



The Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability Seeks a Subrecipient Partner for Phase II: Implementation of Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Project

Issued by: Department of Environment and Sustainability

Funding Source: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) | Coronavirus State and Local Federal Relief Funding (SLFRF) Program

Date Issued: Friday, April 12, 2024

Submission Due Date: Wednesday, May 15, 2024 by 5:00 PM CDT

Anticipated Term: September 2024 through December 2026

Information Session: A virtual information session will be held on Thursday, April 18, 2024 from 1:00 PM to 1:45 PM Central Time. Please register by clicking [here](#). Registrants will receive an email confirmation and calendar invite after registration is complete.

Applicant Questions Due Date: All questions must be received by 5:00pm CDT on Friday, April 26, 2024. Questions can be emailed to environment@cookcountyil.gov. Questions and responses will be posted online by Tuesday, April 30, 2024 on this [page](#).

Submission Instructions: All responses must be submitted no later than Wednesday, May 15, 2024, by 5:00pm Central Time. All applications must be submitted electronically. Late submissions will not be considered. To submit your response, please complete the accompanying [application](#) in its entirety and submit, with attachments, via email to environment@cookcountyil.gov.

The County anticipates the following Schedule:

Open Call posted to the County website	April 12, 2024
Pre-Proposal Conference	April 18, 2024, 1:00 PM CDT
Proposer Inquiry Deadline	April 26, 2024
Response to Inquiries	Posted to County website by April 30, 2024
Proposal Due Date	May 15, 2024, 5:00 PM CDT
Evaluation of Proposals	May-June 2024
Partner Announced	June 2024
Project Kick-Off	September 2024
Project Completion	December 31, 2026



I. Cook County Background

Cook County is an urban county in the upper northeastern section of the State of Illinois that contains more than 800 local governmental entities within its boundaries. With a population of approximately 5.2 million people, it is the second most populous county in the nation and the 19th largest government in the United States (2010 census statistics). It is a home rule county pursuant to Article VII, Section 6 of the Illinois State Constitution and is governed by a 17-member Board of Commissioners who are elected from single-member districts. The Commissioners and a County Board President are elected to four-year terms by the citizens of the County.

Cook County contains 134 municipalities in its region, the most well-known being the City of Chicago - which is the County seat where the central offices of Cook County are located. The City of Chicago and the suburban municipalities account for approximately 85% of the County's 946 square miles, while unincorporated areas make up the remaining 15%. The unincorporated areas of the County are under the jurisdiction of the Cook County Board of Commissioners. As mandated by State law, County government has principal responsibility for the protection of persons and property, the provision for public health services and the maintenance of County highways.

The Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability (CCDES) works to improve the quality of the environment for all residents of Cook County. CCDES is responsible for a number of regulatory practices, including enforcement of Cook County Environmental Control Ordinance, implementation of Illinois EPA cooperative agreements on pollution control, and inspection, and investigation of citizen complaints and ordinance violations. CCDES is also responsible for engaging residents, local businesses, and municipalities in raising awareness of environmental and sustainability issues and supporting efforts to reduce waste in energy, materials, and water.

II. Project Background

As the climate continues to change, the Midwest is subject to increased storm events, natural disasters, flooding, and economic blows which regularly impact vulnerable Cook County communities (communities) at a higher rate and intensity. It is important that communities can prepare for and adjust to these changes. Unfortunately, the communities most at risk of negative impacts from climate change are those that have already faced generations of disinvestment and often do not have the financial, staffing, or physical resources available to devote to resilience



planning. For others, once plans have been completed, there are often challenges to securing funding to implement these plans and achieve set goals.

The Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Project (Project) will help communities develop individualized plans relevant to their needs, putting communities at the center of planning and project prioritization. This can include a wide variety of tailored projects such as reducing flooding and damage from stormwater, enhancing green infrastructure, implementing resilient energy systems, protecting and increasing tree canopy, or improving bike and pedestrian access to community resources. Projects may also include community development and capacity building efforts that boost community resilience, such as training for community-based organizations, resilience hubs, and workforce training. In addition, the development and implementation of these plans will further support the Cook County Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of its development of a countywide green infrastructure plan and efforts toward climate adaptation. Not only will the individual communities see benefits environmentally and economically for their areas, but the region will be further strengthened and resilient as a result of the coordinated effort.

