Accessing Federal Funding for Climate, Environmental Justice, and Infrastructure

July 2024 RFP FAQs

**RFP Eligibility**

**Q:** Is the RFP only about accessing the recent federal funds OR can eligible projects seek to secure new funds or increasing existing funds to the region?

**A:** IIJA and IRA are not the only funding sources that can be the focus of work funded through this RFP. This RFP can support a variety of efforts to bring in federal funding for climate, environmental justice, and infrastructure to the region (however, the Foundation does not fund lobbying).

**Q:** In a situation in which there is a collective proposal with various partnering organizations, if some have existing WPF funding, is this still eligible?

**A:** Yes, provided that current WPF grantees are not requesting more funding for the same “project,” with the project defined by the current WPF grant scope and deliverables. Requesting funding for something that would expand current grant scope and deliverables (result statement and/or milestones) is acceptable, so long as it is clear how the expanded scope/new funds will help advance the goal of this RFP beyond what the organization is already funded to do.

**Q:** Will there be an RFP for NJ counties in the Philadelphia region at another time?

**A:** No. The Democracy and Civic Initiatives program is focused on Pennsylvania.

**Q:** If our organization is sponsored by a c3 that is funded by another WPF grant, would we be eligible?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Just wanted to clarify: private organizations can only apply with a non-profit or public partner?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Regarding non-profit status. What if the applicant is incorporated as a non-profit and has applied for 501c3 status but is still waiting on IRS final determination? IRS approval can take many months.
A: Per Foundation policy, an organization must have 501c3 status to apply. We have seen organizations navigate this in the past by applying through a fiscal sponsor.

Q: What kinds of things can be funded through this initiative? Is staffing eligible?
A: Yes. Staffing and all project-related expenses (except for lobbying) are eligible.

Q: Is the federal funding restricted to the funds that you relayed on the call (IIJA, IRA) or can it come from other federal grant programs that were in place before those large packages?
A: No, it is not limited to these two grant programs.

Q: Will there be future rounds of funding for this program?
A: A calendar of future funding opportunities can be found here: https://williampennfoundation.org/funding/upcoming-funding-opportunities

There is no related RFP on the calendar at present, but we will keep it up to date to provide advance notice of all future WPF RFPs.

Q: If you are an organization that is not experienced or have a specific plan to access federal dollars - should you not apply?
A: We recommend you look through the RFP and see if your proposed work meets our review criteria. In addition, linked in the RFP was a blog post, also below, that describes other WPF-funded work to help organizations access funds, which may be of interest.


Q: Will funds that are awarded to the state but needed to be accessed by individuals (through the state) count as federal funding?
A: Yes.

Q: Can we apply for this WPF funding without having plans to apply for federal funding?
A: The entities that apply to this RFP don’t themselves need to be the ones to pursue federal funding. Your work can be in support of other organizations seeking federal funding. However, it needs to be clear how your work will help advance the RFP’s objective.

Q: Can you say more about your relationship to the Green Family Foundation?
A: The Green Family Foundation shares our interests in helping the region access federal funds for climate and environmental justice and is partnering with us on this RFP to review proposals. At its discretion, Green Family Foundation may provide additional funding for projects that align with its priorities.

**Proposal Design**

Q: Can you please clarify if this RFP is to fund capacity support for an organization to pursue federal funding directly or is this RFP a regrant of federal funds to an organization?
A: This is not a regrant of federal funds; this RFP is to fund organizations help the region access federal funding opportunities.

Q: Can multiple projects be included in a single RFP response if there is one strategic goal?
A: Yes

Q: Should applicants focus on a single federal funding opportunity or a variety of opportunities if they are all focused on the same goal?
A: Proposals can request support to access multiple federal funding opportunities.

Q: What do you think of requests focused on developing/submitting a proposal for federal funding?
A: We are open to a range of proposed activities that have the potential to advance the goal of accessing federal funding.

Q: Is the sustainability of outcomes a large consideration for projects that are granted?
A: Sustainability of outcomes would contribute to our criteria for “Potential for Impact.”

**Application/Proposal Budget**

Q: Can you confirm that the submitted budget (using the provided template) should NOT include the applicant’s overhead?
A: Correct

Q: Can you please explain further the indirect costs that should be separated from the project budget?
A: The project budget should cover all aspects of direct expenses necessary to do the project. It should not include separate indirect or overhead costs. (Please note: the Foundation cannot fund lobbying.) For more information about how overhead expenses will be added to final awards, see page 7 of the Foundation’s standard grant application, downloadable here: https://williampennfoundation.org/funding/how-apply

Q: Is the word limit 2500-3000 for each prompt question, or the overall word limit?
A: There is no word limit for applications. This overall word count guidance is to illustrate that we do not expect organizations to submit lengthy applications.

Q: Will you allow funds to be spent on federal lobbying?
A: As a private foundation we cannot earmark funds for lobbying.