



Frequently Asked Questions 2019 Community Impact Grants

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New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation
Environmental Justice

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Grants Gateway/Prequalification

Q: How do I send in my application?

A: All applicants must apply through the NYS Grants Gateway.

https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx.

This includes answering all program questions and uploading completed and required program documents and forms. Paper applications will NOT be accepted for this grant opportunity. Late applications will not be accepted.

All Applicants must be Registered with Grants Gateway to submit an application. In addition to registration, not-for-profits must also be Prequalified at the time and date that the application is due. If you are not Prequalified at that time and date, your application will not be considered.

Q: We are thinking about doing the EJ Community Impact Grant, unfortunately, I can't find the link for application for 2018 can you email it to me? Also can you explain how this grant is supposed to be tied in with Economic Development and why it would be?

A: Applications are being accepted through the Grants Gateway Portal. Link:

https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx.

Once you are logged in (make sure your log in role is either grantee, grantee system administrator, or grantee contract signatory) you will find the grant under 2017 Environmental Justice Community Impact Grant Program.

If your other question is about the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) question, it is not mandatory for your project to align with the REDC strategy. Applicants may answer N/A to that question. The REDC plans are available here: <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov>. Points will be given if the proposed project aligns with any of the strategies from the applicable to the applicant's project.

Q: Is this application offered through Consolidated Funding Application?


A: No, You will apply through the Grants Gateway.

Q: I am registered and logged in to the Grants Gateway in one of the three roles that can start the application (Grantee, Grantee System Administrator, or Grantee Contract Signatory) but the “Apply for Grant Opportunity” button has not appeared.

A: If you do not see the “Apply for Grant Opportunity” button please go to your **home page** and click on “View Opportunities” listed under View Available Opportunities.



From that page you may search for available grant opportunities.

On the opportunity page, you will see the “  ” button on the bottom left side of the page.

Q: Do we apply through the Grants Gateway or the Consolidated Funding Application?

A: You will apply through the Grants Gateway.

Q: I would love to learn more about the guidelines for Gov. Cuomo's [community impact grant](#). Is there a way to find out relevant information prior to the July deadline?

A: Thank you for your inquiry. You can find more information about this grant opportunity including applicant eligibility and eligible project locations at the NYS Grants Gateway or by clicking on this link: [Grant Opportunity](#) and entering “Community Impact” into the “Search by Grant Opportunity” field. Once you click on the opportunity if you scroll to the bottom of the page you can then click on “View Grant Opportunity” and the full guidelines and instructions will open.

Q: I have not been able to access the site referenced in your article announcing the \$4.5 million Community Impact Grant program. I keep getting a notice that the site is corrupted. Please advise me on how to get a copy of the instructions and application.

A: Please try the following link:

https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/logout2.aspx.

Please contact the grants gateway helpdesk for any technical issues at grantsgateway@its.ny.gov or call 518 474-5595.

Q: We are registered on the NY State Grants Gateway and will be applying for this grant. However, we don't see a link to how to apply THROUGH the NYS Grants Gateway. Could you kindly advise the steps to get to the page on the NYS Grants Gateway where we can complete information and upload items?

A: The short answer is to make sure you are logged in as a role with the function to start an application. Please see below. Additionally, you can find New York State Grants Gateway Vendor's Quick Start Guide on How to apply for Opportunities here:

https://grantsreform.ny.gov/sites/default/files/grantee_quick_start_guide.pdf

*Note to any applicants experiencing issues regarding applying, opening tabs, and using various functions in the gateway: **Please make sure that when logging in, the role is appropriate for the functions you are trying to perform, as many of them have restricted capability.** In many cases there has been confusion because applicants have been using roles that do not have access to particular functions. Below are some steps to walk you through once you have cleared that path.

Role	Create and Maintain user Roles	Initiate Application	Complete Application	Submit Application	Only view the Application
Delegated Admin	✓				
Grantee		✓	✓		
Grantee Contract Signatory		✓	✓	✓	
Grantee Payment Signatory		✓	✓		
Grantee System Administrator		✓	✓	✓	
Grantee View Only					✓

While logged in the appropriate role follow these steps:

- Click the **View Opportunities** button on the home page underneath the
- **View Available Opportunities** heading.
- Enter search criteria into the search fields to find the opportunity you wish to apply to.
- Click on the Grant Opportunity field of the opportunity you wish to apply to.

Review the information on the page to determine if you wish to apply to this opportunity. If you do wish to apply, click the **Apply for Grant Opportunity** button. You will be taken to the Application Main Page. Click on the **Forms** menu. The first actual question is **Project/Site Addresses**.

Q: We are having trouble accessing the on-line application and the 'Presubmission Uploads' such as the Work Plan work sheet and the "itemized expenditure budget in the Grants Gateway" Any advice or direction you could provide would be appreciated.

A: The short answer is to make sure you are logged into a role that has the function to start and fill out the application such as the grantee or the grantee system administrator. Please see above question for more details.

Please email the grants gateway helpdesk at grantsgateway@its.ny.gov or call 518 474-5595 for any technical issues.

Q: I am putting together an application for this grant that involves a community organization working with an NFP fiscal sponsor. With the fiscal sponsor submitting the application, do *both* the fiscal sponsor and the community organization need to be registered and pre-qualified in the grants gateway?

A: Only the fiscal sponsor has to register and pre-qualify in the grants gateway.

Q: Our company is acting as a consultant for several non-profit clients with large building portfolios in New York City. If we are applying for the Environmental Justice Grant funding on their behalf, do we have to submit Prequalification requirements (we are for profit), or do our clients have to submit their own Prequalification requirements?

A: According to our guidelines, an eligible applicant must be a not-for-profit corporation (NFP) community-based organization, or a community based organization may partner with an NFP that will serve as their fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor would be responsible for submitting the online grant application in the Grants Gateway and completing the pre-qualification requirements. The fiscal sponsor must also sign a contractual agreement with DEC on behalf of the community group should grant funding be awarded

Q: Does the fiscal sponsor need to go through the registration process for approval before sending in the application on behalf of the NFP?

A: Yes. The fiscal sponsor must register on the grants gateway and be prequalified on the grants gateway.