Five suburban Cook County communities were selected for participation in the Project after a competitive application and interview process. The communities involved are: the Villages of Bellwood, Franklin Park, Justice, Lynwood and the City of Markham. Currently in Phase I: Planning, these communities are engaged in a community-centered planning process with Geosyntec Consultants (awarded contract after competitive RFP 2323-03090-ARPA Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Consulting Services was posted in April 2023). Geosyntec and partners are engaging with residents, municipal staff, and other stakeholders to identify assets, strengths, hazards, concerns, and strategies to help individuals and businesses thrive in a changing climate. They will provide technical expertise and support communities in developing Climate Resiliency Plans and present findings to stakeholders. The plans will outline actionable goals which can support planning, policy, and funding decisions moving forward. The goal of this open call is to identify and select a Subrecipient who will administer Phase II: Implementation of the Project.

Project Schedule

To elevate the role of community engagement and climate data analysis, the project's phases will overlap, allowing the planning phase to inform the identification and prioritization of implementation measures. The following timeline illustrates the overlap between phases, but applicants should propose their own



timeline for the prioritization and implementation components of Phase II that allows them to meet the project’s goals and ARPA funding deadlines.

	Phase I: Planning	Phase II: Implementation
Dec, 2023	Plan kickoff	
Jan, 2024	Listening and learning; Climate hazard analysis	
Feb, 2024		
Mar, 2024		
Apr, 2024		
May, 2024		
Jun, 2024	Visioning and goal-setting	
Jul, 2024		
Aug, 2024		
Sep, 2024	Refining and prioritizing	
Oct, 2024		
Nov, 2024		
Dec, 2024		
Jan, 2025	Plans complete	Project implementation
Feb, 2025		
2025-2026		
Dec, 2026		Implementation complete; ARPA spending deadline.

III. Funding Source

CCDES is providing funding under the U.S. Department of Treasury’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program, to address a myriad of economic issues caused and exacerbated by the unprecedented pandemic. Cook County Government has allocated a substantial commitment of ARPA funds to support municipalities in becoming more resilient. Award recipients of ARPA funding are responsible for adhering to Federal award guidelines in the Uniform Guidance, a set of federal rules including administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit guidelines that apply to federal money.

All amounts paid from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) are subject to the procurement restrictions set forth in the Uniform Guidance, and the guidelines detailed in the [U.S. Department of Treasury’s Final Rule](#). The full federal procurement standards can be found in 2 CFR 200.317 through 2 CFR 200.327. A summary of the procurement guidelines is detailed in the attached Personal Services Agreement

IV. Budget and Timeline



a. Budget

There is a total budget not to exceed \$14,055,440 available for Phase II: Implementation of the Project. While it may be possible to layer additional funding into the proposed implementation projects, such funding is not expected or required.

b. Timeline

Cook County anticipates this contract will start in September 2024. Per federal requirements for this funding, all portions of this Project must be complete and dollars spent by December 31, 2026. Cook County reserves the right to request portions of the project be completed at an earlier date in order to meet federal requirements.

V. Open Call Details

a. Purpose

The purpose of this open call is to identify an organization to serve as the Program Administrator for Phase II: Implementation of the Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Project. The selected partner will work under the direction of County staff to implement climate resiliency solutions in each of the five participating communities, informed by community participation and Climate Resiliency Plans developed in Phase I. The selected partner will be responsible for providing flawless program execution and ensuring a high-quality participant experience. As this is a public-facing role, the selected partner will need to possess a high degree of emotional intelligence and exhibit cultural competence when interacting with Cook County's diverse communities.

b. Scope of Services

The overarching role of the Program Administrator is to manage the necessary processes and resources to enable successful implementation of the Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Project. The goal of the Project is to improve climate resilience for five suburban Cook County Communities through community-centered planning and initial project implementation. The role of the selected Program Administrator will be to manage the implementation and sub-contractors to ensure program funding meets community needs, improves resilience, and has the biggest impact possible prior to program end (December 31, 2026). The Program Administrator will collaborate closely with CCDES to address program goals. Specific requirements across the lifecycle of the program are included below.



Community and Climate Resiliency Plan Review: The Program Administrator will review information gathered from communities during Phase I: Planning to better understand dynamics, goals, and vision for each of the five communities. This will include meeting with Phase I: Planning partner and CCDES staff as needed. The Program Administrator will be responsible for convening regularly occurring meetings with CCDES staff and appropriate partners and reporting back on progress.

