

Nature in Neighborhoods Conversation Education Grants Pre-Application

Organization, program and contact information

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Please complete the organization, program and contact information below using no more than one page.

Date of application	January 14, 2014
Organization name	Coalition of Communities of Color (in partnership with culturally-specific community based organizations, Portland State University Center to Advance Racial Equity, Verde and local environmental educators)
Organization address and website	5135 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland, OR 97218 www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org
Program contact Name, title, phone, email	[REDACTED]
Program title	Building Environmental Capacity in Communities of Color: <i>Knowledge, Research and Discourse</i>
Program summary Provide a 20-45-word summary that describes your program.	The project will 1) build the environmental knowledge of organizations of color by implementing an environmental education training series; 2) produce community-specific environmental indicators; and 3) provide a community of color vision of conservation that prioritizes environmental initiatives in communities of color.
Category Under which program category does your program best fit? (Select all that apply).	Community Partnerships X Environmental Literacy X Develop Conservation Leaders X
Estimated funding	Estimated amount requested: \$20,000 Estimated match funds: \$26,434 Estimated in-kind match: \$3,750 Estimated total program budget: \$50,184

Organizational preparedness

The mission of the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity. Formed in 2001, the CCC is an alliance of culturally-specific community based organizations with representation from six communities of color: African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American and Slavic.

This project builds off of the CCC's successful track record of advancing equity in our region. Our collective efforts include common understanding of racial inequities and shared vision for change; coordination of activities and strategies across member organizations; stature as one of the region's foremost providers of culturally-appropriate data and research; ability to function on the basis of differentiated approaches to advance collective agendas arising from our founding principles of cultural-specificity and cross-cultural collective action; experience working across sectors to advance racial equity; consensus-based decision making; and more than decade-long experience building intentional relationships across communities and organizations of color.

The following factors prepared the CCC to conduct an environmental capacity building program for organizations of color. First, in January 2013, the CCC completed a robust strategic planning process that defined our members' collective priorities for the next several years. The plan resulted in the CCC's first explicit environmental goals (increase environmental investments in communities of color, build capacity of organizations of color to participate in environmental initiatives, and develop a CCC vision of environmentalism). The plan signals a new recognition by the CCC that environmental initiatives are a means to address traditional social service and community development goals. The CCC formed a Community & Economic Development Committee responsible for ensuring progress on the CCC's environmental goals.

Second, in response to the CCC's strategic goal to increase environmental investment in communities of color, the CCC partnered with the Portland State University Center to Advance Racial Equity to research environmental grant-making to communities of color in our region. Set for early 2014 release, the project will identify the top public and private funders of environmental sustainability projects and determine how much of their funding is being given to organizations that represent and/or organize communities of color. Environmental funding to organizations of color to engage their constituents is necessary to increase understanding of environmental issues and to ensure diverse representation in addressing those issues.

Third, in order to make real progress and enduring solutions that meet the diverse needs of our region's communities and reflect the changing demographics of our state, we need stronger relations between environmental organizations and organizations of color. Throughout the first half of 2014, the CCC, Oregon Environmental Council and Center for Diversity and the Environment are partnering on a project to bring together environmental organizations and organizations of color to lay the foundation we need to work better together and develop workable solutions for the diverse communities we represent.

This project will harness the growing momentum in communities of color to participate in environmental initiatives by increasing capacity, rooting the work in culturally-appropriate research and local examples, and strategic communications.

Julia Meier will serve as project manager and liaise with the project's environmental educators and researchers, support CCC member participation, attend trainings, staff CCC review processes, interview organizations of color and draft the white paper. Julia has been the Director of the CCC since 2009. She came to the CCC from practicing law at Alaska Legal Services. Prior, Julia oversaw restorative justice projects at the Alaska Native Justice Center. Julia received her JD from Harvard Law School in 2005. Additional partners are described in the partnership and program reach sections. The CCC's Executive Committee, our governing body, has approved the submission of this pre-application. Landowner permission is not applicable to this project.

Program description

Program Narrative: The project will 1) build the environmental knowledge of organizations of color by implementing an environmental education training series developed by and for communities of color; 2) produce community-specific environmental indicators to ensure environmental health is measured in a culturally-appropriate manner; and 3) provide a community of color vision of conservation that prioritizes environmental initiatives in communities of color. The primary audience is communities of color, and environmental actors, researchers and decision-makers.

This project adheres to the CCC's proven theory of change – through increased capacity, shifted discourses, reformed non-policy practices, reformed policy practices, improved policy outcomes, and broader community and social impacts we will ensure durable advancement of racial justice in our region. The project focuses on the first three components of our theory of change thereby laying the foundation for improved racial environmental equity in our region.

