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Biden–Harris Administration Selects Fordham University to Receive \$50 Million to Fund Environmental Justice Projects Across EPA Region 2 as Part of Investing in America Agenda

As an environmental justice Grantmaker, Fordham University will help reduce barriers to federal funds and issue thousands of environmental justice grants over the next three years

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NEW YORK – Today, as part of President Biden’s Investing in America agenda, the Biden-Harris Administration announced the selection of Fordham University to serve as a Regional Grantmaker that will receive \$50 Million under EPA’s Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking program (EJ TCGM). This new grant program, while making it easier for small community-based organizations to access federal environmental justice funding, responds to community feedback on the need to reduce barriers to federal funds and improve the efficiency of the awards process to ensure communities that have long faced underinvestment can access the benefits of the largest climate investment in history. Communities

will be able to apply to Fordham University for a subgrant to fund a range of different environmental project activities, including (but not limited to) small local clean ups, local emergency preparedness and disaster resiliency programs, environmental workforce development programs for local jobs reducing greenhouse gas emissions, air quality and asthma related projects, healthy homes programs, and projects addressing illegal dumping. EPA Region 2 covers New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and eight federally recognized Indian Nations.

“For years, community advocates have been calling for federal support and resources to help address our country’s most pressing environmental justice concerns,” **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** “Thanks to President Biden and Vice President Harris’ leadership, we’re responding to these calls by removing barriers that have traditionally held communities and applicants back from accessing these historic investments in America. Together, in partnership with these Grantmakers, we are taking a giant step toward a future where every person in America has equal opportunity to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live a healthy, productive life.”

“As a Grantmaker, Fordham University will help the EPA advance our joint commitment to undo the past harms of environmental injustice,” **said EPA Region 2 Administrator Lisa F. Garcia.** “This will be the start of a fruitful relationship that will build upon both EPA’s priority to addressing climate justice and Fordham’s promise of equity and environmental stewardship.

Fordham University will work with partners such as the New York Immigration Coalition, New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice, ConPRmetidos, Community Foundation Virgin Islands and Business Initiative Corporation of New York, to implement an intersectional approach to place frontline environmental justice communities in positions of power through participatory community-led governance. As the regional Grantmaker, Fordham University will provide grants to community-based organizations, groups, and other institutions and groups who historically have not had the capacity to apply for and receive federal funding for climate projects.

"Fordham believes in the power of community-driven solutions to climate change to capture the insights and ingenuity of the people on the front lines of global warming. Fordham works to find the answers to the most urgent and complicated of problems, and it does so by centering human impact and environmental justice. Fordham is proud to launch the Flourishing in Community Grantmaker Initiative, building on 182 years of deep engagement with the Bronx and expanding our regional and global reach through New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands," **said Fordham University President Tania Tetlow.**

“We’re incredibly honored and energized for the work ahead with our statutory partners. It’s a collaborative effort and it’s a tremendous opportunity for us to employ Fordham’s infrastructure, award these sub-grants, and do this on-the-ground environmental work,” **said Julie Gafney, Assistant Vice President for Strategic Mission Initiatives at Fordham University.**

“Today’s announcement from EPA regarding grant money for grassroots environmental justice groups showcases exactly why I fought so hard for the Inflation Reduction Act,” **said U.S. Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer.** “This \$600 million for 11 regional grantmakers, including \$50 million for our own Fordham University, that is distributed to community-based non-profits fighting on the frontlines of climate change, is the kind of program that can help our disadvantaged communities truly flourish. I am

proud of Fordham University and I'm so excited to see how the vibrant network of New York and Puerto Rican grassroots environmental justice organizations leverage this federal funding. I remain laser-focused on implementation of the IRA so that we can ensure it lives up to its transformative potential to clean our air and combat climate change."

"EPA's Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking program is a vital new program that will advance environmental justice and help communities disproportionately impacted by climate change, pollution, and other environmental stressors," **said Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**. "I am thrilled to see that Fordham University has been selected as the Grantmaker for EPA Region 2, which will allow organizations in New York, other communities within the Region and Puerto Rico to apply for funds to support a range of different environmental project activities that will help the communities most in need. I am proud to have worked with and supported Fordham University to help secure its selection as a Grantmaker and look forward to seeing communities that have long faced underinvestment gain access to federal environmental justice funding."

