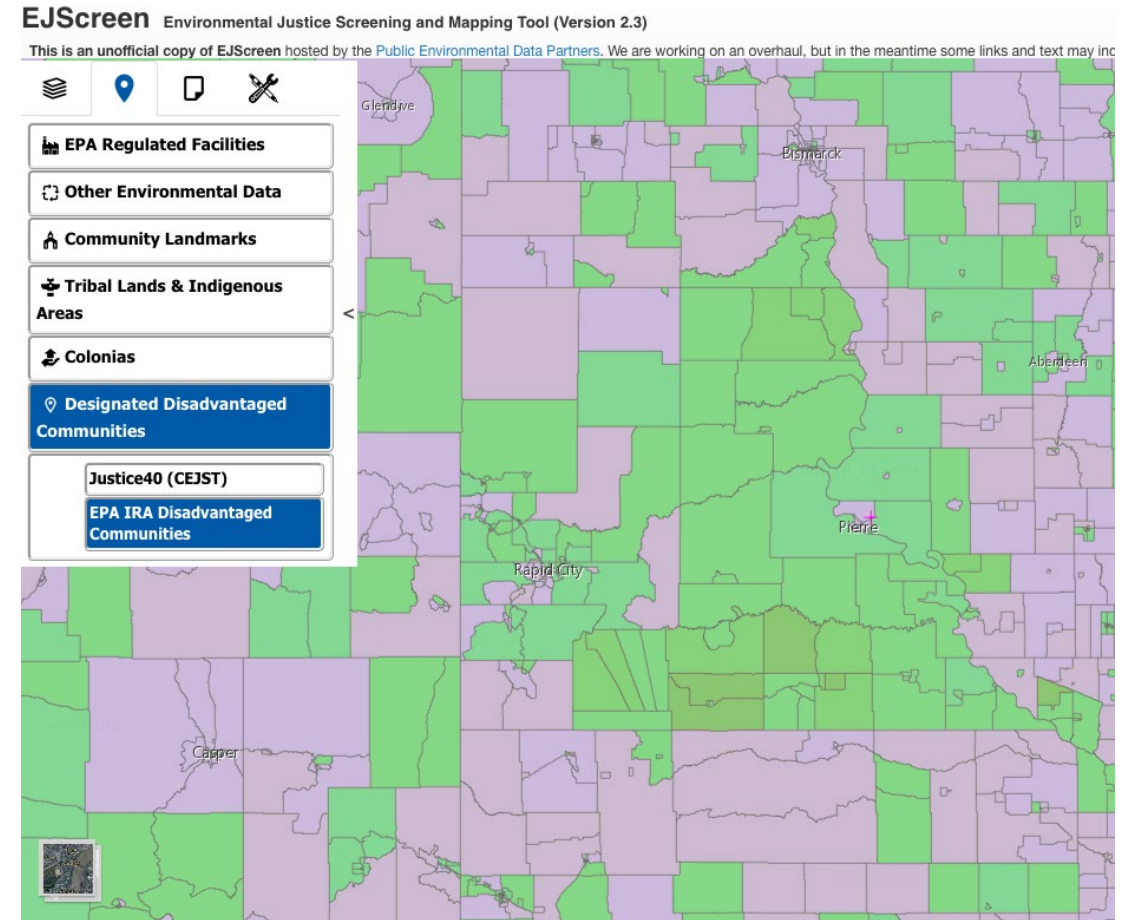
Institutions of Higher Education

Native American Organizations



Grant Eligibility: Benefits Communities of Focus

Project activities must benefit communities of focus as defined by Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Disadvantaged Communities Map.



Source: <https://pedp-ejscreen.azurewebsites.net/>

*If your community is not reflected in the IRA Disadvantaged Communities Map you may still be eligible for this grant. Please contact us at mapejgrants@jsi.com.

**The Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map is currently not available through the EPA's website. The map linked above uses the same data as EJ Screen.

Additional things to know

We anticipate three cycles of grant applications

Applicants can apply to multiple cycles

A single applicant can receive up to 2 awards for a total of up to \$600,000



Tentative Timeline for Applications



NOTE: Timelines are subject to change. Please check mapejgrants.org for more up to date information.