Project Prioritization: The Program Administrator will review all available data and stakeholder input gathered during Phase I: Planning to develop a method for prioritizing projects to receive funding for implementation through this project. This method will build on the prioritization and project ranking developed in Phase I: Planning to focus specifically on a subset of projects for initial implementation. Factors such as resilience impact, feasibility, and cost will be weighed along with consistency with the community vision and goals articulated in the Phase I: Planning process. Note that only projects (or clearly defined portions of projects) able to be completed by December 31, 2026 are able to be considered.

Subcontractor Selection: If applicable, the Program Administrator will be responsible for selecting qualified subcontractors to implement projects in a fair and equitable way. CCDES highly encourages the use of MBE/WBE, Veteran-owned, Persons with Disability-owned contractors. The Program Administrator will be responsible for managing and monitoring each subcontractor and providing appropriate financial and tracking documentation to CCDES as requested.

Project Engineering/Design/Installation: Once site assessments and designs are complete, the Program Administrator will identify the appropriate procurement of equipment and services and execute necessary contracts to install appropriate projects. The Program Administrator will be responsible for monitoring successful implementation of all projects and ensuring completion by the end of the contract agreement.

Capacity building project design and implementation: For measures that focus on community development, training, and capacity building rather than infrastructure or capital improvements, the Program Administrator will identify partners, establish community engagement needs, identify the appropriate procurement of equipment and services and execute necessary contracts to complete projects. The Program Administrator will be responsible for monitoring



successful implementation of all projects and ensuring completion by the end of the contract agreement.

Reporting and Evaluation: Throughout the entire process, the Program Administrator will collect data necessary for federal reporting guidelines and data Cook County specifies for program metrics. Final metrics will be agreed upon after selection of Program Administrator but may include dollars spent in each community, number of projects identified and implemented, and/or anticipated resiliency impact of projects.

Deliverables

- Project Prioritization Plan and Initial Timeline (within three months of signed contract)
- Line Item Budget with estimated costs for administration costs (no more than 10% of total budget) and anticipated spend per community
- Final Prioritized Project List and Timeline
- Successful Implementation of Identified projects

c. Commitment to Equity

Equity means full inclusion of all residents in the economic, social, and political life of Cook County, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, age, ability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, neighborhood of residence or other characteristics.

CCDES has remained committed to an equitable distribution model in its disbursement of COVID-19 funding and program implementation. The selected partner will be responsible for working with Cook County and its partners to ensure that historically underrepresented residents and other stakeholders are reflected and prioritized in program participation efforts through this project performance period.

d. Organizational Capacity and Eligibility

The awarded organization must have the organizational capacity to conduct the work described in this application and have the fiscal and contracting capacity, as well as the accounting and administrative controls necessary to effectively manage a large federal grant award. Requirements include financial stability, fiscal solvency, ability to provide separate reporting for use of funds, and staff to oversee the scope of work and comply with the agreement.



Eligibility/Requirements: The Program Administrator may apply as a single organization, or as a lead organization in partnership with subcontracting/subrecipient organizations. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate an ability to implement designated program elements. The lead organization must demonstrate financial capacity and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in this scope of work. The applicant’s response must include a description of which portion(s) of the services will be subcontracted out, the names and addresses of potential subcontractors, and the expected amount of money each will receive under the Contract. The County reserves the right to accept or reject any subcontractor if in the County’s sole opinion, it is in the best interest of the County. Cook County plans to select one Program Administrator.

Preclusion: Article 8(e) of the County’s standard Contract which was attached to RFP No. 2323-03090 states:

(iv) “Without limiting the foregoing, if the Consulting Parties assist the County in determining the advisability or feasibility of a project or in recommending, researching, preparing, drafting, or issuing a request for proposals or bid specifications for a project, the Consulting Parties must not participate, directly or indirectly, as a prime, Subcontractor, or joint venturer in that project or in the preparation of a proposal or bid for that project during the term of this Agreement or afterwards. The Consulting Parties may, however, assist the County in reviewing the proposals or bids for the project if none of the Consulting Parties have a relationship with the persons or entities that submitted the proposals or bids for that project.”

