



Racial Equity Assessment Lens (REAL)

NAME OF INITIATIVE PROGRAM/PROJECT: Green Neighborhoods Grant Program

Department: Planning

ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION

The Green Neighborhood Grant Program seeks to help bring neighbors together to pursue projects which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create natural areas that are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, and ultimately benefit the entire community. Funding is available for neighborhood teams seeking to implement sustainable projects that align with the goals of the Town of Carrboro's Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP). Grant applications will be evaluated based on the pre-approved, standard scoring rubric and funding will be awarded to the top scoring projects.

Staff developed the program to implement several CCAP recommendations. CCAP Community Integration Recommendation #3 recommends creating a Green Neighborhoods Program to engage neighborhoods in efforts to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions and CCAP Community Integration Recommendation #5 recommends expanding capacity to pursue community sustainability initiatives and creating a community grant program.

The first draft of the program was brought to the Town Council in January 2021. The Council provided comments which were incorporated into the program's outreach plan, project guidelines and decision-making rubric. Staff have continued to refine the program throughout 2021 and 2022 with additional input from Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) and Climate Action Team (CAT) members. In addition to the January 2021 feedback, the Town Council provided comments to the program's outreach plan in October 2021.

The EAB met to discuss the program on 8/5/2021, and 7/22/2021, and the CAT discussed the program on 3/17/22 during the discussion of the FY22-23 Draft Environmental Sustainability Work Plan and on 9/15/2022.

In FY22-23, there is funding in the Climate Action Budget to support at least 10 fully-funded projects in the first grant cycle at \$2,500 each. [How will you track and disaggregate the data related to the 10 projects?](#)

What is the specific desired result statement –

The Green Neighborhood Grant Program seeks to help bring neighbors together to pursue projects which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create natural areas that are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, and ultimately benefit the entire community. The Town seeks to distribute resources to low-income and BIPOC communities who are disproportionately affected by climate change and encourage grassroots efforts to positively

impact the lives of all residents in Carrboro. Is the desired result realistic based on information included in this document such as the highlighted information.

BENEFITTING INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS

1. Low-income households/communities
2. BIPOC households/communities
3. Groups of Carrboro residents who are seeking to improve their neighborhoods/communities and take positive climate action.

BURDENED INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS

1. Groups who are unable to participate in the program and therefore will not receive funding for any of the following reasons:
2. The applicant lives outside Carrboro City Limits within the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
3. The applicant's proposed project is not related to the goals of the Community Climate Action Plan.
4. The applicant does not know about the program or how to participate.
5. The applicant does not have the bandwidth to submit an application or meet the administrative requirements.

In addition, the application process is more complex for residents who need to designate a fiscal agent because they do not have formal representation from their neighborhood association or live in rental housing.

This initiative has been funded, but if we receive more applications than funding allocated, applicants that are not awarded funding may be unable complete their proposed project. Without sufficient or continued funding for these projects, marginalized groups will be increasingly vulnerable without resources to adapt to the changing climate.

1. Low-income residents
2. BIPOC households/communities
3. Groups of Carrboro residents who are seeking to improve their neighborhoods/communities and take positive climate action.

Type	Potential Unintended Consequence	Mitigation Strategies To Prevent Consequences And Advance Racial Equity
SOCIAL Consider native and long-term residents, rural residents, transit,	Some residents may not be awarded funding or be able to apply if they do not meet the eligibility requirements below.	The Town will embrace transparency by posting the application guidelines and a project scoring and selection criteria publicly. How does this advance racial equity?

trust in government, education, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects that are not related to the goals of the Community Climate Action Plan. Project applications without a formal entity representative (Homeowners' Association, Neighborhood Association, Non-Profit, Businesses, or Fiscal Agent, etc.) <p>As a result, some residents without pre-designated formal community representation/fiscal agent or residents who need funding for projects not related to sustainability may feel that the program is biased or the application process is intimidating.</p>	<p>If the applicant does not have a formal neighborhood organization, then they can designate a member of the group to serve as the administrative/fiscal agent on behalf of the applying group. The Town will provide a form to sign and staff assistance on how to apply in this case.</p> <p>Applicants are limited to \$2,500 per project and will not be awarded funding for more than two consecutive cycles in order to extend the opportunity to a wider range of residents.</p>
ECONOMIC Consider wages, competition, tourism, unemployment, small businesses, etc.	<p>Since there is limited funding, ultimately all of the applicants may not receive funding, which may burden those who may have to fund their project personally or through alternative sources.</p> <p>Some residents may feel that the money that is being allocated to these projects could be spent on other/more beneficial initiatives.</p> <p>It's possible that there are local businesses who provide services that potential grant projects will be working on. Local businesses may lose out on revenue if residents use the Town funding to accomplish the project on their own/with volunteers.</p>	<p>Applicants may request up to \$2,500 in funding with no match requirement which reduces the barrier to entry for LMI and marginalized communities.</p> <p>This program is a recommendation of the CCAP and funding for this grant program was passed by the Town Council after careful review by advisory boards and public commentary.</p> <p>The Town will encourage residents to support local and BIPOC businesses when purchasing supplies for their projects using the Buy BIPOC business directory in addition to engaging community support to implement projects.</p> <p>The grant selection criteria will include 20-points towards engaging low-income households or communities of color with the hopes of providing funding for projects in these communities where</p>

