



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2024 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2024-154

Proposal Title: Minnesota Climate and Conservation Solutions for Justice Fellowship

Project Manager Information

Name: Heidi Roop

Organization: U of MN - College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: The Climate and Conservation Solutions for Justice Fellowship builds a network of community changemakers to share narratives of hope and lead collective actions to strengthen Minnesota's frontline community climate resilience.

Funds Requested: \$260,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2026

LCCMR Funding Category: Environmental Education (C)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Metro

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

Minnesota's frontline communities experience the most immediate and severe impacts of climate change and are often Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and lower income communities. They face disproportionate exposure to climate hazards, inequities accessing resources to reduce their exposure, and are traditionally underrepresented or excluded from priority-setting and policymaking to address climate and conservation challenges. The media often highlights the loss facing these communities, exacerbating a deficit framing and detracting from these communities' assets and leadership.

Despite systemic barriers, individuals in Minnesota's frontline communities are leaders in catalyzing action to tackle climate and conservation challenges. Advancing climate justice and action in these communities requires investing in, authentically engaging with, and centering frontline community voices in mainstream climate and conservation communication, discussions, and decision-making. Essential to this is investing in community changemakers to amplify the vibrant and transformative solutions they are implementing with, and for, their communities.

Research shows that storytelling and narratives of action and hope are critical tools for accelerating climate and conservation action. Developing, amplifying and centering the stories and lived experiences of frontline communities in climate conversations, media, and decision-making is critical to advance climate and environmental justice and strengthen climate resilience and conservation action across Minnesota.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

Leveraging existing Change Narrative, LLC (CN) and University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (UMN) climate and environmental communication curriculum, coaching methods, and resources, we will nurture a cohort of changemakers through a year-long Climate and Conservation Solutions for Justice Fellowship with the aim to develop personal, place-based stories that convey lived experiences of climate change, and opportunities, needs, and examples of community-centered climate and conservation action. CN and UMN will partner with frontline community organizations to recruit, train, and support a cohort of five community climate and conservation changemakers. The fellows will participate in monthly meetings to build a shared understanding of projected climate changes in their communities, envision and learn about climate and conservation solutions, and develop climate communication and storytelling skills. Working with BIPOC videographers and animators, UMN Bell Museum exhibit designers, climate experts, and communication coaches, each fellow will be supported to not only develop their own powerful narratives but also to engage with their community members in targeted, fellow-led gatherings to further catalyze community-centered climate and conservation awareness and action. Additional reach to thousands of Minnesotans will occur through the engagement of local media, a Bell Museum exhibit, multimedia online content, and targeted social media.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

This project will support a cohort of frontline community leaders with the skills, relationships and resources to cultivate long-lasting, community-centered climate and conservation action. Fellows will build confidence through sharing their personal stories, individualized coaching, and cohort connections. They will be community sources for understanding climate impacts, solutions, and communications approaches. They will engage with their community members and share their stories to catalyze climate and conservation action and deepen an action-based conservation ethic in their communities. The fellow's narratives will be amplified to thousands of Minnesotans through a Bell Museum exhibit, multimedia content, and local media.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Relationship Building, Fellow Identification and Evaluating Minnesota Climate and Conservation Media Narratives

Activity Budget: \$36,774

Activity Description:

The first stage of the fellowship project is to build community trust and to identify and recruit a group of Climate and Conservation Solutions for Justice Fellows in direct partnership with community-based organizations. We will collaborate with these organizations to define desired characteristics of the fellows and community-focused conservation and climate solutions. Leveraging existing partnerships and relationships and project supporters (see letters) we will identify a committee of 8-10 trusted community leaders to help us use these characteristics to recruit and cultivate a robust group of applicants, and then, under their guidance select a diverse group of five changemakers to participate in the fellowship. CN will lead ten convenings with established frontline community organizations as part of this recruitment process.