Eligibility

Q: We work on a lake. You can see on the EJ map that we are 2 blocks outside of the designated EJ area. The area did have an over 20% poverty rate in 2000. But does our 2-block distance inhibit our applying?

A: If you can use authoritative demographic information to meet the eligibility in one of the listed ways in the RFA (please see pages 15-16) the EJ map does not inhibit you from applying. There are different methods to demonstrate that your location and the residents served are located in an EJ community, not just the potential environmental justice area maps. You may demonstrate on the map where your organization is located in relation to the community served and project area.

Q: The applicant I am working with is based on the west side of Buffalo. Their partner (ineligible to apply as an applicant) is based on the east side of Buffalo and the project will be on the east side of Buffalo. Both areas are EJ areas within the same city. This would be ok?

A: Yes, we would consider the city of Buffalo to be the community served.

Q: Would a nonprofit housing corporation that meets the eligibility requirements, that is also a subsidiary of an ineligible nonprofit, be eligible?

A: Be sure that the applicant organization meets all of the eligibility requirements (see all eligibility requirements on page 2 of the RFA).

The applicant organization:

- Cannot have its charter revoked or otherwise be dissolved through the action of another organization; and

- Is able to enter into legal agreements independent of any affiliated not-for-profit organization, government body, university or other entity that would be ineligible to apply for this grant; and

Q: My understanding is that an ineligible organization can partner with an eligible applicant organization, or they can be a subcontractor on an eligible applicant organization's project. How does DEC differentiate between the two? Is there a limit to how much of the project/funding can be subcontracted out?

A: Applicant organizations are given space to answer each of our program questions and an additional area to discuss your workplan. In those spaces you can talk about your partnerships for the project. If an organization you are partnering with will be getting paid as a subcontractor you will include this information in the expense budget section of the application.

Please see pages 24-25 of the RFA that reference Eligible and Ineligible expenses.

Contractual: Costs for the value of services provided by responsible, professional and technical personnel and consultants directly related to the implementation of the project. Contractual staff time, including fringe benefits, paid to **any individual person cannot exceed 30 percent** of the total grant amount.

Q: How do you define "affected community?"

A: The "affected community" will be the EJ community that you are going to be doing the project in.

Q: Would you be able to tell me what our score was last time?

A: Yes. Any organization who applied can call the office after awards are announced to get a debriefing.

Q: Would a nonprofit housing corporation that meets the eligibility requirements, that is also a subsidiary of an ineligible nonprofit, be eligible?

Be sure that the applicant organization meets all of the eligibility requirements (see page 2). The applicant organization:

- **Cannot have its charter revoked** or otherwise be dissolved through the action of another organization; and
- Is able to enter into legal agreements **independent of any affiliated not-for-profit organization**, government body, university or other entity that would be ineligible to apply for this grant; and

Q: Is it unusual for organizations to be funded 2 years in a row, even though we are eligible?

A: It is not unusual for organizations to be funded 2 years in a row.

Q: We applied last year and received a grant for our greenway and community garden project in Yonkers. We really appreciated the funding and we are carrying out the

initiative this year. Can we apply in this new round due June 14th for a completely separate project, or perhaps, renew the funding for the same project next year?

A: Prior applicants are eligible to apply but please note that on page 2 of the RFA it says "Applicants whom received funding through the 2017-2018 Environmental Justice Community Impact Grant RFA must demonstrate that they are applying for a new project." Since you received funding for the 2017-2018 round you would need to apply for a new project.

Q: Could a county government apply? Specifically, I'm wondering if a Sheriff's Department could apply. If not, could a sheriff's department be a partner/subcontractor in the grant, if a non-profit were the prime contractor?

A: Entities that are **not** eligible to apply and receive funding under this grant program are: individuals; universities; municipalities; government bodies; water districts or similar entities; large non-governmental organizations such as serving multiple counties, regional, state or national environmental groups and organizations.

However an ineligible organization may be involved in a proposed EJ project by partnering as a subcontractor for an eligible organization.

Q: My community-based organization is trying to determine if we would be disqualified from applying for the DEC EJ 2019 grant. Per the instructions, your CBO must "Serves the residents of an area equal to or smaller than one county, one town, city or New York City borough. Organizations serving areas larger than indicated such as regional or national organizations are not eligible for this grant."

My organization stewards 109 community gardens within only the city limits of Buffalo and within some neighborhoods in the City of Niagara Falls, where we have recently expanded. We do not work at all at a county-level. Our proposed project would be exclusively with a handful of gardens in the City of Buffalo only. Can you please clarify if we could be ineligible?

A: Thank you for your question. As you pointed out for the purposes of this grant opportunity, an eligible community based organization must serve an area equal to or smaller than one county, one town, city or New York City borough. Organizations serving areas larger than indicated above are not eligible for this grant opportunity.

In other words, if your organization serves residents of multiple counties, you would not be eligible to apply. However, ineligible not for profits may serve as fiscal sponsors for eligible community based organizations or partner with eligible organizations. However, ineligible not for profits may serve as fiscal sponsors for eligible community based organizations or partner with eligible organizations.

Q: For Question 12, does "people served by the organization" refer to all activities of the organization, or just those that pertain to the project we are applying for funding?

A: People served by the organization refers to your organization as a whole.

Q: Does our organization need to be directly on property in the Potential Environmental Justice (EJ) shaded area to apply, in addition to 50% of the population we're serving? Our property lies just past the border of the EJ area indicated on the map. This question is phrased as "affected community", and we consider our project to serve a slightly larger area that includes our property line.

Related to this, since the EJ area map doesn't encompass any town or city boundaries neatly, do we need to demonstrate that this project *only* serves people who reside in that area, or can a city, whose majority is considered EJ area, serve as our project area?

A: The applicant organization must be located in the EJ community where your proposed project will serve.

For question 4, there are different methods to demonstrate that your location and the residents served are located in an EJ community, not just the potential environmental justice area maps (please see pages 14-15 of the RFA). The potential environmental justice areas are based on census block groups of 250 to 500 households each. As you indicated, the block group may not match up to a neighborhood boundary. You may demonstrate on the map where your organization is located in relation to the community served and project area.

