



SALAZAR CENTER

THRIVING CITIES CHALLENGE

Applicant Webinar Q&A - March 15

The following questions were asked by webinar attendees on March 15, 2021; answers to questions asked during the February 22nd webinar begin on page 5. Many questions were addressed during the live webinar; summary answers are provided here, along with a timestamp of where in the [webinar recording](#) you can find a more detailed answer. Questions that were not addressed during the webinar are also listed here with answers. If you have a question that is not addressed below or by our [FAQs](#), please email us at csusalazarcenter@gmail.com.

APPLICATION PROCESS & TEAM STRUCTURING

While proposals should focus on a city challenge, does a team need to have the city as one of its partners?

No, but you should be able to demonstrate support from your city/location in other ways, should it be critical to the success of your project. See minute 35:40 in the recording for more.

Does the team's nonprofit entity also need to include BIPOC leadership, or can that representation come from elsewhere on the team?

Meaningful BIPOC leadership may come from any team member organization. See minute 50:50 in the recording for more.

Can teams include other Colorado State University (CSU) entities?

Yes, and while the Salazar Center, who administers the Challenge, is also a CSU entity, teams are not required to have a CSU-affiliated team member or partner.

Can an applicant team use a fiscal sponsor?

Yes, as long as the fiscal sponsor/agent is a registered nonprofit entity. See minute 52:40 in the recording for more.

Can a team submit more than one video?

We prefer not. Use this application component to capture your team's energy and passion, and to strengthen the contents of your application. We suggest each team's video be about a minute long. See minute 54:40 in the recording for more.

As long as one team member organization is a nonprofit entity, can other community groups or organizations that aren't nonprofits have a central role in the project?

Yes.

Are all team members funded?

The Challenge will award funding to the primary applicant organization (or, if the primary applicant is not, whichever team member organization is the registered non-profit entity). It is up to the non-profit organization to distribute funds to other team member organizations as they see fit. See minute 36:55 in the recording for more.

IDEAS & APPROACHES

Will the Challenge support a single location, or can a proposal be for a network of cities/locations across the eligible landscape?

It can be either, as long as you can demonstrate how your project is place-based and community-led. See minute 34:30 in the recording for more.

Will the Challenge support projects that already are in progress, or are you looking for projects that are just getting started?

It depends. See minute 53:05 in the recording for more.

Does the Challenge support planning a project, or actually putting it into action?

It depends on the type of project, where it might in the planning phase, and the time-frame for implementation. See minute 41:40 in the recording for more.

Will it be possible to see who is applying so in the interest of collaboration, team can know if they should join forces if appropriate?

No. Applicant teams will be made aware of fellow applicants after the application period has closed, via the Prize Booklet and other communications, but no information about fellow applicants will be shared with other teams prior to the deadline.

Would the Challenge fund projects that are holistic in nature, that include elements that are nature-based?

Yes, as long as the team can demonstrate how the elements for which they are requesting funding, as well as the project approach more broadly, meet the scoring criteria.

Is this Challenge looking for more science-based climate solutions or humanistic solutions?

Projects may propose both science-based and humanistic solutions to climate change impacts, as long as the proposal clearly describes the potential for impact and how it will be measured.

EVALUATION & AWARDS

What are the benefits or other grant opportunities available to applicants who are not the winner of the prize? Is there funding prior to the finalist phase?

Every team who submits a complete, eligible proposal will receive qualitative feedback and score from at least five evaluators, as well as exposure to other funders and Salazar Center contacts via the Prize Booklet. Funding is not provided to applicants prior to the finalist phase of the Challenge. See minutes 45:25 and 56:45 in the recording for more.

What are the five evaluation criteria and what will evaluators expect to see in a successful proposal?

Challenge evaluators will be most interested in equity-centered applications that genuinely engage a diverse and equity-focused team. Creativity, sustainability, and resilience all are elements to be integrated into the application as well, See minute 1:01:40 in the recording; we also encourage you to review the complete [rubric](#), and if you still have questions about specific criteria, email catie.boehmer@colostate.edu with questions.

