

**Conservation Colorado
The Conservation Alliance
Member Directed Grants Request for Proposals
Due: December 15, 2023**

Please answer the following questions about your organization and proposed project.

Name of Organization:

Conservation Colorado Education Fund

Address

Country/Territory:

United States

Street:

303 E. 17th Ave., Ste. 400

City:

Denver

State:

Colorado

ZIP Code:

80203

Phone:

303-333-7846

Contact Name:

Jessica Goad

Contact Title:

Vice President of Programs

Contact Email Address:

jessica@conservationco.org

Website Address:

<https://conservationcoef.org/>

Project/Campaign Name:

Colorado's Outdoor Future

Project Location (state):

Colorado

Staff Size:

31

Total Membership:

12,671

Annual Operating Budget (for entire organization)

\$5,456,470

Amount Requested from Alliance (\$50,000 maximum):

\$50,000

Tax Status/Organization Type:

501c3

Does your organization self-identify as being led by historically racially excluded people (BIPOC)? The Conservation Alliance considers "leadership" in this case as those with decision-making power on behalf of the entirety of the organization or effort.

While the organization does not self-identify as being led by historically racially excluded people, two (and previously three) of our six-person executive team identify as women of color.

Member Directed Grant Proposal Questions

1. Purpose/mission statement and a brief history of the organization.

In alignment with The Conservation Alliance (TCA)'s commitment to protecting North America's cherished wild places, Conservation Colorado Education Fund (CCEF) respectfully requests \$50,000 from TCA to support its public land conservation and environmental justice advocacy work to protect 900,000 acres of public lands in southwest Colorado.

CCEF's mission is to protect Colorado's climate, air, land, water, and communities through organizing, advocacy, and education. CCEF is the largest statewide environmental advocacy organization in Colorado, with tens of thousands of members, and offices in Denver, Grand Junction, and the Roaring Fork Valley. CCEF has been a recognized leader in the Colorado environmental community for over 50 years, working statewide to ensure Coloradans' natural environment, natural resources, and quality of life are protected for generations to come. CCEF

works at the intersection of policy and community advocacy, helping communities and leaders pursue their environmental justice and natural resource conservation goals.

2. One sentence on what the final success looks like. This should include the exact number of acres, miles of rivers, climbing areas, marine reserves, etc. that will be protected when your project succeeds.

Final success for CCEF includes the conservation of 900,000 acres of Colorado public lands for conservation and use by future generations who wish to recreate in and experience a clean and healthful natural environment, and the engagement of diverse communities, including frontline, Latine, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

3. Tell us about the place you are working to protect. Detail any characteristics that impact climate resiliency and biodiversity.

The next two years provide a generational opportunity to define the future of Colorado's public lands, and CCEF is at the forefront of this work.

Over the next two years, every acre of the 8.3 million acres of lands managed by the BLM and 4 million acres of Colorado's national forests will be subject to federal conservation planning processes, which means the future of how those lands are managed – including whether they will be conserved or open for development – will be determined in those processes.

While we will be engaged in all of these efforts, our top priority is the BLM's Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) Resource Management Plan Amendment because of our longstanding commitment to protecting the incredible natural and cultural values that exist here, our desire to strengthen our community engagement in this region, and because of the potential we believe this planning process provides for securing durable and more immediate protections for one of Colorado's most incredible landscapes.

Traditional place-based efforts, though highly valuable and high-profile, often require lengthy political processes that can stretch into decades with conservation impacts typically limited to discrete geographic areas. Engaging in federal planning processes provides unique opportunities to address the cumulative impacts of climate change, industrial development, and advance conservation protection efforts at scale. These challenges demand a landscape-level response that transcends individual sites and land-use planning processes provide excellent venues to advance conservation priorities.

While strengthening management of public lands may not be as attention-grabbing as place-based projects, this strategy offers an efficient and impactful approach to protecting vast acreages with the urgency required by this moment. This proactive strategy ensures the future health and resilience of public lands, benefiting wildlife, residents, and visitors alike.

One of the most important planning processes that will occur in 2024 is that in the Uncompahgre Field Office. This area, covering nearly 1 million acres, includes spectacular red rock canyons, endless expanses of pinon forests, and a renowned river steeped in incredible history make up a truly unique and amazing West Slope outdoor recreation destination. A strong plan from the BLM will not only protect this iconic place but will provide durable economic opportunities to local communities through activities like recreation and farming.

4. What is your strategy and timeline for achieving final success? Include relevant project goals and objectives. Detail any expected economic and recreational impacts if your project succeeds.

To achieve success, CCEF will employ a multi-faceted strategy to influence BLM planning process for the Uncompahgre Field Office Plan, including policy advocacy with the Department of Natural Resources, engagement with statewide and regional public lands partners, and outreach to communities, advocates and leaders statewide.

