



# **Request for Proposal**

## **Nourishing Power Network Sustainability Phase**

Beginning October 1, 2025

### **Background**

The Nourishing Power Network (NPN) was developed through a community action research project, *Nourishing Neighborhoods Empowering Communities*, in July 2022. In the 3 years since its launch, Nourishing Power Network has invested \$250,000 in grassroots work around the community, taken 18 food justice leaders through a fellowship training program, hosted numerous networking events, and been led by 16 unique food systems leaders on the Advisory Council. As the research study behind the Nourishing Power Network ends, the members of NPN are looking to transition the Network from an institutionally held entity into the hands of community.

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit a plan for the sustainment of the Nourishing Power Network for at least 9 months, but up to 12 months, beginning October 1, 2025. Responses to the RFP should align with the goals and topics outlined in the Strategic Planning Report ([found on our website](#)). RFP responses should be plans that include:

- a coordinating entity
- a leadership model of community members
- a networking component focused on advancing Nutrition Zones in Greater Cleveland
- and plans for financial sustainability beyond the end of this one-time investment

To accomplish these goals, there is a one-time investment of \$38,500. The awarded entity, or their fiscal sponsor, must have the demonstrated ability to accept these funds from Case Western Reserve University and Neighborhood Connections.

### **Eligibility**

Must be an organization (business, non-profit, congregation, etc.) operating within Cuyahoga County in good standing with the IRS or have a fiscal sponsor.

### **Important Dates**

<b>Proposal Due</b>	Sunday, August 10 <sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm
<b>Community Engaged Interview</b>	Week of August 18 <sup>th</sup> and August 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Final Award Notice</b>	September 10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Start Date</b>	October 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2025
<b>End Date</b>	A date identified by the applicant between June 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2026 and September 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2026

## **Requested Response Components**

Submit a proposal of no more than 5, single-spaced pages to the Nourishing Power Network outlining your organization's approach to the below details. A timeline (Appendix A) and a budget (Appendix B) are required. Please submit all the requested materials and proof of fiscal sponsorship (not included in the page limit) to Megan ([mxp800@case.edu](mailto:mxp800@case.edu)) by Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm. No late applications will be accepted.

## **Required Components of Response**

- **Contact Information:** Name of organization applying; location of organization applying; name, title, phone number, and email of the main point of contact; website/social media (if applicable)
- **Background:** Provide a background of the organization and its connection to the food justice community of Cuyahoga County
  - Infrastructure in existence to support the organizing of deliverables, fiscal elements of the award, and reporting.
  - Proven track record of successfully obtaining grants and/or other funding for food justice related work.
- **Team:** Describe the project team, including roles and responsibilities
- **Strategy:** What is your strategy related to furthering Nourishing Power Network through establishing a coordinating entity, maintaining a leadership model of community members, leading a networking component focused on advancing Nutrition Zones in Greater Cleveland, and planning for financial sustainability beyond the end of this one-time investment?
- **Milestones:** What are your 2-5 core milestones to be accomplished during the timeframe of this award?
- Timeline of activities (not included in the page limit)
- Budget and budget narrative (not included in the page limit)
- EIN if a registered business or non-profit entity or proof of fiscal sponsorship letter (not included in the page limit)

## **Budget**

Budget must not exceed \$38,500 for the established timeline (9-12 months). The proposed budget must include estimates for all activities (i.e. events, coordination, stipends, etc.)

