King Conservation District Seattle Community Partnership Grant Fund Program

2025 Guidelines

King Conservation District

Seattle
Office of Sustainability
& Environment

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 About the Grant Program & What We Fund

4 Which KCD Grant is for Us?

5 Funding Details & Who Should Apply?
Project Requirements

6 Eligible Costs & What We Will Not Fund

7 Project Examples

8 How to Apply

9 Info Sessions & Technical Assistance (New!)

10 2025 Application Schedule
Staff Office Hours

11 Application Process & Funding Decisions

12 Evaluation Criteria

14 What to Expect if Awarded

15 Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT THE GRANT PROGRAM

The King Conservation District (KCD) Seattle Community Partnership Grant Program is a grant opportunity for community-led projects that improve natural resources and advance racial justice in Seattle. Grants are awarded and administered by the King Conservation District and reviewed by the City of Seattle. This year, $700,000 in funding is available. Projects will be awarded no more than $75,000 and can take place over multiple years.

Visit the King Conservation District (KCD) website for additional information about the grant program and to start the grant application in KCD's online grant portal. If you have any questions, please reach out to the KCD Seattle Community Partnership Grants team at **KingConservationDist@gmail.com**.

WHAT WE FUND

King Conservation District is an agency that promotes the sustainable use of natural resources through education, technical assistance, and grants. Across the United States and here in Seattle, race is the most significant predictor of whether a person lives near contaminated air, water, or soil, which impacts their health and wellbeing. The **Seattle Community Partnership** (SCP) grant program supports **community-led initiatives that improve natural resources and are developed, led by, and benefit people most impacted by environmental and climate inequities.** These communities include: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth and elders.

Projects must focus on at least one of the following KCD natural resource priorities:

- **Managing and preventing pollution from stormwater runoff:** Water runoff from roads, roofs, and other surfaces pollutes our waterways. Solutions can include (but are not limited to) rain gardens, green roofs, cisterns (catch and store rainwater), bioswales (filtration and drainage systems), and other green infrastructure.
- **Protecting and restoring creeks, shorelines, and wetlands:** Activities can include removing invasive weeds and replanting native trees, shrubs and groundcovers around waterways to improve wildlife habitat and water quality.
- **Improving soil health:** Activities can include soil testing, adding nutrients or remediating contamination of community garden or urban farm soil, learning about and applying fertilizer, mulch and compost, and installing on-site compost bins.
- **Restoring urban forests, or other native plant stewardship:** Activities can include (but are not limited to) planting conifers in a deciduous tree dominated area, increasing native plant diversity, restoring native plants to an area, and removing invasive weeds.
- **Building a sustainable, equitable food system:** Activities can include creating or expanding a community garden, growing food distributed to local community groups, and improving access to healthy, local food.

In addition to the focus topics listed above, proposals must also specify which natural resource improvement action(s) will be taken to implement the project:

- **Direct Improvement of Natural Resource Conditions:** On-the-ground work to improve water quality, protect and conserve soils, or preserve and restore ecosystems.
- **Education and Outreach:** Raise awareness, deepen knowledge, and encourage responsible exemplary stewardship of natural resources.
- **Pilot and Demonstration Projects:** Test or refine natural resource management concepts and/or approaches that can be replicated by others.
- **Capacity Building:** Strengthen knowledge, skills, tools, support systems, partnerships, community connections, and technical resources for effective and equitable natural resource management actions.

WHICH KCD GRANT IS FOR US?

	KCD - Seattle Community Partnership Grants	Member Jurisdiction Grants	Regional Food System Grants	Community Ag Seed Money Grants
Project Location: King County	Projects in Seattle only	Within 33 member cities outside of Seattle	County-wide	County-wide
Award Amount	$75,000 max award	Based on available funding for that city	$100,000 max award	$3,500 max award
Funding Priorities	Natural Resource Improvement Projects that address pollution from stormwater runoff; protecting and restoring creeks, shorelines, and wetlands; soil health; urban forests or other native plant stewardship; building a sustainable, equitable food system	Natural Resource Improvement Actions: Direct improvement of natural resource conditions, education and outreach, pilot and demonstration projects, and projects and build capacity	Projects that contribute to the economic viability of local farmers through infrastructure, equipment, and collaborative partnerships.	Not a traditional grant, KCD purchases supplies and/or small equipment to support the creation of new community gardens or help sustain existing gardens.
Grant timeline	Open for applications May 20 - July 14, 2025	Rolling monthly application review through November	To be announced for mid-June 2025	Open for applications until funds are exhausted
Eligible Applicants	-Nonprofit orgs -Community groups with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor - Community groups seeking a fiscal sponsor	-City jurisdictions -Nonprofit orgs partnering with a city jurisdiction (must have a letter of support from member city) -Farmers Markets	-Nonprofit orgs -Producer Networks -Marketing Cooperatives -Farmers Markets -Food and Farm Businesses -Schools, special districts -Community groups with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor	-Nonprofit orgs -Community groups -Community gardeners -Schools

FUNDING DETAILS

$700,000 total available funding

Eligible Project Period: January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2027

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

Organizations or community groups whose work is developed and led by the priority communities: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth, and elders are encouraged to apply.