How does the level of experience weigh in the scoring system?

Experience is only part of the equation; demonstrable engagement with the target community is just as important. The level of experience may describe individuals team members' experience and know-how, as well as that of the organizations represented within the team. We recognize and will consider that some initiatives haven't had the test of time to establish a track record. See minute 39:20 in the recording for more.

Does “innovative” mean new to the team’s target community, or not commonly done anywhere?

It depends. The “innovative” rubric criteria is intended to encourage creative, thoughtful, engaging ways of addressing a need in your community. We encourage out-of-the-box thinking that applies to your community. See minute 1:01:40 in the recording for more.

What is the grant award range?

\$10,000 for each finalist team, \$50,000 to the winning team, with the potential to expand the final prize to as much as \$100,000 dependent upon ongoing fundraising for the Challenge.

Is the final Challenge award amount flexible, and will it be adjusted based on the nature of a given project?

No. Currently, the final award is set at \$50,000. While it may be increased to as much as \$100,000, the final award will not be adjusted based on the winning team's budget. See minute 45:25 in the recording for more.

Will each finalist team receive a \$10,000 grant?

Yes. See minute 45:25 in the recording for more.

What is the funding time period, and do all funds need to be spent within that period? Could a project span 2-5 years?

The winning team's award will be dispersed over two years, but the project may run longer than that period, as long as there are demonstrable impacts/progress to be reported after two years. See minute 49:05 in the recording for more.

When does the grant year start for the winning finalist?

This is not finalized yet, but likely November 2021. See minute 59:40 in the recording for more.

Can funds be used to capital expenses?

Yes, funds may be used for capital expenses, though given the award amount, we do not anticipate being able to fully support large capital projects.

Are matching funds required?

No. See minute 1:00:30 in the recording for more.

Is this grant a cash grant paid up front or is the funding awarded on a reimbursable basis?

Both finalists and the Challenge winner will be receive a cash grant paid up front.

Who participates in the pitch fest?

All finalist teams (currently planning and budgeted for 5-8 teams) will receive a \$10,000 capacity-building grant, as well as training and support during the summer, and all finalist teams participate in the September pitch event. The pitch event culminates with the announcement of a single winning team, chosen from the pool of finalists.

Can teams participate in the pitch fest virtually?

The pitch event will likely be held virtually, but should we choose to pursue a hybrid event format, teams may select to participate virtually or in-person.

Will the lead applicant have to participate in the pitch fest or could anyone from the team do so?

Not necessarily. See minute 58:10 in the recording for more.

Is it possible that the Challenge funders may themselves invite a proposal from applicant teams?

Yes. See minute 56:20 in the recording for more.

Were prior finalists able to leverage attention gained through participation to gain funding for their project?

Yes. See minute 56:45 in the recording for more.



SALAZAR CENTER

THRIVING CITIES CHALLENGE

Applicant Webinar Q&A - February 22

The following questions were asked by webinar attendees on February 22, 2021. Many questions were addressed during the live webinar; summary answers are provided here, along with a timestamp of where in the [webinar recording](#) you can find a more detailed answer. Questions that were not addressed during the webinar are also listed here with answers. If you have a question that is not addressed below or by our [FAQs](#), please email us at csusalazarcenter@gmail.com.

APPLICATION PROCESS & TEAM STRUCTURING

Does the age and history of a team's collaboration play a role? Does it need to be new this year, or have a certain number of years of history together?

There is no requirement in this regard, though the evaluation will consider likelihood of team success, so new partnerships should have high confidence of compatibility and viability.

Does the primary applicant need to be the entity with BIPOC representation?

