

Community Climate Action Fund

# Frequently Asked Questions

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY | Institute for Climate,  
Water, and the Environment



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Below you will find answers to frequently asked questions about the [Community Climate Action Fund](#) (CCAF) grants. Click on the links below to navigate through this page and find the answers to the questions you may have.

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## Will this funding opportunity be impacted by policy or program changes at the federal level?

At present, the Community Climate Action Fund is proceeding as planned and in accordance with our legal obligations under our contract with the EPA. However, news changes quickly. We recommend joining the [CCAF email list](#), available on the [CCAF website](#) (in the Technical Assistance section). If you have specific questions, contact [ClimateInstitute@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateInstitute@gonzaga.edu).

## Who can apply for a Community Climate Action Fund (CCAF) grant?

Eligible applicants for the Community Climate Action Fund include:

1. a community-based non-profit organization (CBO)
2. or a partnership between a CBO and one of the following:
  - a. a Federally recognized Tribe
  - b. a local government (City of Spokane or Spokane County)
  - c. or an institution of higher education (IHE)

Other organizations and entities may participate in the Community Climate Action Fund as Collaborating Entities through subawards or as contractors selected in accordance with competitive procurement requirements which can be reviewed [here](#).

## Is funding for the CCAF coming from the EPA or the Gonzaga Climate Institute?

In January 2025, the Climate Institute was awarded [\\$19.9 million in funding](#) from the [EPA Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants Program](#). Of that funding, \$2.6 million has been allocated to the creation and execution of the [Community Climate Action Fund](#). In this way, the CCAF funding is sourced from the EPA and administered by Gonzaga to make it more accessible to local Spokane community-based organizations. For this reason, all CCAF grantees will be legal subawards of Gonzaga's \$19.9 million EPA grant and thus must meet all EPA [subaward guidelines](#).

## What is the “threshold eligibility criteria”?

Applications must meet the following threshold eligibility criteria to be considered eligible for funding under this NOFO:

1. Applications must comply with the content and submission requirements listed below.
  - Applications must comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of the NOFO or else they will be rejected. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
  - Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance, with not less than one-inch margins and a font size not less than 11-point Calibri, Times New Roman, or Aptos.
  - In addition, initial applications must be submitted on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of the NOFO. (Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of the NOFO to ensure that their application is timely submitted.)
2. All applicants must meet the eligibility and partnership requirements in Section III.A of the NOFO.
3. All applications must demonstrate that the proposed project(s) will benefit disadvantaged communities within the Project Area (City of Spokane) as defined in Appendix A of the NOFO.
4. Given the requirement that all grants must be completed within two years, all applications must describe how the projects in the application, including any construction project(s), can be completed within two years of award.
5. All applications must include projects under at least one Climate Action Strategy as described in Section IV.D of the NOFO. Applications also must include a Community Strength Plan, Readiness Approach, and Compliance Plan.
6. All applications that include a workforce development project under the Climate Action Strategy must demonstrate how it will help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
7. Applications that include projects under Climate Action Strategy 6, Brownfields Redevelopment, must demonstrate that the project will be performed on sites where, at the time of application submission, cleanup is complete or where the site does not require any cleanup activities for the intended use or reuse of the site. Please refer to the Climate Action Strategy 6 section in Appendix C of the NOFO for how to show that cleanup is complete or is not necessary.
8. A single application **cannot request more than \$400,000 in funding**. Applications requesting more than this amount will be rejected. If necessary, the Climate Institute will clarify any questions about the funding amounts requested prior to application review.
9. Written applications **must be submitted in English only**. Applications written in languages other than English will not be reviewed or considered for award. If you need assistance to submit the written application in English, technical assistance may be available.
10. Lead Applicants may submit **no more than two eligible applications** under this NOFO, as explained in Section II. Excess applications will not be reviewed. If a Lead Applicant submits more than two eligible applications, they will be contacted by the Climate

Institute to determine which one(s) to withdraw. Notwithstanding this limitation, a Lead Applicant may be a Partner (subaward) on other applications.

