

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

Climate Resilience And Urban Opportunity Initiative

Frequently asked questions

The Kresge Foundation
Troy, Michigan

In addition to reviewing these frequently asked questions, we encourage you to read a primer that provides a detailed explanation of the Climate Resilience and Urban Opportunity Initiative.

1. What does Kresge mean by “climate resilience?”

Kresge employs a comprehensive definition of climate resilience that encompasses climate-change adaptation, climate-change mitigation, and social cohesion. We believe that actions in support of these three dimensions are most powerful when they are pursued in tandem and designed to be mutually reinforcing.

To build their resilience to climate change, communities must:

- Anticipate and prepare for pressures and shocks that climate change will introduce or worsen (i.e., pursue climate-change adaptation);
- Lessen overall demand for energy and increase the proportion derived from renewable sources (i.e., pursue climate-change mitigation); and
- Foster social cohesion, recognizing the imperative of social inclusion as well as the critical role that networks among individuals and institutions play in conveying information and mutual support.

2. What does Kresge mean by “urban opportunity?”

The Kresge Foundation’s purpose is to expand opportunity for low-income people living in America’s cities. We believe that all people should have the supports necessary to lead self-determined lives. We think it is important to proactively address the disproportionate impact that climate change will have on low-income communities. We recognize that policies and practices designed to enhance resilience can either reduce or inadvertently worsen disparity. We want to demonstrate that communities can build their resilience to climate change in ways that increase low-income community residents’ access to jobs and economic opportunities, improve health and safety conditions in their cities, create new neighborhood amenities, and strengthen civic engagement.

3. What does Kresge hope to accomplish through this initiative?

Kresge has designed this initiative to help nonprofit organizations with deep roots in low-income communities enhance their capacity to engage in a range of local and regional venues relevant to their communities’ climate resilience. We seek to strengthen the capacity of community-based

nonprofit organizations to influence local and regional climate-resilience planning, policy development and implementation to better reflect the priorities and needs of low-income people in U.S. cities. Ultimately, we want to see this capacity translate into tangible policy gains and investments that advance climate resilience and improve opportunity in America's cities.

4. What does Kresge mean by “community-based nonprofit organization?”

For purposes of this initiative, “community-based nonprofit organization” refers to a 501(c)(3) organization that focuses its efforts within a particular geographic area (e.g., a neighborhood, city or region) and views itself as accountable to the people who reside within that place.

5. Is my organization eligible to apply if it does not have deep, prior experience working on climate change?

Yes. This initiative is open to both organizations with prior experience working on climate change and/or climate resilience and organizations with little to no prior experience relevant to climate change. We are hoping that this initiative will catalyze additional nonprofit organizations to engage in climate-resilience work as well as support the strategic development of organizations already working on climate resilience.

In our review of submitted applications – if all other qualifications are equal – we will give some preference to organizations with prior experience on issues relevant to climate resilience, but we are receptive to applications from organizations that are new entrants to climate-resilience work. New entrants to this work may wish to consider partnering in some manner with an organization experienced in climate-resilience efforts.

What is most important to us is that applicant organizations have deep experience working successfully within low-income communities and the standing necessary to move into a leadership role on climate resilience within their localities/regions.

Whether they are established climate-change actors or relatively new to the topic, successful applicants will be focused on applying the three-part definition of climate resilience (noted above) in their work.

6. Is this initiative designed for environmental organizations, or will other types of nonprofit organizations be competitive applicants?

We expect that competitive applicants will include a wide range of nonprofit organizations, including (but not limited to) those that have been active in clean-energy deployment, climate

change, community and economic development, community organizing, disaster preparedness, economic opportunity, environmental justice, local food systems, public health, transportation, and urban planning.

What is most important to us is that applicant organizations have deep experience working successfully within low-income communities and the standing necessary to move into a leadership role on climate resilience within their localities/regions.

7. With what types of public-led efforts must applicants intend to engage to be successful in this grant competition?

We are interested in helping groups strengthen their capacity to engage in an array of climate-resilience efforts relevant to their communities. Such efforts might include the development and implementation of local and/or regional policies and plans focused on climate-change mitigation, climate-change adaptation, disaster preparedness, land use, public health, transportation, and/or urban sustainability.

