

ICR Talking Points, Information, and Questions to share with your Grantmaker

(Use these document questions as guidance and to support section “5. Information Collection Request (ICR) Process” in the Grantmaker worksheet for Funding Recommendation, Participatory Governance and Information Collection Request Worksheet)

Background: The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) and Information Collection Activities (ICRs)

- Public outreach information collections allow EPA and its affiliates to learn about communities' and stakeholder groups' (1) priorities and needs, as well as (2) their feedback on EPA's activities and resources. These activities include methods such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews.
- These activities involve the collection of information from individuals and groups outside the federal government, and thus are governed by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The PRA aims to ensure that information collected by federal agencies and their grantees have practical utility, and that there is minimal burden to respondents who have to provide this information.
- Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for any targeted information collections with 10 or more people. (Targeted = using a specific set of questions, e.g. in a form, application, survey, focus group, or interview). To obtain this approval, agencies must submit an Information Collection Request (ICR) to OMB.
- An ICR describes an agency's planned information collection, including the purpose, practical utility, estimated burden on respondents (e.g., how long will a focus group take), and a list of the questions that will be asked. ICRs must be approved before the corresponding information collections can take place.
- EPA staff will be developing an ICR that will cover all public outreach activities that will be conducted by the Grantmakers.
- In the TCGM ICR, EPA staff need to describe all the public outreach activities that each Grantmaker will undertake. We have determined that there are four activities: (1) grant application inquiry forms, (2) focus groups, (3) feedback surveys and interviews - specific results, success stories, and feedback; and (4) feedback surveys - general technical accessibility.

Purpose of this discussion

- We are having this discussion to identify your information collection activities and timelines.
- This input will help EPA finalize the TCGM Program's ICR Strategy.
- We will go over each information collection activity and then we have 1-2 questions about each one.

Overview: Public Outreach Information Collection Activities

Given the role of the TCGM Program to remove barriers and improve accessibility for communities with environmental justice concerns who wish to apply for federal funding resources, it is essential that each Grantmaker collect input and insights from communities who seek to apply for funding opportunities through the Grantmaker services and their partners. These information collections will enable the Grantmaker to document local priorities, needs, and norms to ensure that they develop useful and relevant Grantmaker funding information. Feedback about access to the Grantmaker funding opportunity and other services will provide the Grantmakers with self-assessment tools to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

This ICR seeks authorization for four public outreach information collections: (1) Grant Application Intake Form; (2) Focus Groups; (3) Feedback Surveys and Interviews – Specific Results, Success Stories, and Feedback; (4) Feedback Surveys – General Technical Accessibility. The respondents will be (potential or actual) recipients of each Grantmaker's services and products, which are likely to include community leaders, community members,

community-based organization staff, locally elected officials, and local government staff from underserved communities and communities in remote and rural areas from across the nation, including Indian Country and territories.

Grantmaker Name: Redacted

EPA Project Officer Name: Redacted

Grant Application Inquiry and Intake Form – Phase 1-3 Grant Applications and Fixed Amount Subaward

Each Grantmaker will offer specific application standards for a competitive community application in-take and evaluation processes, in two parts. All individuals who engage with a Grantmaker in any way—including in person, on the phone, on a video call, via email, or on the website—will be invited to complete a general Grant Application Inquiry that asks them to describe their access needs to the Grantmakers program and proposed use of program funds. There will be two parts to this information collection activity:

Part 1: Grant Application Inquiry

1. Primary environmental and/or energy justice concerns or challenges faced by their community
2. Barriers they have experienced in trying to address these concerns or challenges
3. Experience working with federal funds
4. If they are ready to apply to for Grantmaker Subgrants, what resources are need to be prepared
5. If they have previously worked with technical assistance services (TCN, TCTAC, Earth BPA, etc.) or plan to work with a TA service to apply to for the Thriving Communities Subgrant (describe assistance provided).

Part 2: Grant Application

6. Which funding phase 1-3 or fixed amount is the applicant applying for (choose all that apply)
7. Aims of potential funding, goals objectives, project description, outputs outcomes and performance measures
8. Timeline and milestones, project location and programmatic capability
9. Budget summary, COI and partnership disclosure

Question for Grantmaker

- A. Approximately when do you plan to open your subgrants competition and make the grant applications public? Provide the month and year (e.g., July 2024)**

Answer: August 2024

Focus Groups

The focus groups will allow Grantmakers to better understand the needs of the program participants requesting funding and help the Grantmaker pathways for how to best address those needs while ensuring submissions options are accessible to all Eligible Subrecipients. Each Grantmaker will coordinate with their statutory partners to participate in the focus group to design guidelines for the competitive community application process, with an emphasis on recruiting respondents who represent a broad range of communities, perspectives, and experiences throughout the entire geographic area.

