

FAQs – The Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program (EJ TCGM)

Eligibility

1. *Who is eligible to apply for the EPA EJ Thriving Communities grants?*

Eligible entities include:

- 501c3 Nonprofit-Organizations
- Community-based and grassroots nonprofit organizations
- Tribal Governments and intertribal consortia
- Native American Organizations
- Local Governments
- Institutions of higher education
- Puerto Rico
- US Territories

2. *How can we apply for the EPA EJ Thriving Communities grants?*

Interested applicants can apply to their EPA Regional Grantmaker's opportunity

- **Region 1: Health Resources in Action**
 - Serving: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT
- **Region 2: Fordham University**
 - Serving: NJ, NY, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and 8 federally recognized Indian Nations
- **Region 3: Green & Healthy Homes Initiative**
 - Serving: DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV, and 7 federally recognized tribes
- **Region 4: Research Triangle Institute**
 - Serving: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, and TN
- **Region 5: The Minneapolis Foundation**
 - Serving: IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, and WI
- **Region 6: Texas Southern University**
 - Serving: AR, LA, NM, OK, and TX
- **Region 7: Research Triangle Institute**
 - Serving: IA, KS, MO, and NE
- **Region 8: JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc**
 - Serving: CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, and WY
- **Region 9: Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs (SEE), Inc**
 - Serving: AZ, CA, HI, NV
- **Region 10: Philanthropy Northwest**
 - Serving: AK, ID, OR, WA, and 271 native tribes

3. *What is the deadline for submitting grant applications?*

The deadline for submitting grant applications varies by grantmaker. Please check your Regional Grantmaker's website for the most current information on submission deadlines.

4. *What documents are required for the grant application?*

Interested applicants must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) before applying. If you do not have a UEI please visit SAM.gov to begin the process.

5. *When would an interested applicant apply to the National Grantmaker Opportunity instead of their Regional Grantmaker Opportunity?*

This varies based on your specific Regional Grantmaker and National Grantmaker supporting your region. If you have a conflict of interest with your regional grantmaker, meaning you played a role in the development of the application and scoring criteria, you will more than likely be forwarded to the National Grantmaker. For other circumstances, please contact your Regional Grantmaker.

6. *How many times can an eligible applicant be awarded grant funds under the Thriving Communities Grantmakers Program?*

The number of awards that an applicant can receive varies depending on your Regional Grantmaker's restrictions. Please read your Regional Grantmaker's application in detail to understand the cap on the number of awards you can receive.

Grant Scope and Objectives

1. *What types of activities are eligible for funding?*

Eligible activities for funding differ based on which funding tier interest applicants are applying to.

Tier 1: Assessment

1. Research (that is incidental to the project design).
2. Sampling.
3. Testing.
4. Monitoring.
5. Investigations.
6. Surveys and Studies.
7. Public Education.

Tier 2: Planning

1. Planning.
2. Partnership-building.
3. Public outreach and education.
4. Coordination with community stakeholders to address environmental issues.
5. Training activities for community organizations and community members.
6. Projects and activities to spur community involvement (e.g., cleanups of vacant lots).
7. Smaller land purchases and acquisitions that require less than half of the total amount of subgrant funding.

Tier 3: Development

1. Project Development.
2. Blueprints for construction or cleanup projects, schematics, and technical development.
3. Work to get permits in place directly related to an environmental project.
4. Smaller land purchases and acquisitions that require less than half of the total amount of subgrant funding.
5. Implementation of project plans.

6. Public outreach and education.

2. What environmental issue areas can be addressed with this funding?

1. Air quality & asthma.
2. Fence line air quality monitoring.
3. Monitoring of effluent discharges from industrial facilities.
4. Water quality & sampling.
5. Small cleanup projects.
6. Improving food access to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
7. Stormwater issues and green infrastructure.
8. Lead and asbestos contamination.
9. Pesticides and other toxic substances.
10. Healthy homes that are energy/water use efficient and not subject to indoor air pollution.
11. Illegal dumping activities, such as education, outreach, and small-scale clean-ups.
12. Emergency preparedness and disaster resiliency.
13. Environmental job training for occupations that reduce greenhouse gasses and other air pollutants.
14. Environmental justice training for youth.

3. Can funding be used for both new and existing projects?

Funds awarded under *Tier 3 - Development* can be used for existing projects. Funds awarded under *Tier 1 - Assessment & Tier 2 - Planning* are only for new projects.

Financial Information

1. *What is the maximum amount of funding available per grant and their expected project duration?*
 1. Tier 1: \$150,000 for 1 year
 2. Tier 2: \$250,000 for 1-2 years
 3. Tier 3: \$350,000 for 2 years
2. *Are matching funds required for the grant?*

No, matching funds are not required for the grants
3. *What expenses are eligible for funding?*

Expenses include, but are not limited to:

 1. Small Land Purchases
 2. Staff Time
 3. Contractual Services
 4. Materials & Tools
4. *Are these grants reimbursement-based?*

Yes, these grants are reimbursement-based

Procurement

1. *Are there specific procurement requirements for grant-funded projects?*

Yes, grant recipients must follow the procurement standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200, including

ensuring open competition, fair pricing, and proper documentation.

2. *Can we use preferred vendors for grant-funded purchases?*

Preferred vendors can be used, but only if the procurement process adheres to federal requirements, including competition and cost reasonableness. Sole sourcing is allowed only under specific circumstances, which must be documented.

3. *Are we required to use disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs) for procurement?*

While not mandatory, recipients are encouraged to make a good faith effort to contract with DBEs, such as minority-owned, women-owned, and small businesses. Guidance on meeting DBE goals is provided by the EPA.

4. *What documentation is needed for procurement activities?*

Documentation typically includes solicitations, contracts, cost estimates, vendor selection criteria, and evidence of competition (e.g., quotes or bids). Maintain records to show compliance with procurement policies.

5. *Can grant funds be used for capital expenditures like vehicles or large equipment?*

Capital expenditures may be eligible but require pre-approval from the EPA. Details must be included in the grant proposal and budget justification.

6. *What happens if procurement rules are not followed?*

Non-compliance with procurement rules can result in disallowed costs, requiring repayment of funds or other administrative actions. Recipients should review and adhere to the terms of the grant agreement.

7. *Are we required to monitor subcontractors or vendors?*

Yes, recipients are responsible for overseeing all contractors or vendors to ensure compliance with federal regulations and successful project implementation.

8. *Where can we find resources or guidance on federal procurement standards?*

Detailed guidance is available in 2 CFR Part 200 and on the EPA's website. The EPA also offers training and technical assistance to help grantees understand procurement requirements.

Technical Assistance

1. *What types of technical assistance can be provided by Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (TCTACs)?*

The types of technical assistance that your EPA region's TCTAC can provide will vary based on their in-house expertise and staff capacity. TCTACs seek to meet the needs of the communities they serve. While TCTACs can provide foundational technical assistance to help you develop a strong application, they are unable to write grants on behalf of an applicant.

2. *How can I get in contact with my Regional TCTAC to receive technical assistance?*

You find your EPA region's TCTAC by visiting EJTCTAC.org. The Regional webpage will help you determine who your Regional TCTAC is and provide you with the best means of getting in contact with them.