The project responds to needs identified by our member organizations and their constituents. First, there are deep and broad racial inequities in our region that challenge not only communities of color but our entire community. While there is limited local research on environmental inequities, anecdotal evidence shows that people of color and low-income people tend to live in areas with higher toxic air emissions, brownfields and other environmental hazards. Second, while communities of color and low-income communities are most impacted by environmental inequities, there is limited capacity in organizations and communities of color to address these negative impacts. Third, our region lacks a common understanding of the lived environmental realities of communities of color. The invisible experiences of communities of color in environmental research allow for environmental decision-making that inadequately captures the experiences of local communities of color. Fourth and finally, there is no shared community of color vision of conservation that outlines environmental priorities of communities of color. While the CCC and our member organizations are receiving increased requests from environmental actors to participate in environmental initiatives, we have not been given the opportunity to shape our own priorities.

Project Goals: This project meets the overall grant purpose to support and create partnerships in local communities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature by advancing the following grant program goals: 1) help diversify the conservation movement and support the capacity building of organizations that serve low-income people and people of color to provide conservation education programming; 2) support residents becoming scientifically and ecologically literate; and 3) equip participants to become conservation leaders in their communities. Project goals are described below.

Goal 1: Build the environmental knowledge of organizations of color by implementing an environmental education training series developed by and for communities of color. The CCC will implement an environmental education training series to build knowledge and expertise around conservation issues for organizations of color within the CCC. The series will include four three-hour workshops that cover the following areas identified as priorities by the CCC membership: Workshop 1 – framing and history of the national and local environmental and conservation movements; Workshop 2 – environmental policy frameworks and available advocacy tools; Workshop 3 – a deep dive into an issue area – climate change science and climate action strategies; and Workshop 4 – case studies of similar groups advancing environmental agendas followed by a discussion of local and regional environmental policy opportunities. The CCC will partner with local environmental educators to deliver the trainings.

Goal 2: Produce community-specific environmental indicators to ensure environmental health is measured in a culturally-appropriate manner. The CCC will implement a research project with the following components: a) a literature review of environmental indicators; b) interviews with CCC members to determine community-specific indicator priorities; c) a review of which prioritized indicators are locally available and able to be disaggregated by race; d) analysis of the available data and transformation into accessible format; and e) release of a research report that includes the

above information. The goal is community-specific environmental indicators and baseline data. The CCC will partner with researchers at the Portland State University Center to Advance Racial Equity.

Goal 3: Provide a community of color vision of conservation that prioritizes environmental initiatives in communities of color. The CCC will release a white paper that includes the following components: a) a CCC vision of conservation and the environment; b) stories that highlight successful environmental initiatives led by local organizations of color; c) an analysis of current and emerging environmental policies, programs and initiatives that offer the best opportunities to address the existing needs and priorities of communities of color; and d) a consensus-based environmental policy agenda from an alliance of organizations of color.

Results, Outcomes & Evaluation: Success ultimately rests on seeing the dial move on key environmental indicators prioritized by communities of color. For this project, the CCC will utilize two intermediate definitions of success. First, we will measure our capacity as an alliance of culturally-specific community based organizations with the goal of supporting continuous quality improvement. Measurements of success include increases in knowledge of environmental issues and decision-making pathways, advocacy efficacy, expertise, influence and leverage. Second, we will focus outward on gains and challenges related to the CCC's theory of change domains (with measurements of success include in parentheses): reformed non-policy practices (improved data and research practices including policy practitioners routinely identifying racial dimensions in environmental research, researchers informed by community of color priorities, and environmental data collected and analyzed in community-validated ways); and shifted discourses (analysis of dominant frames, strategic communications for our constituents and broader public, and our frames' ability to replace dominant frames in the media, influence political debate and shift how policy makers consider environmental issues). Ultimately, the project will produce community of color determined key indicators for measuring progress on environmental outcomes for communities of color. We will gather baseline data on these indicators. We will utilize an evaluator from within communities of color. In 2014, through a separate CCC initiative, the CCC will deliver an evaluation training program to CCC members and leaders of color. The CCC will contract with one of these trained evaluators to conduct this project's evaluation.