The focus group discussions may cover the following topics:

1. Satisfaction with the Grantmaker's outreach efforts and open call for applications including accessibility to those not fluent in English.
2. Satisfaction for the Grantmaker's timely intake and evaluation of Thriving Communities Subgrant applications, making clear the distinction between the three phases.
3. Approach to involving remote, rural and urban communities and capacity constrained CBOs in funding programs for environmental justice in the environmental decision-making process.
4. How to effectively engage with decision-makers at all levels of government and private sector entities to inform policy development and program design and delivery.
5. How to engage community members.
6. How to make the various federal grants for environmental justice and energy justice projects accessible to a broader set of applicants.
7. Understanding technical assistance options for applicants pursuing environmental justice and energy justice projects (TCTACs, TCN, Earth BPA) and awarded subgrantee (PREPARED).
8. Regional and National Grantmaker subgrant tracking and reporting systems sink.

Questions for Grantmaker

B. Do you plan to conduct focus groups?

Answer: No

C. If yes, approximately when do you think you will start conducting focus groups? Provide the month and year.

In particular, please consider whether you will conduct any focus groups before you release your grant application forms.

Answer: N/A

Feedback Surveys and Interviews – Specific Results, Success Stories, and Feedback

Each Grantmaker will be offering a series of outreach services and events to make communities aware of the funding opportunity, aggregated environmental and public health improvements and more, either in person or online. After each service or event, all participants will be invited to complete a short feedback survey that asks about their impression of the Grantmakers and the impact of Thriving Communities Subgrant funding opportunity and may be asked to conduct an Interview between the Grantmaker and Subgrantee recipients (in-person, video call).

These surveys and interviews may ask the following questions about each session:

1. Understanding of environmental justice issues in a community.
2. Understanding of the event service target audience.
3. Satisfaction with the Grantmaker and their role as pass-through entity of the Subgrant Program and ways to make the process more effective.
4. Extent to which these funding opportunities has advanced racial equity and environmental justice, address health outcome disparities and support underserved communities while tackling the climate crisis at home.
5. Extent to which funding investments through community-led action has directly impacted environmental justice concerns in their community.
6. Usefulness and appropriation of the Grants Phase 1-3 and fixed awards.
7. If an eligible entity the likelihood of applying to a grant Phase.
8. What is working well: Positive aspects of the Grantmaker’s activities and services.
9. What could be better: Suggestions for improving the Grantmaker’s activities and services.
10. General comments.

Questions for Grantmaker

D. Do you plan to conduct the types of feedback surveys and interviews described above?

Answer: Yes

E. If yes, approximately when do you think you will start conducting these feedback surveys and interviews? Provide the month and year.

In particular, please consider whether you will conduct these feedback surveys and interviews before you release your grant application forms.

Answer: Feedback survey for outreach events and a general feedback survey. All other forms of feedback after September 2024

Feedback Surveys – General Technical Accessibility

Grantmaker will seek to get general feedback on their activities once a year, by contacting everyone on their contact list and inviting them to share their experiences and attitudes. This general survey will be offered either in hard copy format or as an online survey, with the link provided to participants.

These surveys may ask the following general questions about the Grantmakers:

1. Awareness of the Grantmakers and National Grantmaker roles, specific activities, services and tools used.
2. Interest in each of the Grantmaker's activities, services and tools used.
3. Facilitators and barriers to participation in Grantmaker funding activities and opportunities.
4. Satisfaction with the Grantmaker's activities, services and tools used.
5. What is working well: Positive aspects of the Grantmaker's activities, services and tools used.
6. What could be better: Suggestions for improving the Grantmaker's activities, services and tools used.
7. General comments.

Questions for Grantmaker

- F. Do you plan to conduct the general technical accessibility feedback surveys described above?**

Answer: Yes

- G. If yes, approximately when do you think you will start conducting the general accessibility feedback surveys? Provide the month and year.**

In particular, please consider whether you will conduct these surveys before you release your grant application forms.

Answer: No earlier than September 2024. This will not be released prior to the release of the grant application forms.