UMN will also conduct a media evaluation to uncover how frontline communities, climate and conservation impacts and actions are framed as well as the representation of diverse climate stories and their significance in Minnesota media. This analysis will provide evidence to help the fellows develop impactful personal climate and conservation narratives, as well as effective plans to share their narratives and communicate why diverse representation of Minnesota's community leaders is important in promoting climate and conservation action.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Meet with 8-10 established frontline community-based organizations to build trust and buy-in for the fellowship.	September 30, 2024
Co-develop desired characteristics/criteria of frontline community changemakers to invite into the fellowship program.	September 30, 2024
Work with sub-committee of the community leaders to identify, recruit, and select 5 fellows.	December 31, 2024
Media analysis to uncover how frontline communities, climate, and conservation are represented in Minnesota media.	December 31, 2024

Activity 2: Fellowship to Develop Climate and Conservation Stories and Solutions

Activity Budget: \$146,857

Activity Description:

CN and UMN will adapt existing climate and environmental communications educational approaches, coaching methods, and resources to train and engage the selected fellows. This will take place in twelve monthly convenings which will culminate in the skills needed to craft a climate and conservation narrative that will be further developed and amplified in Activity 3.

Of the twelve convenings, a minimum of six will take place in locations of frontline community significance. All meetings will be structured to build cross-cohort collaboration and knowledge exchange, develop and deepen fellow's storytelling skills, connect with climate and natural resources professionals to explore impacts and solutions, and to engage in holistic climate engagement practices including those that help to address climate trauma. CN will lead these meetings, with support from the post-doctoral fellow and UMN team, using The Jemez Principles that serve as guidance for mainstream environmental organizations working with frontline communities and people of color.

In addition to the monthly convenings, each fellow will receive personalized coaching from CN to help build skills, connections, and support the development of their climate narrative that will be shared broadly through activities outlined in Activity 3, including direct community engagement and broader amplification across Minnesota.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Program design and agenda development for Climate and Conservation Solutions for Justice Fellowship monthly convenings.	December 31, 2024
Personalized storytelling and solutions coaching for each fellow.	November 30, 2025
Host 12 Fellowship gatherings to build skills and knowledge in climate impacts, solutions, and storytelling.	December 31, 2025
Development of fellows’ climate and conservation stories and narratives that will underpin Activity 3.	December 31, 2025

Activity 3: Storytelling, Community Engagement and Amplification Across Minnesota

Activity Budget: \$76,369

Activity Description:

CN and UMN will work with the fellows to curate and amplify their climate and conservation narratives and engage their communities in working toward climate and conservation solutions.

First, each fellow will work with a BIPOC videographer and animator to produce a 2-5 minute video to share their personal narratives from Activity 2. Working with exhibit designers, the fellows will integrate these videos into the UMN Bell Museum Reimagined Futures exhibit. In partnership with CN, UMN, and the community organizations from Activity 1, each fellow will be supported to host a community engagement gathering. These gatherings will showcase fellow’s stories and highlight their roles as community changemakers and will catalyze community awareness and sustained action around climate and conservation solutions.

To support broader dissemination and reach, each fellow will work with the postdoctoral researcher to build a strategic communication, engagement, and evaluation plan. These plans will be informed by the Activity 1 media evaluation and are likely to include statewide media releases, social media campaigns, and targeted local media engagement. Implementation of these engagement plans will be facilitated by the project team under the leadership of the UMN postdoc and CN.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Create individualized strategic communications, engagement, and evaluation plans for each fellow.	December 31, 2025
Develop 2-3 minute personal climate and conservation narrative videos for each fellow.	December 31, 2025
Develop Bell Museum Reimagined Future Exhibit featuring fellow’s stories.	March 31, 2026
Host five or more community engagement gatherings as defined and designed by the fellows.	June 30, 2026
Targeted communication and engagement to amplify fellow’s stories as community changemakers.	June 30, 2026
Summarize results, processes, and accomplishments in a final report and presentations to frontline community leaders.	June 30, 2026