CCEF seeks to ensure that federal land managers are developing and implementing plans that adhere to the best available science with regard to climate resiliency, wildlife management, and recreation. Additionally, ensuring that BLM prioritizes minimizing and mitigating the impacts of fossil fuel development on historically disproportionately impacted communities is a key goal.

This opportunity is the product of BLM's failure to address these impacts in prior decisionmaking and presents an important opportunity to secure the strongest protections this region has ever seen and for bold action on oil and gas lease allocations. According to the Colorado Latino Climate Justice Policy Handbook, 58% of oil and gas wells statewide are concentrated in predominantly Latine communities. This BLM process can advance impactful environmental justice opportunities at the state and federal levels.

Similarly, CCEF will continue advocating for the durable protections for wildlands and wildlife habitats that act as refugia for various wildlife species and present opportunities for humans to connect with nature.

Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) Remand: The Uncompahgre Field Office manages nearly 1 million sub-surface acres and nearly 700,000 surface acres of BLM land in Colorado's Southwest District, including the river systems of the Gunnison, San Miguel, Dolores, and Uncompahgre. BLM will reconsider the eligibility of lands open for oil and gas leasing, the designation and management of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), and the management of lands with wilderness characteristics (LWC), and make allocation decisions for future oil and gas development - including which lands will be closed to future leasing and which lands will remain open and under what conditions. The region overlaps with the Dolores River

Canyonlands landscape and includes some of the largest and biologically significant landscapes in Colorado.

If successful, CCEF will bolster Colorado's booming outdoor recreation economy, which contributes to more than 510,000 direct jobs, \$9 billion in state and local tax revenues, and \$37 billion in annual consumer spending (Colorado Office of Economic Trade & International Development, 2023). Increased public land conservation provides opportunities for communities transitioning away from fossil fuel-dependent revenue to orient their economies around outdoor recreation, including activities like hunting and angling, which nets over \$3.25 billion for Colorado annually (Colorado Wildlife Council, 2023). Colorado's world class recreational economy depends on well managed public lands that prioritize the conservation of landscapes and wildlife.

5. Identify key decision makers you're trying to influence, the likelihood of securing their support, and your approach to interacting with them.

The primary targets of CCEF's public land conservation campaign are state and federal agency staff and elected officials. Based on their proximity to the levers of government and ability to influence state and federal climate policy, CCEF will target the following individuals:

* Governor Jared Polis and his environmental cabinet members and staff, including his chief of staff, climate leads, and communications staff.

* At the federal level, key decision-makers will include Senator Michael Bennet, Senator John Hickenlooper, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning, BLM Deputy Director Nada Culver, BLM Senior Executive, John Gale, BLM CO Director Doug Vilsack and various BLM state and field office staff.

* At the state level, key decision-makers will include DNR officials such as Dan Gibbs, Tim Mauck, Tim Brass, as well as Jonathan Asher, Director of Climate Preparedness & Disaster Recovery in the Governor's administration and Nicole Rosmarino, Polis Policy Advisory for lands and wildlife.

CCEF maintains productive relationships with Polis administration officials, and officials within Colorado's bureaucracy listed above. CCEF works year round to cultivate these relationships and garner support for its campaigns, and has secured individual support in many cases.

In addition to regular communication and strategizing, CCEF will interact with these individuals by convening coalition meetings to ensure consistent messaging and effectively strengthen support and engagement in CCEF's land conservation campaigns.

6. How are you working with and elevating voices of historically underrepresented groups and engaging grassroots citizen action?

CCEF centers the interests of historically underrepresented groups in all of its work, recognizing that communities and individuals on the frontlines of the climate crisis are best qualified to speak and lead on these issues. To elevate the voices of these communities, CCEF works closely with them to understand their needs and their interests in public land conservation.

To draw historically underrepresented groups into the policy process, CCEF participates in statewide Latine policy coalitions such as the Colorado Latino Forum, Latino Advocacy Day, Colorado Latino Policy Agenda Coalition, People, and Public Lands and Climate Collaborative to advocate for culturally competent environmental policy proposals for public land conservation and environmental justice. In addition to state level actions CCEF works at the grassroots to engage and mobilize citizen action. CCEF elevates local voices by facilitating town halls, testifying on legislation, publishing news articles and blog posts, and conducting storytelling campaigns.

CCEF identifies Latine-led groups and organizations to support the expansion of Protége, CCEF's flagship environmental justice program that elevates the voices, interests, and goals of Latine leaders and communities across Colorado. Protége - translating to "protect yourself" in Spanish, has the goal of cultivating the next generation of climate leaders and advocates who can guide Colorado to an equitable, healthful future. Protége encompasses the Environmental Leadership Academy, Climate Justice Leadership Academy, and Boards and Commission Fellowship. These training programs equip participants with the knowledge to lead their communities in climate advocacy at the state level and join statewide boards and commissions to influence local and state level policy to reflect Latine priorities and interests.

