

EXAMPLE: Community Change Grants Program Notice of Funding Opportunity [EPA]
Evaluate GO/NO GO Scenarios

UNDERSTANDING THE RULES OF THE FUNDER

Using EPA's Community Challenge Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity [NOFO] as an example, we will use this evaluation sheet to analyze various "GO/NO GO" scenarios to determine "best fit" for your organization as a potential funding submission under TRACK 1 (projects that are shovel ready).

When doing a complete evaluation, it's important to read the NOFO end to end, including EPA's (or any federal programs office's) Terms and Conditions, should you be awarded funding. This will better inform you at the beginning of your research to determine interest and capacity. It also allows you the opportunity to plan and include items in your budget request to be able to meet certain administrative and other costs such as reporting, [Davis Bacon Act \[DBA\]](#), and [Build America/Buy America \[BABA\]](#). You can go straight to the full NOFO text here: [Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants Program](#). See NOFO Requirement 6. Compliance Plan, on Page 10 to see if you meet the Terms and Conditions.

This sample evaluation is organized in two parts:

EVALUATION PART 1: Basic Eligibility--determine whether our project ideas meet basic eligibility requirements; and

EVALUATION PART 2: Competitive Assessment--for those project ideas that meet basic threshold eligibility requirements, through a Competitive Assessment, review possible project submissions against evaluation criteria that will be used by EPA. In doing so, we will identify any gaps and obstacles that might prevent a project submission from moving forward; or if addressed, could be competitive and we would move forward in completing an application package.

Community-Driven Investments for Change (SHOVEL-READY PROJECTS)

We must answer “yes” to all four questions.

1. **Is There is an eligible project?** EPA is looking for multi-faceted applications with Climate Action and Pollution Reduction Strategies to meaningfully improve the environmental, climate, and resilience conditions affecting disadvantaged communities.

Project activities to be performed generally fall under the following categories:

- Climate resiliency and adaptation.
- Mitigating climate and health risks from urban heat islands, extreme heat, wood heater emissions, and wildfire events.
- Community-led air and other (including water and waste) pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation.
- Investments in low- and zero-emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure.
- Workforce development that supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.
- Reducing indoor toxics and indoor air pollution.
- Facilitating the engagement of disadvantaged communities in State and Federal advisory groups, workshops, rulemakings, and other public processes.

2. **Is the project shovel ready?** The project must be completed within three years and applicants can describe their approach for initiating grant performance upon award. This includes addressing the readiness considerations listed below. If any of the below considerations are not applicable, we can explain why not.

- Government Approvals
- Federal Requirements for Construction Projects
- Alignment with Existing Plans
- Site Control
- Operations and Maintenance

3. Is the estimated **project cost between \$10-20 million?**

4. **Is there is an eligible applicant?** Applicants must consist of a partnership between at least two community-based non-profit organizations (CBOs) or a partnership between a CBO and one or any combination of the following:

- a Federally Recognized Tribe;
- a local government; or
- an institution of higher education.

Community-Driven Investments for Change

EVALUATION CRITERIA: All eligible Track I applications will be evaluated on a **200-point scale** as follows—**155 points for a written application** review and **45 points for an oral presentation** review.

Track I Written Application Criterion

Section	Possible Points
Part 1. Community Driven Investments for Change	80 total
1.1 Community Overview	10
1.2 Selected Strategies	45
1.3 Community Engagement and Collaborative Governance Plan	15
1.4 Community Strength Plan	10
Part 2. Program Management, Capability, and Capacity	35 total
2.1 Performance Management Plan, Outputs / Outcomes	6
2.2 Project Linkages to the EPA Strategic Plan	4
2.3 CBO Experience and Commitment	5
2.4 Programmatic and Managerial Capability and Resources	15
2.5 Past Performance	5
Part 3. Readiness to Proceed, Feasibility, and Sustainability	40 total
3.1 Readiness Approach	8
3.2 Feasibility	9
3.3 Sustainability	5
3.4 Program Budget Description	8
3.5 Compliance Plan	10
TOTAL	155

TRACK 1 | Community-Driven Investments for Change
Oral Presentation Criteria (45 points)

Community Overview: How was the Project Area, as defined in Appendix A, chosen to be the beneficiary of the projects in the application? What are the greatest needs for the communities within the Project Area, and, if your application is not selected for funding what would be the adverse consequence to those communities? **(9 points)**

Strategy Rationale: Why did you select the strategies and projects within the application, and how will they (collectively and individually) transform the Project Area to address environmental and climate justice challenges now and in the future (beyond the three-year grant term)? Also, when the three-year grant term is complete, how will you assess whether the grant was successful in achieving its objectives to benefit the Project Area and what will success look like? **(9 points)**

Community Engagement and Collaborative Governance: Describe your commitment, as well as that of the Collaborating Entities as described in Section III. A of the NOFO, to efficiently and effectively perform the projects in the application within three years and describe how all entities will work together to achieve the project objectives within the three-year grant performance period. **(9 points)**

Management Capacity: Explain how you have the programmatic, technical, administrative, and managerial capability, experience, and resources to properly manage the grant consistent with grant regulations and requirements including those in 2 CFR §200 **(9 points)**

Performance Challenges: What do you anticipate are the greatest challenges to completing the projects in the application within the three-year time frame, and what are your plans for overcoming them? **(9 points)**