Eligible applicants must have a **501(c)3 nonprofit status,** or have a **fiscal sponsor with 501(c)3 nonprofit status,** or **be willing and able to secure a fiscal sponsor** with 501(c)3 nonprofit status within four (4) weeks of grant award and before project begins.

- *Fiscal sponsors often charge a fee of 8-15% of the total grant award. This fee may be included in your project budget.*
- *Applicants with a fiscal sponsor must upload a confirmation letter or agreement from their fiscal sponsor organization. A letter template is available on the website.*
- *During the contracting period, KCD staff can help connect groups to potential fiscal sponsors if needed*

Only one proposal per organization is allowed, except if the organization serves as a fiscal sponsor for multiple projects.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Projects must occur primarily within Seattle city limits. However, field trips outside of Seattle are allowed.
- Landowner Permission: If your project is on land that you do not own—including government, city, county, or private property—**you must submit a landowner permission letter with your application.** Obtaining landowner permission can take weeks, so we strongly recommend starting as early as possible. If you need help contacting government agencies or departments, let us know.
- Partnerships: If you have a partnership with another agency or group that is critical to project implementation, **a partnership commitment letter should be submitted**.
- Letter templates for landowner permission and partnership commitments are available on the website.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

The following are common costs that are eligible for grant funding.

- Salaries and benefits for paid employees of the organization.
- Travel, meals, and mileage while traveling, van rentals, and other transportation.
- Office supplies and software necessary for project implementation.
- Field, project or program supplies such as tools, plants, or other materials.
- Food or meals for the community, including food for volunteers.
- Contracted or professional services such as non-employees, consultants or contract labor.
- Equipment rentals are preferred for most equipment except for irrigation equipment, greenhouses, sheds and other farming/gardening equipment as determined by KCD.
- Indirect costs that support overall operations but cannot be directly attributed to a specific project, such as administration fees, insurance, or rent. Indirect costs in project budgets should not exceed 25% of salaries and benefits. Fiscal sponsor fees do not count as indirect expenses.

WHAT WE WILL NOT FUND

- Individuals and for-profit businesses are not eligible to receive funding.
- Acquisition of land.
- Construction of buildings.
- Park benches, shelters, and sidewalks.
- Projects that are not accessible to the public.
- Gift cards. Any participant stipend must be provided through a trackable payment method such as a check or ACH payment.
- Purchase of technology equipment such as laptops, tablets, phones, cellphones, etc. The SCP grant *may* support rental of this equipment.
- Other types of equipment as determined by KCD. If the type of equipment you want to request funding for isn't listed above, contact Jessica Saavedra for clarification (Jessica.Saavedra@kingcd.org, 425-773-9065).
- Indirect expenses such as overhead, administrative fees, and other indirect costs that exceed 25% of salaries and benefits.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

1

An organization and a community group partner to remove asphalt and install rain gardens at a local school, addressing stormwater management and heat island effects. The project also removes invasive weeds and replaces them with native plants (green infrastructure) to raise awareness about stormwater, climate resilience, and green infrastructure's health benefits.

2

An organization serving Indigenous communities launches a food initiative that grows, harvests, prepares and delivers traditional plants and vegetables to urban Indigenous communities in need. Culturally relevant education and outreach events for the Indigenous community are provided year-round as well. The project builds community leadership, supports a sustainable local food system, and builds healthy soil.

3

An organization partners with a cultural hub to shape and implement a proposal to restore a creek in their community. This project simultaneously protects natural resources and biodiversity and gives community members the opportunity to build new skills, implement their own solutions, and address larger social issues impacting them.

4

An community group develops and runs a food justice program for youth and young adults, teaching them about the food system and local community challenges. Participants develop recommendations to present to elected officials and other decision makers. They also develop a raised garden bed to grow food for those in need. This project educates and empowers young people on food justice issues while helping them develop critical advocacy and leadership skills for future employment.

5

To increase tree canopy and improve soil quality, a community group partners with an organization to plant and maintain trees on the grounds of a nearby community hub. Through this effort, they host educational events that celebrate local culture while increasing awareness of the benefits trees provide. The project also improves environmental conditions important to the community, such as climate preparedness, air quality, and urban canopy.

HOW TO APPLY

Click here to apply through the online grants portal

New to the King Conservation District's Grants Portal?

To submit a proposal, the first step is to register. Go to the grant portal and click on the **"Create New Account"** button.

