A Checklist For Writing Grant Proposals that Encourage Meaningful Community Engagement

Your goal is to write a grant proposal that ensures community engagement is central to project design and implementation. This document provides a checklist useful for guiding project team conversations toward this end.

Meaningful community engagement defined.

To build trust and establish strong relationships, meaningful engagement

- provides communities opportunities to be an integral part of the visioning, decision-making, and leadership of projects;
- removes barriers to community participation to ensure all activities are inclusive of community priorities and needs;
- makes connections across community priorities and values, including the environment, health, and well-being;
- ensures decisions are embraced and supported by those that will be affected;
- increases project impact and decreases project delays by ensuring community desires are reflected in project design and implementation; and
- ensures project benefits flow back to the community.

(Information derived from the National Marine Fisheries Service.)

The audience for this checklist.

Grant proposals led by community-based organizations typically have the relationships and trust needed to ensure meaningful community engagement. Unfortunately this type of leadership isn't always available.

This checklist was developed for organizations with less experience in developing grant proposals alongside communities. The emphasis is on identifying and engaging with individuals and groups that have these relationships throughout the process, and adjusting the project plans accordingly.

Instructions for using the checklist.

Every grant that achieves meaningful engagement starts by co-developing the proposal alongside community partners and members. In fact, 90 percent of the work, the relationship building, should be done before a proposal idea is even conceived. Use this checklist to facilitate engagement-focused dialogue and learning amongst project team members and the community.

After you've used the checklist.

As a team, go back to the items rated as "making progress" or "needs work." What improvements can be made to strengthen meaningful engagement? If you don't feel you can adequately move the majority of the relevant items toward the "fully integrated" category, have an honest discussion with partners and communities about how this will impact project outcomes. For the elements where the project falls short during the grant writing process, think about how the team can continue to work together toward improvement if the proposal is funded and implemented.

Some of the checklist items may not be part of the actual grant application. However, all items are important to discuss during the project conception and proposal development phases to ensure there are resources and capacity budgeted towards each element for project implementation.

This checklist does not replace or supersede a particular grant program's request for proposals. A grant writer must follow the requirements in the notice of funding opportunity, and use this checklist to think through how to center meaningful engagement within the proposal guidelines. Check in with the funder if you have questions about proposal requirements (e.g., eligible participant engagement costs such as food).

And remember: meaningful engagement doesn't end once the grant is submitted. Relationships and trust should not wax and wane based on grant cycles.

The CHECKLIST

Writing Grant Proposals that Encourage Meaningful Community Engagement

To ensure meaningful community engagement occurs during the grant writing process and project implementation, there are numerous considerations to explore. Use the following checklist, which is organized around the categories found in many grant proposals, to start discussions within your team.
For each section, rate where your proposal stands, with a goal of moving the "making progress" and "needs work" responses toward "fully integrated."

Project Team

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED
Power-sharing. There's evidence of power sharing with community-based organizations and community members. Example: a community-based organization acting as the principal investigator or sharing decision-making power as a co-investigator.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS
No community leadership. Community-based organizations and community members are part of the project team or are serving in advisory roles, but are not lead members of the project team.

☐ NEEDS WORK
No community representation. No community-based organizations or community members are represented on the project team.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

- [ ] FULLY INTEGRATED
  Communities are decision-makers and acknowledged as such. The community is part of decision-making processes throughout the project. In particular, Indigenous people are acknowledged as *rights holders* (e.g., federal, state, and Indigenous legal responsibility to care for and rights to trust resources).

- [ ] MAKING PROGRESS
  Communities inform decision-making. The community is intermittently engaged but their perspective and recommendations only inform, not drive, project decisions.

- [ ] NEEDS WORK
  Communities have no decision-making power. The community has no decision-making power and is informed about project progress as an afterthought.

- [ ] NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY POINTS OF CONTACT

- [ ] FULLY INTEGRATED
  These are clearly identified. Specific people are identified from community-based organizations or the community to be involved.

- [ ] MAKING PROGRESS
  No specific points of contact. Specific community-based organizations and communities are listed as project team members but no specific point of contact is identified.

- [ ] NEEDS WORK
  No community-based organizations have been identified. A total absence of community-based organizations, or general "TBD" language, such as "We will identify community-based organizations for engagement…" is used.

