



**Iowa
Environmental
Council**

*505 Fifth Ave, Suite 850
Des Moines, IA 50309-2317
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www.iaenvironment.org*

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR IMPACTFUL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE WORK IN IOWA**

**IOWA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
505 FIFTH AVE, SUITE 850
DES MOINES, IA 50309-2317**

1/15/2025



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1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The Iowa Environmental Council (IEC) is a 501(c)(3) private, nonprofit organization and serves as the state's largest environmental coalition. Our mission is to build a just, healthy environment and sustainable future for all Iowans. Environmental justice is at the foundation of our work, and we believe it must be the central goal of our policy initiatives, programs, communications, coalition building, and operations.

As part of our commitment to environmental justice, we have been selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a grant award under the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving grant program. Our project, Building Capacity for Impactful Environmental Justice Work in Iowa, is a three-year initiative that seeks to achieve the following outcomes, among others:

- Increase awareness of environmental justice, including substantive local issues (e.g., pollution, climate risks) and process issues (e.g., participation in local decision-making).
- Increase capacity for environmental justice leadership and engagement in climate and resilience planning, pollution mitigation, just transitions, etc.
- Increase awareness of opportunities for federal funding under programs covered by the Justice40 initiative.
- Through local environmental justice stakeholder coalitions and environmental justice leadership cohorts, a community will work toward identifying disputes, reaching consensus on environmental justice challenges, and working to resolve and identify mutual paths forward
- Increase media coverage of environmental justice issues in Iowa and in local communities, in traditional media (print, tv, radio, etc.) and digital platforms (blogs, social media, etc.)
- Increase the number of environmental justice-focused objectives or barriers identified by the project participants and generated by local communities, are referred to local and state governments for joint work towards solutions.
- Increase in collaborative funding proposals for federal funding in selected communities, focusing on awareness of opportunities for federal funding under programs covered by the Justice40 initiative.
- Increase in leadership cohorts and local stakeholder coalitions engagement of local governments to bring attention to environmental justice issues in selected

2. APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND TIMELINES

This Request for Applications represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. **Applications will be accepted until 5pm CST on February 10, 2025.** Any applications received after this date and time will be returned to the sender. All applications must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company submitting the proposal.

If the organization submitting an application must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements contained herein, this must be clearly stated in the application. Additionally, all costs included in applications must be all-inclusive to include any outsourced or contracted work. Any applications which call for outsourcing or contracting work must include a name and description of the organizations being contracted.

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFA. They must also comply with the U.S. EPA's general terms and conditions as found at https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-09/fy_2023_epa_general_terms_and_conditions_effective_october_1_2023_or_later.pdf All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by IEC and the U.S. EPA and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

Application Outline

Applications should include the following categories and information:

- Applicant Information – Prior experience, organization description, key project staff, contact information, applicant location.
- Timeline – Projected workplan schedule
- Cost – Budget breakdown reflecting details outlined below in section 5. All costs must be itemized to include an explanation of all fees and costs.
- Project Activities – Breakdown of how the applicant will satisfy the key project activities, including those outlined in section 3.

Application Timeline

The selection decision for the winning applicant will be made no later than March 1, 2025. Upon notification, the contract negotiation with the winning applicant will begin immediately. Contract negotiations will be completed soon thereafter.

Project Timeline

- Anticipated contract start: March 1, 2025.
- Anticipated contract end: April 30, 2027

3. PROJECT PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The key project activities of this project are as follows:

The Iowa Environmental Council is seeking an applicant to design curriculum for a series of educational sessions that outline the concepts of environmental justice and climate change and their applicability in Iowa. The selected applicant, if agreed by both parties, may be asked to deliver some of the training sessions. Virtual training is an option if mutually agreeable.

After the initial curriculum development, IEC is also seeking an ongoing partner in the project that will assist in the compilation of project progress reports for EPA related to our environmental justice events in priority communities. To evaluate the impact of our project, IEC will also rely on the selected applicant to help develop methods for measuring project impact and assisting with report submissions to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Lastly, IEC seeks a contractor that will assist with organizing a statewide environmental justice symposium in 2027, or the last quarter of the grant term.

Key Project Activities
1. Curriculum development for up to 16 educational sessions and occasional delivery, as agreed.
2. Assistance with the compilation of progress reports to the U.S. EPA.
3. Establishment of project impact and evaluation methods.
4. Assistance with organizing statewide environmental justice symposium.

Detailed Project Descriptions:

Curriculum Development and Delivery: The selected applicant will develop curriculum for up to 16 educational sessions that outline the concepts of environmental justice and climate change and their applicability in Iowa. Some potential topics include transportation, air quality, water quality, climate change, disaster resilience, energy burden, air quality, and other topics that illustrate a full relationship between environmental pollution, climate change, socioeconomic vulnerability, and justice. All applicants should outline their plan to disseminate the educational sessions to selected audiences, including whether or not to utilize a learning management system (LMS).

