



science for a healthy, sustainable future

## **2010 Request for Proposals**

Sustainable Path Foundation is pleased to release its 2010 Request for Proposals for grant funding. Our 2010 grant program will award funds to programs in the greater Puget Sound region that are focused on sustainability. Successful applications will employ approaches based on science and systems thinking and address intersections between natural systems (i.e. environment) and human systems (i.e. economy, health, community).

### **About Sustainable Path Foundation**

The Foundation is an engaged group philanthropy whose grant making is focused on sustainability and informed by scientific understanding and systems thinking. We believe that:

- Scientific inquiry continues to expand our understanding of the complex relationships between natural systems and human systems.
- Recognition of the interconnected nature of our world provides a vital lens for informed application of scientific discoveries and technological innovations.
- Insightful, innovative scientific and systems thinking is fundamental to imagining and creating solutions for a healthier world.

We are a diverse, interdisciplinary community of people who collectively offer our financial resources, talent and expertise, and embrace a culture of collaboration in our work. We view our grantees as partners in identifying and solving issues facing our region and our world and promote their successes and opportunities for involvement to our community of donors and volunteers. We fund both interesting experiments and big-impact projects.

### **Our Vision**

Sustainable Path Foundation envisions a sustainable future based on scientific understanding and respect for the interconnected nature of our world.

### **Our Mission**

Sustainable Path Foundation promotes sustainability and health in our region through collaborative approaches informed by scientific understanding and systems thinking.

### **Our Values**

**We are hopeful and courageous.**

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise... It is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.”

--The Earth Charter

**We see the interconnected nature of the world.** Recognizing interdependent relationships in all systems --including health, environment, economy, and communities-- is vital to attaining a healthy, sustainable future.

**We seek evidence-based solutions to complex problems.** Scientific investigation, awareness and inquiry skills are critical tools for individuals, organizations, and communities.

**We embrace diverse perspectives and ideas.**

Diversity of expertise and experience promotes insight and creative approaches.

**We work in community.** People and organizations working collaboratively can find creative solutions for a healthier world.

### **Funding Areas for 2010**

Sustainable Path Foundation provides funding in support of projects in the greater Puget Sound area that will encompass one or more of the following:

1. Explore, elucidate, and/or apply links between natural systems (i.e. environment) and human systems (i.e. economy, health, community).
2. Provide opportunities for individuals or organizations to expand scientific awareness and scientific literacy and inquiry skills.
3. Focus on root causes and focus on opportunities for systemic change.
4. Bring together people and organizations with diverse perspectives and expertise to address complex problems.

Successful proposals will employ approaches based on science and systems thinking. Proposals may utilize, integrate and/or generate information from disciplines relevant to sustainability, the natural environment or human society. In addition, projects may involve bringing together people or organizations with interests similar to those of Sustainable Path Foundation for focused discussions or forums. Projects should include provisions for educating the public and/or policymakers about the results and should focus on issues of importance in the greater Puget Sound region. We will also consider science literacy projects for youth if the projects align with our mission.

Sustainable Path Foundation is looking for organizations with strong leadership and a clear strategic vision. Both one-time projects and ongoing work will be considered. We do not provide general operating support or support for capital projects. We value the potential for Sustainable Path to contribute to the organization's work through collaboration or volunteer activities.

Approximately \$100,000 is available for new grants in 2010; our typical grant is between \$5,000 to \$20,000. Partial funding is common. The maximum amount budgeted for science literacy grants is \$10,000. In 2009, we funded 10 grants. The average grant was about \$13,000.

Sustainable Path Foundation will only commit to single-year grants, however grantees may re-apply for funding for new or continuing projects on an annual basis.

## **Application Process and Timeline**

Application forms are available on the Sustainable Path Foundation website at [www.sustainablepath.org](http://www.sustainablepath.org). Eligible organizations with requests that meet the Request for Proposal guidelines should provide a letter of inquiry, which must be received via email **by 5:00 p.m. on January 27, 2010**. Sustainable Path Foundation will acknowledge all letters of inquiry within a day of their receipt and invite full proposals from selected applicants by the end of **February 2010**. Full proposals will be due **on March 17, 2010**. Awardees will be contacted and funds will be dispersed in **June 2010**.

This year we will be experimenting by trying to engage more of our donors with the group philanthropic process, while at the same time trying to generate community support for the organizations that are selected for our final grant docket. We will share a limited portion of the finalists' applications (organization name and mission, project description, objectives, fit with Sustainable Path's mission) with our larger donor circle. Donors who opt to be part of the group philanthropy can learn about finalists' projects, attend a site visit, and cast a vote near the end of the process. A small pool of grant funds will be set aside to be allocated in accordance with our donors' votes. This money will be added to grant amounts recommended by our volunteer Grants Committee.

We are interested in learning about your work and strongly encourage you to call and discuss your proposal idea. **Please contact Nora Burton, Operations and Program Manager, Sustainable Path Foundation at (206) 443-8464 or via email at [nora@sustainablepath.org](mailto:nora@sustainablepath.org).**

For more information about Sustainable Path Foundation please visit our website [www.sustainablepath.org](http://www.sustainablepath.org).

## **Selection Criteria**

1. Applicant organizations must qualify as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, or have a tax-exempt fiscal sponsor.
2. Projects should utilize and apply scientific approaches and methods to further understanding of the issue being addressed.
3. Projects that consider issues from multiple perspectives or employ collaborative approaches are especially encouraged. Collaborative applications that include more than one organization are welcomed.
4. Projects should include provisions for educating the public and/or policymakers about issues addressed.
5. Applicant organizations should be based in and focus on the greater Puget Sound region.

If your organization does not meet all of the selection criteria and you would like to further discuss your status, please contact us.

## **Funding Limitations**

Funding will not be provided for:

- General operating expenses (unless directly related to a project)
- Endowments
- Capital expenditures
- Political campaigns or candidates

- Lobbying activities
- Individuals
- Organizations that unfairly discriminate in any manner
- Programs operating outside of greater Puget Sound region

### **Sustainable Path's working definition of Science and Systems Thinking**

*Science* is the pursuit of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following an evidence based systematic method. Science also refers to the organized body of knowledge that has been gained by such study.

*Systems thinking* is a framework based on the knowledge that components and processes of our natural and man-made world(s) are interconnected and best understood in the context of relationships with each other rather than in isolation. Those employing systems thinking are cognizant that changes in one area can alter other interacting elements of the larger whole. A systems thinker would therefore consider the interrelationships among sub-systems and processes before and during implementation of a solution to a problem.

The following diagram outlines our framework for developing systems-based solutions to sustainability issues.

PLEASE VISIT [WWW.SUSTAINABLEPATH.ORG](http://WWW.SUSTAINABLEPATH.ORG) FOR AN APPLICATION FORM

# Sustainable Path Foundation – Whole System Solutions Framework (Version 1.1)

This framework evolved from the concept that sustainable solutions to tough problems require understanding and change in each of the six focus areas below. It is intended as a tool to help stakeholders evaluate a problem and prioritize funds and resources to best achieve change.

