



Climate Champions Grant Program: Call for Applications

APPLICATIONS DUE: DEC. 1, 2023

Overview

The Denver Public Schools (DPS) Sustainability Team partnered with Denver’s Office of Climate Action, Sustainability & Resiliency (CASR) to fund projects that help DPS students implement climate action in their schools. This program intends to engage DPS students in real-world problem solving, leadership development, and Project Based Learning that will allow for innovative and creative solutions to climate change.

\$225,000 is available to fund multiple projects during this round of applications. The maximum amount of funds a school can apply for during this round is \$25,000, and the minimum amount that can be applied for is \$1,000. We invite DPS students to apply for funding by the deadline of Friday, Dec. 1, 2023.

DPS’ Climate Action Plan

The DPS Board of Education passed Ends Statement 1.6 in 2022 as a result of student activism. Ends Statement 1.6 reads:

DPS shall be a national leader in establishing an organizational culture anchored in sustainability, climate action, and environmental justice in both the conservation of natural resources and in minimizing the carbon footprint of DPS’ practices.

DPS published its first-ever Climate Action Plan in response to Ends Statement 1.6. The DPS Climate Action Plan can be found online in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), and it has three North Star goals:

- Reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90% by 2050.
- Reduce natural resource consumption and waste year-over-year.
- All students and staff are engaged in sustainability by 2050.

“Our futures depend on us taking action.”

Maya Kitei,
South High School

VISION: DPS is recognized as a leader and steward of healthy, livable, and sustainable environments.

Allowable Uses of Funding

Projects *must* address at least one the following allowable uses of funding:

1. **Renewable energy technology**
2. **Climate justice programs** at schools and/or surrounding neighborhoods
3. **Adaptation and resiliency programs** that help vulnerable communities prepare for a warming climate
4. **Transportation** options that are affordable, clean, safe, and reliable
5. Improved **energy efficiency** of school buildings to reduce their carbon footprint, utility bills, and/or indoor air pollution

Problems of Practice

The intent of this program is to engage DPS students in Project Based Learning (PBL). Learn more about PBL at: www.pblworks.org/what-is-pbl. Below are *examples* of problems of practice for each of the allowable uses of funding.

1. **Renewable energy:** Natural gas is a *non*-renewable energy source, and the natural gas used to heat our homes and buildings results in 24% of Denver’s greenhouse gas emissions ([Energize Denver](#)). How can my school shift to electrification and/or using renewable energy?
2. **Climate justice:** In nearly all regions of the U.S., children in low-income households are more likely than those in higher-income households to live in areas with the highest projected increases in childhood asthma diagnoses due to climate-driven changes in fine particle pollution (PM_{2.5}) ([U.S. EPA](#)). How can we protect our vulnerable communities from worsening air quality?
3. **Adaptation and resiliency:** Denver is estimated to have 88 extreme heat days per summer by 2050, an increase from the historical average of 9 days. And many residents lack access to indoor cooling like air conditioning ([City and County of Denver](#)). How can we help vulnerable communities cope with increases in extreme heat?
4. **Transportation:** It’s estimated only 14% of DPS students walk or bike to school. ([DPS Climate Action Plan](#)). How can my school encourage students to get to school in a way that does not involve burning fossil fuels - such as walking, biking, scooting, or rolling?
5. **Energy efficiency:** Energy use in buildings and homes is responsible for 64% of Denver’s greenhouse gas emissions ([City and County of Denver](#)). How can we help our school buildings use energy more efficiently?

Applicants can also use the table below to help develop their own problem of practice.

Developing a Problem of Practice	
Step 1: Identify a problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does the problem impact the community (hint: use data)? ● Can the problem be improved within the timeframe and scope of this project?
Step 2: Identify an objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop an objective and action steps that will address the problem in specific and measurable ways. ● Ask questions to understand current barriers to improvement.
Step 3: Review the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What resources does the project need to be successful? ● Does the project adequately address the problem of practice? ● Will the project positively affect the community?

Eligibility

This program is meant to be student-led but *must* have a DPS staffperson champion who will support the project team, hold students accountable to project deadlines, and ensure funding is spent appropriately. Students and staff from DPS schools can apply, but projects must be student-led and based at a DPS school. All grade levels can apply. DPS charter schools are NOT allowed to apply at this time.

Example Projects

Below are examples of projects that could receive funding, but we encourage applicants to *get creative and use these examples simply as a springboard for their own ideas.*

- Redesigning a shared space with a climate justice focus
- Creating prototypes that address the impacts of extreme heat
- Upgrading school buildings with highly efficient windows
- Installing bike racks
- Purchasing electric bikes
- Attending job training for climate action careers
- Creating a marketing campaign for resource conservation
- Planting and maintaining trees or native plants
- Installing solar-powered picnic tables

Application Requirements

Please submit your application with the three summaries below at:

<https://forms.gle/cTmbhAXYre2twNDq8>.

1) Project Summary

2) Collaboration Summary

3) Budget Summary

4) Photos (Optional)

1. PROJECT SUMMARY (500 words or less)

- Describe the project, population served by the project, and the project’s impact on climate action, including any relevant metrics (examples: kWh saved, tons of CO₂ saved, number of people engaged, number of volunteer hours).
- Describe how the project will work toward [DPS’ Climate Action Plan](#) goals, environmental justice, and the funding’s allowable uses.
- Describe how the project’s impact will be measured *and maintained* beyond completion.
- Describe the project timeline, including key milestones and a plan for when/how the team will work on the project (e.g., once a week during class).

