



Sustainability, Climate Action & Resilience

Solicitation for Requests for Funding (RFF)

Environmental Sustainability Matching Grant Program - 2026 Funding

Summary

The Boulder County Commissioners are seeking Requests for Funding from municipalities located in Boulder County for the 2026 allocation of grant funding for sustainability-focused initiatives, as required by the Sustainability Tax, which was approved by the voters in 2016 as County Ballot Issue 1C “Countywide Sustainability Sales and Use Tax Extension” (“Sustainability Tax”).

- Any municipality within Boulder County is eligible to apply for this grant funding.
- **The application process will open on Sep. 22, 2025. Applications must be submitted online no later than Nov. 14, 2025 at 5 p.m.**
- Request for funding must meet the requirements and evaluation criteria outlined in this document.
- If your application proposes an environmental sustainability project that will include leveraging existing sustainability services managed by Boulder County (i.e., PACE, EnergySmart, CC4CA, etc.), please contact the Grant Program Manager by Oct. 6.
- Applications must be submitted online. The online form must be completed in one sitting. Answers cannot be saved for update later.
- Steps to Apply – the application will be available on Sep. 22, 2025:
 - Download and complete the application form provided on the program website.
 - Use the completed form in #1 to fill out the online application form, upload required attachments such as Letters of Intent as described in the Evaluation Criteria section later in this RFF, and submit.
- Applications must be completed in their entirety.
- If you have questions about the grant program, or application process, please contact Lea Yancey at lyancey@bouldercounty.gov.

Definitions

Sustainability Tax: The Sustainability Tax was approved by the voters in 2016 as County Ballot Issue 1C “Countywide Sustainability Sales and Use Tax Extension” and is the source of funding for this grant program.

Grant Program: The Boulder County Environmental Sustainability Matching Grant Program is the grant program that makes available grant funding each year to municipalities in Boulder County for environmental sustainability projects.

Municipality: Refers to an incorporated city or town, and for the purposes of this Request for Funding refers only to municipalities located within Boulder County.

Request for Funding: This notice announces to municipalities that applications are being accepted for funding for the Grant Program.

About the Environmental Sustainability Matching Grant Program Funding

In November 2016, voters approved the Sustainability Tax ballot initiative, to allocate a portion of sales and use tax revenue to fund sustainability infrastructure and programs, including grant funding to cities and towns for sustainability-focused initiatives that will address the priority needs of local communities.

The Grant Program provides an opportunity for municipalities in the county to undertake environmental sustainability priorities within their communities. Each year, the Board of County Commissioners invites applications from municipalities for projects that meet the Sustainability Tax and Grant Program objectives. Starting in funding year 2026, to maximize the impact of the Sustainable Matching Grant funding, the Boulder County Commissioners seek further advancement of local climate action policies and projects. Applicants must describe how the proposal will incorporate racial equity.

The applications for funding are submitted through this Request for Funding process. This funding cycle and allocation will address funding for calendar year 2026. Only one application is accepted per municipality. Each municipality can apply for funding by submitting an application with a description of the project and associated budget. Municipalities are required to provide a match. Projects are expected to be completed within 12 months. The county plans to award funding to the selected municipalities in the first quarter of 2026 after it issues an Award Notice to the municipality for incorporation into the existing IGA with the county.

Application Deadline

The application is on a separate online form (will open September 22) and is due electronically by **Friday, November 14, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

Eligibility Requirements

- Any incorporated city or town located within Boulder County is eligible to apply for funding on the basis of program need and proportionate to community population.
- The municipality must provide a 25% match of the dollar amount requested.

Compliance Requirements

- The purpose of the Grant Program is to fund projects that, in the opinion of the Commissioners, are in the best interest of Boulder County and consistent with the Sustainability Tax.
- The municipality must meet insurance requirements.
- Projects must comply with all federal, state and local land use, regulatory, and permit requirements.
- The municipality must be willing to enter into an IGA with the county.
- The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to wholly fund, partially fund, or reject any and all requests for funding.
- Funds are awarded on a competitive basis; no requests will be considered outside the standardized application and review process. There is no appeals process for proposals that are not accepted for funding.
- Boulder County shall have sole discretion to approve or disapprove any delayed expenditure of grant funds. If disapproved, the allocation may be recovered by the county and/or re-allocated for the current or subsequent years, at the county's sole discretion.

Eligible Projects and Policies

Proposed projects must be consistent with the purposes of the Sustainability Tax to fund projects that promote environmental sustainability. Proposed projects must demonstrate a program need and further advance local climate action.

The grant program offers the following options for funding each year:

- 1. High Impact Project (Option #1):** High impact projects are eligible for funding; low impact projects are not eligible.
 - a. High impact projects are those projects that significantly reduce GHG emissions or have meaningful climate resiliency. Examples include building electrification, geothermal, electric vehicle infrastructure and/or accelerate EV adoption, biochar, circular economy project, composting/recycling, regenerative agriculture, urban tree canopy, and renewable energy.
 - b. If a project meets this preferred list, the funding can be used to support municipal projects (i.e. fleet or municipal building electrification). See additional details below.

