CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
Office of Government and Community Relations

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
Neighborhood Advisory Council

Apply for a NAC Neighborhood Ideas in Action Grant

Award Amount: **Up to $3,000**

Applications Due: **Friday, January 8, 2027**

Awards Announced: **By Friday, January 29, 2027**

Overview

The **CWRU Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC)** is accepting applications to fund projects that support the interests and concerns of campus-adjacent neighbors and especially projects that build connections between the two. The grants will be made available to individuals or small groups committed to building community and positive change.

Each project will be supported by a CWRU "ally." The ally is a CWRU faculty member, staff member, or group who will be available to assist the grant recipient throughout the project.

Important Dates (See "Application Timeline and Process" on next page for more information)

- **November 12, 2026** - Information Session (Wade Park Community Engagement Center)
- **November 21, 2026** - Information Session (Cleveland Public Library, Glenville Branch)
- **December 11, 2026** - Community Dinner & Information Session (Thwing Center, CWRU)
- **January 8, 2027** - Grant applications due
- **January 29, 2027 (or sooner)** - Grant recipients announced
- **June 30, 2027** - All projects and final reports due
- **September 3, 2027** - Grant recipients present final projects

About the NAC

The Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), founded in the fall of 2021, consists of community members, students, and representatives from Case Western Reserve University and local community organizations. The NAC serves as the community representative to University leadership and advises on relevant issues, programs and projects that significantly impact people in Cleveland and East Cleveland neighborhoods around campus.

Criteria for Grants

- The applicant must be an **individual** or **small community group** (CWRU-affiliated faculty, staff or students are not eligible, but may apply for a Community Engagement Grant)
- Applications may be for **either an existing or new** project.

- Applications must identify a CWRU ally (individual or group) or an ally will be assigned to you. If you have selected or wish to request a specific CWRU ally, a verification form is required (go to case.edu/gcr/NAC/NIAGrants for more information and to access the form).
- Projects must relate to at least one of the following NAC areas of focus: ***reciprocity of information, representation, and access between CWRU and adjacent neighborhoods.*** These are described in the ***How Your Proposal Will Be Evaluated*** section on the next page.
- Projects with these additional qualities have the best chance of being funded:
    - Strong understanding of the subject or issue addressed by the project
    - Understanding of participating communities
    - Potential for building trust among participants
    - Addresses a recognized gap or disconnect
    - Collaboration between participants
    - High community impact
    - Potential for future growth
    - Project in an area close to CWRU
    - Clear budget and realistic financial plan

How Proposals Will Be Evaluated

The review committee will use an evaluation & scoring process using **9 core criteria** on a **scale of 1-5** for a **maximum possible total of 45 points** (see below).

The Scoring Scale

- **5 – Exemplary / Model Proposal:** Outstanding clarity, exceptional alignment, and thorough detail.
- **4 – Strong / Exceeds Expectations:** Detailed, well-planned, and strongly aligned with goals.
- **3 – Competent / Satisfactory:** Meets basic expectations with clear, practical planning.
- **2 – Developing / Emerging:** Lacks sufficient detail, clarity, or demonstration of key concepts.
- **1 – Unsatisfactory / Missing:** Fails to address the criterion or lacks necessary information.

The 9 Evaluation Criteria

1. Reciprocity (Mutual Benefit)

Describe how your project will benefit the community, the grant recipient, and the university through shared information and resources.

2. Representation (Diversity of Geography & Topics)

We seek to support projects from different local neighborhoods focused on a variety of issues.

3. Access & Connection (Bridging Campus & Community)

Explain how you will break down barriers and build connections between the university and nearby neighborhood residents.

4. Understanding of Subject Matter (Expertise & Knowledge)

Demonstrate a strong understanding of the issue or topic you plan to address with your project.

5. Collaboration (Cross-Group Partnerships)

Describe how your project will foster genuine teamwork across different organizations, disciplines, or community groups.

6. Impact (Addressing Recognized Gaps)

Your application must identify a community need/gap and offer clear, measurable steps to improve it.

7. Potential for Future Growth (Sustainability & Legacy)

Your project should have the potential to continue, grow, and/or create lasting relationships.

8. Proximity to Campus (Target Neighborhood Focus)

Projects should focus on neighborhoods in Cleveland or East Cleveland close to CWRU.

9. Finances & Budget Narrative (Clarity & Necessity)

Your budget should provide details on exactly how grant funds will be spent and why those expenses are necessary, and that they can support the project effectively.

What Can Be Funded?

- Supplies, materials, equipment, rentals
- Food, drinks, & refreshments
- Payment for outside services (must be approved prior to contracting)
- Mileage or travel reimbursement

What Cannot be Funded?

- Gift cards (in most circumstances)
- CWRU faculty/staff stipends or bonuses (ally positions are volunteer only)

Tips for Applicants

1. **Be Specific:** Include details in your application such as numbers, partner names, locations, and schedules.
2. **Align Budget with Plan:** Be sure each item listed in your budget matches your project plan as described in your application.
3. **Highlight Partnership Roles:** Clearly state who will be doing what. Highlight any interaction between community partners and CWRU.

Application Timeline & Process

- Complete the **online application** in its entirety and **submit by Friday, January 8, 2027** to be considered. This is a firm deadline.
    - If you prefer to complete the application on paper, applications are available at the CWRU Wade Park Community Engagement Center at 11310 Wade Park Ave. Cleveland, OH 44106.
    - You may also contact communityrelations@case.edu, 216-368-2331, or 216-368-1723 for additional options or assistance.
- For more information and individualized support, attend one of our information sessions. All sessions are offered in-person and online. In addition, a recording of one of the information sessions will be available at case.edu/gcr/NAC/NIAgrants.
    - **Thursday, November 12, 2026, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.:** CWRU Wade Park Community Engagement Center - 11310 Wade Park Ave.
    - **Saturday, November 21, 2026, 10:30 - noon.:** Cleveland Public Library, Glenville Branch - 11900 St. Clair Ave.
    - ***Friday, December 11, 2026, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.:** NAC Neighborhood Ideas in Action Reception & Community Dinner at the CWRU Thwing Center Excelsior Ballroom (2nd Fl.) - FREE dinner, parking, and childcare provided - 11111 Euclid Ave.
- Proposals will be reviewed by a joint committee of NAC and non-NAC members.
- Preference will be given to first-time grant applicants.
- The number of awards granted and their respective amounts depend on the availability of funds and quality of proposals.
- Applicants will be informed of their award status by **Friday, January 29, 2027.**

Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to:

- Meet with your CWRU ally monthly during your project cycle to check in/request support
- **Wednesday, June 30, 2027**, is the deadline to complete your project (exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis) including a final report. ***The report must be completed by this date regardless of whether the project has reached completion.***
- All grant recipients will present their projects at the NAC Neighborhood Ideas in Action Community Dinner on **September 3, 2027 from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.** at CWRU (Tinkham Veale University Center Ballroom)

More detailed information about reporting can be found at case.edu/gcr/NAC/NIAGrants.

**The last information session will be presented during the annual NAC Community Dinner. Information sessions are not mandatory, but attending at least one (or viewing the recording) is recommended.*