"As we face the monumental challenges of environmental justice, which disproportionately affect underserved communities like ours in the Bronx and our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, it is critical that the federal government take big steps and invest the proper resources to prepare us for the future. Today's announcement from the EPA that Fordham will receive millions of dollars in federal funds demonstrates the historic nature of the Inflation Reduction Act and the importance of never stopping our work fighting for the Bronx. Without a clean and healthy environment to grow up in, our children will never be able to achieve the true promise of this great nation," **said U.S. Representative Ritchie Torres (NY-15)**.

EPA Grantmakers will work in collaboration with [EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights](#) to issue subgrants to community-based nonprofit organizations and other eligible organizations representing disadvantaged communities. As a Grantmaker, Fordham University will design comprehensive application and submission processes, award environmental justice subgrants, implement tracking and reporting systems, and provide resources and support to communities. The subgrants are expected to become available by summer of 2024.

In addition, EPA has selected, the Institute for Sustainable Communities to receive \$50 million as a National Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaker to provide additional support, coordination, and oversight to the subgrantees, applicants, and the Regional Grantmakers across the eastern part of the country. Institute for Sustainable Communities will provide equity-centered coordination services to regional Grantmakers. They will develop a Grantmaker website and host a visualization hub with public-facing grantmaking information, data tracking and other evaluation tools for regional Grantmakers.

Grantmakers are expected to begin opening competitions and awarding subgrants by summer 2024. Community-based nonprofit organizations and other eligible organizations seeking subgrant funding will be able to apply for subgrants through three concurrent tiers offered by the Grantmakers. Tier One will consist of grants for \$150,000 for assessment, Tier Two will consist of grants for \$250,000 for planning, and Tier Three will consist of grants for \$350,000 for project development. In addition, \$75,000 will be available for capacity-constrained community-based organizations through a noncompetitive process under Tier

One. Each Grantmaker will design and implement a distribution program best suited for their region and communities.

The Grantmakers program is part of the [Federal Interagency Thriving Communities Network](#) and delivers on the Biden-Harris Administration's [Justice40 Initiative](#) which set the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. Grantmakers will work in collaboration with the [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers \(EJ TCTACs\)](#) to create a robust support network to assist eligible entities when applying.

Learn more about the [Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmakers](#).

Background

From day one of their administration, President Biden and Vice President Harris have made achieving environmental justice a top priority. In August 2022, President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law, creating the largest investment in environmental and climate justice in U.S. history. EPA received \$3 billion in total to award grants and fund related technical assistance to benefit disadvantaged communities.

EPA has since launched and expanded innovative programs such as using \$177 million for the creation of [16 EJ TCTACs](#) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy to remove barriers to federal resources and help communities pursue funding opportunities like those made available through President Biden's Investing in America Agenda.

EPA [announced nearly \\$128 million](#) to fund 186 projects across the country that advance environmental justice as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. The organizations, which EPA has selected through its [Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving Cooperative Agreement](#) and [Environmental Justice Government-to-Government](#) programs, will use the funds to ensure disadvantaged communities that have historically suffered from underinvestment have access to clean air and water and climate resilience solutions in alignment with the Biden-Harris Administration's Justice40 Initiative.

EPA also announced [Community Change Grants](#) which is [approximately \\$2 billion in funding](#) available to support community-driven projects that deploy clean energy, strengthen climate resilience, and build capacity for communities to tackle environmental and climate justice challenges last month.

[Learn more about environmental justice at EPA.](#)

For up-to-date information on when subgrants will be available, subscribe to the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights' listserv by sending a blank email to: join-epa-ej@lists.epa.gov. Follow OEJECR on X (formerly Twitter): [@EPAEnvJustice](#). Follow EPA Region 2 on [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) and visit our [Facebook](#) page. For more information about EPA Region 2, visit our [website](#).

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