11. The Climate Institute will not consider any application that includes projects **exclusively designed** to conduct scientific research. Applications may, however, include research components such as building blocks for outreach, training, and program implementation projects. In such cases, applications should clearly articulate this link, explain why the research is necessary for the project's success, and ensure that such research does not already exist.
12. The Climate Institute **will not consider any application requesting funding for assessment, removal, or remediation of Superfund sites.**

Note: If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible projects, tasks, or activities, including but not limited to ones that the EPA or the Climate Institute determines cannot be funded under the statutory / regulatory authorities for the grant, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding. Applicants who have any questions about whether their project can be funded under the statutory / regulatory authorities for the grants and this NOFO, or whether certain costs related to the project are allowable costs, should clarify the issue with the Climate Institute prior to submitting their application. Failure to do so may result in the project(s) and / or costs being ineligible for funding and may impact the eligibility of the entire application.

## How do I know if my organization is eligible?

Your organization will need to have proof of non-profit status.

Your organization will need to provide a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM) website. If you do not already have a UEI, you can register on the website linked. **Do this as soon as possible, as it may take weeks or months for an application to be approved.**

## How does my organization establish a formal partnership with a CBO, Tribe, local government, or institution of higher education for my application?

The lead applicant will need to enter into a partnership agreement with any partner entities on the application. A template for this agreement (which is required for the application) can be requested from the technical assistance team by emailing [ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu).

## What kind of projects will be considered for funding?

All projects and activities funded by the CCAF must take place in Spokane and target communities within Spokane identified as disadvantaged by the EPA. (Please reference the map on the CCAF website.)

The Gonzaga Climate Institute is using the EPA's definition of disadvantaged communities, which are "communities that are underserved and overburdened" by adverse environmental impacts. These communities may be experiencing challenges in areas such as climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, or workforce development, and in many cases have endured decades of underinvestment.

Projects funded through the CCAF should directly benefit a community that is considered disadvantaged in accordance with the EPA mapping tool. Applicants will be asked to confirm that their project will benefit a designated disadvantaged community by listing the Spokane neighborhoods that will primarily benefit in their application.

Additionally, proposed projects must align with at least one of the Climate Action Strategies identified below:

- Strategy 1: Green Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions
- Strategy 2: Mobility and Transportation Options for Preventing Air Pollution and Improving Public Health and Climate Resilience
- Strategy 3: Energy-Efficient, Healthy, and Resilient Housing and Buildings
- Strategy 4: Microgrid Installation for Community Energy Resilience
- Strategy 5: Community Resilience Hubs
- Strategy 6: Brownfield Redevelopment for Emissions Reduction and Climate Resilience
- Strategy 7: Waste Reduction and Management to Support a Circular Economy
- Strategy 8: Workforce Development Programs for Occupations that Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Air Pollutants

More details on these strategies as well as examples of potential project activities can be found in the [Community Change Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) on page 70 under Appendix C: Climate Action Strategies and Associated Project Activities. In the case that the CCG NOFO is no longer available for reference on the federal site, a PDF version of the last published NOFO is available under the Climate Action Strategies section of the [CCAF website](#).

## Are there any specific unallowable costs?

The goal of this funding opportunity is to make this environmental justice funding available to local Spokane organizations that understand the needs of their community. We encourage applicants to think creatively about work that aligns with their organization's mission and niche while also meeting at least one Climate Action Strategy. If you'd like assistance in brainstorming potential

projects or have questions about project eligibility, please contact the technical assistance team at [ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu).

There are only two explicitly unallowable costs outlined in the CCAF NOFO:

1. Research only projects: *“The Climate Institute will not consider any application that includes projects that are exclusively designed to conduct scientific research.”* Section III.D.
2. Brownfields cleanup projects: *“The Climate Institute will not consider any application requesting funding for assessment, removal, or remediation of Superfund sites.”* Section III.D.

In addition to these unallowable costs, indirect costs cannot exceed 15% (see the budget template available on the [CCAF website](#)). CCAF funds may not be utilized outside of the October 1, 2025—September 30, 2027 work plan period.

## For how much funding can my organization apply?

Awards are expected to be between \$100,000-\$400,000 each and cannot exceed \$400,000. Each lead applicant can submit a maximum of two applications, each application requesting no more than \$400,000 (for a maximum total of \$800,000 for a lead applicant in the case of two awarded applications). An organization can be a partner on more than two applications as a subaward but only Lead Applicant on a maximum of two applications.

## When are applications due?

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Final applications are due by 11:59pm on May 31, 2025.