Your organization may serve an area larger than the project area but cannot serve an area larger than a town or city (for example, regional or national organizations are not eligible).

Q: Is there a GIS boundary file of the eligible (purple) territory for this grant?

A: Please see our website that has each county map with EJ areas on it. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/911.html>

To view PEJAs in greater detail or to combine them with other spatial information, [download the GIS layer of PEJAs in KMZ format for Google Earth \(TM\)](#). You will need Google Earth 5 or later to view the KMZ file; the latest version of Google Earth is available to download for free at <https://www.google.com/earth/desktop/>. When this data layer is opened in Google Earth, the PEJAs appear as transparent purple polygons superimposed on the map of New York State.

Q: We are fully prequalified and have been the recipient of NYS DEC grants before. We service all of the Hudson valley and into the Bronx.

My question regards whether an acceptable project under the current RFP can be located in nearby areas other than the small town and village of Ossining, NY itself? For instance, could we propose a project to be located in the downtown Yonkers area, which is an area of considerable interest regarding environmental justice.

A: Please see page 2 and 3 of the RFA for applicant eligibility. For the purposes of this grant opportunity, an eligible community based organization **must** have its primary office in the affected community and **must** serve an area equal to or smaller than one county, one town, city or New York City borough (RFA Section 2 (f) page 9 Applicant Eligibility). Organizations serving areas larger than indicated above are not eligible for this grant opportunity. However, ineligible

not for profits may serve as fiscal sponsors for eligible community based organizations or partner with eligible organizations.

Q: We're curious about working both inside and outside of the EJ boundaries. If our project serves areas that are largely inside but also works on the perimeter of the purple boundaries cited in the RFP, will our application be disqualified?

A: Yes, you can apply for a grant to do work both in the EJ area AND for work just outside of the EJ area. Be sure to discuss in your narrative the harms and risks along with benefits of doing this work and how it will help the folks IN your EJ area.

Q: Does the fiscal sponsor have to be located in an EJ area?

A: No, the fiscal sponsor does not have to be located in an EJ area. The fiscal sponsor does not have to meet the eligibility requirements and can have an operating budget over \$3 million, however the applicant organization must have a budget under \$3 million and meet all other eligibility requirements. The fiscal sponsor should answer the eligibility questions based on the applicant organization. Please refer to the RFA Applicant Eligibility Section and Fiscal Sponsors on pages 2-3.

Q: We are a Vermont based organization would we be eligible to apply?

A: Please see page 4 of the RFA.

Eligible Project Locations

Projects must serve an EJ community, as defined in DEC *Commissioner Policy 29, Environmental Justice and Permitting* (available on DEC's website at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/36929.html>). Applicants can identify EJ communities in the following ways:

- Refer to maps on DEC's website showing these areas:
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/911.html>.
- Refer to census tracts and block numbering areas which, as of the 2000 U.S. Census, had a poverty rate of at least 20 percent and an unemployment rate of at least 125 percent of the New York State unemployment rate.
- Refer to census tracts and block numbering areas which, as of the 2000 U.S. Census, had a poverty rate of at least two times the poverty rate for the county in which the tract is located.
- Refer to the Empire State Development Corporation's (ESDC) designated environmental zones. Maps of *environmental zones* in each county can be found on the ESDC Brownfield Redevelopment website at <http://www.esd.ny.gov/BusinessPrograms/BrownfieldCleanupTracts.html>.

Note: The ESDC has designated the Environmental Zones for the purpose of providing tax incentives for brownfield redevelopment. The Environmental Justice Community Impact Grants ARE NOT related in any way to the Brownfield Redevelopment tax incentives. The link to the ESDC Brownfield Redevelopment website is provided here only as a reference to the Environmental Zone maps.

Q: Is it possible to change the funding timeline on our current grant so that we can apply to cover salaries for the same position?

A: While you can finish a project earlier, you cannot change the funding timeline on the current grant. You could apply for the new grant cycle but you must be able to differentiate the current program costs and expenses from your new proposal.

Q: My question was can we use the 990 along with the Audited Financial Report since this clearly shows that our organization's revenue is much less than 3 million without in-kind donations of food. We count in-kind as both revenue and expenses according to the audited financial report.

A: For this particular opportunity it is in the RFA that we base revenue on the 990 (specifically line 12) and we cannot allow other exemptions or base it on other financials.

Q: We are a CBO that has revenue over 3,000,000 but it is due to in-kind donations of food to our food pantry. Our revenue without these in-kind donations is 1.8 million. However, on our 990, it shows a total revenue greater than 3 million. Can we based on revenue on our audited tax forms rather than our 990 so that we are eligible to submit?

A: The overall revenue of the applicant organization cannot exceed \$3,000,000 based on the applicant's IRS Form 990 filing from the previous year (line 12) as described in the RFA Applicant Eligibility Requirements Section 2 (b) on page 8.

Q: We are current grantees that are working on a water quality and pathogen testing project, can we apply to expand upon this project?

A: Yes, however, you cannot use funds from a new grant to help cover expenses or costs that are also being paid for by your previous award. You could apply for the new grant cycle but you must be able to **differentiate the current program costs and expenses from your new proposal.**

Q: Is the Tuscarora Indian Reservation in Niagara County eligible?

A: The Nations' territories are considered EJ areas and community based non profits within their territory would be eligible. However, the Nation itself is not a 501c3 not for profit. Please see pages 2-3 for a full list of applicant eligibility criteria.

Q: I have reread the RFP a few times but am still not sure: If an organization is applying through a Fiscal Sponsor and has an operating budget under \$3 million, is it OK if the Fiscal Sponsor has an operating budget over \$3 million?

A: Yes, if an organization is applying through a fiscal sponsor, the fiscal sponsor does not have to meet the eligibility requirements and can have an operating budget over \$3 million, however the applicant organization must have a budget under \$3 million and meet all other eligibility

requirements. The fiscal sponsor should answer the eligibility questions based on the applicant organization. Please refer to the RFA Applicant Eligibility Section and Fiscal Sponsors on pages 2-3.

Q: We are a regional organization and the RFP states applicants must be "community-based organizations." Are we eligible to apply for this grant opportunity?

