Drinking from the Firehose: Technical Assistance for Accessing State and Federal Resources

Kelsey Brooks and Michelle Kokolis University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center September 12, 2024



Overview

- Environmental Finance Center (EFC) Overview
- Federal Funding
 - How much funding is available?
 - How do you access federal funding?
- Technical Assistance
 - TCTAC
 - Region 3 WaterTA
- Funding Opportunities



Environmental Finance Centers (EFC)



Environmental Finance Centers

- Network of centers across the country
- UMD EFC works throughout the mid-Atlantic
- Provide the information, tools and resources to build community capacity to pay for resource protection and restoration priorities





Capacity Building & Training

- Local Government Leadership Training
- On-line and Virtual Workshops
- Municipal Online Stormwater Training (MOST) Center



Policy Analysis & Financial Assessment

- Policy Review
- Financing Strategies
- Budget Analysis
- Program Evaluation

Community Outreach & Facilitation

- Designing outreach campaigns
- Facilitating stakeholder engagement
- Conducting focus groups
- Managing community surveys and interviews



Capacity Building Technical Assistance

- Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC)
- WaterTA Program (focused on IRA funds)
- Small Systems Capacity Building Program
- MOST Center
- Advancing Energy Justice in Maryland
- Maryland Local Government Climate Action Support Program
- Maryland Solar for All



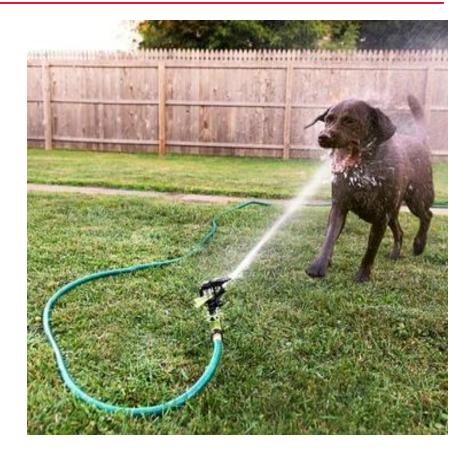
Federal Funding



Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

o BIL

- \$1.2 trillion
- Infrastructure and jobs
- 350 programs, 12+ agencies
- Grants and Loans
- o IRA
 - \$370 billion
 - Clean energy and jobs
 - 100s more programs
 - Grants, loans, rebates, and incentives





The Challenge...

Funding is not the only limiting factor:

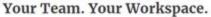


- Navigating hundreds of programs
- Competing timelines
- Prioritizing needs
- Proposal development capacity
- Grants management capacity
- Loan payback requirements
- Procurement and reporting requirements



Finding Relevant Opportunities: Federal

An official website of the United States government Here's how you know ~		
GRANTS.GOV"		
FIND. APPLY, BUCCEED.	Help Register	Login
Home Learn Grants 🗸 Search Grants Applicants 🗸 Grantors 🗸 System-To-System 🗸 Forms 🗸 Connect	v Support	~
Informative status		
Reminder: Federal financial assistance award recipients are a crucial part of safeguarding Federal funds and ma secure cyber environment. Check out our <u>latest blog post</u> to learn more.	aintaining a	
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Your Team Your Workspace	10	



Applying for a funding opportunity is easier and more efficient when your team collaborates. Grants.gov Workspace makes it possible.

Apply for a Grant Using Workspace





Finding Relevant Federal Opportunities:

Search Filters on Grants.gov

- Opportunity Status
- Funding Instrument Type
- Eligibility
- Category
- Agency

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Finding Relevant Opportunities: Federal



Sign up for EPA's listserv: https://www.epa.gov/grants/forms/subscribe-epagrants-update-listserv



Consider partnering with the US Forest Service: <u>https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/partnerships</u>



Sign up for DoE's competitions and prizes listserv: https://www.energy.gov/eere/funding/eere-prizes-

and-competitions



Technical Assistance



Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (TCTAC) Program

Program Goals:

- April 2023 EPA announced TCTAC, which provides grant funding to establish technical assistance centers nationwide to provide TA, training, and related support to EJ communities
- 16 TCTACs in partnership with the US Department of Energy will receive a total of \$117 million to help overburdened communities
 - Region 3 received \$12 million