## Where do I submit my application?

Your organization will submit its application(s) on the application platform, available on the [CCAF website](#) (using the “Apply” button at the bottom of the page). We encourage applicants to download and make use of the application platform preview available as a Word document on the CCAF website (in the Application Resources section).

Please do not start an application within the application platform without completing and submitting it. **Use the application preview to ensure you have all required documents and information ready before opening the actual application platform.** If you start to enter an application within the platform but must exit the platform without submitting, please notify the

technical assistance team at [ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu) so the partial application is not counted as one of your two allowable applications.

## When will the awardees be announced?

Final awardees will be announced via electronic mail on July 1, 2025. Announcements will be sent to the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) listed on applications. Applicants who were not selected for award will be notified as well.

## How many grants will be awarded?

The Climate Institute anticipates awarding approximately \$2.6 million in funding through this NOFO.

That amount is an estimate only, and the Climate Institute reserves the right to increase or decrease the total number of awards and funding amounts contingent on the quality of applications received, the amount of funds awarded to selected applicants, budget availability, and / or Institute priorities and programmatic considerations.

## Can my organization apply for more than one grant?

Lead Applicants, as defined in Section III.B of the NOFO, may submit a maximum of two eligible applications and may receive up to two awards, if they demonstrate the capacity and capabilities to effectively perform, manage, oversee, and complete the awards within the two-year grant period of performance.

An organization can be a partner on more than two applications as a subaward but only Lead Applicant on a maximum of two applications.

## What documents are required for the application?

The required documents are outlined briefly below. Reference the NOFO (section and appendix details included below) for details on each document. Please reference the application platform preview available on the [CCAF website](#) in the Application Resources section to build an understanding of how these documents will be requested in the application platform. Ensure you are prepared with all required documents and information in their requested format before starting your application in the portal.

1. **Key Contacts Form:** Please refer to Section IV.D of the NOFO. (Applicants must use the [EPA Key Contacts Form](#), and upload it as a PDF.)



2. **Project Narrative:** Please refer to Section IV.D of the NOFO. (No more than 10 single-spaced pages. PDF format.)
3. **Program Budget:** Please refer to Section IV.D and Appendix F of the NOFO. (Applicants must use the budget template, provided on the [CCAF website](#) in the Application Resources section, and upload as an Excel spreadsheet.)
4. **Partnership Agreement:** Required for projects that include partners (subawards). Please refer to Section III.A and Appendix B of the NOFO. (A template Partner Agreement can be provided by the technical assistance team; please email [ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu). No page limit.)
5. **Project Neighborhoods:** Please refer to Appendix A of the NOFO. (No page limit. PDF format)
6. **Community Strength Plan:** Please refer to Section IV.D of the NOFO. (No more than 5 single-spaced pages. PDF format.)
7. **Readiness Approach:** Please refer to Section IV.D of the NOFO. (No page limit for this information, but applicants should be as concise as possible. PDF format.)
8. **Compliance Plan:** Please refer to Section IV.D of the NOFO. (No more than 5 single-spaced pages. PDF format.)
9. **Proof of non-profit status.** This is required for all CBOs on the application. (No page limit for this information. PDF format.)

## What other information will I need before beginning the application?

You will need:

1. A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) for the Lead Applicant and any partner organizations (subawards).
2. The Lead Applicant's Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN)
3. Mailing address for the Lead Applicant
4. Contact information for the Lead Applicant organization's Authorized Organization Representative
5. A descriptive title for your proposed project

## Who should complete the application?

Applications for proposed projects should be completed by an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR). This person must sign the application and will be the contact person for the notice of award.

## Who can I contact for help or clarification on applications?

Climate Institute staff not on the grant review committee will be available to discuss application ideas and goals and advise applicants on how to respond to evaluation criteria. Climate Institute staff cannot review or edit drafted application materials from any applicant but may clarify eligibility criteria, answer questions, and discuss the goals of the program with applicants. Applicants interested in discussing an application may email [ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu). Applicants are responsible for the contents of their applications. The Climate Institute will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the NOFO.

## What is “environmental justice”?

[Environmental justice](#), as defined by the EPA, is the *fair treatment* and *meaningful involvement* of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. *Fair treatment* means that no one group of people, including racial, ethnic or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal environmental programs and policies. *Meaningful involvement* means people have an opportunity to participate in decision-making that may affect their environment or health.

