NY Power Authority | Canal Corporation



New York Power Authority

Environmental Justice Community Greening Funding Initiative

Request for Application (RFA)

Applications Due: October 16, 2026

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I. GLOSSARY

Air Quality Improvements: Reductions in pollutants (e.g., particulate matter, ozone precursors) achieved through greening and emission reduction activities.

Bioswale: A vegetated, gently sloped channel that slows, filters, and conveys stormwater.

Census Tract: A geographic unit used for data analysis; applicants must specify project tract(s) to confirm DAC status.

CLCPA (Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act): New York State law establishing climate and equity goals, including identification of DACs and the requirement to prioritize certain investments and emissions reductions to these communities.

Climate Resilience: A community's ability to prepare for, withstand, and recover from climate impacts such as extreme heat, flooding, and storms.

Community Engagement: Meaningful involvement of local residents and stakeholders in project design, implementation, and stewardship (e.g., outreach, training, co-creation).

Community Greening: Projects that increase vegetation and natural features (e.g., trees, gardens, green roofs) to improve health, climate resilience, and quality of life.

Disadvantaged Communities (DACs): New York State census tracts identified under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) as experiencing disproportionate environmental and health burdens. Applicants should verify DAC status using the referenced map tool.

Environmental Justice (EJ): Fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in environmental decision making, ensuring no group bears disproportionate environmental burdens or lacks access to environmental benefits.

FTE (Full Time Equivalent): A standardized measure of staff effort (e.g., 0.5 FTE = halftime) used in budget and staffing plans.

GHG (Greenhouse Gas) Emissions: Heat trapping gases (e.g., carbon dioxide, methane) that contribute to climate change; projects may reduce GHGs through cooling and reduced energy demand.

Green Infrastructure: Nature based or engineered systems (e.g., rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements) that manage stormwater, reduce flooding, and improve water quality.

Green Roof: A roof partially or fully covered with vegetation over a waterproof membrane, providing cooling, stormwater retention, and habitat benefits.

Long Term Sustainability: Plans to operate, maintain, and financially support the project beyond the RFP funding period.

Maintenance Plan: A documented approach for ongoing care of installed features (e.g., watering schedule, pruning, repairs) with responsible parties and budget.

Match Funds: Non RFP funding contributed to the project (cash or in kind), if applicable.

Milestones: Clear, time-bound steps or deliverables used to track progress and trigger payments.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E): Methods to measure outcomes and impacts (e.g., canopy added, temperature reduction, infiltration rates, engagement metrics).

Permeable Pavement: Paving materials that allow water to pass through into the ground, reducing runoff and improving infiltration.

Permits/Approvals: Regulatory authorizations required before implementation (e.g., local, state environmental or building permits).

Project Feasibility: The practical viability of a proposal, including technical soundness, staffing capacity, risk mitigation, and realistic timelines.

Rain Garden: A shallow, planted depression that captures and infiltrates stormwater runoff from roofs, streets, or sidewalks.

Retention (Final 10%): A portion of the award held until project completion and submission of required reports.

Site Control: Proof that the applicant has authority to implement and maintain the project at the proposed location (e.g., ownership, lease, permissions).

Stormwater Management: Strategies and infrastructure to capture, store, infiltrate, or treat rainwater to reduce flooding and pollution.

Subcontractor/Vendor: External entities contracted to provide services or materials (e.g., design firms, landscapers).

Urban Forestry / Tree Canopy: The management and expansion of trees in cities; “tree canopy” refers to the layer of leaves/branches that provides shade and cooling.

Urban Heat Island (UHI) Effect: Higher temperatures in urban areas due to reduced vegetation and hea tabsorbing surfaces; can be mitigated by shade trees, green roofs, and reflective materials.

Workforce Development: Training and employment pathways for local residents related to project implementation and maintenance.



II. INTRODUCTION

The New York Power Authority (NYPA), the largest state public power organization in the United States, is dedicated to providing clean, low-cost and reliable energy.

As part of our commitment to environmental justice, NYPA is pleased to announce the availability of funding through the NYPA Environmental Justice (EJ) Community Greening Initiative. This initiative aims to support community greening projects that promote healthy environments in disadvantaged communities[1] with a nexus to NYPA's operations and across New York State.

