

EarthLab Grants Program: Incubator Grants

2026 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

EarthLab is an institute at the University of Washington taking equitable action on climate change. The **EarthLab Grants Program** (The Program) cultivates a vibrant community of faculty, staff, students, and partners united by a commitment to community-engaged, impact-driven climate change and environmental justice research and action. The Program offers multiple grant types and opportunities for networking, connection, and research.

The **EarthLab Incubator Grants** nurture ideas and launch partnerships for climate change or environmental justice research and action. Fostering interdisciplinary, community-engaged, and/or cross-sectoral collaboration; these grants bring together diverse partners around a shared idea or research agenda.

For questions about the program or this RFA, please contact elgrants@uw.edu.

Award Details

- **Award Amount:** Up to \$10,000 (no indirect costs allowed)
- **Application Deadline:** March 6, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific
- **Award Notification:** April 2, 2026
- **Earliest Project Start Date:** May 1, 2026
- **Project Duration:** 12 months. Project extensions will not be granted.
- **Expenditure Deadline:** All grants must be fully expended by April 30, 2027.
- **Submission:** Complete and submit the application form [2026 EarthLab Incubator Grants Application Form – Fill out form](#) by the deadline.

Application Requirements

This application is open to Principal Investigator (PI) eligible faculty/staff/research scientists from all three University of Washington campuses (Bothell, Seattle, Tacoma), who if awarded, will be responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable federal, state, and institutional requirements.

Individuals may not apply or serve as principal investigators on more than one grant within the EarthLab Grant Program within a single application cycle.

Eligible Activities

The **Incubator Grants** can fund:

- Development of a research agenda, including literature reviews, data synthesis, and partnership convening(s)
- Hosting workshops, meetings, and/or other convenings
- Attending conferences and presenting on your idea or project

The **Incubator Grants** CANNOT fund the following:

- Curriculum development or academic coursework
- Program evaluation
- Technology commercialization
- Bridge funding (interim funding to continue an existing project during interruptions in funding)

Budget & Allowable Expenses

The maximum award available per project is \$10,000. Proposed expenses must be tied directly to the implementation of the project activities. The University of Washington Principal Investigator will receive the funds, and **no indirect costs will apply**. Community or non-academic partners can receive reimbursement for allowed costs and will be required to follow UW policies.

Any funds unspent at the end of the award period must be returned to EarthLab for future grant cycles.

Allowed expenses include:

- Personnel (i.e., salaries and benefits for faculty and students as well as staff at the UW, including course buyout or payment to a community-based organization or individual)
- Travel, including airfare, transportation, and per diem (lodging, meals and expenses)
- Research equipment, materials, printing, supplies and/or participant incentives
- Computer, tablet, computer equipment, and software costs
- Tuition for graduate students
- Support (e.g., facility rental, food)
- Seminar/conference registration
- Other direct costs related to the project (must detail the expense and include rationale)

Unallowable expenses include:

- Indirect/overhead costs
- Patent cost
- Goods and services for personal use
- Alcohol
- Publication costs

All allowable expenses must adhere to applicable University of Washington policies. Please contact your department's finance lead with questions regarding such expenses.

Application Instructions

Request for Applications will be submitted to EarthLab via [2026 EarthLab Incubator Grants](#)

Application Form – Fill out form. A review by the Office of Sponsored Programs is not required for this grant application as these are internal UW funds from EarthLab. **Submissions that do not follow the application instructions will be disqualified.**

Projects should deliver on the Incubator Grant's desired outcomes and align with EarthLab's [vision and mission](#). An additional point will be awarded to projects that support Washington State communities.

The following are required elements of the request for application. Applicants will be prompted to respond to each of the following questions in the [Microsoft Form](#):

- **Descriptive Project Title:** (Required)
- **What is the primary domain focus?** (Required) (choose from: Environmental Adaptation, Community Science, Ecosystem Management & Restoration, Policy, Human Health, Technology & Innovation, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Education, and Other)
- **If your project has additional secondary sustainability foci, please select all that apply** (Optional) (choose from: Environmental Adaptation, Community Science, Ecosystem Management & Restoration, Policy, Human Health, Technology & Innovation, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Education, and Other)
- **Dollar amount requested:** (up to \$10,000)
- **Principal Investigator (PI) Name, Email, Campus, College, Department, Employee ID, and Mailstop** (Required): This person must be employed by the University of Washington and has a department willing to aid in invoicing, purchasing and reconciling funds.
- **Finance/Administrator Name and Email** (Required): This person is responsible for invoicing and paying bills. This information is necessary to transfer funds, and any errors may result in your funds being delayed.
- **Dean/Chair Name and Email.** (Required): This information is necessary to transfer funds, and any errors may result in your funds being delayed.
- **Project Abstract:** A concise summary of your project which should be accessible to general audiences, and which will be made publicly available if your project is funded. (600 characters, including spaces)
- **How does this proposal nurture an idea and launch partnerships for climate change or environmental justice research and action?** (1500 characters, including spaces)
- **Please describe your project objectives (specific activities that will help you reach your goal).** (1500 characters, including spaces)
- **Please provide a detailed description of your expected outcomes and anticipated next steps.** (1500 characters, including spaces)
- **Please list collaborators and/or your plan to identify collaborators or build partnerships.** (1000 characters, including spaces)