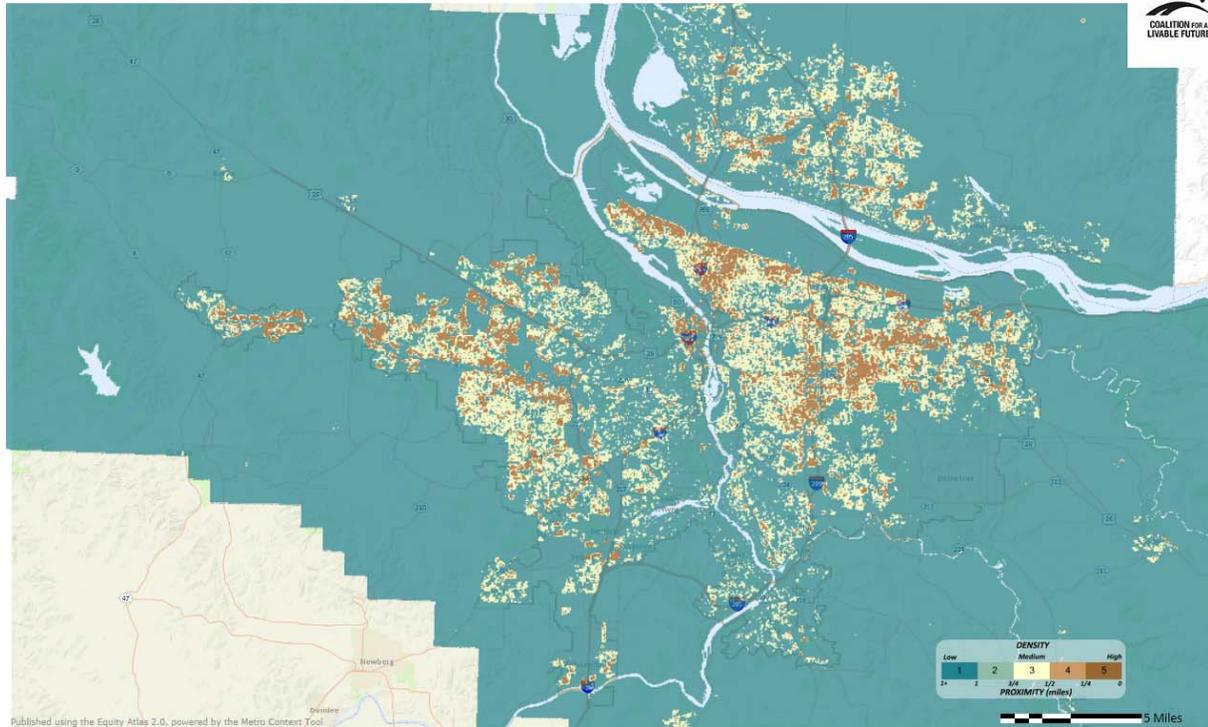
Partnerships & Sustainability: The CCC will partner with the following entities: 1) CCC member organizations whose roles are to attend the training series, convene community-specific meetings with researchers to identify community-specific environmental indicators, assist the CCC Director in defining the CCC's vision of the environment and conservation, share successful examples of organization of color-led conservation projects, and develop the CCC's environmental priorities; 2) Portland State University Center to Advance Racial Equity whose role is to partner with the CCC to implement the research project defined under Goal 2; 3) Verde whose role is to chair the CCC committee responsible for ensuring progress on our environmental goals, assist the CCC in choosing appropriate trainers and advising on the scope of the training sessions, meet with researchers to finalize the scope of the research project, attend interviews with organizations of color who have successfully led conservation projects, and guide the development of the white paper; and 4) local environmental educators whose role is to provide facilitation and education for the training series. The first three partners are already committed. The CCC is currently having discussions with potential environmental educators to provide the facilitation for the trainings.

This project harnesses the growing momentum in communities of color to participate in conservation efforts by increasing capacity, rooting the work in culturally-appropriate research and local examples, and strategic communications. Project goals are designed specifically to drive systemic change – increased capacity, reformed non-policy practices, and shifted discourses. After the grant period, efforts will shift to reforming policy practices, improving policy outcomes in areas prioritized by CCC members, and supporting conservation efforts that promote equitable environmental health.

Location and program reach

This project is focused on communities of color in the Metro region. The map below shows where communities of color are located across our region.

Populations of Color (Density per Acre)



The above map demonstrates that communities of color are dispersed throughout the Metro region. Since this project focuses on communities of color rather than a specific geographic community, the project does not have a specific location.

The primary audience for this project is the communities of color with representation in the CCC: African, African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Native American and Slavic. All program participants will be representatives from culturally-specific community based organizations that are members of the CCC. Current CCC members include African House, Asian Family Center, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Center for Intercultural Organizing, El Programa Hispano, Hacienda CDC, Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization, KairosPDX, Latino Network, Miracle Theatre, Native American Youth & Family Center, Portland African American Leadership Forum, Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Portland Indian Leaders' Roundtable, Portland Youth & Elders Council, Self Enhancement Inc., Slavic Network of Oregon, Urban League of Portland, Verde, and VOZ. While our member organizations are physically located in Multnomah County, staff and constituents of our members are located across the Metro region.

In addition, the project will reach beyond communities of color through the CCC's widespread dissemination of the project's products (research report and white paper) to environmental actors, researchers and decision-makers across the region. The research report will build the capacity of environmental researchers to implement culturally-appropriate data and research practices, include racial dimensions in their work, be informed by community of color priorities, and analyze data in community-validated ways. The white paper will help shift our community's discourse around environmental issues to ensure that our frames are inclusive of the voices of those communities most impacted by environmental inequities.