



Community Engagement Grant Program Policy

Technical Advisory Committee- September 1, 2026



Power Ahead Colorado
Community Engagement

Community Advisory Group update



Community Advisory Group (CAG) role

- Make an impact on climate resilience and cleaner air in their communities.
- Represent diverse geographies across the DRCOG region.
- Bring trusted relationships within neighborhoods, organizations, or networks.
- Offer experiences and perspectives that connect to Power Ahead Colorado's mission.

CAG responsibilities

- Shape community engagement grant program.
- Provide assistance to grantees when appropriate.
- Advise on Power Ahead Colorado's engagement strategy.
- Review community feedback and recommend improvements.
- Support outreach and awareness efforts.

CAG membership

Name	Org	Geography	Expertise
Guadalupe Solis*	Cultivando	Denver Metro, Commerce City, North Denver, Adams County	Public health, equity, EJ and CJ
Berenice El Gharamti*	Monarca Group	Boulder County, Northern Colorado (Erie, Dacono, Firestone), Denver Metro, rural communities across CO, Aurora, Adams County	Culturally responsive engagement, EVs, efficiency, electrification
Cornelio Martinez*	Maize Mechanical	Barnum Park, Denver Metro	HVAC contractor
Trace Faust	Confluence Policy and Strategy Group, Hearthstone Cohousing	Denver Metro, NW Denver, Aurora, Jefferson County, Arapahoe County	Facilitation, community and civic engagement, education, youth and family services, cohousing
Keara O'Laughlin	Building Electrification Coalition	Arvada, Denver, Boulder	Equitable building decarbonization, including workforce, lessons learned from other cities

CAG membership

Name	Org	Geography	Expertise
Art Lopez	Valverde Neighborhood Association	Valverde	Community activism and engagement
Chet Campbell	Energy Resource Center	Denver County, Jefferson County, Broomfield County, Gilpin County	Weatherization Assistance Program
Maritza Gutierrez*	Energy Outreach Colorado	Denver County, Adams County	Community engagement, energy education, program implementation
Chris Urias*	Montbello Organizing Committee	Montbello, Green Valley Ranch	Community organizing, community resilience, youth and families, bilingual engagement
Sharnell Smith	Black Parents United Foundation	Denver, Aurora, Commerce City	Community engagement and empowerment, especially for Black families and parents
Stephanie Salazar-Rodriguez*	Blazing Cloud Consulting	Denver, but especially Southwest/West Denver	Public health, multigenerational engagement, especially with Latino and Indigenous communities

CAG activity

- Three meetings so far, focused on:
 - Launch and orientation.
 - Targeted feedback on grant solicitation and application.
 - Targeted feedback on grant outreach strategies .
- Will settle into a monthly meeting cadence with more standard discussion topics, informed in part by CAG member priorities.

CAG grant solicitation input

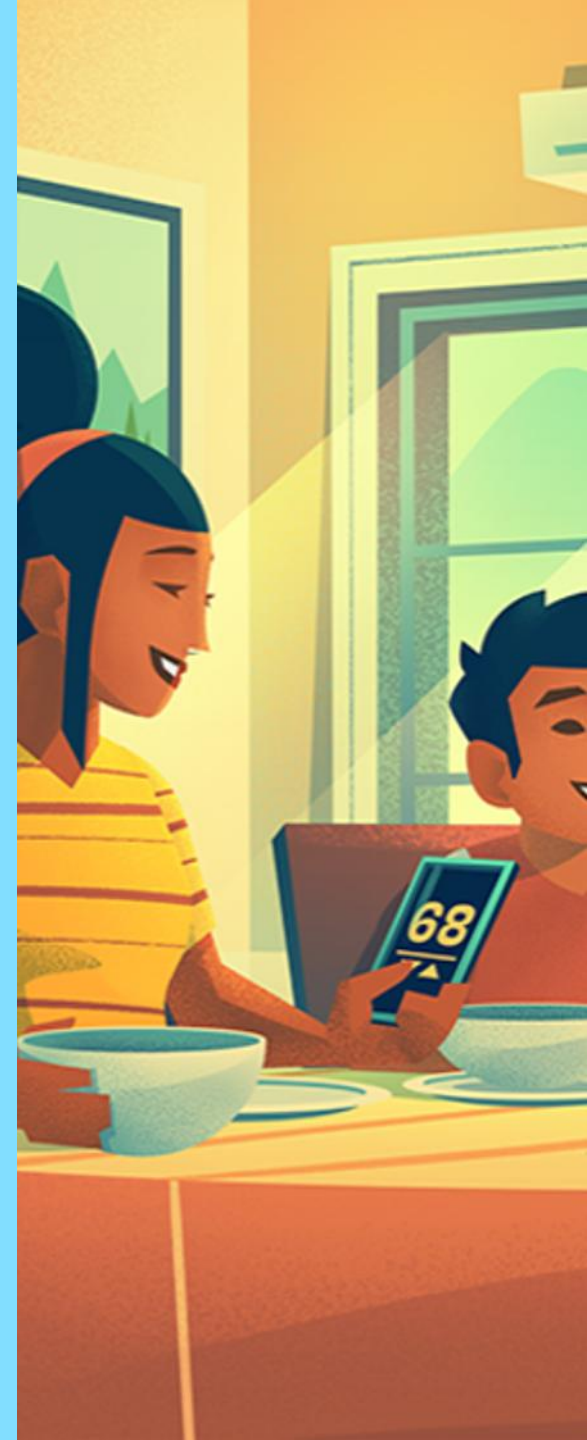
- General appreciation for focus on accessibility in initial draft.
- Use (even) plain(er) language wherever possible.
- Include examples and templates wherever possible.
- Ensure clarity of grant program purpose.
- Emphasize community relationships in scoring and include a community leader as a reviewer if possible.
- Insurance and other federal requirements may be a barrier.