Possible Project Topics

- Air quality & asthma
 - Fence line air quality monitoring
 - Monitoring of effluent discharges from industrial facilities
 - Water quality & sampling
 - Small cleanup projects
 - Improving food access to reduce vehicle miles traveled
 - Stormwater issues and green infrastructure
 - Lead and asbestos contamination
 - Pesticides and other toxic substances
 - Healthy homes that are energy/water use efficient and not subject to indoor air pollution
 - Illegal dumping activities, such as education, outreach, and small-scale clean-ups
 - Emergency preparedness and disaster resiliency
 - Environmental job training for occupations that reduce greenhouse gases and other air pollutants
 - Environmental justice training for youth
- + **Other community-driven environmental justice priorities**

Projects you might not realize are EJ

- Workshops on safe and sustainable agricultural practices
- Solar microgrids
- Climate assessments
- Weather shelters at bus stations in rural areas
- Growing traditional foods
- Food source preservation for communities
- Permaculture
- Floodplain management
- Tree planting to address urban heat islands
- Green infrastructure improvement (e.g. rain barrels, rain gardens)
- EJ-themed mural project with youth
- Patient-centered climate resilience training and tools
- Plan for increasing community involvement in a county Climate Action Plan
- Citizen science: Collecting data from community members about the urban health environment
- Workforce capacity development for green jobs

+ **Other community-driven environmental justice priorities**

Case example: Tier 1

Org type: Tribal community-based non-profit organization

Project description: A non-profit organization is working with a local Tribe to better understand the need, desire, and potential barriers to supporting residential solar to increase energy independence of the Tribe. They propose a combination of Tribal community assessment through surveys, focus groups, and community meetings.

In their application,

- **Community of Focus:** Local Tribal community members, with a focus on underserved community members
- **Community Engagement:** Tribal community engagement through survey and focus group implementation, seeking to reach saturation. Public community meetings will be held, with specific accommodations to reach underserved populations, including ASL interpreters, childcare, and ensuring that the meetings are held in accessible locations.
- **Environmental Justice Issue:** Energy independence affected by high costs and fossil fuel dependence, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Project Activities:** Survey, focus group, and community meeting implementation, with materials developed and sessions held in Tribal language for monolingual community members. The project aims to work with and continue the efforts of previous organizations to support the use and upkeep of residential solar panels.



Case example: Tier 2

Org type: City Health Department

Project description: A City Health Department proposes a project to reduce high rates of lead exposure among disadvantaged community members in their City. The City aims to do this by improving testing rates through the development of Lead Remediation Action Plan. An Advisory Committee made up representative from the community develop and approve the Action Plan.

In their application:

- **Community of Focus:** Includes Black community members, Indigenous populations, and low-income individuals within the City.
- **Community Engagement:** In addition to the Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from the impacted community, the City will hold a series of open meetings and workshops in-person and remote, prioritizing those communities with the highest rate of blood lead levels. Meetings will held at various times to accommodate different schedules and interpretation services will be provided.
- **Environmental Justice Issue:** High rates of lead exposure among the Communities of Focus, resulting from many of these community members living in houses built before 1978, in impoverished neighborhoods.
- **Project Activities:** Implementation of a representative Advisory Committee, community health assessment, action plan, collaboration meetings, and virtual and in-person listening sessions.



Case example: Tier 3

Org type: Community-Based Organization (CBO)

Project description: An agriculture-focused CBO in a rural area is proposing a program that supports local farmers to transition towards sustainable farming practices.

In their application,

- **Community of Focus:** Rural, low-income farmers
- **Community Engagement:** The non-profit organization will use their existing relationships with farmers in the area. The non-profit will hold informational sessions with the farmers to develop the design and delivery of the program.
- **Environmental Justice Issue:** Changes in farming practices affecting local farmers include rising input costs, climate variability, and the need to adapt to new technologies and market demands.
- **Project Activities:** The non-profit will conduct listening sessions with farmers, utilizing their input to develop a list of changing farming practices and ways to support them to address them. The program will prioritize the farmer's input to develop project activities and evaluation metrics.





Resources for Applicants

Explore the collected resources to help support your [subgrant application process](#).

Jump to: [General Resources](#) | [Competitive Subgrants](#) | [Non-competitive Subgrants](#) | [Questions/Need Help?](#)

General

[Cycle 1 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)

Review the Notice of Funding Opportunity for Cycle 1. Cycle 1 applications will be open between October 28 – December 12, 2024.