### **Allowable Expenses:**

- Personnel (salary, fringe)
- Other Project Costs, such as:
  - General project related supplies
  - Marketing and promotional materials for project goals
  - Community engagement costs (e.g., food at meetings, stipends for participation)
  - Consultation
  - Mileage for in town and statewide travel for meetings: \$0.70 per mile
- Administrative Costs (up to 5% of direct costs)

### Unallowable Expenses:

- Equipment over \$500 (unless approval is provided in writing prior to award)
- Purchase of land or buildings
- Alcoholic beverages
- Goods and services for personal use
- Lobbying that is substantial in relation to the organization's overall activities or is in support of or against a political candidate or specific legislation.
- Construction
- Capital or building campaigns
- Religious efforts for religious purposes
- Fundraising dinners, galas, or events

### **Selection Process**

Upon initial review of the responses by the Nourishing Power Leadership Team for achievement of all minimum requirements (rubric in Appendix C), all applicants will be required to attend a one-hour, virtual community engaged interview the week of August 18<sup>th</sup> or August 25<sup>th</sup>, to field and answer questions about their proposal from the interview team comprised of core members of the Nourishing Power Network (Advisory Council 1.0 and 2.0, Fellow graduates 1.0 and 2.0, Fund awardees).

#### Structure of the Community Engaged Interview

- 10 minute presentation on your proposal
- 30 minutes of structured questions
- 20 open question and answer section

A final vote will be made by members of the interview team. The selected proposal will be notified on or near September 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Please submit all materials to Megan Paskey at [mxp800@case.edu](mailto:mxp800@case.edu) by Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm. No late proposals will be accepted.**

## Appendix A: Timeline

Due Date	Milestone	Deliverable

### **Sample: Timeline from October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026**

**Project Name:** Sustainment of NPN by Sesame Street

**Team Members:** Cookie Monster, Elmo, and Oscar the Grouch

Due Date	Milestone	Deliverable
10/31/2025	Host info session with NPN membership to gather interest in sitting on the leadership team	Attendee list, Suggestions for “must have” features of the leadership team
12/20/2025	Seat core team of NP responsible for all activities, budgeting, and marketing/communications	Send vote to the NPN membership
3/15/2025	Host 3 networking events	Attendance information, photos, resource directory
6/30/2025	Secure \$50k more for another year of sustainability	Have a contract of at least \$50K to continue coalition

## Appendix B: Sample Budget

Expense Item(s):	Amount Requested	Budget Justification:
1. Supplies (items that will be consumed)		
2. Food		
3. Printing		
4. Equipment (lasts longer than project)		
5. Fees/Permits		
6. Space		
7. Personnel (paid or volunteers)		
8. Transportation		
9. Other		
10. Other		
11. Other		
12. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (sum of 1-11)		
13. Administrative Costs (5% of total direct costs)		
14. TOTAL (DIRECT + ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS)		

## Appendix C: Initial Application Review Rubric

Criteria	Yes/No
All application components were included.	
Entity is in good standing with the IRS and can accept money from CWRU and Neighborhood Connections through own account or that of a fiscal sponsor.	
Proof of fiscal sponsorship, if applicable	
Budget does not exceed \$38,500 and includes only allowable expenses	
Timeline ends between 6/30/2026 and 9/30/2026	
<b>Applicant meets minimum criteria?</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	

## Appendix D: Community Engaged Interview Review Criteria

1	<b>Organization has a connection to the food justice community of Cuyahoga County, infrastructure to support the award, and proven track record of obtaining funding for related work.</b>  <i>Connection to the food justice community of Cuyahoga County refers to past or current work in food justice through deep relationship.</i>	
2	<b>Project team has clear roles and responsibilities with relevant experience to support their work</b>	
3	<b>The proposal clearly demonstrates a feasible and impactful strategy to sustain Nourishing Power Network</b>  <i>Strategy clearly describes how it will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>establish a coordinating entity</i></li><li>• <i>maintain a leadership model of community members</i></li><li>• <i>lead a networking component focused on advancing Nutrition Zones in Greater Cleveland</i></li><li>• <i>plan for financial sustainability beyond the end of this one-time investment</i></li></ul>	
4	<b>Outlined 2-5 core milestones are achievable in the timeframe (9 to 12 months) and moves NPN toward the sustainment goals</b>	
5	<b>Timeline of activities and the budget aligns with proposal narrative</b>	