CAG grant application input

- Be transparent and realistic about time needed for application.
- Remove or combine even possibly redundant questions.
- Eliminate technical barriers (e.g. requiring EnviroScreen reference).
- Clearly distinguish required, optional, scored, and post-award materials.
- Get specific about community reach: lived experience, involvement in decision-making, compensation, valuing community knowledge.

Power Ahead Colorado
Community Engagement

Community Engagement Grant Program Policy



Community Engagement Grant Program

- Power Ahead Colorado's community engagement work is anchored by its grant program, through which \$2.2 million will be distributed over the next three years to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to increase accessibility and understanding of Power Ahead Colorado programs.
- The grant program will be informed by a Community Advisory Group (CAG) made up of representatives with geographically diverse and strong networks; kicked off in July.
- The grant program is expected to go live September 21.
- Year one of the sub-grantee awards will total around \$500,000.

Grant program goals

- 1) Support the Power Ahead Colorado mission: “***Power better homes, stronger communities, and quality jobs for Colorado’s clean, healthy future.***”
- 2) Increase awareness of Power Ahead Colorado program areas, focused on:
 - i. General education related to heat pumps, electrification, efficiency, and related topics.
 - ii. Workforce development.
 - iii. Incentives.
- 3) Cover a diverse geographic area reflective of the 59 participating member governments.

Internal goal: Increase accessibility for prospective grantees and remove barriers for underserved communities

Meeting the internal goal

- Reducing administrative burden where possible.
- Offering individualized technical assistance at the award stage.
- Promoting teaming.
- Offering readable and accessible resources (e.g., templates).
- Providing example grant activities, with sample budgets.
- Providing Spanish translation of core grant materials (e.g., application, recorded info sessions).
- Offering milestone-based payments.

Community engagement grant solicitation

- Introduces Power Ahead Colorado Programs and where this grant program fits within, including what potential activities are and what a competitive proposal would include.
- Grants will be disbursed all at same time to a 'cohort' which will include voluntary cohort co-learning activities.
- Subaward amounts will range from \$15,000 for less labor-intensive engagement activities up to \$100,000 for broader engagement activities that may require more time, coordination, staffing, or resources to carry out.

Community engagement grant solicitation

- Eligibility is generally 501(c)(3) orgs that are able to conduct community engagement within or across any of DRCOG's 59 municipalities. Partnerships and teaming is encouraged.
- Proposals should serve communities experiencing greater environmental, economic, or health burdens and applicants may demonstrate these burdens in community knowledge, lived experience, local data, Colorado EnviroScreen, or other relevant information.
- Grant cycles will be 13 months.

Community engagement grant application

- Application requirements include:
 - Completed web application (approx. 28 questions).
 - Representations & Certifications – signed form.
 - Budget Worksheet (template provided).
- Application period open for approx. 35 days.
- Application will be a web portal and will offer informational materials:
 - Recorded virtual Q&A session.
 - Recorded tutorial on web application.
 - Recorded webinar.

Community engagement grant support

- Finalists will be informed/supported on the following*:
 - Teaming advantage in scoring rubric
 - Potential brief interview – to verbally share about their project and background
 - Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) (one-time free registration in federal portal, support provided to complete this)**
 - Adequate insurance; some coverages may not be applicable in certain cases; 1-pager will explain requirements and how to ensure adequate coverage*
 - Pre-award eligibility and readiness review – contract requirement that confirms the application information and assesses applicant's ability to meet the program's financial, administrative, insurance, reporting, and other grant requirements

**K&W will be providing technical assistance on these requirements in group settings*

Community engagement grant support

- Sub-awardees will be supported with the following:
 - Regular reporting with support from Kearns and West.
 - Workplan.
 - Minor monthly progress bulleted lists.
 - One or two more substantive reports depending on length of project (EPA requirement).
 - Periodic check-ins – either individual or as cohort.

Grant program

Questions?

Recommended motion:

Move to recommend the Community Engagement Grant Program Policy to the Power Ahead Colorado Oversight Committee.