For our work on the Uncompahgre Field Office, we will specifically:

- Develop a bilingual comms plan that includes targeted email, social, and action alert tactics
- Develop bilingual engagement resources that includes messaging, comment guidance, and resources
- Mobilize key spokespeople in impacted communities across the planning area.
- Collaborate with partners to help ensure that environmental justice and impacted community priorities are included within coalition's technical comments.
- Utilize Protegete social channels to elevate a Latino narrative on the UFO process.

7. What are 3-5 measurable on-the-ground outcomes (NOT activities) that you hope to accomplish over the next year?

Over the next year, CCEF hopes to accomplish the following outcomes:

- 900,000 million acres of public land protections added to avoid, minimize and mitigate oil and gas development.
- In partnership with our Protegete Program, we will develop and implement a field plan that effectively engages Latine communities and centers the lived experiences and

perspectives of community members and individuals associated with fossil fuel development, public lands conservation, and outdoor recreation.

8. How will you evaluate your progress and success?

To evaluate its progress and success, CCEF will measure its project outcomes against its 2023 public lands priorities and Public Lands Planning 2022-2026 planning document. CCEF will track acres of land conserved, miles of river protected, and the amount of money generated by Colorado's outdoor industry.

CCEF will also measure its progress and success by evaluating the following metrics:

- Whether planning process outcomes align with internal goals.
- How well aligned state actions are with CCEF work and goals.
- Assess how well the Polis administration and federal lawmakers are implementing legislation that aligns with CCEF's strategy goals.
- Media hits that help influence a strong public narrative around the need for public land conservation and environmental justice in Colorado.
- Number of participants in the Protége program.

9. How do you plan to use funding from the Conservation Alliance?

In its public land conservation campaign and programming, CCEF will use Conservation Alliance funds to support its public land conservation efforts. Funds will be specifically allocated for the following purposes:

- Staff capacity support.
- Campaign coordination within the Colorado conservation community.
- Outreach with state and federal agency partners and stakeholders.
- Community engagement through organizing engagement with grassroots and grassroots, businesses, and coalition partners.
- Convene conservation meetings and discussions with statewide stakeholders and agency partners.

10. Tell us about your organization's efforts to address justice, equity, diversity and inclusion over the last year. How has this impacted your organization (e.g., demographics, processes, policies) and the work that you do?

CCEF's policy and advocacy work prioritizes and is led by individuals from the communities of color that are disproportionately impacted by climate change, environmental racism, and industrial pollution. Through its efforts to address justice, equity, and diversity, CCEF has diversified as an organization, including adding and creating a full-time Communities and Justice Advocate position to ensure that racial equity is considered in all of its policy campaigns.

Additionally, our Protégéte program builds Latino leaders and power and is staffed by an all Latino-team.

CCEF has adopted a multi-pronged approach to advancing justice, equity and diversity internally, including ongoing internal learning and dialogue, updating internal systems such as hiring and onboarding. In the last three years, CCEF successfully increased the percentage of staff who identify as BIPOC from 15% to 50%, and from 10% to 50% on its board.

11. Elements of your proposal may be shared with member company employees during the ballot process. If there is anything in your proposal that must be kept confidential, please indicate that here.

There is nothing in CCEF's proposal that must be kept confidential. CCEF invites TAC to share its full proposal with its member company employees.

Proposal Attachments

1. **Project budget-** Detail the total budget for the period of the grant. Include a separate column to show how funds from TCA would be spent. Funding may not be used for lobbying or related expenses.

Upload

2. **Annual Organization Budget-** Indicate which year the budget reflects and include both revenue and expenses, including details of your top five funding sources.

Upload

3. **Board and Directors List-** Include name, titles, and affiliations.

Upload

4. **Photo-** We encourage you to send your best image of the place you are working to protect, ideally one that indicates individuals and/or community. Please include photo credit information in the title of the file. It is your responsibility to clear full usage of the photograph with the photographer. By sharing the photo, you give permission to TCA to use it.

Upload

- 5. If Applicable- Logo-** If your organization has not previously submitted a grant to TCA, has not submitted an application to TCA since 2020, or has changed its logo since last applying for funding, please submit a digital copy of your logo.

Upload

- 6. If Application- 501c3 tax status documentation**

Upload

- 7. Optional- Map of Project Location**

- 8. Optional- Letter of Partnership-** If you are working with a historically racially excluded or another under-represented group on this project, please upload a one-page description about your partnership and relationship with them and how you are adding value to their organization. Please include the name and contact info of your primary contact at that organization. If you have an existing letter from this group, please include it in your upload. Please do not ask your partner to write a letter specifically to fulfill this request.