2. COLLABORATION SUMMARY (500 words or less)

- Describe the project team and DPS staffperson champion.
- Get the **principal’s signature** with a statement of approval for the application.
- Describe the collaboration done with appropriate DPS departments and how the appropriate approvals were obtained. For example, the DPS teams in the table below should be collaborated with for the associated types of projects.
- Contact **First Call** for approval of ALL building or grounds modifications.
- Describe the team’s participation in the pre-application assistance process. (See next section.)

DPS Collaborators	For any projects affecting:
Career and Technical Education	career development and project based learning guidance
Custodial	cleaning processes or zero waste
Facility Managers	the school building or grounds
Environmental Services	indoor air quality, stormwater, water quality
Food and Nutrition Services	school cafeterias or food choices
Grounds Department	outdoor landscaping
HVAC Shop	heating and cooling systems
Instructional Coaches	for project support and alignment to content standards
Planning, Design & Construction	buildings or landscaping changes
Plumbing Shop	water-using fixtures
Sustainability Team	renewable energy generation

3. **BUDGET SUMMARY** (500 words or less)

- Explain the requested funding amount, project costs, and provide any relevant vendor quotes.
- A table format is suggested for this summary, and a **budget template** is provided at the end of this document.
- Funding is available for purchasing equipment, supplies, outreach, and career development. Funding is NOT available for hiring staff at DPS.
- The maximum amount of funding an application can request is \$25,000, and the minimum amount that can be requested is \$1,000.

4. **PHOTOS** (*OPTIONAL*, 3 photos maximum)

- Share up to three photos that help show the context and scope of the project.

Pre-Application Assistance

The pre-application assistance process is intended to provide applicants with any necessary tools, guidance, and connections to ensure quality, competitive applications and successful projects.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their project ideas by **Friday, Oct. 20** at:

<https://forms.gle/X6SFidRqP7x8AmdU7>

DPS Sustainability staff will then review and guide the project team as necessary, with the intent that project teams incorporate the guidance into their project plan and final application.

While participating in the pre-application assistance process is NOT required, it is *highly encouraged* so that final project submissions are feasible and as competitive as possible.

Evaluation

This program has an evaluation process to ensure fair selection of the most-qualified applications. Applications will be reviewed for completeness and scored by DPS and Denver CASR staff with subject matter expertise.

The evaluation criteria is provided in a table at the end of this document. *Applicants are encouraged to tailor their application to address the evaluation criteria*, as these are how applications will be scored.

Timeline

Stakeholder outreach and communication	Summer - Fall 2023
Pre-application assistance submissions due (optional)	Friday, Oct. 20, 2023
Applications due	Friday, Dec. 1, 2023, 5 p.m. MST
Application evaluation & selection	Dec. 15, 2023
Funding recipients notified	Jan. 3, 2024
Funding made available to recipients	Jan. 3, 2024
Projects completed	July 1, 2024
Data reported to Denver CASR	Sept. 1, 2024
First year cohort celebration	Fall 2024

Questions?

Email any questions to the DPS Sustainability Team at: dept_sustainability@dpsk12.net. We're here to help and support project teams throughout the entire process!

Let's do something real, together!



We look forward to reviewing all the creative ideas from DPS students.

Climate Champions Grant Program: Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria:	Score	Description
Project Summary		
- Does the summary clearly communicate the proposed project?	2	Fully
- What is the reach of the project?	1	Partially
- Will the project be communicated to the school community effectively?	0	No
Budget		
- Does the summary clearly communicate about the requested funds?	2	Fully
- Is the summary accurate?	1	Partially
- Does the summary include vendor quotes, if applicable?	0	No
Impact		
- Will the project impact the goals in the DPS Climate Action Plan?	2	Fully
- Will the project's impact be tracked and maintained beyond its completion?	1	Partially
	0	No
Environmental Justice		
- Does this project support communities most affected by climate change (people of color, Indigenous people, low-income households, people living with chronic health conditions, children, and older adults)?	4	Fully
	2	Partially
	0	No
Collaboration		
- Have the necessary stakeholders been identified and involved?	2	Fully
- Is there a project champion(s)?	1	Partially
- Is there principal approval?	0	No
Feasibility		
- Can the funding be spent and the project be completed by the deadline?	4	Fully
- Is this project likely to succeed?	2	Partially
- Does the application discuss a long-term maintenance plan, if applicable?	0	No
Pre-Application Assistance		
- Did this project team participate in the pre-application assistance process?	2	Fully
	1	Partially
	0	No
Innovation		
- Is this a creative solution to the issues facing DPS students?	2	Fully
	1	Partially
	0	No
Project Score:		

Climate Champions Grant Program: Budget Template

Template Summary

- This template can be used as a guide to organize and communicate the budget summary.
- Budget Items can be updated and removed as appropriate for the application.

Budget Category Examples	Description	Requested \$ Amount
Equipment Purchases		
Materials/Supplies		
Communication/Outreach		
Labor		
Fees		
Transportation		
Tuition		
Stipends		
Other		