The curriculum will also need to provide an enhanced level of detail that addresses four priority communities selected by IEC. The curriculum will be used as the basis for up to 16

total in-person and virtual training sessions for four environmental justice leadership cohorts consisting of up to 12 individuals in the four IEC-selected disadvantaged communities in Iowa. The curriculum should outline historical examples of environmental injustice and outline existing resources to remedy these ongoing challenges in the Iowa communities of Dubuque, Des Moines, Ottumwa, and Council Bluffs.

The developed curriculum and training sessions will be owned by IEC after completion, allowing for future unimpeded use.

Progress Reporting: The selected applicant will assist with curriculum development and delivery, will build on existing EJ research and serve as technical support and assist with compiling information that IEC will use to write the annual and final reports.

Project Impact and Evaluation: The selected applicant will assist with developing program evaluation benchmarks and compiling lessons learned as we consider how to replicate and scale up the project to other communities. All applicants should include, at a minimum, their proposed process to develop program evaluation benchmarks.

Statewide Environmental Justice Symposium: The selected applicant will assist IEC in planning a statewide environmental justice symposium in 2027. The symposium will include participants in the environmental justice leadership cohorts which received the developed training sessions as well as local, state, and federal stakeholders involved in environmental decision making. IEC will work with the selected applicant to identify specific activities that align with the budget and timeline of the project, but each applicant should identify which roles they are comfortable playing in this activity, including organizing, planning, recruiting, and marketing, etc. These roles are negotiable.

4. PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of this project includes all design, development, continuous improvement, and dissemination of the environmental justice curriculum. IEC will provide the selected applicant with our branding and marketing materials for inclusion in the developed curriculum. The scope also includes assisting with progress reporting, developing program evaluation benchmarks, and assisting (as negotiated) with the statewide environmental justice symposium.

The following criteria must be met to achieve a successful project:

- Include only credible sources as cited materials in the curriculum development and trainings delivery.
- Visually and aesthetically appealing display of the curriculum to enable ease of use.
- Avoiding jargon and creating the curriculum with disadvantaged populations in mind, including those with English as a second language and those with lower levels of educational attainment.
- A detailed plan for how the curriculum would be accessible to intended audiences (ex: audiences with English as a second language).
- User-friendly environment that is easy to navigate.
- Consistency of design across all pages/sections of the web site in a design theme that fits targeted market segment(s).
- Curriculum can be changed/updated easily by IEC staff with minimal effort.
- All software and licensing requirements should be included as part of this project.
- Prominent display of IEC’s logo, company mission, vision, and strategy throughout all developed materials.
- A clear process for determining program evaluation benchmarks.
- Clear indication of what roles the applicant is suitable to play in organizing the statewide environmental justice symposium (planning, recruiting, organizing, marketing, etc.). These are negotiable with IEC staff.

5. BUDGET

As described in IEC’s budget agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the contractor has a maximum allowable cost for each year, totaling \$24,000 as outlined below:

Year One Maximum Cost	Year Two Maximum Cost	Year Three Maximum Cost
\$12,000	\$6,000	\$6,000

The selected applicant will sign a subaward agreement with IEC that indicates these funds are a draw down system where the selected applicant allocates resources, properly reports to IEC on a monthly basis, and is then reimbursed by IEC after IEC is reimbursed by EPA. All applications must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the project activities section. Costs should be stated as one-time or non-recurring costs (NRC) or monthly recurring costs (MRC). Pricing should be listed for each of the following items in an easily navigable format. NOTE: All costs and fees must be clearly described.

6. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants should provide the following items as part of their application for consideration:

- Two or more past examples of curriculum or similar work related to environmental justice and climate change.
- Anticipated staff resources you will assign to this project (total number of team members, role, title, experience)
- Timeframe for completion of the project (Ex: March to April)
- Project management methodology
- Credentials of each staff member who will be assigned to this project.
- The applicant's physical address and contact information.

7. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

IEC will evaluate all applications based on the following criteria. To ensure consideration for this Request for Applications, your application should be complete and include all the following criteria:

- Overall Application Suitability: proposed solution(s) must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner.
- Organizational Experience: Applicants will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope of this project.
- Previous work: Applicants will be evaluated on examples of their work pertaining to environmental justice, climate change, and training delivery.
- Value and cost: Applicants will be evaluated on the cost of their application based on the work to be performed in accordance with the budget and scope of this project.
- Technical expertise and experience: Applicants must provide descriptions and documentation of staff technical expertise and experience.

Each applicant must submit their application to IEC at the email address below by February 10, 2025 at 5pm CST:

Cody Smith,
Director of Climate Initiatives
Iowa Environmental Council
Smith@iaenvironment.org
515-809-9369