Many disadvantaged communities face disproportionate environmental and climate impacts including higher energy costs, health impacts, and fewer resources for adaptation. These communities often have limited access to green spaces, which can exacerbate urban heat island effects and reduce air quality. Community greening projects, such as increasing tree canopy and green spaces, can provide cooling, improve air quality, and offer recreational spaces that foster physical and mental well-being. Additionally, the installation of rain gardens and bioswales can manage stormwater, reduce flood risks, filter pollutants, and in some instances indirectly reduce energy consumption. Through the EJ Community Greening Program NYPA will help fund projects that enhance the natural environment, reduce pollution, improve public health, and mitigate climate change impacts.

NYPA is committed to delivering a cleaner and more affordable future. One of our core strategic pillars is to support the diverse needs of the communities we serve and impact by promoting environmental justice and ensuring equitable access to a clean and healthy environment.

We invite registered not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous nations and tribes, municipalities, and state agencies to submit proposals for projects that align with this vision.

III. PROGRAM GOALS

- Support projects that improve the natural environment and sequester or reduce greenhouse gases and criteria pollutants.
- Improve NYPA's overall environmental impact within the communities it operates and statewide.
- Enhance climate resilience through sustainable practices and green infrastructure.
- Create green spaces, trees and other greening solutions to mitigate urban heat island effects, improve air quality, and enhance quality of life in disadvantaged communities.
- Foster collaboration and community engagement in greening projects.
- Support projects with demonstrated feasibility, long-term sustainability and clear metrics for measuring environmental and community benefits.
- Support community capacity building.

IV. PROJECT EXAMPLES

Projects should focus on **community greening initiatives,** such as, but not limited to:

- Tree planting and urban forestry projects
- Community gardens and green spaces development
- Green infrastructure installations (e.g., rain gardens, bioswales) for flood and erosion mitigation

[1] As defined in New York Environmental Conservation Law § 75-0101(5). Information about disadvantaged communities in New York can be found at https://climate.ny.gov/resources/disadvantaged-communities-criteria/.

- Projects that address urban heat island effects and/or improve air quality
- Expansion of existing green spaces or projects
- Any other greening projects that promote the program goals, including advancing healthy environments and climate resilience

V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A. Geographic Eligibility

Projects must be located within New York State Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) [2] with a nexus to NYPA's operations. Eligible New York State counties are listed below.

County
Rensselaer
Albany
Schenectady
Onondaga
Suffolk
Nassau
Westchester
Ulster
Oneida
Queens
Kings
Richmond
New York
Bronx
St. Lawrence
Franklin
Erie
Niagara

B. Applicant Qualifications

- Registered not-for-profits, Indigenous nations and tribes, municipalities, and state agencies.
- Demonstrated experience in community engagement, such as leading outreach initiatives, facilitating stakeholder partnerships, or coordinating community-based projects.
- Demonstrated capacity to manage funds responsibly and successfully complete proposed projects, including examples of past budget management and project delivery.
- Submittal(s) must include the project approach and execution plan of the proposed project(s).

C. Restrictions

- The Authority will not accept applications from for-profit, religious or political organizations.

[2] Information about disadvantaged communities in New York can be found at https://climate.ny.gov/resources/disadvantaged-communities-criteria/.

Usage Note:
Applicants may use the interactive map tool provided on the webpage to verify whether a project site is located within a designated Disadvantaged Community (DAC). Upon loading, the map displays New York State census tracts, with DACs shaded in purple. Users can search by address or zoom into specific areas to confirm DAC status and toggle "individual indicator" levels.

VI. PROJECT CRITERIA

Proposals will be selected based on the degree to which they meet the program goals and incorporate impactful community greening activities.

Program Goals	Category	Example Activities and Impacts
A. Environmental Improvements and Climate Resilience	*A.1*	o Implement new or expanded tree planting, green roofs, gardens, other green spaces o Install rain gardens, permeable pavements, or bioswales o Other flood mitigation and stormwater management
	A.2	o Sequester or mitigate impacts from GHG and criteria pollutant emissions o Enhance community resilience to extreme weather events o Reduces temperature in heat-vulnerable neighborhoods o
B. Community Health	*B.1*	o Addresses urban heat island effects o Improves air quality in pollution-affected communities o Creates green spaces to support physical activity and mental health
	B.2	o Directly benefits New York State designated disadvantaged communities that have historically faced disproportionate adverse environmental impacts o Addresses energy burden issues for low-income households



