



**CJRF Call for Grant Proposals:
Building Connections, Networks, and Collaborative Spaces for Climate
Justice and Resilience**

Thank you for your interest in the Climate Justice Resilience Fund's 2024 open call for proposals. Those interested in applying for this opportunity should read the following application packet carefully.

Fund Overview:

The [Climate Justice Resilience Fund](#) (CJRF) is one of the first major philanthropic initiatives framed explicitly around climate justice, and one of the few that works internationally on climate resilience. We put people, their rights, and their lived experience directly at the center of climate action. We envision a thriving planet built on participation, equity, human rights and justice, where people who have been disproportionately affected by climate change issues are recognized and resourced to lead solutions and act at the emerging frontiers of climate justice. To this end, we fund locally led, rights-based initiatives to help communities reduce risk, manage shocks, rebound, and continue charting their path to development.

From 2016-2022, CJRF pooled over US\$25M and deployed over US\$21 million through more than 40 major grant partnerships, primarily in East Africa, the North American Arctic, and the Bay of Bengal. We invite you to read more about these partnerships and the impact of our first six years in [our 2023 evaluation](#).

Fund Transition:

While we are proud of the work we accomplished from 2016-2022, we also recognize that philanthropy is a deeply flawed system rooted in hierarchies of power that do not traditionally empower those on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

With this understanding, in 2021, CJRF's Review Board, comprised of our funders and other grantmakers, decided to shift CJRF's governance model. In 2022, they officially handed off power from a funder-led board to a board comprised of activists and practitioners, with the aim of bringing our own grantmaking processes in line with our belief that people facing the problems and doing the work should be calling the shots. Our board now consists of people with intimate knowledge of the realities of the climate crisis and of philanthropy that centers people with lived experience. You can read more about this transition and our board members [on our blog](#).

CJRF's 2024-25 Grantmaking Strategy:

Our new board has been diligently working since 2023 to transition our governance and grantmaking systems. In late 2023, the board approved an 18-month strategy to deploy up to US\$4M in funding by test-driving several different participatory grantmaking methods.

As a funder who has made grants via traditional philanthropic methods and structures in the past, CJRF is now investing in a period of exploration and learning. We will undertake a series of

initiatives that will allow our staff and board to test several methods for participatory grantmaking over the course of 2024-25, including:

- an applicant collective process, where applicants will select the awardees;
- network-driven grantmaking processes, where current and past grant partners set strategic parameters, refer organizations for funding, or otherwise drive the grantmaking;
- a re-granter collective;
- potentially one or more other models

We are excited to officially launch the first of these participatory grantmaking pilots via this global open call for applications! This pilot will employ an applicant collective decision-making model, through which applicants will review proposals and decide on grant awards. Under this global call, CJRF will award four \$200,000 USD grants. Grants are intended to be multi-year and flexible. If you are interested in being considered, please carefully review the following information regarding the process, criteria, eligibility, and more.

Preface, Disclaimer, and Our Commitment to Transparency:

Below you will find a detailed description of who qualifies for our open call for proposals, how to apply, and importantly, the process through which CJRF will invite applicants to collectively review proposals and decide upon grants. CJRF has based this process in large part on the process of the [FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund](#), which has made grants through an applicant collective since 2015. FRIDA's experience suggests that this type of process has the potential to redistribute traditional philanthropic power and wealth in exciting and transformative ways, but for CJRF, this process is very much an experiment. Through this experiment, we hope to learn:

- Whether an applicant collective grantmaking process is a good fit with the very diverse, global climate justice community that we fund.
- Whether highly inclusive, collective grant decision-making leads to exciting new grants that our staff and board would not have made alone.
- Whether climate justice activists appreciate participating in the grantmaking process and find value in it even if they do not receive grants.
- Whether we should do this kind of grantmaking regularly in the future, and if so, what capacities we should build in order to do it well.

