



Columbia River Restoration Fund Request for Proposals Packet

Introduction

The Columbia River Restoration Fund (CRRF, or the Fund) was established by [Columbia Riverkeeper](#), an environmental justice organization and long-time partner of Seeding Justice.

The funds for CRRF come from settlements obtained through litigation against polluters. The Funds' grants are therefore destined for projects and environmental justice organizations working to restore, protect, and maintain the Columbia River Basin and the Columbia River's tributaries.

While the Columbia River Basin spans the U.S. and Canada, these funds are from Clean Water Act (CWA) settlement agreements; since CWA is a U.S. law, funding will benefit projects and organizations within the U.S.

Acknowledging Tensions

We acknowledge that the dominant paradigm in American philanthropy is built on wealth that has been extracted from communities and natural systems, and hoarded and controlled by a wealthy and powerful few. We have a responsibility to unleash this wealth back to the community.

We also acknowledge that there is tension in managing a fund that is built on the proceeds from pollution and its harms. More pollution and lawsuits = more grant funding.

Purpose of the Fund

The CRRF supports initiatives that restore and protect the beneficial and cultural uses of the Columbia River Basin by empowering diverse communities to act on their collective responsibility to the river and its watershed, and ensuring that those most impacted by pollution have the greatest voice in determining the solutions.

Values of the Fund

ABUNDANCE: We believe in abundance and have a sense of optimism that through collaboration, generosity and openness, the future holds great possibilities for change.

EMPOWERMENT: We are dedicated to the empowerment of all communities to exercise their rights and create the community conditions needed to thrive, prioritizing Tribal sovereignty and centering the voices of those most harmed by water pollution.

JOY: We foster joy by celebrating our love of nature and the River community, honoring the Basin's beauty and bounty, and nurturing a community of care.

JUSTICE: We seek justice through healing past and preventing future harms to the River and the diverse cultures of the Columbia Basin community.

RECIPROCITY: We prioritize reciprocity because we recognize our collective responsibility to foster connection, harmony, and balance among current and future generations, all species, and the waters of the Columbia Basin.

TRANSFORMATION: We believe in transformation and foster regenerative capabilities so that systems and communities in and beyond the Basin can continuously evolve toward health and resilience.

WISDOM: We rely on the wisdom of communities and nature to provide guidance and perspective in seeking and arriving at the best possible decisions and outcomes.

Decision Making Process

The Columbia River Restoration Fund follows Seeding Justice's grantmaking approaches, seeking to shift not only wealth, but also power, and focusing on environmental and social regeneration rather than extraction.

A steering committee, composed of environmental justice activists and organizers, makes all decisions regarding the Fund and represents those whose voices are not often at decision making tables.

Fund Budget

In 2024, the Fund will have \$2.5 million available for grantmaking. Of these funds:

- \$2 million will be directed (i.e. no application) to the work Tribes have been or will be doing in the Basin.
- \$500,000 will be allocated through an open request for proposals (RFP).

Fund Priorities and Examples of Projects

The grantmaking committee has identified three priorities for the Fund, listed below.

For each priority, we are sharing some non-exhaustive list of projects and activities that align with them. Your project does not have to cover or aim to accomplish all of the activities or goals listed. In fact, in the request for proposal, we ask that you focus on just one of the priorities. If you have a difficult time deciding which priority best fits your project, [please contact us](#).

Priority 1: Uphold Columbia River Basin Tribes' sovereignty and leadership in watershed restoration, protection and conservation efforts in the Basin.

Examples of projects/organizations we might fund under this priority:

- Tribes' efforts to uphold treaty rights and expand food sovereignty in the Basin, as well as cultural uses of the River.
- Tribes' legal or policy advocacy efforts to uphold their right to protect fish, and use salmon and other sacred wildlife in cultural ceremonies or subsistence activities.
- Tribes' advocacy for regulatory changes that would strengthen water quality standards in the Columbia River Basin.
- Tribes' use and expansion of traditional ecological knowledge, including to educate landholders and managers in the watershed, and improve their land management practices.

