



Climate Champions Grant Program: Call for Applications

PRE-APPLICATION DUE OCT. 22; APPLICATIONS DUE DEC. 3, 2024

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 for innovative and creative solutions to climate change.

\$225,000 is available to fund multiple projects during this application period. The maximum amount of funds a school can apply for during this period 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 Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024.

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.

Eligibility

Students and staff from DPS schools are encouraged to apply, but projects must be based at a DPS school. All grade levels can apply. DPS charter schools are NOT allowed to apply at this time.

This program is meant to be **student-led**, which means that youth share power and decision-making, and that actions are driven by youth interest and lived experiences. In addition, projects *must* have a DPS staff champion who will support the project team, be accountable for project deadlines, and ensure funding is spent appropriately.

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). 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 incorporate 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 ([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 develop their own problem of practice.

Developing a Problem of Practice	
Step 1: Identify a problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which problem does your group care most about? How does the problem impact your community (hint: use data)? Talk to others that are affected or interested in the problem.
Step 2: Identify an action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions to understand current barriers to and opportunities for improvement. Involve community and decision-makers. Develop action steps to address the problem in specific and measurable ways.
Step 3: Refine the action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Does the action project adequately address the problem of practice?</i> What resources does the action project need to be successful? Will the project positively affect the community?

Example Action Projects

Below are examples of action projects, but we encourage applicants to *get creative and use these examples simply as a springboard for their own ideas*. To view the projects that were awarded in the 2023-2024 school year, visit [here](#).

Example 1: *Problem of practice:* Students rarely bike to school because the school lacks safe places to store bikes during the day. *Action:* Install secure bike racks and a bike maintenance station, and promote bike-to-school days.

Example 2: *Problem of practice:* Students lack access to quality food and the knowledge around sustainable food production. *Action:* Have students attend a conference to learn job skills and knowledge in agriculture, community gardening, and food justice, and have the students share and implement their learnings in the community.

Application Requirements

1. PRE-APPLICATION

The intent of the pre-application process is to provide applicants with necessary guidance and connections to ensure competitive applications and successful projects. Applicants are **REQUIRED** to submit their problem of practice and project idea by **Tuesday, Oct. 22** at:

<https://forms.gle/Ubt2wT3zz9rReMpo9>

2. APPLICATION

Applications **MUST** be submitted with the three summaries below by **Tuesday, Dec. 3** at:

<https://forms.gle/aNevZLEN7o5czFZ9A>

1) Project Summary

2) Collaboration Summary

3) Budget Summary

4) Photos (Optional)

A. PROJECT SUMMARY (500 words or less)

- Which problem of practice did you choose?
- What action project are you proposing to address it?
- What would be the impact of your action project on the community and climate?
 - Include any relevant metrics such as estimated energy savings, number of people engaged, or 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.

B. COLLABORATION SUMMARY (500 words or less)

- Describe how the project is *student-led* and how student voice and choice were incorporated. Consider having youth help write the application.
- Describe the project team and DPS staff champion. The staff champion must be someone who works at the school.
- Include the **principal's signature** with a statement of approval.
- 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 [DPS First Call Communications](#) for an initial review of any building or grounds modifications.

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

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

- Explain the requested funding amount and provide any relevant vendor quotes.
- A **Budget Template** is provided at the end of this document and is suggested for this summary.
- Funding is available for purchasing equipment, supplies, outreach, stipends, and career development. Funding is NOT available for hiring DPS staff.

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

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

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** table is provided in a table at the end of this document. *Applicants are encouraged to tailor their application to address the evaluation criteria.*

Timeline

Task	Timeline
Stakeholder outreach and communication	Fall 2024
Pre-application due (Required)	Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2024, 5 p.m. MST
Applications due (Required)	Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024, 5 p.m. MST
Application evaluation & selection	Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024
Awardees notified and funding made available	Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025
Project teams to attend either the DPS STEAM Expo or DPS Climate Summit to share their projects with the community (Highly encouraged)	TBD, Spring 2025
Projects completed and funding spent	Monday, June 30, 2025
Data, photos & stories reported to DPS Sustainability	Monday, June 30, 2025

Resources for Frequently Asked Questions

To help applicants contact DPS departments at the right time with the right questions, please review the resources to these frequently asked questions.

1. What are DPS standards for plantings?
 - [The Process for Planting and Maintaining a Tree in DPS](#)
 - [DPS Plantings Guidelines](#)

2. If my project requires modifications to the building or grounds, what steps do I need to take?
 - If a project that requires *minor* modifications to the building is awarded grant funding, schools will need to follow the [Facility Modification Process](#) so that the proposed work can be reviewed by the appropriate DPS department and connections to the appropriate points of contacts can be made. Students should lead this process and the submission of required paperwork, with the DPS staff champion providing guidance and support as needed.
 - If a project that requires *larger* modifications to the building or grounds is awarded grant funding, the project will need to be reviewed by DPS Planning, Design & Construction and follow the [Facility Modification Process](#). Review relevant [Facility Standards](#).

3. If my proposed project is for a shared campus, what additional approvals do I need?
 - If your project affects a shared campus, approvals from *all* the principals on the shared campus are required in the Collaboration Summary.

Questions

Email any questions to the DPS Sustainability Team at: dept_sustainability@dpsk12.net. We're here to 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
Student Voice		
- Was this project student-led?	4	Fully
	2	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
Feasibility		
- Can the funding be spent and the project be completed by the deadline? - Is this project likely to succeed long-term?	4	Fully
	2	Partially
	0	No
Project		
- Does the summary clearly communicate the proposed project? - What is the reach of the project? - Will the project be communicated to the school community effectively?	2	Fully
	1	Partially
	0	No
Collaboration		
- Have the necessary stakeholders been identified and involved? - Is there a project champion(s)? - Is there principal approval?	2	Fully
	1	Partially
	0	No
Budget		
- Does the summary clearly communicate about the requested funds? - Is the summary accurate? - Does the summary include vendor quotes, if applicable?	2	Fully
	1	Partially
	0	No
Impact		
- Will the project impact the goals in the DPS Climate Action Plan? - Will the project's impact be tracked and maintained beyond its completion?	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 / Extra Duty Pay		
Other		