Building on CJRF's past experience, this call for proposals is targeting relatively large, formal organizations (see below). We are aware many potential applicants will be disappointed that they do not qualify because of their size or registration status. We recognize that these eligibility criteria perpetuate inequities in funding systems that often exclude important grassroots groups. However, as an organization with a small staff who is learning as we go on participatory grantmaking, we are trying to undertake change in manageable steps. Future CJRF participatory grantmaking opportunities will launch later in 2024 using other processes and targeting other groups, including a future global open call for smaller, less established organizations.

In the event that CJRF receives more applications than our staff can process, we will have to cancel this open call. For full transparency, we believe that, at our current staffing level of five individuals, we will be unable to process more than 700 expressions of interest. If we receive more than 700 expressions of interest, we will cancel this open call and try a different approach. Applicants will be notified accordingly.

Due to our limited staff capacity, and in the interest of fairness to all candidates, CJRF is unable to answer individual questions regarding this opportunity.

Open Call Process:

The application process has four steps:

1. **Eligibility Determination:** Those interested in applying for CJRF grants under this call should express their interest by filling out [this eligibility screening tool](#). This mandatory eligibility screening will enable CJRF staff to ensure that only applicants that meet basic eligibility requirements spend the time to apply for a grant. Applicants that do not fill out the eligibility screening will not be considered.
2. **Invitation to Apply:** Applicants that complete the eligibility screening and are found eligible will be notified by CJRF staff. If confirmed, you will receive access to the application form where you can submit a short concept note and budget. Only applicants that complete the eligibility screening and receive the application form from CJRF will be considered.
3. **Application Screening:** Concept notes and budgets will be screened by a review committee comprised of CJRF staff, board members, and external colleagues/peers in the climate justice space. They will screen for proposal eligibility, completeness, and relevance to the theme of this call for proposals (described below).
4. **Entry Into Applicant Collective:** Applicants that move past the second screening will be invited to become part of the applicant collective voting process. Your application will be shared with other applicants as part of the decision-making process, though all identifying information such as organization name will be withheld from voters. ***Please only apply if you are willing and able to take part in the applicant collective voting process (see below).***

Applicant Collective Voting Process:

The applicant collective will work in two stages:

1. **Small-group Review:** Those in the applicant collective will each take part in a small voting block comprised of about 7-12 applicants. We anticipate each applicant will need to review 7-12 applications during this stage, which will most likely take place during June 2024. Each block will vote to determine which of their 7-12 applications should move to the final selection stage. CJRF will structure voting blocks based on language, region, activities, or other parameters, depending on the applicant pool. ***Taking part in the small-group review process is mandatory for all applicants that reach this stage.***
2. **Final Grant Selection:** The top applications from each voting block will be invited to move to the final selection process. All applicants from the small group review, even those who are no longer under consideration for a grant, will be invited to read the final applications and vote to determine the grant recipients. Participants will need to read up to 10 applications in the second voting round, which will most likely take place during July 2024. ***Taking part in the final grant selection is mandatory for applicants who reach this stage, and optional for those who don't.***

*****Applicants that are unwilling or unable to take part in the application voting process should refrain from applying.***

Open Call Theme and Criteria:

In November 2023, CJRF held two workshops with grant partners, board members, and others in the climate justice movement to brainstorm about what a global open call for proposals could entail. From these workshops and subsequent board meetings came the decision to focus this first

2024 global open call on the following theme: ***Building connections, networks, and collaborative spaces for climate justice and resilience.***

Through this theme, CJRF aims to equip organizations with the resources and tools to build relationships and structures for collective climate action. This collective action accelerates momentum for change across communities, countries, and the world. It strengthens movements by allowing like-minded local groups to learn from each other and partner for more impact

CJRF is prioritizing the social and relational aspects of movement building for this open call. Some examples include: building coalitions, partnerships, networks, alliances, and/or other relationships; facilitating conversations; creating shared advocacy plans and strategies; developing shared narratives or communications campaigns; skills and leadership development opportunities; organizational development; and healing work. We are seeking applications that can demonstrate the following:

- A clear grassroots-led effort to build or strengthen climate justice movements by connecting diverse constituencies, movements, and/or organization types.
- A compelling strategy for sustaining and supporting climate justice movements over the long term.
- A clear strategy to strengthen the voices of marginalized peoples and enable local actors to influence national and international decision making.
- A commitment to addressing intersecting forms of oppression (see [CJRF's Intersectionality Statement](#) for more background on our approach).
- A clear articulation of how your work supports people to build climate resilience.