Not Sure? If you think that you or someone at your organization has already registered in the system, contact Jessica Saavedra (jessica.saavedra@kingcd.org, 425-773-9065) to receive your username and password.

Once logged into the Grants Portal:

1. Navigate to the Apply page
2. Find the 2025 KCD-Seattle Community Partnership Grant Program and click on the dark blue "Apply" button to start your application.

Need help with the portal?

Check out this video tutorial: Getting Started with Online Grant Application System. You may also email KingConservationDist@gmail.com for additional support.

This **application worksheet** is available to help you prepare your proposal before submission. (You may make a copy of this view-only file for your use.)

All applications must be submitted through the Grants Portal by July 14 at 5pm. Late and/or emailed applications will not be accepted or reviewed.

INFO SESSIONS

Join a virtual information session to learn more about the grant program, the qualities of a strong proposal, the application and review process, and to ask any questions you may have. A recording of the session will be available on KCD's website.

SESSION 1:
Thursday, May 29
5:30 - 6:30 pm
CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP

SESSION 2:
Friday, June 13
Noon - 1pm
CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (New!)

Technical Assistance (TA) consultants are available for free. Applicants are encouraged to request TA for stronger proposals. **TA consultants will be able to**:

- Discuss your project idea for Seattle Community Partnership Grant alignment
- Review your draft proposal and provide feedback
- Provide *high-level* edits on your draft proposal

Consultants will not be able to:

- Help you design your project idea
- Draft your application responses

Learn about the consultants here.

Complete this form to request Technical Assistance by Tuesday, June 24.

If TA requests exceed capacity, priority will go to smaller organizations and those led by individuals whose first language is not English. Interpretation will be provided as requested.

2025 APPLICATION SCHEDULE

May 20	Application period opens
May 29	Info Session #1 Register here via ZOOM
June 13	Info Session #2 Register here via ZOOM
June 24	Last day to request TA
July 14	**APPLICATIONS DUE BY 5 PM PT**
Aug 6	Review Team questions are sent to applicants
Aug 20	**APPLICANT RESPONSES DUE BY 5 PM PT, if applicable**
Nov 7	Applicants notified of decision by email

STAFF OFFICE HOURS

Drop in during the following times to meet with staff to discuss eligibility, share project ideas, or to ask other questions:

Wednesday, June 4, 6:00-7:00 PM
Tuesday, June 17, 2:00-3:00 PM
Friday, July 11, 10:00-11:00 AM (mainly for online portal support)

DROP IN

APPLICATION PROCESS

Date	Application Stage	Who
May 20 - July 14	Application Period	Applicants
July 21 - Aug 4	Initial Proposal Review / Reading Period	Review Team
Aug 6 - 20	Response Period to Review Team Questions	Applicants
Aug 21 - Sept 10	Final Proposal Review and Scoring	Review Team
Sept 15 - 23	Deliberation and Decision-Making	Review Team
Sept 25 - Oct 28	Technical Review & Final Approval Process	KCD Staff

FUNDING DECISIONS

The Grant Review Committee includes City of Seattle staff and past KCD-SCP Grantees from community-based organizations with experience in environmental justice and the natural resource priorities. They will evaluate applications and submit their funding recommendations to the King Conservation District Board of Supervisors for final approval.

The Committee will assess proposals on based on purpose, clarity, community benefits and impact, workplan feasibility, and budget. Alignment with community-defined environmental justice priorities, the City's Equity & Environment Agenda, and KCD's natural resource improvement goals will also be considered. The full set of recommended projects will reflect geographic diversity across the City of Seattle, a range of natural resource issues being addressed, and use of innovative approaches.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

See the full scoring rubric here

The Grant Review Committee will use the following criteria to identify strong proposals:

Organization Impact

- Organization or group is a strong fit to lead and implement the proposed project, with deep connections and roots in Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrant, refugee, low-income, youth and/or elder communities.
- Organization shows they have meaningful experience and relevant strengths that align with the project's goals, supported by clear and convincing examples.
- Racial justice shows up as a core value, with specific examples of how it is implemented in the organization's internal and external work, including systemic efforts like advocacy, BIPOC leadership, and equitable policies.

Community & Project

- Project benefits Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, youth and/or elders.
- The community they are working with is clearly defined, including details on neighborhood and/or demographics.
- There is a strong understanding of the environmental inequities, needs, challenges, and priorities in their communities, and how those challenges can be addressed.
- Project activities and how they will be implemented are clearly described and well-designed, with a defined approach.
- Project clearly links actions to specific impacts that improve natural resources and addresses environmental inequities.
- Project demonstrates strong and active community involvement, and supports or enhances on existing community-led efforts and solutions.