A: For this grant opportunity regional organizations are not eligible. However, ineligible not for profits may serve as fiscal sponsors for eligible community based organizations or partner with eligible organizations.

Q: I work for a regional office of a national organization but we have worked with and served an EJ area in NYC for the past several years. I was wondering if we'd be eligible for this grant opportunity?

A: For the purposes of this grant opportunity, an eligible community based organization must serve the residents of an area *equal to or smaller than one county, one town, city or New York City borough*. Organizations serving areas larger than indicated such as regional or national organizations are not eligible for this grant.

Q: Can a Benefit Corporation (focused on EJ) apply for the EJ Grant? A Benefit corporation is a private company focused exclusively on enhancing low income communities engagement.

A: Thank you for your question. One of the eligibility criteria for this grant opportunity is that the applicant must be a not for profit with a 501c3 designation. For profit entities are not eligible.

Q: Is it possible to expand our current program covered by the last round of Community Impact Grants?

A: Yes, however, you cannot use funds from a new grant to help cover expenses or costs that are also being paid for by your previous award. You could apply for the new grant cycle but you must be able to differentiate the current program costs and expenses from your new proposal.

Q: We have received past support from NYS DEC Urban and Community Forestry grant program. This year, I would like to apply for the EJ grant. Some of our programs are city wide but if we apply for a grant that is specific to the Bronx does that qualify for Community Based?

A: Please refer to pages 2-3 of the RFA (attached) for the full list of eligibility criteria. These criteria include 501 (c)(3) status, the location of the project and the applicant organization's primary office must be located in the affected EJ area, the applicant organization must focus on addressing the environmental and/or public health problems of the affected community, and serve the residents of an area equal to or smaller than one town, city or New York City borough. Organizations serving areas larger than indicated above are not eligible for this grant opportunity.

Q: Can we apply for an expansion of a program that is currently being funded by another grant? For example same work but adding other workshops.

A: You cannot use funds from a new grant to help cover expenses or costs that are also being paid for by your previous award. You could apply for the new grant cycle but you must be able to differentiate the current program costs and expenses from your new proposal.

Q: We are interested in proposing a project that engages high school students. However, if the population served must be residential we will submit a proposal that would help fund the work we do with our community members/neighbors that addresses local environmental harms and risks.

A: The eligibility criteria require that both applicant and project must be located within the EJ community. Whether a project engages high school students versus residents is up to the applicant.

Q: If a municipality is interested in building a community center in a designated environmental justice area, would they be eligible for assistance from an Environmental Justice Area grant?

A: Entities that are **not eligible** to apply and receive funding under this grant program include municipalities; individuals; universities; government bodies; water districts or similar entities; large nongovernmental organizations such as a county (outside New York City), regional, state or national environmental groups and organizations.

Q: Is this grant program for not-for-profits or private sector?

A: It is only for not-for-profit organizations.

Fiscal Sponsors

Q: Do you have a sample fiscal sponsor agreement we can see?

A: [Sample Fiscal Sponsor Agreement](#)

Q: We are in the process of asking a 5013c organization to be our fiscal sponsor for the Environmental Justice Community Impact Grant.

If a not-for-profit as pre-qualified, applied, and received a EJ grant in the past, do they need to pre-qualify again if they are going to be a fiscal sponsor for a community organization for the July 10th deadline?

A: Prequalification should be done on an annual basis to maintain a “document vault prequalified” status. If you do not update the required documents annually the document vault will expire. The fiscal sponsor must register on the grants gateway and be prequalified on the grants gateway by the deadline.

Q: Our fiscal sponsor is prequalified through the grant gateway, does the applicant organization also need to need to also pre-qualify?

A: Only the fiscal sponsor has to register and pre-qualify in the grants gateway. The fiscal sponsor does not have to meet the eligibility requirements, however the applicant organization must meet all other eligibility requirements (page 3 of the RFA). The fiscal sponsor should answer the eligibility questions based on the applicant organization.

Q: Please confirm that my understanding is accurate: if an organization is not eligible to apply on its own, its choices for participation are: 1) serve as a fiscal sponsor for an eligible organization; **Yes 2) partner with an eligible organization that will be the applicant; **Yes** or 3) serve as a subcontractor for an eligible organization that will be the applicant. **Yes** For choices 2 and 3, the applicant must meet eligibility requirements including being located in the same community as the project. For choice 1, the applicant does not have to meet any of the eligibility requirements, but the fiscally sponsored organization does.**

If an organization is applying through a fiscal sponsor, the fiscal sponsor does not have to meet the eligibility requirements and can have an operating budget over \$3 million, however the applicant organization must have a budget under \$3 million and meet **all** other eligibility requirements. The fiscal sponsor should answer the eligibility questions based on the applicant organization. Please refer to the RFA Applicant Eligibility Section and Fiscal Sponsors on pages 2-3.

Q: I don't quite understand what to put in a fiscal sponsor agreement, do you have an example that we can look at?

A: A fiscal sponsor agreement must be addressed to the NFP applicant serving as the fiscal sponsor and the agreement must state the NFP will serve as the fiscal sponsor and will assume the responsibility for the project application, the performance of work consistent with this RFA and execution of a State of New York Master Contract for Grants or Letter of Agreement. Here is a sample that has been accepted in the past. [Sample Fiscal Sponsor Agreement](#)

Q: I have reread the RFP a few times but am still not sure: If an organization is applying through a Fiscal Sponsor and has an operating budget under \$3 million, is it OK if the Fiscal Sponsor has an operating budget over \$3 million?

A: Yes, if an organization is applying through a fiscal sponsor, the fiscal sponsor does not have to meet the eligibility requirements and can have an operating budget over \$3 million, however the applicant organization must have a budget under \$3 million and meet all other eligibility requirements. The fiscal sponsor should answer the eligibility questions based on the applicant organization. Please refer to the RFA Applicant Eligibility Section and Fiscal Sponsors on pages 2-3.

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A: No, the fiscal sponsor does not have to be located in an EJ area. The fiscal sponsor does not have to meet the eligibility requirements and can have an operating budget over \$3 million, however the applicant organization must have a budget under \$3 million and meet all other eligibility requirements. The fiscal sponsor should answer the eligibility questions based on the applicant organization. Please refer to the RFA Applicant Eligibility Section and Fiscal Sponsors on pages 2-3.

