

Climate Resilient Communities

Examples and exemplars

The examples and exemplars below are offered as a very small sampling of projects that reflect some of our early thinking about how organizations and communities may wish to respond to this opportunity. Successful applications will address more than one of the desired outcomes (Community, Environmental, Inclusivity, Systems Change) for the grant program, and we anticipate most competitive applications will address three or four outcomes. Please see the document “Is this a good fit?” for further guidance. We look forward to learning through practice in the coming year(s) to better understand how our investments may have the most impact on local communities.

Examples

Wildfire Risk & Preparedness:

- Community-led wildfire protection, defensible space, and vegetation management projects aligned with local hazard mitigation plans, prioritizing rural and high-risk areas.
- Partnership with tribes and Indigenous practitioners to incorporate Good Fire and other ITEK-informed practices in appropriate landscapes.
- Culturally relevant education and outreach on wildfire risk, smoke health impacts, and community preparedness.
- Cross-sector workforce development in wildfire mitigation, response, and recovery (e.g., training local residents, youth, or Tribal members).
- Strengthening communication networks and shared learning across communities to build long-term wildfire resilience.

Nature-Based Solutions:

- Tree canopy expansion and long-term care (watering, pruning, and survivability) in heat-vulnerable and low-canopy neighborhoods, with continued financial support to reduce burdens on residents.
- Habitat and watershed restoration using native species and nature-based methods that improve soil health, prevent erosion, and enhance water quality through partnerships with local and Tribal organizations.
- Projects that address urban heat islands and reduce exposure to pollution, prioritizing areas with low canopy cover and high vulnerability.



Foundation

- Indigenous- and community-led restoration efforts that integrate cultural knowledge, natural infrastructure, and long-term stewardship.
- Technical assistance and workforce development for local and under-resourced organizations to plan, implement, and sustain nature-based projects over time.

Parks & Public Spaces:

- Creation or enhancement of community-driven resilience hubs and public spaces that serve as trusted, accessible gathering points during heat and wildfire events.
- Green infrastructure and shade projects (depaving, tree planting, pervious materials, shade structures) in heat-vulnerable and low-canopy areas, with measurable outcomes such as surface-temperature reduction and canopy expansion.
- Climate-adaptive accessibility improvements to ensure people with disabilities, elders, and frontline communities can safely access cooling, refuge, and outdoor spaces during climate-related events.
- Community stewardship and education programs that build long-term care, volunteer engagement, and advocacy for climate-resilient public spaces through shared ownership and cross-sector collaboration.
- Collaborative planning or small capital projects that measure and demonstrate impact (e.g., canopy increase, surface temperature reduction, community partnerships) to inform replication across the region.

Exemplar projects with related outcomes

Wildfire Risk & Preparedness Exemplar

Project: A tribal- and community-led “Good Fire & Preparedness Collaborative” focused on training residents in defensible space and cultural burning practices.

- Community: Builds local capacity by training residents, youth, and Tribal members in wildfire mitigation and emergency response.
- Environmental: Restores forest health and reduces wildfire intensity through culturally informed prescribed burning and vegetation management.
- Inclusivity: Elevates Indigenous ecological knowledge and ensures Tribal voices lead regional wildfire planning.
- Systems Change: Establishes an enduring cross-sector model that links local fire districts, Tribal governments, and nonprofits in coordinated wildfire resilience.



Nature-Based Solutions Exemplar

Project: A community-based tree care and watershed restoration initiative focused on heat-vulnerable neighborhoods.

- Community: Strengthens neighborhood stewardship through resident training in tree maintenance and green workforce pathways.
- Environmental: Expands canopy cover, improves air and water quality, and stabilizes soil to reduce flood risk.
- Inclusivity: Prioritizes investments in historically under-shaded, low-income areas where residents face higher heat exposure.
- Systems Change: Creates replicable local partnerships among city agencies, CBOs, and residents that embed long-term maintenance into urban planning.

Parks & Public Spaces Exemplar

Project: Transformation of a neighborhood park into a community cooling hub through shade structures, native plantings, and climate education events.

- Community: Builds local resilience by providing a safe, trusted gathering space during heat and wildfire smoke events.
- Environmental: Reduces surface temperatures and increases local biodiversity through tree planting and pervious materials.
- Inclusivity: Ensures equitable, climate-safe access for elders, families, and residents with disabilities.
- Systems Change: Demonstrates a scalable public-private partnership model for integrating resilience design into local park systems.