Priority 2: Strengthen advocacy, organizing, and coalition building efforts that empower and support all Basin communities to access, protect, and restore the River and its watershed.

Examples of projects/organizations we might fund under this priority:

- Initiatives that build collective action and collaboration and expand power building efforts rooted in equitable partnership among Tribal nations, nonprofits, and communities.
- Policy, communications, education, or other campaigns that aim to achieve long-term solutions to protect and improve river health in the Basin.
- Communications and public education efforts that elevate a culture of respect, care, and accountability toward the Columbia River Basin and that center the voices of marginalized communities.
- Arts and culture projects designed to amplify marginalized voices and narratives, engage the public, change systems, and support policy changes that improve watershed health.

Priority 3: Expand culturally-rooted ways of caring for and engaging with the Basin through hands-on programs and experiences.

Examples of projects/organizations we might fund under this priority:

- Organizations and efforts for and led by culturally specific communities that result in traditional/cultural uses of the Columbia River watershed and its tributaries for ceremonial, spiritual, subsistence, and recreational purposes.
- Efforts that provide art-based experiences and/or nurture, educate, and train the next generation of watershed stewards.
- Small-scale, community-centered ecosystem restoration and clean-up

efforts that enhance cultural connections and build community, while also providing ecological benefits.

What we cannot fund

- Individuals.
- For-profit businesses.
- Projects that do not primarily benefit the Columbia River Watershed.
- Electoral or political work.
- Lobbying.
- Large-scale restoration or clean-up projects.

OUR COMMITMENT TO TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

Acknowledging the relation of the Clean Water Act to the colonial context of the U.S., the Fund seeks to uphold Tribal sovereignty and support the original stewards of the Basin's ecosystems in non-extractive ways.

To this end, the Fund will resource Tribal nations whose ancestral lands fall within the U.S. portion of the Columbia River Basin **through a separate, non-competitive process.**

To find out more about the funding process for Tribal Governments and who qualifies, please email Jill at crrfgrants@seedingjustice.org.

Requests for Proposals Process

Nonprofits, fiscally sponsored projects, and other entities wishing to submit proposals, can do so via our open RFP process.

If you are a Tribal nation or government, please contact us.

RFP Eligibility

To be eligible for a 2024 grant, applicants must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) organization or be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization;

The project for which you are seeking support must:

- Be located and/or serve the people in the territories of the Columbia Basin currently known as Oregon and Washington;
- Focus on restoring, protecting and improving water quality in the Basin and the communities' health and prosperity that call the region home.

We encourage proposals from small, grassroots, and volunteer-based groups, and we

welcome first-time grant seekers.

If your group or organization lacks charitable status and doesn't have a fiscal sponsor, but has a compelling project, [please contact us](#) to discuss options.

If you are new to grant writing, we'd be happy to help you navigate the grant application process. You can make an appointment with [Seeding Justice staff here](#).

Amount and Duration of Support

Organizations can apply for up to \$200,000 in support lasting up to 24 months.

How to Submit a Request for Proposal

You can submit a [request for proposal via Submittable](#), our online platform. We anticipate the following timeline:

Proposals open	May 14, 2024
Proposals close	July 12, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time
Review and scoring of grants	July 13 to August 30
Decision-making meeting(s)	Fall 2024

Working on Your Request for Proposal

You will submit your [request for proposal via Submittable](#), our online platform. If submitting your proposal online presents a barrier, please let us know and we can work together on finding a solution.

Before you start filling out your proposal, please read through this document and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) carefully.

If you are working on your proposal directly in the online platform, your answers will autosave. If you'd like to work on a draft outside of the platform, please work on this work document before copying/pasting your answers into the platform.

Questions?

Here's how to get a hold of us:

- If you are a Tribal Government seeking funds, please contact crrfgrants@seedingjustice.org.
- To sign up to receive Fund updates, [please click here](#).
- If you have any questions, please send us an email to crrfgrants@seedingjustice.org.
- You can make a virtual appointment with [Seeding Justice staff here](#).
- If you experience technical difficulties with Submittable, please contact them directly at support@submittable.com.