Not necessarily. Our eligibility criteria state that at least one organization represented in the team should have BIPOC leadership, either on their staff or their governing board. While we hope that the primary applicant comes from an organization with BIPOC leadership, an application won't be automatically ineligible if the primary applicant organization does not have that BIPOC representation. In that case, we'd expect to see substantive and demonstrable BIPOC leadership elsewhere in the team, e.g. a major partner organization or individual, accompanied by an explanation of why the team is structured in that way. See minute 52:30 in the recording for more.

Do you prefer that the lead applicant is a nonprofit?

Yes, but you may choose to structure your team differently. See minute 49:20 in the recording, as well as the following question, for more.

Does the primary applicant have to be a nonprofit organization or can a city be the lead applicant and fiscal agent?

The primary applicant does not need to be a registered nonprofit or have a nonprofit fiscal agent, but if your team is awarded funding, those funds must be remitted to a nonprofit entity on your team or to a team member organization with a designated nonprofit fiscal agent. See minute 32:50 in the recording for more.

Does a public university qualify to receive the funding?

Yes, as long as legal tax exemption can be documented. A cap on institutional overhead would also be required.

Can a faculty apply as an individual as part of a team, or do they have to apply as the university they are part of?

It depends on who the team designates to receive funding. See minute 54:30 in the recording for more.

Can a single organization be a partner on more than one team, if they are not the lead applicant?

Yes.

Can the applicant organization be a chapter of a national organization where the chapter and/or the project is led by a person of color, even if the national organization is not?

Yes. It is more important that a team and its proposed project demonstrate a commitment to and understanding of the goal of racial equity as coequal to natural solutions to climate resilience.

How many team members can work on the application?

You can choose to have as few as 1 primary applicant and no co-applicants, or as many as 1 primary applicant plus 3 co-applicants. See minute 32:30 in the recording for more.

Is it necessary to have one member from each of the listed team categories (community-based organization, conservation-oriented organization, university researcher(s) or other academically-oriented entity, governmental agency partner or similar policy-oriented partner)?

No. You should assemble your team to best achieve your project goals and to best serve your target community; if a certain sector(s) is not represented, that will not affect the eligibility to your project as long as you can demonstrate your team is equipped to complete the project as described.

IDEAS & APPROACHES

Would it be best to focus on one town or city's resilience, or are multi-town collaborations ideal?

The Challenge is focused on place-based projects. It is up to the proposal team to decide whether they wish to focus on one or multiple communities for the greatest desired impact.

Do you encourage a team to apply even if at the beginning of an idea?

Yes. We are seeking creative ideas and approaches, along with genuine engagement with people from all walks of life. We want to see more collaborations with people of diverse cultures, backgrounds and locations.

What are examples of eligible activities related to outreach and community building? Do activities have to be "hands on" green infrastructure projects?

We are looking for impact for both climate resilience and racial equity via natural solutions and green space. Metrics for both types of success will be considered, but we do not have a specific "hands-on" requirement.

What kinds of projects are you looking for? Capital improvements? Strategic planning?

We are looking for innovative thinking and activity that can lead to impact for climate resilience and racial equity via natural solutions and green space. We encourage all types of thinking about this, whether a new way to use data, engage people, or model approaches.

When you say capital investment are eligible, do you mean any construction (e.g., in a green design project for stormwater flood control projects, will you fund the purchase of vegetation materials like trees)?

Yes. While this award is likely not large enough to cover the full costs of capital investments, we do not prohibit capital expenditures. If those are the best way to achieve your project goals, then by all means include them. We are just aware that at this level of award, the dollars may not go as far for capital projects as for other types of activities.

What kind of track record are you looking for in terms of past work/organizing? How are you taking into account grassroots community-based organizations that may not have the same infrastructure as well-established nonprofits?

One consideration in evaluating proposals will be likelihood of success, should the proposed project be funded. This may be a function of experience, but it also may be a function of community buy-in and reaching new audiences. We have tried to make the program accessible to grassroots organizations. The key will be to make your case for realizable impact.

Can the seed funding for finalists be used towards a pilot version of the final project?