Q: I am putting together an application for this grant that involves a community organization working with an NFP fiscal sponsor. With the fiscal sponsor submitting the application, do *both* the fiscal sponsor and the community organization need to be registered and pre-qualified in the grants gateway?

A: Only the fiscal sponsor has to register and pre-qualify in the grants gateway.

Q: Our company is acting as a consultant for several non-profit clients with large building portfolios in New York City. If we are applying for the Environmental Justice Grant funding on their behalf, do we have to submit Prequalification requirements (we are for profit), or do our clients have to submit their own Prequalification requirements?

A: According to our guidelines, an eligible applicant must be a not-for-profit corporation (NFP) community-based organization, or a community based organization may partner with an NFP that will serve as their fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor would be responsible for submitting the online grant application in the Grants Gateway and completing the pre-qualification requirements. The fiscal sponsor must also sign a contractual agreement with DEC on behalf of the community group should grant funding be awarded

Q: Does the fiscal sponsor need to go through the registration process for approval before sending in the application on behalf of the NFP?

A: Yes. The fiscal sponsor must register on the grants gateway and be prequalified on the grants gateway.

Research Component

Q: Would surveying residents about solutions to stormwater and flooding issues be considered appropriate for this grant?

A: Yes, that would be an acceptable research component. The research component can be either primary or secondary and should be related to the environmental harms or risks in the affected community.

Q: What type of research would be best for our organization to include in this project?

A: The research component can be either primary or secondary. The research should be related to the environmental harms or risks in the affected community.

Projects

Q: I would like to plant trees locally in Plattsburgh and was wondering if I could use this grant to do so?

A: We cannot comment on specific proposals because of the competitive nature of the grant opportunity but we have included a list of eligible projects that were funded in the past in the RFA beginning on page 12.

Q: We work in a park that is considered an Environmental Justice area and we would like to expand our work to outside the Park to an area that is not considered EJ. However, everything that happens up there- pollution and invasive plants- flows downstream into our Park and we cannot do a long term fix here without going north. Would we be able to apply for a grant to do work both in the EJ area within the Park and outside of the EJ area north of the park since the end result would greatly improve the EJ area?

A: Yes, you can apply for a grant to do work both in the EJ area within the park AND outside of the EJ area north of the park. Be sure to discuss in your narrative the harms and risks along with benefits of doing this work and how it will help the folks in your EJ area.

Q: I just met with one of our county representatives who is interested in applying for this grant to do a project in our city. We have a few different ideas and I was hoping you could give me some feedback on which one you think would be the best fit.

- 1) He would like to address the food insecurity issues in our city by increasing programming at the farmers market. Currently, they are not able to accept SNAP Benefits. We would like to set them up with SNAP processing equipment as well as outreach and education to attract SNAP users.
- 2) There is a vacant lot in the City that he would like to turn into a community space with a pavilion for the farmers market as well as a gateway to the larger park.
- 3) We have a community garden located directly across from the Boys and Girls Club as well as an elementary school, however there is no programming connecting the children to the community garden yet. We would like to apply for funding to build a greenhouse and create an urban agriculture education program.

I know community gardens and urban agriculture were listed in the types of projects this grant has funded in the past. However, I am concerned these proposals do not address the environmental harms and risks this grant is meant to address. If you have any feedback on whether or not these project ideas would qualify I would greatly appreciate it!

A: First, I want to make sure that you saw that municipalities are not eligible entities for this grant opportunity. Applicant eligibility requirements are on page 2 and 3 of the RFA.

Due to the competitive nature of the grant opportunity I cannot comment on which project you should apply with however whichever project you do select should address environmental harms and risks of the affected community and also include a research component that will be used to expand the knowledge or understanding of the affected community (General Information and Conditions can be found on page 11).

As you noted, successful past projects have included community gardens and urban agriculture.

Q: For projects that involve testing water samples: does your office follow the same guidelines as DEC Hudson River Estuary Program? In other words do you require a QAPP and must the lab be certified by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) under the Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP)?

A: We do not require a QAPP and do not follow the guidelines of the Hudson River Estuary Program. However, the information collected by the grant recipient must be shared with the affected community.

Q: For projects that involve data collection: will the applicant need to submit a QAPP to DEC? Or are there any other forms of quality assurance oversight from DEC?

A: We do not require a QAPP. If selected, grant recipients are required to provide quarterly progress reports and expenditure reports.

Q: Would a project on water quality and pathogen testing be eligible? Can we call you to discuss aspects of our project?

A: We cannot comment on specific proposals because of the competitive nature of the grant opportunity but yes that project would be eligible. We also included a list of eligible projects in the RFA beginning on page 12.

Q: Would a project that helps inner-city students connect to nature and become more aware of climate change impacts in a city qualify according to the eligibility guidelines?

A: We cannot comment on specific proposals because of the competitive nature of the grant opportunity but yes that project would be eligible. We also included a list of eligible projects in the RFA beginning on page 12.

Q: Does the DEC support initiatives that focus on school-based populations (students) facing EJ issues, or, does it tend to support initiatives focused on working with the general public? The RFP used the word "residents," so, I wondered if a proposal aimed to support our work in our school community would be acceptable.

A: Work in schools is acceptable. Please see pages 12-13 in the RFA for a list of some of the projects the community impact grants have funded in the past.

Q: We wanted to know if food insecurity and undernourishment in the community we work for is considered an environmental harm or risk by the DEC?

A: The proposed project must address a community's environmental and/or public health risks. Food insecurity and undernourishment may be demonstrated as one of the above. Please refer to the RFA pages 11-12 for a more detailed list of past funded programs.

Budget

Q: Is insurance an eligible expense?

A: Please see page 25 for a list of eligible and ineligible expenses. Indirect costs: indirect (overhead) costs such as: utilities, office rent, insurance are consider ineligible expenses.

Q: Is the rental of land for the use of a farm an eligible expense?

A: Indirect project costs for utilities, **office rent** and insurance are **not eligible** expenses. However, if you are renting the land for the sole purpose of the project that is eligible we allow for rental of meeting space and this would be considered as such. Please be sure to make that very clear in the application that it is not your office space, that it is being rented solely for the project.

