# Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Program Request for Information (RFI)

Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights

March 10, 2023

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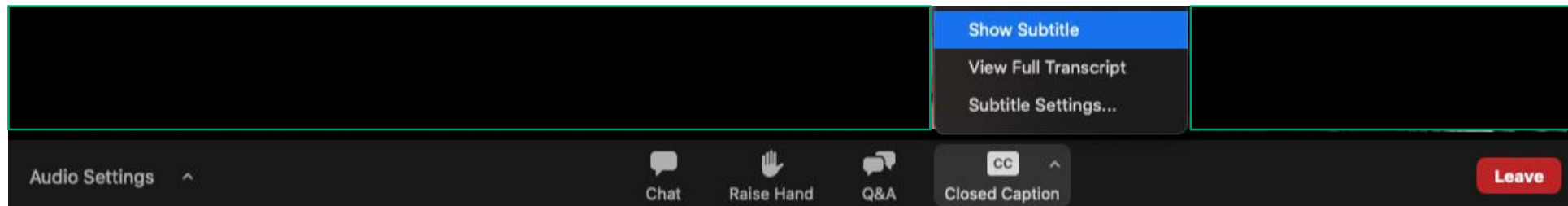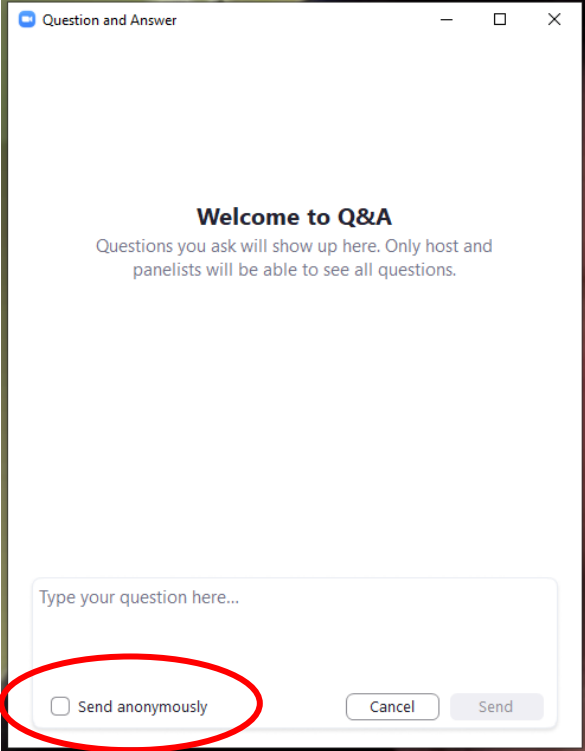
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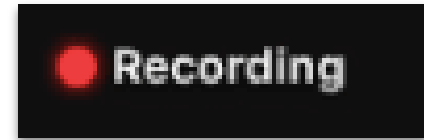

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Today's event is being **recorded**.

Please note that by participating in today's online event, you acknowledge and consent that your name _may_ be visible or audible to others in the live online meeting, as well as captured in the recording.

We will post today's presentation slides and the recording online at our EPA Environmental and Climate Justice Program webpage.

Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Grant Program Development
MARCH 2023

AGENDA

1. Environmental and Climate Justice Program (ECJ Program) Overview

    a) Environmental and Climate Justice grants to benefit disadvantaged communities

2. Request for Information (RFI) Overview – **Extended to April 10, 2023**

    a) ECJ Program Design

    b) Eligible Projects

    c) Eligible Recipients

    d) Reporting and Oversight

    e) Technical Assistance

    f) General Comments

3. Q & A

ECJ PROGRAM BACKGROUND

OVERVIEW

$3 billion under the <u>IRA</u> and $100 million in the <u>FY-22</u> budget (and similar amount in FY 23 budget) to support environmental justice activities

- <u>IRA</u>:
  - $2.8 billion to provide grants for activities benefiting disadvantaged communities.
  - $200 million for technical assistance related to the grants.
- <u>FY-22</u>:
  - $100 million to enhance the agency's ability to infuse equity and environmental justice principles and priorities into all EPA practices, policies, and programs.

GRANTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
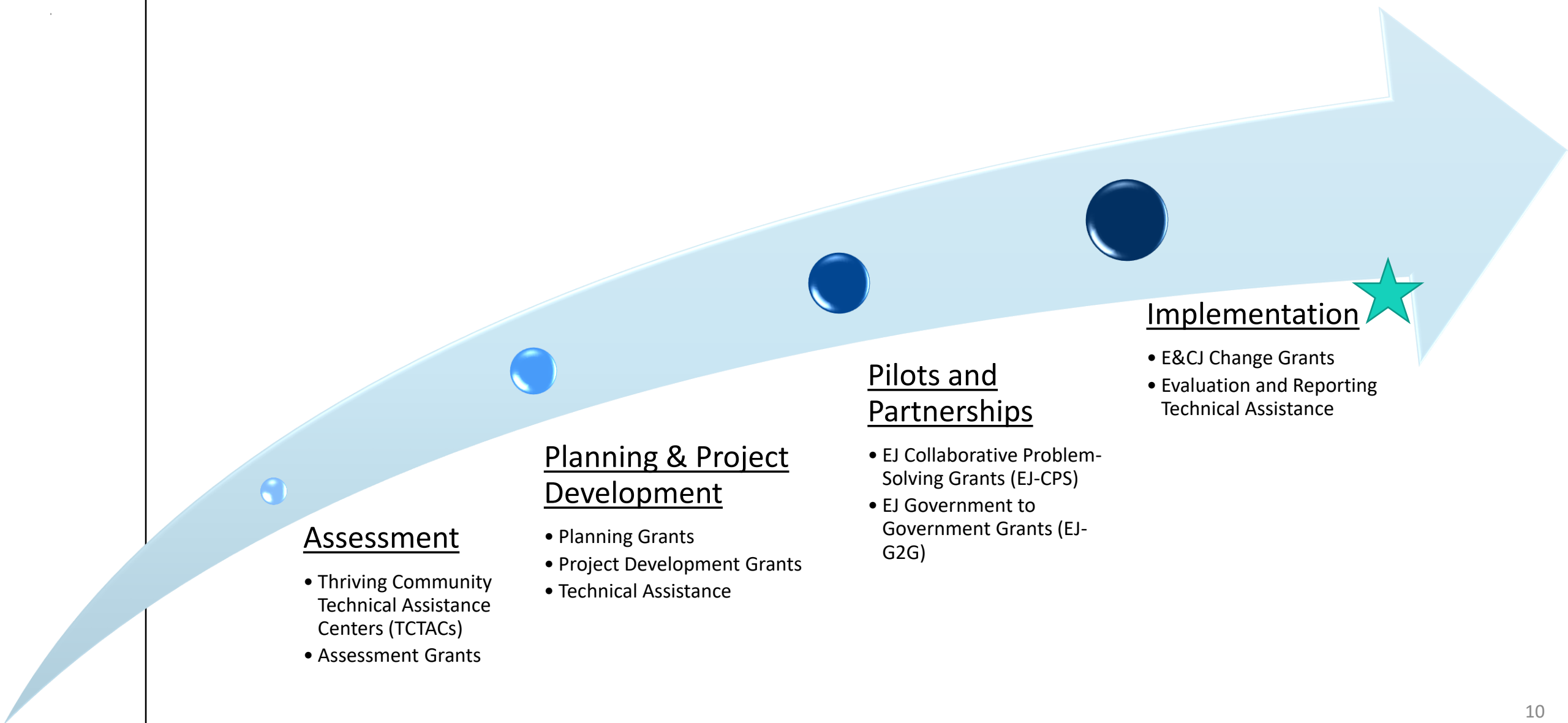
Assessment

- Thriving Community Technical Assistance Centers (TCTACs)
- Assessment Grants

Planning & Project Development

- Planning Grants
- Project Development Grants
- Technical Assistance

Pilots and Partnerships

- EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving Grants (EJ-CPS)
- EJ Government to Government Grants (EJ-G2G)

Implementation

- E&CJ Change Grants
- Evaluation and Reporting Technical Assistance

IRA – E&CJ COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM STATUTORY LANGUAGE / DEFINITIONS

(a) APPROPRIATION.—In addition to amounts otherwise available, there is appropriated to the Administrator for fiscal year 2022, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated—

''(1) $2,800,000,000 to remain available ==until September 30, 2026==, to award grants for the activities described in subsection (b); and ''(2) $200,000,000 to remain available ==until September 30, 2026==, to provide technical assistance to eligible entities related to grants awarded under this section.

''(b) GRANTS.— ''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall use amounts made available under subsection (a)(1) to award grants for periods ==of up to 3 years== to eligible entities to carry out activities described in paragraph (2) that benefit disadvantaged communities, as defined by the Administrator.

