



science for a healthy, sustainable future

2012 Request for Proposals

Sustainable Path Foundation is pleased to release its 2012 Request for Proposals for grant funding. Our 2012 grant program will award funds to organizations managing projects in the greater Puget Sound region that are focused on sustainability. Successful applications will employ approaches based on science and systems thinking (see definitions below) and address intersections between natural systems (e.g., environment) and human systems (e.g., economy, health, community).

About Sustainable Path Foundation

Sustainable Path Foundation is an engaged group philanthropy whose grantmaking 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 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 are [inspired by a common mission, core values, and shared vision](#). We view our grantees as partners in identifying and solving issues facing our region and promote their successes and opportunities for involvement to our community of donors and volunteers. We emphasize innovation in funding both interesting experiments and big-impact projects.

Our Grantmaking Philosophy

Central to Sustainable Path Foundation's grantmaking process is our value of collaboration. We work as a committee of 14 Group Philanthropy Partners to select grants through consensus. The unique perspectives and experiences of each member of the Grants Committee work to ensure that we support a variety of projects and strengthen our organization. The Committee relies heavily on our Whole-Systems Solutions Framework when considering grant proposals. New, innovative approaches to issues of sustainability excite us most; however, we also understand that organizations and proposals that have been previously funded often merit consideration.

Funding Guidelines

Sustainable Path Foundation provides funding in support of projects in the greater Puget Sound region that employ approaches based on science and systems thinking. We fund projects that focus on the Puget Sound area and that encompass one or more of the following:

- Explore, elucidate, and/or apply links between natural systems (e.g., environment) and human systems (e.g., economy, health, community).

- Provide opportunities for individuals or organizations to expand scientific awareness and scientific literacy and inquiry skills.
- Address the root causes of barriers to achieving sustainability from a clearly articulated base of evidence.
- Find opportunities for systemic change and durable impact. These opportunities could work towards developing incentives and improved regulations and policies.
- Bring together people and organizations with diverse perspectives and expertise to address complex problems.

Proposals should clearly state the root problem addressed by the project and the vision of how a successful project will foster sustainability. Proposals should utilize, integrate, and/or generate information from disciplines relevant to sustainability, the natural environment, or human society.

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 an organization's work through collaboration or volunteer activities. Approximately \$100,000 is available for new grants in 2012; our typical grant is between \$5,000 and \$20,000. Partial funding is common. Projects that are collaborative efforts among different organizations may apply. In 2011, we funded seven grants; the average grant amount was \$15,084.

Selection Criteria

- 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.
- Projects should utilize and apply scientific approaches and methods to further understanding of the issue being addressed.
- Projects that consider issues from multiple perspectives or employ collaborative approaches are encouraged. Collaborative applications that include more than one organization are welcomed.
- 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 discuss your status further, please contact us.

Working definitions of science and systems thinking are [published on the *scientific philosophies* section](#) of the Sustainable Path Foundation website along with an [illustration of the Whole-Systems Solutions Framework concept](#).

Information Sessions

Sustainable Path Foundation will host two hour-long information sessions this fall. These seminars are intended for one representative of your organization and other potential applicants to learn more about the group process and philosophy of Sustainable Path and to meet with members of the Grants Committee. Information session dates are:

- Monday, December 5, 2011 at 4:30 pm
- Friday, December 9, 2011 at 8:30 am

Please e-mail Erika Orsulak, Sustainable Path Foundation Managing Director, at erika@sustainablepath.org if you plan to attend an information session. The information sessions are

casual, will include light snacks, and will be conducted informally at the [Sustainable Path Foundation office](#).

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 the greater Puget Sound region

Application Process and Timeline

Application forms are available on the Sustainable Path website at www.sustainablepath.org. Eligible organizations with requests that meet the Request for Proposal guidelines should provide Letter of Inquiry, which must be received via e-mail by midnight on January 9, 2012. Please e-mail your LOI to erika@sustainablepath.org.

Sustainable Path will invite full proposals from selected applicants by the end of February 2012. Full proposals will be due on March 21, 2012. Awardees will be contacted and funds will be dispersed by June 2012.

Please note that while our 14-member Grants Committee coordinates our grantmaking, Sustainable Path engages all of our Group Philanthropy Partners (donors) in the process. We share a portion of finalists' applications (organization name and mission, project description, objectives, fit with Sustainable Path's mission) with our larger Group Philanthropy Partner donor circle in efforts to further educate our, and our finalists', work. Group Philanthropy Partners can learn about projects, attend site visits, and cast votes near the end of the process to allocate small pool of grant funds to selected projects. This money will be added to grant amounts recommended by our Grants Committee.

We are interested in learning about your work and strongly encourage you to call and discuss your proposal idea. Please contact Erika Orsulak, Sustainable Path Foundation Managing Director, at [\(206\) 443-8464](tel:2064438464) or via email at erika@sustainablepath.org.