Q: Is purchase of land is an eligible expenditure as a line item on the budget for a larger project on the "Environmental Justice COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANT PROGRAM"?

A: Yes, the purchase of land is an eligible expenditure and should be categorized in the budget section under "other".

You will need to demonstrate how the purchase of the land is a reasonable cost that it is directly related to implantation of the project and how the project addresses an environmental/public health issue or risk.

Q: The applicant is a nonprofit organization. The subcontractor is a nonprofit organization. Some of the subcontractor's staff will be working on the project, but as staff of the nonprofit, not as individual subcontractors. Does the 30% cap apply to each of the subcontractor's staff, or the 30% cap applies to the subcontractor as an entity, so the nonprofit that will serve as the subcontractor can get 30% to then divide among its staff working on the project?

A: The subcontractor nonprofit can get more than 30%, but each of its staff working on the project can ultimately receive no more than 30% of the funds.

Q: If a partner organization is to be paid with grant funds for their work in the project, is the only way to do this as a subcontractor?

A: Yes. The way that we will look at it is who does the person doing the work for the project work for? If they work for the applicant organization the budget should be under personal services. If the person works for another organization (subcontractor) it would be under contractual.

Q: Are administrative costs limited only to fiscal sponsorship? For example, can an applicant request a percentage of the grant to cover agency administrative expenses such as the Executive Director's salary, or would funding for the Executive Director need to be directly tied to their work on the project?

Please see page 24-25 for eligible and ineligible project expenses.

Personal Service and Fringe: Cost of staff salaries, including fringe, directly devoted to the project. Itemize salaries according to job title and roles/responsibilities on the project. Grantees will be required to document time worked, tasks, pay ratio and payment. **Fringe benefits are limited to 15 percent of the staff salary.** Paid staff, including fringe benefits, to any individual person **cannot exceed 30 percent** of the total grant award.

Grant Administration Costs: Administrative costs cannot exceed 10 percent of the total grant award and should be clearly identified as 'Administrative' costs in the personal or contractual budget category depending on who will be performing grant administration.

Q: How do we show in kind donations of equipment or services in the budget?

A: You can put a \$0 in the budget category and in the budget narrative for that item let us know what the value is.

Q: What is cost effectiveness?

A: Cost effectiveness is an important part of your application that is worth 30 points. What reviewers will look for is that the budget is well balanced, does not contain any extraneous expenses, and supports objectives, tasks and performance measures identified in the project work plan. How well does the budget demonstrate value for cost?

Applicants may compare the project costs to other similar work and explain the balance of expenses across proposed expenditure budget categories. To sufficiently respond to this question, applicants are encouraged to upload documentation to support specific budget items, such as standard government wage rates, current market prices for equipment and cost-estimates from potential contractors.

Q: We need clarification on one of the Program Specific questions. Since we are not outsourcing any of this project, do we need to provide "cost estimates, tangible quotes, etc." ?

A: For our grant, cost effectiveness is worth 30 points of your application, so very important. We are looking for clearly written budgets that demonstrate value for cost. Applicants are encouraged to upload documentation to support your budget items such as wage rates, current market prices for supplies and equipment, etc. Please see page 23 for more information on cost effectiveness.

Q: We're a little confused about Personal Services. If we apply for \$100,000 and we have 3 people who are going to be funded as "project managers" we can't have their budget line for salary total over 30%?

A: The amount of grant funds used for salary of **any individual person** cannot exceed 30 percent of the total grant award including fringe. The total in the personal service category may exceed 30%. Similarly, the amount of grant funds used for contractual payments to **any individual person/firm** cannot exceed 30 percent of the total grant amount. The total in the contractual category may exceed 30%.

Sample Budget for this example:

\$100,000 project

Personal Services & fringe for ONE individual- \$25,500 salary and \$4,500 fringe- total \$30,000 (30% of total award)

\$100,000 project

Personal Services & fringe for THREE (3) individuals -\$76,500 salary and \$13,500 fringe- total \$90,000 for ALL THREE individuals. In this case, each individual's salary and fringe would NOT exceed 30% of award with salary and fringe.

Q: If we will be hiring someone to provide a nutritional class for participants where would that fall under the budget?

A: That depends on if the person would be a staff member or if you will be contracting with a consultant. If the nutritional program will be performed by a professional firm/contractor/consultant or other entity under contract those activities should be categorized under Contractual. If the nutritional program will be performed by staff they should be listed under Personal Services.

Q: We are in the process of filling out our budget and we weren't sure where we would put down the purchase of shrubs and other supplies needed, where should we put those?

A: Those expenses should be listed under "Other" which would include supplies and materials for the project and in the "Other" expenses narrative you can provide detail about what you'll be purchasing.

Q: The RFP mentions "demonstration projects" for green infrastructure or energy conservation as examples. Are construction activities such as these eligible? If so how should they be budgeted? There is no construction category in the budget.

A: The RFA provides information on past successful projects as examples. Construction activities may be eligible if the project meets the project criteria detailed on page 12.

If the construction activities will be performed by a professional firm/contractor/consultant or other entity under contract those activities should be categorized under Contractual. If the construction activities will be performed by staff they should be listed under Personal Services. Any equipment purchased to perform construction should be categorized under Equipment.

Q: How do you fill out the salary portion of the budget?

A: Here is a great 16 minute video that explains how to fill out the budget including how to complete salary calculations. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b1btPFdHMU>

Q: Would you let me know who I should contact with a specific budget question about the Community Impact grant?

A: Please contact justice@dec.ny.gov and our grants administrator will send a prompt response to your question.

Q: We found one particular excerpt from the instructions confusing: "Paid staff, including fringe benefits, to any individual person cannot exceed 30 percent of the total grant award." This also refers to contract staff time. My questions are: 1) Does this mean that ANY ONE individual payment line cannot exceed 30% of the total grant award, or that the TOTAL staff budget line — which could include several staff lines -- cannot exceed 30%? 2) However question 1 is answered, do the instructions that I quoted mean that paid staff can be up to 30% of the grant award and that contract staff time can be up to ANOTHER 30%? Or should I read that as either/or? In other words, does it mean paid and contract staff time COMBINED cannot exceed than 30% of the grant award?