If you are found eligible during CJRF's [initial applicant screening](#), you will be invited to submit a short proposal that addresses the following questions:

1. What connection, network, or space do you plan to create or strengthen using this funding, and why is that connection, network, or space important to the field of climate justice?
2. How does the connection, network, or space you are seeking to create or strengthen advance your long-term vision, goals, and strategy?
3. Why do you believe your organization or coalition is the right one to create or strengthen this particular connection, network, space, and why now?
4. Who else will be involved in this connection, network, or space, and how will you facilitate their meaningful participation?

Intended Outcomes: CJRF will judge success of grants under this theme by the existence, strength and sustainability of relationships and connectivity over the next five years.

Applicant Eligibility

- Applications for this pilot are accepted in French or English; applications in other languages will not be considered.
- Eligible applicants must have an annual organizational budget between \$50,000 USD and \$2 million USD.
- Applicants must be constituent-led. For your group to be considered constituent-led by CJRF, at least 50% of your senior staff and board members should comprise the demographics your work aims to benefit. As an example, suppose a group wants to support Indigenous Peoples to work on climate justice. If they have five board members and three

top staff members, at least four of those individuals (50% of eight total leaders) would have to be Indigenous. Priority will also be given to applications that demonstrate a specific mechanism for constituent ownership and accountability (e.g. elected governing body, membership rules).

- CJRF will accept applications from organizations based in the Global South and from Indigenous-led organizations in the Global North. Specifically, CJRF will support organizations based in Eastern, Western, Southern, Central Africa; Asia and the small island states of the Pacific; South West Asia and North Africa; Latin America; the Caribbean and Central, Southern, and Central and North Asia.
- CJRF will also support Indigenous-led organizations in Europe, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States of America. ***Non-Indigenous groups in these regions are not eligible to apply.***
- Due to organizational constraints, CJRF cannot give grants to organizations based in Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria, Ukraine (Russian-Occupied Territories), Yemen.
- Organizations must be formally registered with the local or national government as a nonprofit organization or charity.

Timeline:

- **April 17:** Call for proposals launched and expressions of interest screening tool opened.
- **May 8:** Expressions of interest screening tool closes.
- **May 31:** Applications due for those that move past the expressions of interest screening.
- **June - August:** Applicant collective voting process
- **Late August:** Grant awardees notified.
- **October:** Public announcement of grant winners.

Expectations and Opportunities for Applicants:

By applying for this open call, you are agreeing to the following expectations from CJRF:

- You acknowledge that this is a learning experiment for CJRF, so there may be periodic adjustments to the timeline and process.
- You agree to complete the eligibility screening quiz and understand that you cannot apply to this open call if your quiz results note you are ineligible at this time. Only eligible applicants will receive an invitation to apply.
- If you are invited to apply, you accept the invitation, and you submit an application within the deadlines, your organization agrees to participate in the applicant voting collective. This means you may review up to 22 other applications.
- By participating in the applicant voting collective, you agree to carefully follow the process to vote on other organizations' proposals and understand you will take up a decision-making role in the process.

We understand there is a significant time commitment in this process. We hope that your organization sees the value in being a part of this full process. CJRF will not be providing monetary compensation for those participating in the applicant collective process. Our hope is that even though we cannot compensate individuals or give grants to every organization, participants will find it was worth their time and energy. Specifically, we believe that through this process, participants will:

- Learn about grantmaking "from the inside," and gain experience in evaluating proposals and recommending grants;

- Build new connections with other applicants working in the climate justice space;
- Influence CJRF's transition to a more participatory funder;
- Learn about other applicants' work, share your work, and gain visibility with new audiences;
- Learn more about the Climate Justice Resilience Fund, our work, and become part of our broader community.