Region 3 Team:

• National Wildlife Federation (NWF), UMD Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice & Health (CEEJH), and UMD EFC



TCTAC Objectives

- Provide outreach to underserved, overburdened, rural, and capacity strained communities through TA to increase capacity to:
 - Assess environmental and energy justice concerns, obtain funding, and engage policymakers and government agencies to evoke change
- Technical Assistance Opportunities
 - Wayfinding how to use grants.gov, how to register in SAM.gov
 - Training on grants administration
 - Capacity building and organization growth
 - Partnership development



TCTAC Approach

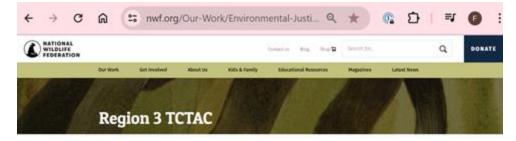
Community partners serve as "hubs" to ensure services are easily accessible both in location and culture.

- Community hubs include
 - Appalachian Voices
 - Centro de Apoyo Familiar (CAF)
 - Empower DC
 - Overbrook Environmental Education Center
 - Sentinels of Eastern Shore Health
 - South Baltimore Community Land Trust
 - Sussex Health & Environmental Network
 - UrbanKind

- HBCU hubs include
 - Morgan State University
 - Virginia State University
 - West Virginia State University



TCTAC Intake Process



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Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center Programs

Contact Us

If you are an Environmental Justice community organization or individual in Region III seeking technical assistance, interested in offering pro-bono services, or a member of the media/press, click "Get Started" to begin.



If you're unable to submit a form, please give us a call at: (202) 792-5350 or 1-800-757-1405

https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Environmental-Justice/Region-3-TCTAC



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Intake Survey National Wildlife Federation

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Intake Form

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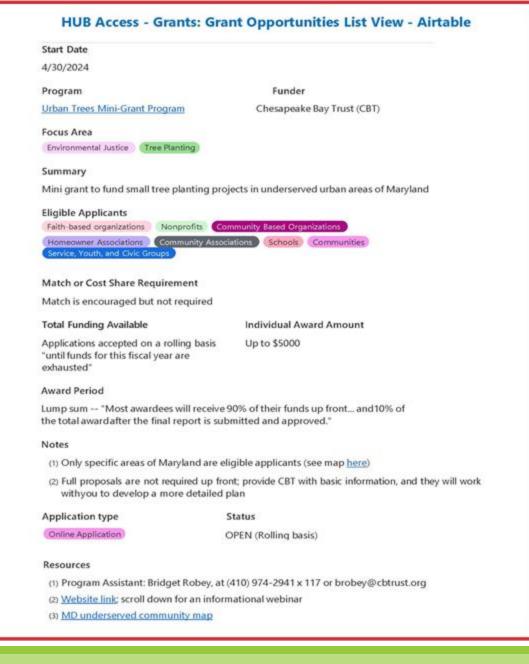


Grants Database

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Region 3 WaterTA

SEPA United States Environmental Protection Agency			Search EPA,gov	
Environmental Topics 🗸	Laws & Regulations 🗸	Report a Violation \checkmark	About EPA 🗸	
Water Infrastructure			CONTACT US	
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\$	EPAwater T/	4	What's New and Key Resources	

All communities deserve access to clean, reliable water. Yet, too many communities across America face challenges in providing safe drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services to their residents. The <u>Bipartisan Infrastructure Law</u> presents an unprecedented opportunity to address water infrastructure needs by providing SS0 billion in new funding – the <u>Largest federal</u> <u>investment in water in the history of our nation</u>. New and existing <u>EPA Water Technical</u> <u>Assistance (WaterTA) programs</u> will be utilized to support effective implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

WaterTA Community Fact Sheet (May 2023) -

General information for the public on WaterTA. • WaterTA

> Implementation Memo (March 2023) -

https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/water-technical-assistance-waterta

EFC		
University of Maine System		
Syracuse University		
University of Maryland		
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill		
Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project Inc.		
WSOS Community Action Commission Inc.		
Delta Institute		
University of New Mexico		
Wichita State University		
National Rural Water Association		
Rural Community Assistance Corporation		
Hawaii Community Foundation		
Rural Community Assistance Corporation		



