



Office of Sustainability, Climate Action & Resilience

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BOCC Memo: Business Meeting July 8

Subject: Climate Equity Fund Update

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Background Information:

- In 2024, the Boulder County Office of Sustainability, Climate Action & Resilience (OSCAR) conducted a comprehensive review of climate justice best practices. Informed by recommendations from external environmental justice consultants, OSCAR staff—together with Commissioner Loachamin—began developing a vision for a Climate Equity Fund. The intent of the fund is to expand access to funding for frontline communities and individuals disproportionately impacted by climate change. The Climate Equity Fund is designed to directly support neighborhoods, organizations, and communities that have been historically excluded from traditional climate solution efforts. This initiative advances the County's climate action and racial equity goals by prioritizing resources for those most affected by the climate crisis and enabling grassroots, community-driven climate action at the local scale.
- OSCAR brought on **JSI**, a consultant with deep experience in environmental justice grantmaking, to support the launch of this fund. Administering funds through a participatory process is complex, and a strong fiscal and administrative partner is critical to undertaking this new initiative. JSI has been an outstanding collaborator—providing expert facilitation, technical assistance, and strategic guidance throughout.
- Given the core tenet of this fund is to center community voice, we created the *Community Creation Council (CCC)* to guide recommendations on the fund's design and implementation. The CCC is a collaborative group of six community members¹ tasked with co-designing and guiding the Climate Equity Fund under the shared principles of justice, transparency, and community leadership.
- The CCC invested significant time, intention and effort throughout May and June with the goal of making recommendations to OSCAR and the Board of County Commissioners on the following, all of which is detailed in the attached packet:
 - Defined goals and values that reflect community needs and aspirations.
 - Funding eligibility, priorities and tiers.
 - An inclusive application process that centers frontline groups and projects.
 - A process for reviewing applications that prioritizes community preferences.
 - A guide on how success is defined, measured, and communicated back to the community

¹ With input from our former Justice40 consultants and trusted community leaders, we invited nominations for individuals to serve on this committee. We prioritized nominees with lived experience in climate or social justice—particularly those representing groups that may benefit from the Climate Equity Fund—as well as deep community ties, a collaborative mindset, and experience with grantmaking or community-based funding. Using a skills matrix, JSI reviewed the nominations, conducted interviews, and selected six individuals for paid, hourly roles to help design the recommendations being presented today.

- While designing the Climate Equity Fund, OSCAR also engaged a strategic advisor from *Once & Future Green* to align the process with Boulder County's Community Engagement Framework and prior research on climate justice best practices.

Next steps:

- BOCC decision for approval of the CCC's recommendations for administration of Climate Equity Fund (July 8, 2025 business meeting).
- Establish a Community Evaluation Committee to review and score applications (July 2025).
- Implement targeted outreach efforts to increase awareness of the Climate Equity Fund (July 2025 to Fall 2025).
- Open the official application period (Aug. 1 to Sept. 1, 2025)
- Present all Community Evaluation Committee award recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for formal review and approval at a future business meeting (Fall 2025).
- Distribute funding and share project outcomes and community impact throughout the award period (Fall /Winter2025 through Fall/Winter 2026).

Specific BOCC questions to consider on July 8:

- **Does the board approve the CCC's recommendations detailed** in the attached packet and as formalized and operationalized by JSI through the proposed contract amendment with JSI to administer the fund, including fiscal management, risk management, and reporting and monitoring throughout 2026?
 - **Does the board approve the Contract Amendment?**
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