[Request for Applications](#) – Cycle 1

Review the Request for Applications for Cycle 1. This will provide details on eligibility, use of subgrant funds, and the subgrant application process.

Additional Considerations

- Procurement
 - Must follow Federal requirements
- Land Acquisition and Purchase
 - Cannot exceed 50% of total budget
- Purchase of Equipment with a Unit Cost of More than \$10,000
 - Is allowable, but must be approved by EPA
- Fiscal Sponsorship
 - Fiscal sponsor fees cannot be included as direct expenses in the project budget
- Human Subjects Research
 - If selected, grantees are responsible for ensuring IRB approval
- Construction
 - Build America Buy America (BABA)
 - Subject to prevailing wage requirements relating to the Davis Bacon Act
- Quality Assurance Project Plans
 - Collecting, producing, evaluating environmental data, using environmental data in decision-making processes (e.g., regulatory compliance, risk assessment), Environmental technology projects

See FAQs at: <https://mapejgrants.org/faqs/>



Application Overview

Competitive and Non-competitive Application



MAP EJ TCGM Competitive Application

MAP EJ TCGM Competitive Application

Application Instructions

Interested organizations should complete our pre-application screening questions that are intended to help you, the applicant, ensure that you are eligible to apply and that your project fits within this subgrant program. One note, as we are not collecting your information as part of the pre-application screening, some of these questions will be asked again during the actual application. If you have any questions about your eligibility, please reach out to mapejgrants@jsi.com. The pre-application screening can be found [here](#).

Once the pre-application is completed and you have determined you are eligible, you can access the Tier 1-3 competitive application [here](#) or the Tier 1 non-competitive concept note, [here](#). A pdf and document preview of the application questions can be found in the [applicant toolkit](#). Applications can be saved and returned to at a later time. For any application questions, you can reach out to mapejgrants@jsi.com.

Competitive Application

This collection of information is approved by OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq. OMB Control Number: 2035-NEW. Responses to this collection of information are voluntary. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to be 15-20 hours per response. Please send comments on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden to: Director, Information Engagement Division; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2821T); 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW; Washington, D.C. 20460. Include the OMB control number in any correspondence. Do not send the completed form to this address.

Next

Competitive Application Weighted Scoring

Section	Weighting	Min Score	Max Score
Applicant Profile	x1	1	5
Need and Centering Community	x3	3	15
Partnerships, Assets and Meaningful Community Engagement	x4	4	20
Project Goals, Activities, and Milestones	x4	4	25
Performance Measures & Sustainability	x3	3	15
Programmatic Capability	x2	2	10
Budget & Budget Narrative	x2	2	10
TOTAL		19	100

Competitive Application Scoring Rubric Summary

The applicant is not responsive to the application questions.	1	Not recommended for funding.
The applicant has proposed a project that does not align with the goals and principles of the Thriving Communities Grantmaker Program, the applicant doesn't effectively convey how they will address an environmental justice issue in a way that benefits a community of focus, and/or the applicant does not demonstrate the capacity to complete the project as described.	2	
The applicant has proposed a project that is intended to address an environmental justice issue in a community of focus, but there are capacity concerns, gaps in the project design, or issues with the project approach that may impact its success.	3	Possibly recommended for funding; may need technical support.
The applicant has proposed an attainable project that is intended to address an environmental justice issue in a community of focus, has plans to effectively engage impacted communities, and demonstrates capacity to achieve project goals.	4	Recommended for funding.
The applicant has proposed a community-driven project that will effectively address the environmental justice issue described. The applicant demonstrates the capacity to successfully achieve project goals and has articulated how this project fits into a broader community environmental justice strategy.	5	

Additional Resources

- Additional resources are available on our website: mapejgrants.org
- Office Hours:
 - We are offering office hours multiple times a week to support you and answer your questions! Sign up here: <https://mapejgrants.org/events/>
- Additional TA and resources:
 - To request TA support from EPN: <https://www.environmentalprotectionnetwork.org/our-work/capacity-building/apply-here/>
 - To request TA support from ICMA: <https://tctac.icma.org/request-technical-assistance/>

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Q & A

Contact Us



For any questions or more information,
please email mapejgrants@jsi.com



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