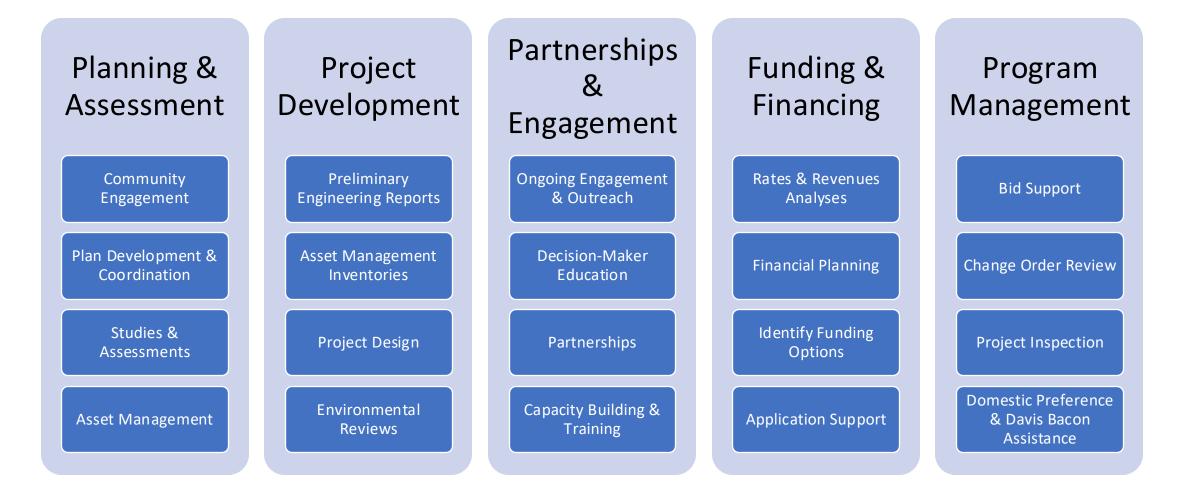
EFC's Region 3 WaterTA Goals

- Provide direct TA to communities
- Support communities to take steps toward accessing water infrastructure funding (state revolving funds)
- Coordinate and collaborate to support effective delivery of TA
 - If we aren't the right fit, connect communities with whoever is
- Prioritize underserved communities
 - 40% Justice40
- 10 "deep dive" and 30-50 "light touch" annually





Technical Assistance Services





How to Reach Us

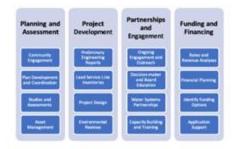


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Request assistance

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Partners

ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER

EPA Intake Form

https://www.epa.gov/water-infrastructure/forms/watertechnical-assistance-request-form



UMD - EFC Intake Form

<u>https://arch.umd.edu/research-creative-</u> practice/centers/environmental-finance-center/project areas/technical-assistance/region-3-waterta-program



State Referral

Direct Email

https://arch.umd.edu/research-creative-practice/centers/environmental-financecenter/project-areas/technical-assistance/region-3-waterta-program



Funding Opportunities



Community Change Grants

- Provide resources for community-driven projects to address environmental and climate challenges in communities facing disproportionate and adverse health, pollution, and environmental impacts, and suffering from generations of disinvestment.
- Invest in strong cross-sectoral collaborations with partners who bring a robust commitment to working with and for communities.
- Unlock access to additional and more significant resources to advance environmental and climate justice goals.
- Empower communities and strengthen their capacity to drive meaningful positive change.
- Strengthen community participation in government decision-making processes that impact them.



The Basics: Two Tracks

Track One: Community-Driven Investments for Change

- Awards of \$10-20 million *each*
- Climate action and pollution reduction strategies that improve the environmental, climate, and resilience conditions affecting disadvantaged communities.

Track Two: Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance

- Awards of \$1-3 million *each*
- Facilitate the engagement of disadvantaged communities in governmental processes to advance environmental and climate justice.



