

**Interdisciplinary Climate and Environmental Equity Seed Grants  
Request for Proposals  
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research**

The UC Berkeley campus is committed to research that has high social impact, with climate change being one of the most complex and pervasive challenges globally, regionally and locally. The social, environmental, and technological challenges of climate change require that UC Berkeley, a top public research institution in the world, leverage its collective excellence by creating cross-disciplinary teams to develop the most effective, viable, and equitable solutions. Toward this goal, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (VCRO) has launched a small seed funding initiative that will support the formation of interdisciplinary teams to prepare for external funding opportunities to advance innovative and integrative interdisciplinary understandings and approaches to the study of climate and environmental equity. For example, team projects could address climate and environmental equity at the local/community, regional, and/or global scales. We encourage research that brings a diversity of approaches and integrates a range of disciplinary perspectives across campus to study complex problems.

**Program Statement**

This pilot initiative is designed to support interdisciplinary teams of scholars who will collaborate across 1-2 semesters to develop a competitive research grant proposal for external funding. Interdisciplinary Climate and Environmental Equity Seed Grants center expansive notions of equity, interdisciplinarity, and intergenerational configurations in the study of climate and environmental equity, broadly speaking. We encourage participation of community members or organizations where appropriate. We expect to make 2-4 awards of up to \$20K.

A distinguishing feature of these planning grants is their explicit attention to equity and diversity, imagined broadly, as well as their role in knowledge production. We encourage applicants to think beyond traditional diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in the research setting (e.g., broadening participation, access, and inclusion) to imagine how attending to equity and diversity is fundamental to sustaining resilient ecologies that ensure climate and environmental justice for all their inhabitants.

**We seek proposals that:**

- Embrace interdisciplinary work that sits at the edges of disciplines and invites intellectual and disciplinary boundary crossing. We imagine teams composed of individuals traditionally not often in conversation with one another—including the STEM fields to the social sciences to humanities and the professional schools, for example.
- Identify questions that are intellectually ambitious, consequential, invite interdisciplinarity, and seek nuance and complexity, while proposing actionable paths forward.
- Propose innovative approaches to equity (e.g., as worldmaking and possible futures, as integrating different epistemologies) that demonstrate an expansive understanding of

equity as contributing to the social good, to participants' social futures, and/or to sustainable designs that reimagine vulnerable ecologies.

- Identify equity indices that are observable and measurable metrics which can serve as guardrails and feedback loops, and that will help sustain commitment to equity and diversity throughout the iterative design and implementation processes. Equity indices might, for example, gauge the health and well-being of the research project, relational equity among participants, or forms of engagement. Importantly, equity indices can also provide relevant information about whether the research project is realizing its social impact goals (e.g., making a sustainable and dignified life for vulnerable populations/participants possible).
- Engage intergenerational groups of interdisciplinary scholars at different career stages in conceptualizing, designing, and engaging in research, including how equity is made central in the proposed research effort. The proposal would address how opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral and early career scholars, for example, would participate and contribute meaningfully, alongside faculty, to the proposed project.
- Proposal teams should include researchers from two or more disciplines and be led by researcher(s) with PI status.

In addition, we encourage proposal teams to identify potential external funding opportunities that align with proposed project(s). Please see the Appendix for a list of several potential funding opportunities.

### **Initiative Support Opportunities**

**Faculty co-thinkers:** Funded teams will be provided a faculty co-thinker who will serve as a resource for the planning teams as they develop and design their proposal.

**Ignite Innovation Talk Series:** During the Fall semester 2024, funded teams will be expected to participate in the Ignite Innovation Talk Series (2-3 conversations) that will also be open to the larger Berkeley campus. These talks will feature UC Berkeley and other UC faculty who will present their own program of interdisciplinary, equity-oriented research as models of innovation for the social good.

**Workshops:** Funded teams will be expected to participate in two workshops designed as collaborative thought sessions with other funded teams and campus co-facilitators. When relevant, funded participants are invited to attend the Berkeley organized workshop for the [UCOP-sponsored Community-Engaged Research for Clean Energy Solutions initiative](#).

### **Application and Review Process:**

To apply for an Interdisciplinary Climate and Environmental Equity Seed Grant, please provide short responses (up to 300 words per question) to the following series of prompts in which you will address the following:

- 1) Topic and the central research question of the proposed research: Discuss what makes your focus a compelling question to pursue, including what impact this project could have on climate equity and environmental justice.
- 2) Integrative Interdisciplinarity: Discuss how this work will be organized around an innovative integrative interdisciplinary approach that works at the edges of disciplines and questions.
- 3) Interdisciplinary Team: Describe the interdisciplinary team, including how it will individually and collectively contribute to fresh ways of capturing the complexity of the proposed research problem and the ensuing research design.
- 4) Intergenerational configuration: Discuss proposed intergenerational team configurations and how they generate expansive opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral, early career and more senior faculty, for example, to co-participate in the planning and design, as well as open up new pathways for cross-generational knowledge production. (Include CVs of team participants.)
- 5) Equity: Discuss how expansive notions of equity and diversity and what possible equity metrics might be employed throughout the design process.
- 6) Methods: Briefly identify the methodologies the team expects to use in the proposed study.
- 7) Budget: The grant is designed to facilitate ongoing collaboration among the team and sponsor activities that sustain co-design efforts (e.g., weekly meeting support, food, GSR and undergraduate participation, etc.). Budgets up to \$20K will be granted to 2-4 proposals.
- 8) Timeline: Provide a timeline of the proposed project, key activities, and indicate the projected end date (not to extend beyond June, 20, 2025).
- 9) Expected Deliverables: Brief interim report; final draft of the research proposal to be submitted for funding.

**Application deadline:** July 22, 2024

Please use this [link](#) to complete your application.

Please direct any questions about this request for proposals to both [research@berkeley.edu](mailto:research@berkeley.edu) and Kris Gutiérrez at: [gutierrkd@berkeley.edu](mailto:gutierrkd@berkeley.edu)

### **Appendix:**

Potential external funding opportunities:

#### **Environmental Protection Agency**

<https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/inflation-reduction-act-environmental-and-climate-justice-program>

<https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/inflation-reduction-act-community-change-grants-program>

**US Department of Agriculture**

<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/environmental-justice-a146>

**National Science Foundation**

Neurobiology in Changing Ecosystems (NiCE)

<https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/ethical-responsible-research-er2>

**California Climate Investments**

<https://www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/cci-programs>

**Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Program**

<https://sgc.ca.gov/grant-programs/tcc/>

While the deadline for submission has passed, below are other programs that may have future opportunities:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-grantmaking-program>

<https://www.epa.gov/greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund>

<https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/responsible-design-development-deployment/nsf24-524/solicitation>

<https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/conference-proposals-clean-energy-topics>