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Jothsna Harris	Change Narrative, LLC	Project co-lead. Harris will be a subcontractor to serve as the project co-lead to shape the project direction, provide leadership and guidance on frontline community engagement and coaching, storytelling training, and production of co-designed fellow stories in written, audio, and video formats for community engagement and media amplification efforts.	Yes
Nathan Meyer	University of Minnesota Extension	Project co-lead. Meyer will assist the postdoctoral associate with developing strategic communications, engagement, and evaluation plans.	No
Dr. Holly Menninger	Bell Museum of Natural History	Menninger will assist Stampe with the integration of multimedia/interpretive content into Bell exhibits and programs, as well as assisting the postdoc in developing strategic communications, engagement, and evaluation plans.	No
Jenny Stampe	Bell Museum of Natural History	Stampe will coordinate with the project team, integrating multimedia/interpretive content produced by fellows into Bell exhibits and programs.	Yes
Postdoctoral Associate	University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership	Support all project activities but with a focus on a) leading a statewide climate media evaluation (Activity 1), and b) training fellows on climate communications skills and developing strategic community climate conservation communications, engagement, and evaluation plans to for each Fellow. (Activities 2 and 3).	Yes

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

This Fellowship will deepen relationships and community engagement connections to sustain community climate and conservation action. Fellows' stories and experiences will be available in print and multimedia through UMN and community organization websites, social channels, and the Bell Museum.

Beyond the initial Fellowship, we intend to continue long-term Fellow engagement and secure resources to support this. We plan to replicate the fellowship in other communities with partners like the Initiative Foundations. This project will be piloted in Twin Cities communities to leverage existing relationships and to facilitate in-person meetings that will better enable refining the fellowship for future cohorts.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Water and Climate Information to Enhance Community Resilience	M.L. 2022, , Chp. 94, Art. , Sec. 2, Subd. 04f	\$564,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Heidi Roop

Job Title: Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Principal Investigator Heidi Roop is a trained climate scientist, climate adaptation specialist, and science communicator with years of experience developing innovative ways to build bridges between the theory and practice of climate science

and conservation action. Dr. Roop's research focuses on developing communication and technical support tools and methods for connecting climate science to decision-making. Dr. Roop holds appointments in the University of Minnesota Extension and College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, is Director of the University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP) and was formerly the Lead Scientist for Science Communication at the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group. She has grown MCAP from a volunteer-run annual conference to a university-funded organization with more than ten scientists, staff, and interns. Her expertise in climate science, communication, and stakeholder engagement gives her the skills to lead this project. Dr. Roop is currently the principal investigator of climate adaptation planning projects with Minnesota's northern Tribal Nations, which exemplifies her capabilities to work in authentic and co-creative ways with frontline communities to address climate conservation solutions.

Organization: U of MN - College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences

Organization Description:

The mission of the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate is to advance the understanding of Earth system processes and the interaction among land, atmosphere, and water. Through research, teaching, and outreach it seeks to: (1) improve and protect the quality of soil, air, and water resources in natural and managed ecosystems; (2) enhance agricultural and forest productivity and sustainability; (3) predict and mitigate impacts of environmental change on ecosystems and society; and (4) provide science-based knowledge for improved decision making and a better-informed citizenry.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Postdoctoral Associate		Support all project activities but with a focus on a) leading a statewide climate media evaluation (Activity 1), and b) training fellows on climate communications skills and developing strategic community climate conservation communications, engagement, and evaluation plans to for each Fellow. (Activities 2 and 3).			25.7%	1		\$74,000
UMN Bell Museum Associate Director		Lead coordination of integration of multimedia/interpretive content produced by fellows and video team into Bell exhibits and programs (Activity 3).			36.8%	0.08		\$9,497
							Sub Total	\$83,497
Contracts and Services								
Change Narrative LLC	Sub award	The subcontractor will serve as the project co-lead to shape the project direction, and provide leadership and direction to guide frontline community engagement and coaching and storytelling training.				0		\$100,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Recording and producing five 2-3 minute videos to share the fellow's personal climate and conservation narratives and solution strategies as part of the Activity 3 community engagement gatherings.				0		\$10,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Producing five one-minute animations to share the fellow's personal climate and conservation narratives and solution strategies as part of the Activity 3 community engagement gatherings.				0		\$10,000
TBD	Professional or Technical Service Contract	Professional services as needed to address barriers to participation in the fellowship meetings (Activity 2) and community engagement gatherings (Activity 3) like translation services, childcare, transportation.				-		\$10,000
							Sub Total	\$130,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								