A combination of environmental risks and social inequities can create a disproportionate impact on some communities that hinders optimal health. Environmental justice is important to ensure that all people have the right to live in a clean and healthy environment.

## What is considered a “disadvantaged” community?

The Gonzaga Climate Institute is using the EPA’s definition of disadvantaged communities, which are “communities that are underserved and overburdened” by adverse environmental impacts. These communities may be experiencing challenges in areas such as climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, or workforce development, and in many cases have endured decades of underinvestment.

For the Community Climate Action Fund, the Climate Institute has created a Spokane-specific snapshot of the EPA's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Disadvantaged Communities Map, which identifies census tracts that are disadvantaged (defined through various criteria as overburdened and underserved). Projects funded through the CCAF should directly benefit a community that is considered disadvantaged in Spokane. Applicants are asked to list the neighborhoods their project

will serve and whether they are designated as disadvantaged on the [Spokane Disadvantaged Communities Map](#).

## Can a project be eligible if it does not fall within a Spokane disadvantaged community?

While projects and activities may have an incidental benefit to areas that are not considered disadvantaged communities, the applicant must demonstrate that the projects' primary benefits will flow to disadvantaged communities in the Project Area (City of Spokane).

## Is there a time limit in which to “spend-down” the awarded funds?

All projects must complete their proposed activities within the project work period of October 1, 2025—September 30, 2027. Work plans and quarterly reporting must begin on October 1, 2025, even if project activities are not scheduled to start until later. Project work plans must run for a minimum of one year (through September 30, 2026) and a maximum of two years (through September 30, 2027). Additionally, all subawards and contracted parties must be paid out in full within 60 days from the closure of the grant. Quarterly reporting is expected throughout the work plan period, and comprehensive final reporting will be due to Gonzaga by October 31, 2027. Reporting templates and coaching will be available to awardees after selected applicants are announced, and applicants are encouraged to write staff time for reporting and administration into their application budgets.

## Is there an indirect rate cap?

Applicants are obligated to use their federally negotiated indirect cost rate, if they have one. If the applicant does not have a federally negotiated rate, they should use the 15% *de minimus* rate.

## Are current projects eligible for funding or must the project(s) proposed in the application be new?

CCAF funding may be used to continue/expand current projects and/or propose new projects so long as they are in line with eligibility criteria.

## Is cost-sharing or matching required?

No cost-sharing or matching is required.

## Can I send in a hard copy of the application, or does it have to be online?

All applications must be submitted through the online application portal available on the [CCAF website](#). If your organization is having technical difficulties, please reach out to the technical assistance team at [ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu) as soon as possible.

## Can multiple organizations partner for one grant?

Yes, so long as the partner organizations all fall within the eligibility criteria and one organization serves as the Lead Applicant, which includes maintaining fiscal responsibility for the grant and managing grant reporting. The application, workplan, and budget should clarify the roles and relationships of the various organizations along with the breakdown of funding.

## Will there be a preference for partnerships?

Partnerships are not a requirement for this funding opportunity, though applicants are encouraged to take this funding as an opportunity to foster collaboration across Spokane and integrate with existing work where possible rather than proposing projects that are repetitive of existing work. If applicants decide they want to enter a partnership for this grant, applications on behalf of partnerships should have a project plan that is clear about the roles partners might play. Specific roles for financial reporting and compliance will be particularly important to detail. In the case of a partnership, the Lead Applicant must submit a completed Partner Agreement with each partner organization. A template Partner Agreement can be made available to applicants upon request by emailing the technical assistance team at [ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu).

## If my organization applies and is not selected for a grant, can we apply again?

No. Applicants will not be notified whether their grant application has been accepted until after the deadline for submission has passed.

## Can I save my application and return to it later?

**Our application portal does not allow partial applications to be saved.** Please use the application platform preview (available on the [CCAF website](#) in the Application Resources section) to ensure that your organization has all required information and materials in the correct format before beginning the application process. Applications that are partially completed (in the case an applicant begins entering an application but then exits the application platform before submitting) could be confused as an ineligible application and count against your two allowable submissions. If you accidentally enter the application portal and start an application without submitting it completely, please contact the technical assistance team at [ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ClimateFund@gonzaga.edu).