		the residents would otherwise not be able to fund projects or support local businesses.
HEALTH Consider impacts on pollution, health access, existing health disparities, etc.	Since this is an application-based process, it is possible that the locations/projects that would have the most impact on the overall health of Carrboro residents might not be proposed for funding. As a result, health disparities may persist throughout low-income/marginalized communities if the Town's outreach doesn't successfully engage these residents.	The Town will be utilizing various outreach methods in alignment with the Town's Inclusive Communications & Community Engagement Plan to ensure that all residents are aware of the program regardless of their access to computers and prior involvement in Town meetings. Town staff will explore office hours or meeting times with staff and/or Climate Action Team members to provide assistance in project planning and questions during the application process.
ENVIRONMENT Consider impacts on pollution, natural resources, transit, etc.	While the objective of the Green Neighborhood Grant Program is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it's possible that the implementation of some projects may have some embodied carbon emissions in the supplies, production, transportation, installation, or maintenance of the project.	The primary goal of the GNGP is to empower neighborhoods to address climate change by reducing GHG emissions and engaging the community. The Town will post the application guidelines with examples of projects related to the Community Climate Action Plan and a project-scoring criteria that will include categories for the project impact (20 points) as well as

		<p>racial equity and environmental justice (10 points). All projects are required to either reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contribute to ecosystem resiliency efforts, or increase climate action engagement/awareness.</p> <p>Grant applications will be evaluated based on the pre-approved scoring rubric and funding will be awarded to the top scoring projects. The long-term environmental benefits of each project, either related to emissions mitigation, ecosystem resiliency, or increasing climate action awareness will likely outweigh any embodied emissions for these projects.</p>
<p>OTHER Consider how a resident might interact with this measure "start to finish."</p>	<p>Some residents may not be eligible for funding due to living outside of the Carrboro city limits or due to lacking a formal entity representative or fiscal agent which may cause them to feel that the program is unfair.</p> <p>Some residents may not be aware of the program or will not have the time to organize a project and apply for funding.</p> <p>Some residents may need the funding for other necessary projects that are not related to sustainability; these will not be eligible for funding through this program.</p> <p>Some residents may not understand what kind of projects are eligible for funding, and therefore will not apply.</p>	<p>The Town has employed all of the measures listed in the categories above in order to alleviate some of these potential negative impacts. There will be an equitable outreach campaign to promote the program so all residents know how to apply (in person or online). Available staff on hand to assist residents in completing the application process? Also, don't recall if scheduled information meetings will take place preferably in neighborhoods.</p> <p>Additionally, the Town staff will collect data on the first round of grant projects and perform a program review to adjust or improve the program as needed.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To ensure a fair and equitable evaluation for selecting applicants to award funding, staff is exploring options to create a committee of community members with the charge of reviewing applications and selecting grant awardees. Currently, the Town staff will be evaluating the Green Neighborhood Grant program applications based on the pre-approved scoring rubric.
2. Project applicants without a formal entity representative (Homeowners' Association, Neighborhood Association, Non-Profit, Businesses, or Fiscal Agent, etc.) will have to complete additional steps in the application process in order to be eligible. Staff are working to create a GIS map of communities with HOA locations to understand where some residents may not have a pre-designated administrative/fiscal agent in order to provide tailored outreach and guidance to residents who need it.
3. Town staff are exploring the possibility of providing office hours or designated meeting times with staff and/or Climate Action Team members to provide assistance in project planning and questions during the application process. The proposed assistance would be especially useful in cases of residents needing to designate a fiscal agent, understanding what supporting documents are needed to complete the application, and questions regarding eligible projects.
4. Town staff are preparing to collect demographics information for awarded applicants with each round of funding to better identify who is engaging with the program and if there are communities that have not been successfully engaged through the program's outreach. Additional data will be collected on the neighborhood location of the projects that are funded with each grant cycle, to further understand if we are successfully engaging low-income and BIPOC communities.
5. Staff plan to continue administering a Community Climate Action Plan Survey on a biennial basis and this would provide an opportunity to measure the success of this engagement. The Town will also work to solicit feedback from grant recipients about the program's structure and effectiveness after the initial round of awards in FY22-23.

[Ongoing outreach](#)