IRA – E&CJ COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM STATUTORY LANGUAGE / DEFINITIONS

''(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—In this subsection, the term 'eligible entity' means—

''(A) a partnership between—

''(i) an Indian tribe, a local government, or an institution of higher education; and

''(ii) a community-based nonprofit organization;

''(B) a community-based nonprofit organization; or

''(C) a partnership of community-based nonprofit organizations.

IRA – E&CJ COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM STATUTORY LANGUAGE / DEFINITIONS

''(2) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.—An eligible entity may use a grant awarded under this subsection for—

''(A) community-led air and other pollution monitoring, prevention, and remediation, and investments in low- and zero emission and resilient technologies and related infrastructure and workforce development that help reduce greenhouse gas (as defined in section 211(o)(1)(G) (as in effect on the date of enactment of this section)) emissions and other air pollutants;

''(B) mitigating climate and health risks from urban heat islands, extreme heat, wood heater emissions, and wildfire events;

''(C) climate resiliency and adaptation;

''(D) reducing indoor toxics and indoor air pollution; or

''(E) facilitating engagement of disadvantaged communities in State and Federal advisory groups, workshops, rulemakings, and other public processes.

GOALS

- Provide resources as soon as possible for on the ground activities to benefit communities.

- Meet communities at their needs and where they are in their journey.

- Prove that investing in communities are the best investments to solve the toughest problems in places with the biggest challenges.

- Achieve lasting, meaningful change on the ground.

- Be the bottom-up to all the other top-downs!

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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant - Request for Information (RFI)

Created by the **Environmental Protection Agency**

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OTHER
Memo Openings Docket for Public Access
Agency Environmental Protection Agency | **Posted** Feb 9, 2023 | **ID** EPA-HQ-OEJECR-2023-0023-0001

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SUPPORTING & RELATED MATERIAL
Request for Information on the Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grant Program

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RFI POLICY TOPICS

a.   ECJ Program Design

b.   Eligible Projects

c.   Eligible Recipients

d.   Reporting and Oversight

e.   Technical Assistance

f.   General Comments

PROGRAM DESIGN

- Program design considerations to ensure grants benefit disadvantaged communities

- Feedback on rolling application period and holistic approach

- Best practices to reduce burdens for applicants, grantees, subgrantees

- Techniques to prevent application burden, such as oral presentation components

ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

- Types of projects under CAA Section 138(b)(2) listed (pollution, workforce, climate resilience, adaptation, facilitating engagement in public processes)

- Challenges and barriers to connecting residents of disadvantaged, underserved, and under-represented communities to workforce opportunities, and mitigating programs, services, and partnerships

- Project types that incorporate nature-based solutions to advance climate adaptation and resilience

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS

- Defining a "community based nonprofit organization"

- Defining a "partnership" and important associated characteristics

- Requirements to ensure projects and partnerships are community-driven and avoid displacement of residents and small businesses

- Facilitating partnership development through EPA-sponsored events (webinars, online forums)

REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT

- Types of governance structures, reporting requirements, audit requirements to ensure successful implementation

- Examples of other compliance requirements that EPA should consider when designing the ECJ Program

- Ideas to reduce reporting requirements while ensuring proper grant oversight

- Metrics to track program progress, including benefits in disadvantaged communities and addressing environmental justice concerns

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Types of technical assistance most helpful to support grantees with implementation

- Types of entities best suited to provide technical assistance

GENERAL COMMENTS

- Any other comments on the design, structure, and/or implementation of the ECJ Program

- Including views on overall simplification of application process and program

IMPORTANT DATES

Date	Event
February 9, 2023	**Request for Information (RFI)** Posted
April 10, 2023	RFI Comments Submission Deadline
Early Summer 2023	**Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers** expected to begin operations
Summer 2023	ECJ Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Posted ($2 Billion)

Thank you for joining us!

After this webinar…

- The presentation slides and the recording will be available soon on our Environmental and Climate Justice Program website.

- You can follow-up with questions at: ECJRFI@epa.gov

- Sign-up for our EPA EJ listserv by sending a blank email to: join-epa-ej@lists.epa.gov

RELEVANT LINKS

- Request for Information Webpage: https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OEJECR-2023-0023/document

- Request for Information Press Release published February 9, 2023: https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-seeks-input-inflation-reduction-act-environmental-and-climate-justice-program

- To learn more about the Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ) Communities Grant Program, you can access this YouTube video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2xy4XZ5Oks

- More information on US EPA environmental justice grant programs: https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-grants-funding-and-technical-assistance

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