As such, any vendor who participates in Contract No. 2323-0309 would be precluded from participating in a contract for the implementation phase, whether as a Prime, subcontractor, or joint venturer.

e. Evaluation Process

An evaluation committee comprising County personnel and other stakeholders will evaluate all complete submissions in accordance with the selection criteria detailed below. Each eligible applicant will be evaluated on the strengths of the application, the responsiveness to the selection criteria, and understanding of program goals and timeline. Successful applicants must be ready to proceed with the proposed Project within a reasonable period of time upon selection and approval of Subrecipient Agreement by Cook County Board of Commissioners.



Cook County reserves the right to reject any application if such application is incomplete, deemed inadequate or is otherwise not in the best interest of the County. This evaluation process may result in a short-list of submissions. The evaluation committee, at its option, may request that all or short-listed applicants make a presentation, submit clarifications, provide references, respond to questions, or consider alternative approaches.

f. Selection Criteria

Applicants will be reviewed, and selection will be based upon the following criteria:

Criteria	Points
Overall Quality of Application Quality of the application and thoroughness of submission, with a demonstrated understanding of the County’s needs, goals, and objectives as it pertains to proposed scope of work, strategic plan, project prioritization, project management and methodology.	30
Qualifications and Experience Qualifications and specialized experience demonstrated through past experiences in program administration, contractor selection and management, project management related to engineering, design, and installation of climate resiliency projects.	25
Budget and Financial Stability Clearly defined budget submission and ability to demonstrate good financial standing as it pertains to successfully completing this project.	20
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Approach Proposed approaches and/or resources that address diversity, equity, and inclusion (language, disability, etc.), Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	15
Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting Demonstrated quality and feasibility of approach to data collection, analysis, and reporting.	10
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	100

VI. Submission Details

a. Information Session:

The Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Program Lead will conduct a virtual information session on Thursday, April 18, 2024 from 1:00 PM to 1:45 PM



Central Time. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to attend. Registration is required. Please register by clicking [here](#). Registrants will receive an email confirmation and a calendar invite after registration is complete.

b. Deadlines for Submission:

All responses must be submitted no later than Wednesday, May 15, 2024, by 5:00pm CDT. All applications must be submitted electronically. Late submissions will not be considered. To submit your response, please complete the [Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities, Phase II: Implementation Open Call for Subrecipient Application](#) in its entirety and submit with all required attachments via email to environment@cookcountyil.gov.

VII. Disclosures

a. General Guidelines

- i. Applicants shall comply with all laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation; and/or any other legally protected classification group.
- ii. All submitted applications and related materials shall become and remain the exclusive property of the Cook County Department of Environment and Sustainability (CCDES).
- iii. CCDES is not liable for any costs incurred by the Applicant prior to the Partner and CCDES signing the Agreement.
- iv. An authorized representative of the organization shall submit the application and certification and such completion and submission of an application constitutes agreement with subsequent contracting requirements and with conditions of participation in the Cook County Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Project as funded under the American Rescue Plan Act.
- v. CCDES reserves the right to reject any and all proposals that are deemed not responsive to its goals under the Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Project scope.

b. Summary of Contract Terms and Conditions

The following summary outlines terms and conditions that will be used as the basis for developing subrecipient agreements with the selected partner.



- i. **Funding:** The Climate Resiliency Planning for Communities Project is supported by funds from the U.S. Department of Treasury, under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program.
- ii. **Method of Payment:** Selected Partner must submit invoices to CCDES in such detail as CCDES requests and on a monthly basis. CCDES will process payment within forty-five (45) days after receipt of invoices. Advance payments will be considered where needed.
- iii. **Award Budget:** CCDES and Selected Partner shall jointly develop a detailed budget that is based upon and consistent with the funding source(s). Any revisions of a line item in the working budget shall be subject to approval by CCDES.
- iv. **Award Qualifications:** Selected Partner shall ensure that all agents, employees, and subrecipients or subcontractors performing the services agreed upon, meet and maintain any licensure, certification and accreditation required to carry out such services.
- v. **Monitoring and Compliance:** Review and evaluation of the program will be performed, and regular contact with the Selected Partner will be maintained to both maximize program coordination and adhere to federal guidelines.
- vi. **Reporting:** Selected Partner shall submit monthly, quarterly and/or final reports pursuant to U.S. Treasury ARPA reporting requirements and Cook County requirements as developed by DES. Additionally, throughout the entire process, the Selected Partner will collect data necessary for federal reporting guidelines and data Cook County specifies for Program metrics.
- vii. **Legal Requirements:** Compliance with the Uniform Guidance and County legal requirements will be required.