NAC Neighborhood Ideas in Action Grant Application Evaluation Rubric

Each criterion is evaluated on a **1–5 scale**:

- **1 = Unsatisfactory / Missing** (Fails to address criteria)
- **2 = Developing / Emerging** (Lacks detail or full clarity)
- **3 = Competent / Satisfactory** (Meets basic expectations)
- **4 = Strong / Exceeds Expectations** (Detailed, highly aligned)
- **5 = Exemplary / Model Proposal** (Outstanding detail, exceptional alignment)

	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points
Reciprocity *Examines mutual benefit between the university/applicant and the community partners.*	Single-sided proposal with no clear mutual benefits; one party bears all burdens or gains all rewards.	Mentions benefits to both parties, but they are vague, unbalanced, or largely symbolic.	Clearly states how both the community and the university/applicant benefit from shared information and resources.	Demonstrates strong bidirectionality where knowledge exchange, learning, and outcomes enrich both parties.	Exemplary model of co-learning and mutual gain; outlines explicit mechanisms for two-way knowledge transfer and sustained mutual value.
Representation *Evaluates inclusivity across the local geography and diverse subject areas/perspectives.*	Narrow focus with no consideration for local geographic diversity or broader thematic perspective.	Represents a familiar or over-served topic/location; minimal effort to include underrepresented voices.	Covers a clear geographic zone and topic area that contributes meaningfully to overall area diversity.	Engages underrepresented neighborhoods or novel subject matters, filling noticeable gaps in area representation.	Outstanding effort to bring forward historically underrepresented communities, novel topics, or multi-faceted regional perspectives.
Access *Measures the degree to which the project bridges connections between the university and neighboring communities.*	Creates barriers or maintains isolation between campus and community members.	Limited accessibility; interactions are brief, centralized on campus only, or difficult for community members to access.	Provides clear, feasible pathways for mutual access to facilities, events, or resources between campus and neighborhood.	Proactively eliminates financial, technical, or physical barriers to participation across community and university lines.	Serves as a direct, seamless bridge; creates durable access channels, open facilities, or community-embedded programs.
Understanding of Subject Matter *Assesses the applicant's depth of knowledge and expertise regarding the proposed issue/topic.*	Inaccurate information, significant gaps in knowledge, or misunderstanding of the problem.	Basic awareness of the topic, but lacks deep context, current research, or community-grounded awareness.	Solid, accurate understanding of the subject matter, local context, and relevant methodologies.	High level of expertise demonstrated through deep contextual knowledge, evidence-based practices, or lived experience.	Mastery of subject matter; synthesizes evidence-based practices or deep local/lived expertise to form an innovative approach
	1 point	**2 points**	**3 points**	**4 points**	**5 points**

Collaboration *Evaluates cross-group partnerships and interdisciplinary or cross-sector teamwork.*	Individual effort with no meaningful external partners or inter-group cooperation.	Partners are named in name only; roles are ill-defined or lack evidence of genuine working relationships.	Meaningful collaboration between at least two distinct organizations or cross-field groups with defined roles. CWRU support role is mentioned.	Strong cross-sector or multi-group alliance with active co-planning, shared responsibilities, and integrated workflows. CWRU support role is defined.	Deeply integrated collaborative network spanning diverse stakeholder groups, leveraging distinct strengths of each partner. CWRU support role is very clear.
Impact *Measures how effectively the project identifies a community gap and outlines measurable improvements.*	Fails to identify a community gap; outcomes are non-existent or unmeasurable.	Identifies a general issue, but proposed solutions lack clear metrics or realistic pathways to improvement.	Identifies a recognized community gap and provides achievable, measurable targets to address it.	Directly addresses a critical community gap with strong, well-defined quantitative and qualitative metrics.	High-impact intervention addressing an urgent need; features a rigorous, realistic evaluation plan with clear milestones.
Potential *Assesses long-term sustainability, scalability, or lasting legacy beyond the grant timeline.*	One-off activity with no consideration of sustainability or long-term continuation.	Expresses intent for future growth, but lacks concrete strategies, funding plans, or scalable frameworks.	Outlines a realistic plan for maintaining project relationships or continuation after grant funds end.	Shows clear promise for expansion, replication, or securing secondary funding sources.	Exceptionally sustainable vision; creates lasting relationships, repeating activities, or a clear pathway for ongoing community impact.
Proximity to Campus *Physical, spatial, or operational relational closeness to CWRU. (ex. E. Cleveland, Fairfax, Hough, U.C., Buckeye, Glenville, etc.)*	Located entirely outside the university's target local footprint with no relational proximity.	Moderately distant; limited physical or operational connection to nearby campus neighborhood zones.	Located in or directly serving the immediate university-adjacent neighborhoods.	High physical proximity, taking place directly in target-area neighborhoods bordering campus.	Directly embedded within the immediate target neighborhood corridor, optimizing ease of joint campus-community participation.
Finances *Evaluates transparency, necessity, and line-item clarity of requested funds.*	Vague, incomplete, or unreasonable budget; lacks justification for how funds will be spent.	Basic line-item list provided, but justification for costs or necessity is weak or inconsistent.	Clear, complete budget detailing accurate estimates and reasonable justifications for all expenses.	Cost-effective, thoroughly detailed financial plan showing high steward accountability for requested funds.	Exceptionally transparent and efficient budget; clearly links every dollar directly to project goals, demonstrating maximum value and necessity.
POINTS TOTAL					**/45**