People

- Project team (including staff or volunteers) is a part of the focus community(ies).
- Community members are clearly leading and centered in the proposal. They are key decision makers and/or deeply involved in all phases of the project concept development, design, planning, and implementation.
- Project team has the skills, lived experiences, relationships, and expertise to ensure successful completion.
- Project partnerships demonstrate authentic collaboration and reciprocity shown by actions like budget inclusion.

Impact

- Project outcomes are clearly linked to the community needs and opportunities identified in the proposal, and will advance environmental justice and improve natural resources.
- Community and environmental benefits are clear, specific, and meaningful.
- Project outcomes will directly support improving the selected natural resource priority area(s).

Workplan & Budget

- Activities and milestones are designed to build on each other and consistently progress toward environmental justice outcomes.
- The project activities and timeline are reasonable and sufficient to achieve the expected outcomes and impact.
- The budget is reasonable and realistic to provide the funding and resources needed to carry out the scope of work.
- Budget and budget narrative contain sufficient detail and propose spending and investments in community capacity to advance racial equity.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF AWARDED

If funded, groups, organizations, and fiscal sponsors (if applicable) will be required to:

- Participate in an introductory meeting with KCD Staff
- Work with KCD Staff to finalize project/program outcomes for the grant agreement
- Sign a grant agreement with King Conservation District to begin the project
- Participate in at least one reporting meeting a year

Reporting Requirements	Grant Disbursement
Grantees will meet with KCD Fund staff **at least once a year** during the grant cycle to complete reporting requirements. Grantees will need to submit progress reports with their reimbursement requests. Grantees should contact KCD Fund staff anytime to discuss project opportunities or challenges, such as changes to staffing, timeline, or budget. Grantees must submit records and receipts for all grant fund expenditures.	Grant awards are paid on a reimbursement basis. Eligible organizations may receive upfront installment payments for up to 40% of the grant award in the first year of a two-year project. KCD will determine newly awarded grantee eligibility for installment payments during the contract development stage. For more information, contact Jessica Saavedra, King Conservation District Senior Program Manager at Jessica.Saavedra@kingcd.org or 425-773-9065.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What qualities are you looking for in applicant groups?
Organizations or community groups should: 1) be led by or co-develop work with those most affected by environmental and climate issues, 2) demonstrate a clear understanding of their community's environmental and climate justice issues, and 3) propose work developed with their community.

What steps can we take to develop a strong proposal?

1. Carefully review the eligibility requirements before starting.
2. Allow plenty of time to develop your project idea with your team members.
3. Carefully review the scoring rubric when preparing your responses. The strongest proposals will cover all the items in the "green" sections of each category.
4. Be sure to hold time during the Q&A Period (August 6-20) to prepare and submit responses to the review team's questions.

How can we make sure the Review Team has the information they need?
Clearly show how project outcomes are directly linked to the natural resource improvement action(s) being addressed, and how they will benefit the community.

Is there a preference given to new projects or to ongoing programs/projects?
No. New projects and ongoing programs or projects are evaluated equally. Proposals that include ongoing program or project costs are eligible and encouraged to apply.

Are indirect costs an eligible expense for all-volunteer organizations? Since there are no salaries or benefits for the organization, how do we know if we exceed the cap on indirect costs at 25% of salaries and benefits?
Yes, all-volunteer organizations can submit project proposals that include indirect costs. Contact Jessica Saavedra (Jessica.Saavedra@kingcd.org, 425-773-9065) to discuss details about your project budget and eligible expenses in more detail.

Participant stipends are part of our budget. Can we use gift cards as stipends?
No, the purchase of gift cards is not an allowable grant expense. Stipends must be provided through a trackable payment method such as a check or ACH payment.

We don't have a fiscal sponsor yet. How should we budget for the fiscal sponsor fee?
We recommend including a 12% fiscal sponsor fee in your project budget. If awarded, you can adjust the budget to reflect the actual fee (typically 8–15%).

Can past Seattle Community Partnership Grant recipients apply in 2025?
Yes, but if you have an open contract with KCD, please reach out to Jessica Saavedra (Jessica.Saavedra@kingcd.org, 425-773-9065) *before* drafting or submitting a proposal.

Can a collaborative submit a proposal?
Yes, but one group in the collaborative must serve as the lead applicant group.

Can I submit more than one proposal?
No, only one application per nonprofit organization or community group is allowed, except if the nonprofit is serving as a fiscal sponsor for multiple proposals.

We applied to the City of Seattle's Environmental Justice Fund and noticed similar questions. Can we reuse our answers?
Yes and no. The applications were designed similarly to simplify applying to both programs. You can reuse responses where questions overlap but make sure that the funding requests cover different project costs, as expenses can't be double-funded.

If I have questions about the grant program or application, whom do I contact?
Please feel free to reach out to us at KingConservationDist@gmail.com.