Program Goals	Category	Example Activities and Impacts
C. Community Engagement	*C.1*	o Evidence of community input in project o Community needs and priorities reflected in project goals
	C.2	o Training and skill development opportunities for community members o Local workforce development components o Community or environmental education related to the project
D. Project Feasibility, Sustainability & Impact	*D.1. Technical Viability*	o Realistic timeline and implementation plan o Appropriate technology and design for local conditions o Clear project management structure and responsibilities o Risk assessment and mitigation strategies
	D.2. Long-term Sustainability	o Maintenance and operation plans beyond funding period o Financial sustainability model
	D.3. Measurable Impact	o Clear metrics for environmental and community benefits o Monitoring and evaluation plan

VII. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Narrative Components



1. **Introduction**
    - Background of the applicant organization
    - Summary of the project
2. **Community Needs Assessment**
    - Project location- address and census tract(s)
    - Description of disadvantaged community status[3] and specific environmental and health challenges faced by the community
3. **Project Description**
    - Detailed scope and description of the project
    - Goals and deliverables for the project
4. **Timeline and Project Management Plan**
    - Project timeline with major milestones
    - Resume or bio of staff overseeing the project
    - Summary of any subcontractors or vendors contracted to implement the project
5. **Technical Information**
    - Site ownership, existing conditions and any relevant additional environmental considerations
    - Environmental review status, including whether any municipal entity has initiated or conducted an environmental review (e.g., SEQRA), the stage of the review, and any available documentation
    - Design specifications, renderings, or other technical documents
    - Required permits or approvals and if they have been obtained or timeline for obtaining them
6. **Community Engagement**
    - Community involvement in project development
    - Strategies for ongoing engagement and participation
7. **Project Impact and Sustainability Plan**
    - Environmental and health impacts to the surrounding community, including GHG reductions, air quality improvements, urban heat island mitigation, flood and erosion mitigation
    - Long-term maintenance and operation strategy
    - Financial sustainability beyond the funding period

B. Project Budget

- Project Budget (please provide attached MS Excel):
    - Total project cost
    - Materials and supplies
    - Contracted services- consulting, design services, landscaping services, etc.
    - Personnel expenses and % FTE dedicated to project
    - Administrative costs
    - Other project expenses
- Budget narrative
- Match funds and sources (if any)

C. Required Documentation

- Current year operating budget, including income and expenses

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[3] Climate.ny.gov, https://climate.ny.gov/resources/disadvantaged-communities-criteria/.
Usage Note:
Applicants may use the interactive map tool provided on the webpage to verify whether a project site is located within a designated Disadvantaged Community (DAC). Upon loading, the map displays New York State census tracts, with DACs shaded in purple. Users can search by address or zoom into specific areas to confirm DAC status and toggle “individual indicator” levels.

- Listing of current board members and senior management, including affiliations and other pertinent information
- Most recent audited financial statement or approved substitute
- Documentation of organizational entity, e.g. 501(c)(3) status
- Demonstrated adherence to Supplier Diversity Goals: 36% (NYS certified MWBE/SDVOB)
- Site control and permissions

VIII. AWARD DETAILS

A. Funding Structure

- **Individual project funding**: $25,000- $300,000.
- **Project duration**: Funds must be expended within 24 months of the funding being awarded. Projects completed within one (1) calendar year are preferred. Multi-year projects will be considered with annual review.
- **Payment schedule:** Tied to milestone completion, *retention of final 10% pending project completion and reporting.*

B. Reporting Requirements

- Quarterly progress reports.
- Final project report.

IX. APPLICATION TIMELINE

Milestone	Date	Description
RFA Release	August 17, 2026	Request for application released
Virtual Session	September 14, 2026 10:00–10:30 AM	The session will include an overview of the program, how to submit your application and open Q+A period **Click here to join the virtual session**: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/212077478653789?p=UIe9RVxp0QF8CpcWre
Questions Due	September 18, 2026	Deadline for applicant questions and clarifications
Application Deadline	October 16, 2026	Final submission deadline for application
Award Announcements	November 17, 2026	Notification of selected awardees

X. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications must be submitted to CommunityGreening@nypa.gov. Please note that while we welcome all responses to this RFA, submitting a response does not guarantee selection. The Authority may decide to conduct interviews with applicants which will be considered as part of the overall evaluation process.

Late submissions will not be considered.

XI. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions or additional information, please contact: CommunityGreening@nypa.gov.