The use of seed funding can be determined by each finalist team, in collaboration with the Salazar Center team and its Thriving Cities Challenge advisors.

Are you looking to create a cohort of teams who have related projects that can be mutually beneficial?

Not necessarily, though we do hope finalists will benefit from each other's knowledge and experience. See minute 46:50 in the recording for more.

EVALUATION & AWARDS

What do evaluators expect to see in the narrative portions of the application?

Each question requiring a narrative answer is accompanied by help text, with examples of how you might answer the question, and each have limits ranging from 150 to 300 words. See minute 38:45 in the recording for more, and if you want to talk about a particular question(s), please reach out to catie.boehmer@colostate.edu.

Do you have to apply to a certain track (design and engineering vs. community outreach), or choose your own path?

We strongly encourage you to choose your own path. Cross-disciplinary and collaborative project proposals are encouraged.

What is the nature of the finalist support, such as the funding amount and time commitment?

Finalist teams will each receive \$10,000; capacity building, mentoring, and training activity will be determined together with finalists, but may require up to 10-20 hours before the pitch fest in September. See minute 44:30 in the recording for more.

How many awards will be funded and at how much?

One team will receive the final Challenge award, which will be a minimum of \$50,000, and may be as much as \$100,000, dependent upon ongoing Salazar Center fundraising for the Challenge. A minimum of five finalist teams will also receive \$10,000 each. See minute 53:15 in the recording for more.

Is there a match required for this grant? If so, how much?

No, there is not a match required for this grant.

What is the pitch fest?

Final pitch event will be held in-person in Denver, CO, or **virtually as needed** for the health and safety of all participants. Finalists will present their ideas and a small panel of reviewers will select a winner. This event may also be held September 28 or 29, dependent upon event logistics and details. Should it be deemed safe to hold the pitch event in-person, the Salazar Center will cover all related costs for finalist teams to attend and participate. Should the event be held in-person but participants do not feel comfortable traveling, accommodations to participate virtually will be made.

Is indirect funding at a certain percentage allowed?

Each project's budget will be distinct. Indirect costs may be needed by an applicant. If that is the case, then it is up to the project team to make the case for it in their proposal.

Are you open to funding a portion of a larger project? And if so, will you allow for the Challenge funding to be part of a bucket of funds?

Yes, and yes.

Are there any restrictions on the use of funds?

Funds may not be used toward political lobbying/advocacy. We will not place a limit on how much of the funding can cover staff time or consultants. See minute 35:10 in the recording for more.

If awarded, is there a deadline by when funds need to be spent?

We typically expect awarded funds to be used over a period of two years. See minute 34:40 in the recording for more.

Is there an expectation that the \$100,000, if awarded, would fund the majority of the project?

No, this will vary by proposal. The current award amount anticipated is \$50,000. If your budget is significantly larger, then we encourage you to describe how you anticipate funding the balance, and why or how the Challenge funds are mission-critical

Is this a cost-reimbursement grant, a prepaid, or an installment grant?

We anticipate paying the award in one or two installments, depending on the nature of the winning proposal.

Will this Challenge be offered annually?

No, not annually. It is one of two different award programs of the Center and this is the first year of the Thriving Cities Challenge. We anticipate offering this urban and resilience-focused prize every two years. See minute 50:25 in the recording for more.

Is there a Word or PDF version of the application?

Yes. [Download the Word document](#) / [download the PDF](#).

The application has an ‘upload file’ option for letters of recommendation, as well as the option to request letters from references via email. Is there a preference for submitting the letter?

No preference, choose whichever option works best for your team. You may also use both options, if you think different references will prefer one over the other.

Are current grantees of the VF Foundation eligible for this opportunity and will the VF Foundation have a role in the decision making on finalists and awardee?

Yes, current grantees of the VF Foundation are eligible for this opportunity. We are appreciative that the VF Foundation is a lead sponsor of this award in 2021; and the foundation does not have a role in the selection process.