

## Grant Project Description

*Please provide an overview of the need of the project and a detailed description of the project activities. Some questions you might address include: the need the project is addressing, how project activities are designed to address this need, who will be served or engaged by the project, what geographic location the project will take place in, and any other relevant information that is helpful in providing a clear picture of the intent and activities of the project.*

*(Word Limit 1,000)*

The City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County have teamed up to form a joint City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity (CCTFCEE). The mission of this Task Force is to identify strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by the year 2030 while creating family supporting jobs for people in Milwaukee's low- to moderate-income neighborhoods. ECO has played a key role in this effort. The City of Milwaukee's Environmental Sustainability Director, who leads ECO, is a formal member of the CCTFCC and played a leading role on two of the four working groups of the CCTFCC, the Emissions Assessment and Inventory work group and the Financing work group. The CCTFCC published its preliminary report in May 2020 which calls on the City and County to develop a formal Climate and Equity Plan. The climate crisis is driven by human's overuse of fossil fuels and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions in every facet of our society, including buildings, transportation, manufacturing, and food systems. Therefore reducing greenhouse gas emissions to save our planet while improving people's quality of life and addressing systemic racism and inequities is an enormous challenge. Since May, ECO worked with ICLEI-USA to publish Milwaukee's first professional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and develop emissions forecasts, and published a public facing website for the Climate and Equity Plan, available at [Milwaukee.gov/ClimatePlan](https://www.milwaukee.gov/ClimatePlan). ECO expects to play a project management role in the further development of the Climate and Equity Plan.

The Climate and Equity Plan is expected to take up to two years to fully develop and will include extensive community engagement in the process. Since greenhouse gas emissions are tied to nearly every facet of modern life, reducing them by 45% over the next decade will require major changes to housing, commercial buildings, public utilities, land-use, manufacturing, and transportation. Thus we need to simultaneously educate the public on the importance of climate change and build support for strategies that address climate change. Most importantly, we need to listen to the public, hear their concerns and ideas, and build the partnerships necessary to implement that plan. Policy makers need to hear and address the frustration of traditionally underrepresented populations that have come to feel discounted or ignored. We need to make sure that every strategy in the Climate and Equity Plan is developed through an equity lens and meets the needs of all our community members.

ECO has experience in creating public plans. The ReFresh Milwaukee Sustainability Plan was published in 2013 with input from over 1,000 respondents to surveys, town hall events, and business outreach. The Climate and Equity Plan needs to draw from these successful experiences, but find new ways to reach Milwaukee in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is expected to last well into 2021. ECO will conduct outreach according to the preliminary plans outlined below, but these plans may need to be adjusted according to the direction of the broader CCTFCEE. We expect the CCTFCEE to review an overall plan and timeline for both the development of the Climate and Equity Plan as a whole and the outreach and education portion in particular.

ECO will work with Clean Wisconsin to develop short concise materials explaining why

climate change matters in Milwaukee by outlining the increased risk of extreme storms, floods, and other threats. And ECO is also exploring new approaches to generate in depth citizen engagement beyond surveys. Today, most residents have access to cameras on their phones. Through outreach on social media, ECO and its selected media provider will provide context about climate change, and ask pre-recorded compelling questions to solicit community feedback. Residents can share their stories and insights by recording their answers on their phones or computers, which is then professionally edited. We can then share these stories to inform our planning efforts and build additional support for the climate plan. We can thus build a social media campaign to support the Climate and Equity Plan built directly upon community voices.

Second, ECO has strong standing collaborative relationships with many environmental and business groups in Milwaukee. Leveraging these partnerships is necessary to build community trust and reach Milwaukee residents who may not typically engage on environmental issues or with government more generally.

To conduct outreach and record feedback, ECO requests funds to 1) support ECO staff time for community outreach; 2) work with Clean Wisconsin to develop materials highlighting Milwaukee's climate vulnerabilities; 3) work with a media company such as Tank Brain Productions or another firm to provide a media platform for collecting and editing citizen feedback; and 4) paid media to raise awareness about the Climate and Equity Planning process, which can include marketing on social media, local radio, or other public-facing platforms.

## Project Timeline

*Please include a timeline of activities to take place during the grant period.*

Jan-February 2021: Work with Clean Wisconsin to develop concise materials to explain climate change and the threats it poses to Milwaukee. ECO will disseminate this information through paid social media and radio spots to raise awareness about the threats of climate change to Milwaukee and note that the City and County of Milwaukee are collaborating on this issue. During this phase, ECO will also leverage our partnerships to build community support among stakeholders that are predisposed to supporting climate action. We will also run tests of Tank Brain Productions' stakeholder engagement process.

March -April 2021: Distribute interview questions to stakeholders and public more broadly through social media and other channels; share preliminary feedback with CCTFCEE.

May-July 2021: Begin sharing preliminary menu of climate mitigation strategies to public to gauge public openness and feedback on strategy concepts and help prioritize actions.

July-September 2021: CCTCEE refines climate mitigation strategies to propose real programs or projects

September-December 2021: Conduct outreach to get public feedback to refine or change proposed mitigation strategies and projects.

## Project Partners

*If your proposal includes project partners, please provide more details about the relationship.*

Clean Wisconsin: ECO proposes working with Clean Wisconsin to develop and distribute information about Milwaukee's climate change vulnerabilities. They have access to both scientific and communications staff to put together a compelling document, drawing from previous work done by the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts and other state

and national resources. Clean Wisconsin also has established neighborhood partners with whom they have conducted past education and outreach on green infrastructure.

ECO has strong relationships with many local organizations that could be resources in public engagement on climate change issues. These include Milwaukee Public Libraries, Walnut Way Conservation Corps, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, Milwaukee County, Sixteenth Street Community Health Center, Urban Ecology Center, Wisconsin's League of Women Voters, Milwaukee Water Commons, 350 MKE, Wisconsin Citizen Action, US Green Building Council, and others. ECO also has strong partnerships with business organizations like the Water Council, Midwest Energy Research Consortium, and real estate groups such as BOMA-Wisconsin. While these organizations will not be funded through the grant, ECO can leverage these partnerships to leverage community engagement on the project.

Tank Brain Productions: Tank Brain Productions (<https://www.tankbrain.xyz/>) contacted ECO about this project after attending Milwaukee's presentation at the global Daring Cities virtual conference (<https://daringcities.org/program/ambition-through-participation-citizens-driving-climate-neutrality/>) This organization has worked with Citizen Climate Lobby and other environmental organizations to develop a platform for virtually interviewing residents and turning their responses into compelling videos that can help advance the planning process.

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