A: The amount of grant funds used for salary of **any individual person** cannot exceed 30 percent of the total grant award including fringe. The total in the personal service category may exceed 30%. Similarly, the amount of grant funds used for contractual payments to **any individual person/firm** cannot exceed 30 percent of the total grant amount. The total in the contractual category may exceed 30%.

Sample Budget for this example:

\$100,000 project

Personal Services & fringe- \$25,500 salary and \$4,500 fringe- total \$30,000
(30% of total award)

Funding

Q: Can more than one organization apply from one community? How will that affect that chances of both organizations winning? We don't want to cannibalize each other's efforts.

A: Thank you for your question. Yes, more than one organization can apply from one community.

There is approximately \$4.3 million in funding available. In an effort to distribute available funding across the state, and in the best interest of the state, DEC reserves the right to determine the best selection of applications for project funding in the following way:

Individual reviewer scores will be averaged for each application to determine an average score. Regional Economic Development and cost effectiveness points will be added to the average score to determine the final score of the application. Final scores will be ranked from highest to lowest and applicants having the highest final scores will be selected to receive grant funding.

DEC reserves the right to ensure that **no single part of the state** receives a disproportionate share of the total amount of available EJ grant funding. If any single DEC **region** receives **at least 60 percent** of the total amount of available funding during the scoring and funding decision process, DEC will not fund the remaining applications ranked within the region.

Q: Are matching funds encouraged?

A: Matching funds are not a requirement under this grant opportunity.

Q: Could you please tell me if the award amount is per year or spread over 3 years? For example, is it \$30,000 per year for a total of \$90,000 or \$10,000 per year for a total of \$30,000 total over the course of the grant award?

A: This is a scheduled payment grant program dispersed over 3 year period in installments. Recipient not for profit organizations may request up to 30% of the award as advance payments. Once the first advance is fully expended the recipient may request the next advance payment. The final 10% payment will be provided as a reimbursement. Please see pages 24 of the RFA for further description.

Q: If the federal government suspends all grant programs, does this affect DEC's EJ Community Impact Grants?

A: No. Our Community Impact Grants are funded by the state Environmental Protection Fund.

Project Timeframes

Q: Can you please tell me the time frame for these EJ Grants, one- year; two-year; open ended? Please excuse me if this information is in the RFA and I missed it.

A: The grants are paid in installments up to a 3-year period. Your proposal may be for a project undertaken in less than three years.

Q: How long is the contract for? I see on Grants Gateway that the anticipated contract is 3 years, but I can't find any details in the Grant Opportunity PDF.

A: Contracts will be for a three year period although your project may be completed in less time.

Q: What would be the anticipated start date of projects? If our project doesn't have a specific location, what do we list as the project location? We are looking to hold classes in several locations around the community--not just in one place. Do I consider a stipend for students as a contractual expense? I cannot find where to upload an authorizing resolution. Where does that go?

A: Grantees can anticipate a start date approximately 60 -90 days from the date of award notification. A grantee should not start their project until a MCG or LOA has been fully approved by DEC. Costs eligible for grant funding must be incurred within the term dates DEC assigns to the MCG or LOA.

You should identify the locations for each class, and be sure that each location

is in the affected EJ community. For example: if you are using a local school, church, hall etc, those addresses should be included.

Payments made to any individual that is not staff should be categorized as contractual. If the stipends are for staff they should be categorized under personal services. Please refer to the RFA page 23 for Eligible and Ineligible Expenditures.

The authorizing resolution demonstrating permission to use municipal property should be uploaded for program specific question 6.

How often will you update the Q & A?

Q: It would be very helpful to see the questions that are being asked for the grant, and know just how to prepare answers. Is there any way to see the questions and documents needed, while we are awaiting access to the Grants Gateway?

A: All applications must be completed on the grants gateway. The RFA contains more information. There is also an FAQ up that is being updated weekly.

Q: When/where will answers to other questions be posted on the website?

A: The Q and A for this grant opportunity will be posted on the Grant Opportunity Portal (the Grants Gateway) and are updated weekly.

Application Questions

Q: I am currently wrapping up our proposal for the grant, and am having some trouble with question 21, "Describe how the project will implement part of the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) plan." I went through the provided website at <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov> but was unable to find the plan. Could someone advise where exactly I can locate the plan in order to frame my answer?

A: The NYS REDC Priorities are in the "2019 REDC Guidebook" is on the landing page of the website. Here is a link to the Guidebook <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2019-04/2019REDCGuidebook.pdf> This guide also has more information about REDC and other resources which may give you some other ideas: https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2019-04/2019ResourcesAvailableGuide_0.pdf

Please note that it is not mandatory for your project to align with the REDC strategy. Applicants may answer N/A to that question however points will be given if the proposed project aligns with any of the strategies from the applicable to the applicant's project.

Q: Are all the essay/substantive questions that need to be answered for the grant, posted in the pdf entitled " COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANT PROGRAM For Communities Exposed

to Multiple Environmental Harms and Risks in New York State”? If not, I assume the question will be available once we've passed pre-qualification review?

A: To apply for this grant opportunity you must answer all of the questions on the Grants Gateway.

Q: Who should the letters of support for our proposal be addressed to? Is there a name and title of a person or just address it to DEC Office of Environmental Justice?

A: Support letters must be uploaded as a single pdf file in the Grants Gateway for program specific question 17 by the application due date.

You can address it to:
Rosa Méndez, Director, Office of Environmental Justice
Dept. of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, 14th Floor
Albany, NY 12233

Letters received in the mail will not be counted. Only letters of support uploaded in the Grants Gateway will be counted.

Q: Under the program specific questions, the last one says: "Have you checked to make sure all required uploads are complete and viewable in the Grants Gateway?" How do I view uploads in the Grants Gateway? In some places where I have uploaded something, there's now a link that says "view file" but there doesn't seem to be any place for me to see what files I've uploaded and where they are.

A: Click on view file button you referenced and then “open document” and ensure it is the correct one you wanted uploaded for that question.

Q: We are in process of applying for the Environmental Justice Community Impact Grant, due on June 14. Can you point us toward the most recent strategies for the regional economic plan?