							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Funding requested for requested in year one for 2 staff to travel an average of 80 miles round trip to attend meetings with ten frontline community organizations in the greater Twin Cities metro region to facilitate the recruitment and selection of fellows (Activity 1) and travel for 5 fellows and 2 project team members to attend 6 fellowship training and discussion meetings at various Twin Cities area locations (Activity 2).	Travel is necessary to facilitate the recruitment and selection of fellows (Activity 1) and facilitate 6 fellowship training and discussion meetings at Twin Cities area locations (Activity 2).					\$3,250
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Funding requested in year two for five fellows and two project team members to attend 6 fellowship training and discussion meetings at various Twin Cities area locations (Year 2; Activity 2) and travel for 2 project team members to attend five community engagement gatherings coordinated by the fellows (Activity 3).	Travel is necessary to facilitate 6 fellowship training and discussion meetings at Twin Cities area locations (Year 2; Activity 2) and attend five community engagement gatherings coordinated by the fellows (Activity 3).					\$2,750
							Sub Total	\$6,000
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
	Printing	\$240 is requested in year one for meeting supplies (average \$40 per meeting) for 6 fellowship training and discussion meetings (Activity 2).	Printing climate science, narrative and strategy-building worksheets, and other items for fellowship training and discussion meetings.					\$240

	Printing	\$563 is requested in year two for meeting supplies (\$240, average \$40 per meeting) for 6 additional fellowship meetings (Activity 2) and meeting supplies (\$323, average \$65 per meeting) for 5 fellow-led community engagement gatherings (Activity 3).	Printing of climate science, narrative and strategy-building worksheets, and other items fellowship and discussion trainings, as well as printing brochures and other informative materials for community engagement gatherings.					\$563
							Sub Total	\$803
Other Expenses								
		\$600 years 1 and \$1,600 in year 2 of the project (\$2,200 total) requested for room rental (average \$200 per meeting) for up to 3 fellowship meetings per year in community identified places of significance for conservation, cultural importance, and climate solutions to be fostered or implemented (Activity 2), and \$1,000 for year 2 community engagement gathering meeting costs (rental, AV, and other costs for community engagement events).	Providing community-located spaces for 3 fellowship meetings per year, as well as rental and other costs to host fellow-led community engagement gatherings.					\$2,200
		\$25,000 is requested in year one to provide five \$5,000 fellowship awards to support the time and effort of five fellows to participate in twelve discussion and training meetings (Activity 2) and public engagement gatherings (Activity 3).	Funding supports the time and effort of five frontline community fellows to participate in fellowship meetings (Activity 2) and public engagement gatherings (Activity 3).					\$25,000
		\$10,000 is also requested in year two for five additional awards of \$2000 per fellow to support the fellow's community engagement gatherings and statewide efforts to share their personal climate and conservation narratives (Activity 3).	Funding supports additional time and efforts for fellows to plan and host community engagement gatherings and statewide efforts to share their personal climate and conservation narratives.					\$10,000
		\$2,500 is requested in year one for \$250 honoraria for 10 frontline community leaders who serve on the committee to identify, recruit, and select five fellows (Activity 1).	Funding supports the time and efforts of frontline community leaders to identify, recruit, and select five fellows to develop climate conservation solution strategies.					\$2,500
							Sub Total	\$39,700
							Grand Total	\$260,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
Cash	UMN Faculty Savings	Funding to support an additional .5 FTE postdoctoral associate for a full-time position to participate in all project activities, lead a statewide climate media evaluation, train fellows on climate communications skills, and work with them to develop community climate and conservation communications, engagement, and evaluation plans.	Secured	\$74,000
			State Sub Total	\$74,000
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	\$74,000

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [b6f0a7c4-9fa.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

A visual of the 3-phase process of developing and hosting the MN Climate and Conservation Solutions for Justice Fellowship...

Optional Attachments

Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
MN Climate and Conservation Solutions for Justice Fellowship Support Letters	6844dd92-4ea.pdf
University of Minnesota Sponsored Projects Administration Endorsement Letter	f0dbf595-66f.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

Yes, Sponsored Projects Administration

Does your project include the design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other capital asset costing \$10,000 or more?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services, as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7?

No