The Basics: Timeline

- Rolling submissions through November 21, 2024
- Approximately monthly reviews
- Originally suggested first reviews in February 2024, awards March/April 2024, and projects to begin May/June 2024
- Projects must be completed within 3 years. There are no extensions.
- Lead applicants can submit 2 proposals, max



The Basics: Submission

- Submission is through Grants.gov, which requires registration.
- Submission through Grants.gov requires SAM.gov registration and a UEI number (Unique Entity ID).
- Registering with SAM.gov will generate a UEI.

These processes take time, and you need to budget for them in your timeline.



Important Things to Consider

- Are you registered with Grants.gov and SAM.gov?
- **Can you meet the timeline?** There is a lot of writing, plan development, and required documentation. This is not a proposal you can start 2 weeks or even a month before it is due.
- **Do you have the capacity to manage this large amount of money?** You can not apply for less than the minimum amount. Awards of this size come with a lot of reporting, auditing, and financial implications.
- **Do you know who your partners would be?** There are specific partner eligibility requirements, including a formal partnership agreement.
- This might not be the best opportunity to take a new partnership with no history for a "test drive."



Track One: Summary

Community-Driven Investments for Change Anticipating: 150 awards of \$10 - \$20 million Goals:

- Increase community resilience
- Reduce local pollution
- Center meaningful community engagement
- Build community strength
- Reach priority populations
- Maximize integration across projects



Track One: Required Elements

In addition to the project narrative, every application must include the following six elements:

- 1. Climate Action Strategy
- 2. Pollution Reduction Strategy
- 3. Community Engagement and Collaborative Governance Plan (10 pages)
- 4. Community Strength Plan (5 pages)
- 5. Readiness Approach
- 6. Compliance Plan (5 pages)



Track Two: Summary

Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance Anticipating: 20 awards of \$1 - \$3 million Goals:

- Build capacity of communities to have a meaningful voice.
- Support direct community participation in the development and implementation of solutions, policies, and programs.
- Break down systemic barriers to community participation.
- Create two-way engagement and feedback mechanisms.
- Inform communities about issues.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure community needs are integrated into government processes and policies.



Resources

- EFC's proposal templates with guidance
- EFC Track One and Track 2 recordings
- Environmental Protection Network's resources
 - Application guides
 - Informational webinars
 - Example documents
 - <u>https://www.environmentalprotectionnetwork.org/ffog-january-25-2024/</u>



Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program

Provides funding to historically underserved communities that have been disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards. Grants may address a wide range of environmental issues including (but not limited to) the following:

- Air quality & asthma
- Fence line air quality monitoring
- Monitoring of effluent discharges from industrial facilities
- Water quality & sampling
- Improving food access to reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Lead and asbestos contamination
- Pesticides and other toxic substances
- Healthy homes that are energy/water use efficient and not subject to indoor air pollution
- Illegal dumping activities, such as education, outreach, and small-scale clean-ups
- Emergency preparedness and disaster resiliency



The Basics

Grants will be available for three (3) distinct tiers of community readiness and action. The criteria and process for the severely capacity-constrained communities will be managed outside of this RFA process.

Tier	Award Focus	Expected # of Awards	Amount	Award Period	Application Deadline
I	Assessment Projects	60	Up to \$150,000	1 Year	Rolling and no later than April 30, 2025
II	Planning Projects	51	Up to \$250,000	1-2 Years	Rolling; 2-year grants: no later than November 30, 2024 1-year grants: no later than April 30, 2025
III	Implementation Projects	50	Up to \$350,000	2 years	Rolling and no later than November 30, 2024
N/A	Noncompetitive Capacity- Building for severely capacity constrained communities	10	\$75,000	1 year	



Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants and projects must be in EPA Region 3, which includes DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, and WV
- Proposed activity must be in and benefit an area considered disadvantaged, as defined by the <u>Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map</u>
- Eligible entities include:
 - Nonprofit organizations
 - Community-based and grassroots organizations
 - Philanthropic and civic organizations with nonprofit status
 - Local governments
 - Institutes of higher education



Application

- Submit applications through GHHI's Thriving Communities application portal located on <u>GHHI's Thriving Communities website</u>
- Required materials include:
 - Proposal Narrative
 - Budget
 - Work plan
 - Most recent organization financial statement is required for Tier II and Tier III applicants. Tier I applicants who do not have a financial statement may explain how the project will be financially managed.



Questions???

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