- **Does this project support Washington State communities and if so, how?** (500 characters, including spaces)
- **Please complete and submit a budget and budget narrative.** Template provided at [Incubator budget and budget narrative template.xlsx](#)

Selection Criteria

An interdisciplinary review committee of UW faculty and/or staff will review and score applications. When necessary, EarthLab will also consult with appropriate subject matter experts.

Matching funds are allowed but not required. Matching funds can take the form of monetary or in-kind support.

The applications that receive the highest scores will be granted funding. If two applications receive the same score, applications with matching funds will receive priority.

Application will be scored using the following criteria and points:

- **To what extent does this project nurture ideas and launch partnerships for climate change and/or environmental justice research and action?** (5 points)
- **How do the proposed objectives (specific activities) advance the project goal?** (5 points)
- **Is the proposed outcome of the project feasible and is there a clear plan for next steps for the project?** (5 points)
- **Does the collaboration plan bring diverse partners together around a shared idea or research agenda, which fosters interdisciplinary, community-based, and/or cross-sectoral collaboration?** (3 points)
- **Does the project support Washington State communities?** (1 point)
- **Is the budget and budget narrative reasonable for the proposed activities and timeframe?** (2 points)

Award Requirements

Recipients will be required to attend (1) program orientation, submit a final report detailing project accomplishments and final budget reconciliation due 30 calendar days following the end of the funding period. A survey will be sent to the PI one year after the final report is submitted, to understand the impact of the funding.

Terms and Conditions

- It is the UW Principal Investigator (PI)'s responsibility to ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state, and institutional requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, policies for [Human Subjects](#), [Animal Welfare](#), [Export Controls](#), [Environmental Health and Safety](#), [Lobbying](#), [FERPA](#) and any other UW requirements. Intellectual property will follow the University of Washington policies. The UW PI is responsible for notifying or seeking approval from the

appropriate compliance offices on the UW campus prior to initiating any work and for following all relevant protocols. EarthLab expects that the team will not begin work on the project until all appropriate compliance procedures are completed.

- It is the PI's responsibility to work closely with their Finance/Administrator to manage their budget and to be compliant with all finance and administrative procedures.
- If the PI is partnering with a Tribe, that PI will be expected to determine and follow any relevant and appropriate Tribal Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols.
- If there is a proposed change or absence (30 days or greater) in PI, grantees will immediately provide justification and a plan to transition management of the grant to the new PI and (if applicable) new UW department to the EarthLab Grants Program Lead via email at elgrants@uw.edu.
- Budget needs may change as a project progresses. If budget revisions are greater than 20% between categories, this will require review and written approval by EarthLab. To request a budget revision, please submit your request in writing to elgrants@uw.edu and include the following: grant title, description of the change, total dollar amount, and justification for the change.
- All project expenses must be submitted in Workday on or before April 30, 2027. Any unspent funds need to be returned to EarthLab for future grant cycles.
 - Please ensure that you allow sufficient time to complete payment to community partners and/or research participants, where applicable.
 - Allowable equipment and supplies should be purchased at least 90 days before the end of the grant period.
 - The PI and the PI's department must follow University of Washington procurement practices.
- Grant extensions will not be granted under **any** circumstances.
- PIs are required to attend a grant orientation meeting.
- PIs are required to submit a final report and budget reconciliation 30 days after the completion of the award period. Parts of the final report may be used in EarthLab external communication, such as project outcomes and testimonials about the impact of the funding or the success of the project
- A survey will be sent to the PI one year after the final report is submitted to understand the impact of the funding.
- Publications, presentations, or other communications referencing the project funded by the Innovation Grants Program should include a statement that acknowledges EarthLab. For Primary Support (greater than 50% support from EarthLab), please state that, *“Funding for this project was provided by the EarthLab Grants Program at the University of Washington.”* For Partial Support (less than 50% support from EarthLab), please state that, *“This project was supported in part by the EarthLab Grants Program at the University of Washington.”*
- EarthLab may be in contact with opportunities for sharing the project with external partners, during or after the award period.