- c. Grant funding can be used for existing grant-funded sustainability staff in 2026 but not in future years. Funding in Option #1 is intended for high impact projects.
 - d. Ineligible projects include sustainability planning, climate action plans, GHG inventories, and general education and outreach.
 - e. If you are conducting an eligible project-specific plan or project-specific study, applicants must include with their application a resolution, memo, or letter of intent from municipal leadership that confirms the funded plan/study will be directly used to craft project development and implementation.
 - f. No more than two projects are permitted to ensure high impact projects.
2. **Pursue Policy Adoption (Option #2):** High impact policies are eligible for funding; low impact policies are not eligible.
- a. High impact policies are those policies that significantly reduce GHG emissions or have meaningful climate resiliency. While not exhaustive, the [Municipal Policy Examples List](#) provides examples of high impact climate policies.
 - b. Boulder County allows and encourages municipalities to use the county grant funds to support the municipality's local policy development and implementation including building the leadership and community support for the adoption of local policy. Grant funding can be used for staff working on the policy, consultants, interns, stakeholder engagement, and other costs related to the policy work.
 - c. Applicants must include with their application a resolution, memo, or letter of intent from municipal elected officials or City Managers to adopt the proposed policy so long as the funding request is granted.
3. **Project Flexibility with Completed Policy Adoption (Option #3):**
- a. With proof of adoption of a new high impact policy in the last 12 months, municipalities have project flexibility as follows:
 - Municipalities can apply for funding for projects listed under option #1 plus more eligible project types, consistent with the purposes of the Sustainability Tax, including water quality and water conservation and local food and agriculture.
 - Ineligible projects include sustainability planning, climate action plans, GHG inventories, and general education and outreach.
 - More than two projects can be funded under option #3.
 - b. While not exhaustive, the [Municipal Policy Examples List](#) provides examples of high impact climate policies.
 - Applicants must include with their application proof of new policy adoption in the last 12 months (as of application due date), such as adopted land use or energy code, municipal ordinance,

passed voter-approved ballot initiative, licensing requirement, etc.

- To meet the requirements of Option #3, the policy needs to exceed state minimum requirements, when applicable.

4. Project Flexibility for Small Municipalities (Option #4): This option is only available to municipalities with a population of 1,000 or less.

- a. Municipalities can apply for funding for projects listed under option #1 plus more eligible project types, consistent with the purposes of the Sustainability Tax, including water quality and water conservation and local food and agriculture.
- b. Ineligible projects include sustainability planning, climate action plans, GHG inventories, and general education and outreach.
- c. Grant funding can be used for existing grant-funded sustainability staff in 2026 but not in future years.
- d. More than two projects can be funded under Option #4.

Other Guidelines and Parameters

- Applicants must describe what process was used to determine the racial equity impact of the proposed policy or project(s) and describe any modifications to the policy or project(s) based on potential impacts. Boulder County has a Racial Equity Impact Assessment Tool (REIAT) tool available for assistance with this. As applicable, applicants may find it helpful to use metrics or tools, such as the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool or EnviroScreen Environmental Justice Mapping Tool.
- Applications may include municipal capital improvement projects (i.e., environmental improvements within/on municipal buildings, fleet, and municipal infrastructure), consistent with the following guidance:
 - Funding is only eligible for sustainability improvements above what is required by code.
 - Funding can only be used towards fossil-fuel free retrofits, equipment, and vehicles. The county grant funding should not be used to replace any of the city or town public works budgets for capital equipment, but instead county grant funds are permitted to go towards offsetting the incremental cost of electrification equipment. Note that Boulder County funds cannot be used for purposes in which other state agencies or utility programs already fund transportation electrification efforts.
- The county welcomes applications that leverage or build upon existing successful sustainability services, such as Partners for a Clean Environment (PACE), EnergySmart, Mobility for All, Urban Tree Canopy Expansion, and climate policy coalition Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA). If your municipality plans to leverage existing sustainability services managed by Boulder County, please contact the Grant Program Manager by October 6 to confirm your project is eligible.

- Applications may include transportation electrification implementation, as well as supplementing existing state grants or utility funding for electric vehicle charging stations. In general, Boulder County funds can not be used for purposes in which other state agencies or utility programs already fund transportation electrification efforts, such as Charge Ahead Colorado program, Fleet-ZERO grant program, EV charging infrastructure or projects that are eligible for funding by local utilities. For example, if your municipality wants to apply for funding to install EV charging stations at municipal locations, you'll need to apply to the state grant programs, not to the county sustainability grant program. However, if your municipality wants to partner with CEO to contribute additional funding to increase the interest and participation in your community of EV charging, that project may be permissible under the county grant funding.
- Applications may include building policy adoption and building electrification implementation. In general, applicants are encouraged to leverage and use other available funding as well (i.e. Denver Regional Council of Governments Carbon Pollution Reduction Grant, Colorado Local Climate Action Accelerator, utility funding).