A: <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>

Uploads, Letters of Support and Permission/Workplan

Q: Should letters of support still be addressed to Ms. Rosa Mendez?

A: Yes, please address letters of support to Rosa Mendez.

Q: Can I upload additional documents that we'd like the reviewers to see to the “Grantee Document Folder”?

A: The grantee document folder is used after an organization is awarded funds as a place to put documents that are required to execute their contract.

If you want the reviewers to see anything that information should be uploaded to the question as reviewers do not have access to the grantee document folder.

Q: We are applying for a grant from DEC and we have a question about the Smart Growth Assessment Form. We are seeking funding for a program that trains young people to conduct marketing and customer acquisition for residential (single-family) solar energy projects. This work aims to catalyze the residential solar energy market, and, by extension, the installation of solar panels on single family homes. As such, we are not sure if we should answer yes or no to the following question:

Does the proposed project support the construction or reconstruction of infrastructure?

So the rooftops of single family homes constitute "infrastructure" in this schema? While our program will have tangential benefits for the public electricity grid, we believe that we should answer no to this question because we're focusing on private homes and because we are simply proposing to promote improvements to small homes as opposed to actually making the physical improvements. Is this assessment correct?

A: Yes, your assessment is correct you would answer "no" to this question as you are not doing any constructions or reconstruction for this project.

Q: Our project doesn't contain a construction component. How do we fill out the Smart Growth Form?

A: If your project isn't a construction project you can mark "no" on the Smart Growth form.

Q: Regarding the letter of permission/municipal endorsement, is this needed for a project where the site is TBD or may vary? Our plan now is to propose work with residents at the in a NYCHA development. We could meet with them on NYCHA premises, or off-site. We're not proposing any physical alteration of the site for the project. Would we need a letter of permission for this?

A: A letter of permission is needed if you are using property that is not in your control for your project, even if you are not altering the site physically. If the proposed project will be on space that the organization owns or leases/rents then we would not need a letter of permission. If the space is something you plan on renting please indicate that in your narrative response for the letter of permission/municipal endorsement section. If your site is TBD please indicate that in the narrative response. If there will be multiple sites we would need a letter of permission for each site.

Q: If we will be educating property tenants by going door to door, do we need to get a letter of permission from each tenant we visit?

A: No, you do not need to have a letter of permission from each tenant. The letters of permission are intended for use by organizations that will be hosting programs on property that

they do not own. For instance you were holding your project at a local community center or municipality.

Q: Does every application need a letter of permission/municipal endorsement? It sounds like that is for physical projects on a site? If your project is solely education/research based and includes no construction or related activities do you need a letter of permission/municipal endorsement? If so who would that come from?

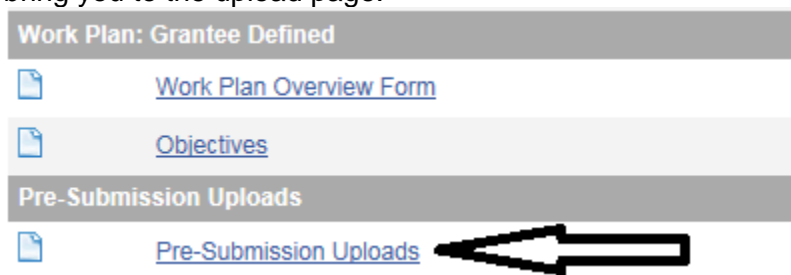
A: Proofs of land ownership are required only if applicable. A municipal endorsement is only needed if the project will occur on property owned by a municipality. A sample endorsement can be found in the Pre-Submission Uploads section of the application on the Grants Gateway.

Q: Where can I find the Workplan template?

A: Here is a link to the Workplan Template [Workplan Template](#) you can also find it by following the instructions below.

When you are logged into the Grants Gateway and working on your application you can click on "Forms Menu"

Then scroll down the page until you see "Pre-Submission Uploads" and click on it. It will then bring you to the upload page.



Q: Is there a boiler plate agreement we can give to property owners we plan to work with as part of the grant? Or do we prepare an agreement stating they will give us access to their property to prepare and implement the environmental and resiliency upgrades? If we prepare it, I am not clear as to what provisions it should contain, and if it needs to contain language about insurance, etc.

A: We do not have a sample agreement. The agreement must allow the applicant to access the property, and represent the landowner, to accomplish the proposed project. You should prepare the agreement and upload it as document in the grants gateway as part of your application.

Q: Is a partner letter supposed to be combined into one file with support letters or is it treated differently? Where does an authorizing resolution get uploaded?

A: The partner letter should be kept separate from the letters of support.

An authorizing resolution from a municipality to demonstrate permission to use municipal property should be uploaded for program specific question 6.

Unless the question specifically asks for an upload, anything else you need to show through an upload should go in grantee document folder like insurance, MWBE plan, etc.

The grantee document folder is not the same as your document vault. The grantee document folder can be found by clicking on forms menu when you are in the application and scrolling down to grantee document folder.

Review Process

Q: How will we be reviewed/evaluated? A single person or group?

A: Applicants who submit applications by the due date will first receive an “eligibility” and “completeness” pass/fail review. If the application receives a single ‘fail’ response in the eligibility review, the application will be disqualified from further review. If the application meets all eligibility pass/fail criteria, it will receive further evaluation and scoring by at least three members of a review team. For further information about the evaluation process please see page 19-23 of the RFA.

What to expect if we are given an award/Reporting Requirements

Q: Based on the application guidelines, I believe that we do not have to submit the Contract Document Properties at the application phase, and that we will instead be required to submit this information if we receive a grant, within 60 to 90 days of an award letter, is this correct?

A: Yes, that is correct. If you are awarded funding we will work with you on the next steps along with documentation required to execute your contract.

Q: What kind of reporting requirements will be necessary if we are given an award?

A: Please refer to page 25 of the RFA. If you are awarded a grant you will be expected to submit quarterly narrative and expenditure reports (ie. 3/30, 6/30, 9/30, 12/30 for each year of the grant). At the end of the grant period you’ll be expected to submit a final report no later than 60 days after the end of the contract term or upon completion of the project.