Our assumption is that advancing a comprehensive climate-resilience and urban-opportunity agenda will be a multi-faceted, long-term effort. We are interested in supporting organizations that wish to strengthen their capacity to “go the distance” and address a range of levers and strategies. Therefore, competitive applicants will intend to engage in an array of local and/or regional efforts important to climate-resilience and/or employ a holistic approach to climate-resilience planning rather than engage in a single policy or planning venue.

8. Must the efforts in which applicants plan to engage be public-led?

One goal of the initiative is to advance public policy, budgetary frameworks and/or public-financing commitments that advance comprehensive climate resilience. We think that this requires engagement with and influence on public sector-led efforts. In some cases, a robust social-sector-led effort with clear public-sector leverage targets might be eligible, but applicants will need to make a strong case for the significance of the opportunity presented by the effort.

9. What types of projects or initiatives will be less competitive?

Please read the primer that provides detail on the Climate Resilience and Urban Opportunity Initiative as it includes the criteria that Kresge will use in review of Statements of Qualification.

We will give strong preference to organizations that:

- Intend to engage in *an array of efforts* related to improving their community's climate resilience;
- Are skilled at *working across sectors* (e.g. nonprofit, public, and private); and
- Can bring a *variety of tactics* to their climate-resilience efforts.

Applications will be less competitive if they:

- Do not reflect Kresge's three-part definition of climate resilience (noted above);
- Are not focused on low-income, urban areas with the intent of delivering multiple benefits to low-income community members;
- Do not present opportunity for meaningful cross-sector collaboration;
- Lack potential to influence specific, public-sector-led efforts with high relevance to climate resilience;
- Propose engagement in a relatively isolated intervention (e.g., opposition to individual pollution sources, advocacy concerning a single transit line, or implementation of energy-efficiency improvements) rather than a comprehensive resilience-planning effort or a suite of near-term policy or planning efforts relevant to the community's climate-resilience;
- Propose to serve only one neighborhood or a small set of neighborhoods without an evident pathway for impact beyond those boundaries; and/or
- Seek support for organizations that do not have full-time, paid staff.

10. May a coalition of groups apply for a planning grant?

Yes. Partnership or coalition efforts are eligible. In such cases, one of the participating organizations must be designated the lead for the effort, and that organization's responsibilities must extend beyond financial management to include overall coordination and communication with Kresge. The application must explain how the participating organizations will work together and how their collective effort will be grounded in the needs of a particular community or set of communities. The resulting implementation plan must be developed on behalf of the partnership or coalition as a whole; Kresge will not accept applications from more than one group for implementation efforts growing out of the planning period.

11. What does Kresge mean by “partnering with organizations in other sectors and disciplines as well as with organizations that hold perspectives different than its own?”

Kresge thinks that advancing comprehensive climate resilience and urban opportunity requires many partners working across multiple sectors and disciplines over a significant period of time.

We want to know that applicant organizations are capable of working in partnership, however tactical, with groups that approach climate-related challenges and/or urban opportunity with different points of view.

12. What scale of urban focus is Kresge interested in supporting? Is a neighborhood-level focus sufficient?

Kresge is open to different scales of effort, but applicants' proposed activities must be positioned to make a material difference in advancing comprehensive climate resilience within the urban context. Organizations that are proposing to work in a neighborhood or a set of neighborhoods rather than at a city- or region-wide scale must make the case in their applications that the scale at which they propose to work will be positioned to have a multiplier effect.

13. May governmental entities apply?

No. This initiative is intended to strengthen the capacity of community-based nonprofit organizations to influence local and regional climate-resilience planning, policy development and implementation to better reflect the priorities and needs of low-income people in U.S. cities. While we expect that applicants will work in partnership with and/or to influence the plans and priorities of governmental entities, we do not intend to fund governmental entities through the initiative.

15. Does this initiative represent the only opportunity to apply for an Environment Program grant from Kresge this year?

No. It is, however, the only open portal for applications at this time. We anticipate making a limited number of grants under our interests in climate-resilience in coastal cities and regions, sustainable water-resources management in a changing climate, urban energy resilience, and climate-resilience field building during the year; however, we will review proposals under those categories on a by-invitation basis only.

We post information on our website as new funding opportunities arise. Interested organizations are encouraged to [stay in touch through email subscription, RSS, or social media](#)