Evaluation Criteria

Awards will be based on consideration of the following evaluation criteria:

- How the proposed project will significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or achieve meaningful climate resiliency (Option #1);
- How the proposed policy will significantly reduce GHG emissions or achieve meaningful climate resiliency, and evidence of commitment from municipal elected officials or city managers to pursue identified policy (Option #2);
 - Custom policy proposals are acceptable with the same description and commitment;
- Proof of adoption of new high impact policy in the last 12 months and how the proposed project for funding fulfills a municipality's sustainability priority (Option #3);
- How the proposed project fulfills a municipality's sustainability priority (Option #4);
- The applicant has considered racial equity impacts of the project or policy (all Options);
- The ability of the government to provide assurances that it will be able to complete the proposal within a 12-month timeframe (all Options); and
- Commitment to meet the funding match requirements (all Options).

Funding

The final funding amounts available will be provided when applications open in late September 2025. Grant Program funding for 2026 is subject to the county's 2025 budget approval process, and final award amounts may vary from the estimates. Funding requests must be for a minimum amount of \$5,000. The maximum amount any municipality may apply for is proportionate to the population of the municipality; however, small municipalities whose proportionate maximum is below \$15,000 may apply for up to \$15,000.

NOTE: The DOLA State Demography office doesn't provide updated population data until late September 2025 so the below table reflects estimates based on 2023 population data. The table below will be updated when applications open in late September 2025.

Table 1: Sustainability Tax: Municipal Grants - Allocation to Communities in 2025 (2026 not available yet)

Allocated Share of Tax by Municipality Proportionate to Population¹

Minimum Allocation = \$15,000

City/Town	Population	% Population	6% of Entire Revenue Generated Allocated to Communities (\$15,000 minimum)	25% Match ²
Boulder	106,852	33%	\$218,956	\$54,739
Erie in Boulder County ³	14,887	5%	\$30,506	\$7,626
Jamestown	245	0.08%	\$15,000	\$3,750
Lafayette	30,471	9%	\$62,440	\$15,610
Longmont	97,006	30%	\$198,780	\$49,695
Louisville	19,570	6%	\$40,102	\$10,025
Lyons	2,166	1%	\$15,000	\$3,750
Nederland	1,471	0.5%	\$15,000	\$3,750
Superior	12,536	4%	\$25,688	\$6,422
Ward	125	0.04%	\$15,000	\$3,750
Unincorporated Boulder County	41,334	13%	\$83,294	n/a
Total	326,336	100%	\$719,765	\$159,118

¹ Population values based on [Colorado DOLA State Demography Office data for 2023](#) (most recent available). Each municipality eligible for funds above the minimum threshold is reduced 7% to cover the minimum grant amount.

² Match is 25% cash match requirement, except in-kind allowed for small communities with population <5,000.

³ Population of Erie located in Boulder County is 14,887

The estimates for population are based on population totals for Colorado municipalities published online by the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs State Demography Office.

Grant funding is awarded annually and as such, it is important that awardees implement projects within a 12-month period.

Funding is contingent on the receipt of sales and use tax revenues through the Sustainability Tax. There is no guarantee that Sustainability Grant awards will be made in any given year. Funding for future years cannot be guaranteed.

Match

Municipalities with a population greater than or equal to 5,000 must match their request with a 25 percent cash match of the dollar amount requested.

However, in the event such a municipality has a demonstrated inability to meet the cash match due to unforeseen circumstances, the county, in its sole discretion, may determine to modify the cash match requirement. You must make this request in your application with proposed allocation amounts (i.e. reduced cash match and/or in-kind, volunteer, and donation contributions). Boulder County will review exception requests on a case-by-case basis.

Municipalities with a population less than 5,000 must match their request with a 25 percent match from in-kind, volunteer, and donation contributions ("Other Community Contribution") and/or through a cash match. In-kind contributions can include paid staff, consultant, and intern time.

Volunteer rates must be calculated consistent with the annual Independent Sector for Colorado state volunteer rate, which is \$38.74 per hour for the most recent data. Each municipality must document how they track Other Community Contributions through their reporting.

Larger Projects that Exceed Annual Funding Allocation

A municipality can submit a proposal to have the county hold funds in reserve for a project with an estimated project budget that exceeds the municipality's 2026 funding allocation. For such proposals, the municipality must contact the Grant Program Manager by October 6 to receive information on how to complete your application.

Reporting Requirements

Municipalities awarded a grant will be required to submit annual financial and

project progress reporting for their grant-funded sustainability projects. A municipal representative shall attend project progress meetings with the Grant Program Manager, as requested.

Contact Information for Grant Program:

[Lea Yancey](#)

Senior Sustainability Strategist

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