

Carbon Footprint Reduction Fund (CFRF) Fact Sheet

What is the Carbon Footprint Reduction Fund (CFRF) and how is it funded? In 2009, the Congregation co-signed the *Family of Holy Cross Statement on Climate Change*. This public declaration commits the four congregations of Holy Cross to “reduce energy consumption, increase efficiency, and employ renewable technologies to achieve **carbon neutrality** in [their] congregations by 2050” and to “[e]nsure that ecological sustainability is integral to our congregational planning, decision-making, and practices.”

A major initiative that concretely and comprehensively addresses these concerns is the Carbon Footprint Reduction Fund, established by the General Leadership Team in May 2014. Each year the General Leadership Team allocates \$10,000 (US) to this fund, as well as \$15 per metric tonne of carbon that is emitted due to travel at the General Level. This includes travel by the Leadership Team members, members of congregational committees, and congregation staff. External donations are also accepted through the Development Office.

In this way, the Congregation is **reinvesting** monies in emission-reducing, sustainable development and contributing to **distributive justice**, by redistributing and sharing resources where they can do the most good. That is, we calculate the environmental cost of necessary travel, and we use those funds to reduce greenhouse gas emissions around the world, simultaneously reducing the pressures associated with scarcity which in turn promote conflict. We are creating and sustaining local economic markets for renewable energy in the places we live and serve. In essence, we are creating the cultural, political, and financial will to develop in a manner which harms none, least of all creation.

What is carbon reduction? The primary driver of climate change is human-generated emissions of **greenhouse gases (GHGs)** like carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (NO_x). GHG emissions occur whenever **fossil fuels** (i.e. natural gas, coal, oil) are burned or **harmful refrigerants** (i.e. hydrofluorocarbons [HFCs], perfluorocarbons [PFCs], and sulphur hexafluoride [SF₆]) are used in refrigeration or air conditioning. A carbon reduction project, then, reduces or eliminates the emission of GHGs.

What kinds of projects does the CFRF support? Each spring, Sisters may apply to the CFRF for grants that support projects in local communities and sponsored ministries which **increase** energy-efficiency and reliance on renewable energy sources and **decrease** dependence on fossil-fuels, harmful refrigerants, and/or deforestation. Applications are submitted to and processed by the Congregation Justice Office, and reviewed by a committee to ensure that they meet necessary criteria. Finally, the recommendations are submitted to General Leadership for consideration.

The CFRF will financially support projects that **create opportunities for:**

- Renewable energy (such as solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, and biofuels)
- Tree planting and re-forestation AND
- Energy-efficiency (LED light replacements)

We prioritize those projects with the **greatest impacts**. For example, we are interested in impacts such as:

- carbon reductions
- educational opportunities
- general wellbeing; and/or
- added health benefits.

What key aspects should I cover in my application? Your application should directly address specific plans for 1) educating others about climate change and the impact that projects like yours has on the environment and on the quality of life; as an example, this may include formal education on how renewable energy functions and contributes to sustainable development; and 2) maintaining the project (e.g. procedurally and financially) going forward. In addition, your application should explicitly indicate the current reality (e.g.

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How are energy or other related needs currently being met?) and the impacts that the new project will have on those directly benefitting from the project, as well as the broader community or public. You should specifically address how the new project will result in carbon emission reductions and/or will introduce renewable energies. If your project will be completed over multiple grant years, you must indicate this under the “project description” area of your application form; for more information see the next section (“How much funding is available?”).

How much funding is available? As of 2018, most of our projects have received about \$2,500 USD for a grant year, though we have awarded as much as \$5,000 in some cases. What, then, should you do if you want to plan a more expensive or involved project, such as installing solar panels and a solar water pump? You will need to plan your project strategically, prioritizing the most important needs first. You will need to plan to break this work up into phases that could be completed in subsequent grant years, as many of our sisters have done. If you are planning on working in phases, you should indicate how many annual phases you anticipate under the “project description” section of your current application.

NOTE: The Carbon Footprint Reduction Fund (CFRF) operates as a reimbursement grant; therefore, award recipients will need to meet the upfront costs of the projects and submit their documentation and receipts for reimbursement to Dana Taylor, in the Congregation Justice Office, according to a set schedule (1st of August and/or November in the first half of the grant year; 1st of March and/or June in the second half of the grant year).

Need help? If you are unsure about what project possibilities exist in your area and/or you need help with research or writing your application, contact Dana Taylor (dtaylor@cscsisters.org) in the Congregation Justice Office for assistance.