- [ ] NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY-LED ENGAGEMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Trusted messengers lead engagement. A community-based organization or community member is directly contracted to engage the community in the proposed project. Proposal includes trusted and involved community champions.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Outreach professionals lead engagement. Nonprofits and other organizations that have experience with community outreach are leading project engagement, but these entities may not have a strong engagement history with the community and may not be trusted by the community.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Scientific and agency experts lead engagement. Scientists, technical experts, consultants, and agency representatives with limited capacity or experience with engagement lead the engagement process

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

History of engagement. Project team members have a history of working alongside the communities long before the grant proposal was even conceived. Previous work with the partners and communities is referenced.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Engagement during grant writing process. The project team has been actively talking to the community during the grant writing process, but no evidence of community engagement occurred before that.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No history of engagement before submitting the proposal. No evidence of partners being engaged. Wording indicates the proposers haven't talked to key community partners – "We're going to reach out to…" or "We plan on talking with…"

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Diverse community priorities represented. Project team represents a variety of important community priorities, such as affordable housing, public health.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Broader organizational missions represented. Project team has organizations with broader missions but is missing organizations that directly align with stated community priorities. Team is more focused on project co-benefits that only indirectly advance community priorities.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Only scientific or agency missions represented. The project team has expertise and experiences that don't overlap with identified community priorities.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

LOCATION OF PROJECT TEAM

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Project team co-located in the community. At least some members are physically living in or are working in the communities that are part of the project.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Project team has worked with the community. Some team members have worked with the community but have not spent extensive time living or working there. This is the difference between community-serving and community-based organizations.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No members are physically located in the community. Project team is not physically living or working in the community, such as a consultant or academic in Oregon engaging a community in Maine.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

EQUITABLE SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Reciprocal and equitable research practices. Social scientists committed to working alongside the community. Evidence of historical engagement, of valuing community experiences and expertise, of equitable research practices, and ongoing reciprocity between the researcher and the community.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Social scientists with a history of community work. Researchers that have conducted research in the community are on the project team, but there's little evidence of equitable research practices (e.g., listing community members as co-authors on previous publications) or of reciprocal practices that advance community dialogue (e.g., sharing survey results with community members outside of publications).

☐ NEEDS WORK

Social scientists are equated with community engagement. Social science research is equated with community engagement. Conducting research on a community does not demonstrate engagement, particularly when a researcher has no history of working alongside a community.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

NEW POSITIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

New positions created for specific community members. New positions for specific people with a history of engagement with the community are identified.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

New positions created for community members. New hire is needed and a person with deep community ties is desired, but this person has not yet been identified.

☐ NEEDS WORK

New positions are playing lead roles. For new positions, there are few if any commitments to hire a community member.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

Grant Narrative

DEFINED COMMUNITY

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Clearly defined community. A clear description of the priority community exists, a rationale for why they're being engaged, and a clear connection between community needs and the proposed project. Also clearly stated: who and what constitutes the community, including geography, population, and socio-economic structure. If identified as "underserved," an explanation is provided.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Community is loosely defined. Specific communities are identified but the proposal does not reflect knowledge about the people and places (e.g., limited historical, social, or cultural context).

☐ NEEDS WORK

Community is not defined. Unclear what specific community is targeted (e.g., will work with three coastal communities in Florida to be identified after funding is received) or lacks community understanding beyond online search results, census data, or maps. The identified community may not even exist (e.g., audience is city planners of rural communities that don't currently have city planners).

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY VALUES

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Clear understanding of community values. Understanding goes beyond online research. Project narrative demonstrates an understanding of community values, history, and priorities. Can be demonstrated through a history of community engagement (e.g., testimonials from previous workshops and community events) or written by a community-based partner with deep community history.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Beginning to understand community values. Online research (e.g., online tools, published research, census data) is supplemented with conversations with community leaders during the grant writing process.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Only "know" the community through online research. Proposal only cites sources of information that can be found without ever engaging the community directly.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Clear understanding of project benefits. Linkage between project benefits and the partnering communities is obvious, including defining the benefits, who will benefit, how they will access those benefits, and for how long they will benefit. The project will result in community-owned impact, change, or tangible benefit.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Loose linkages between project benefits and community. Project benefits are identified alongside who will benefit, but no understanding how they will access those benefits and for how long they will benefit.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Disconnect between community and project benefits. Project benefits are identified but no strong linkages to community (e.g., restore a coastal habitat without consideration for whether the people living in the adjacent neighborhood will directly benefit).

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY REDUCTION

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Project will reduce community vulnerability. A specific vulnerability is identified and the project will contribute to reducing that vulnerability (e.g., living shoreline will reduce flooding in an underserved neighborhood).

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Project will reduce vulnerability adjacent to community. Specific vulnerability is identified; project will contribute to reducing that, but is not directly benefiting the community being engaged (e.g., living shoreline will reduce flooding in an area near an underserved neighborhood).

☐ NEEDS WORK

No linkage to any vulnerability. There is no evidence that the community is vulnerable to a priority hazard (e.g., coastal hazards, climate change), and so no direct reduction of community vulnerability.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

DIRECT COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Community context comes from within the project team. Highlights personal, less formal sources of community information, such as a recent neighborhood event or conversations with local leaders to provide context around community needs and priorities. Uses online sources of information, local and state plans, and other sources of information to supplement directly obtained information.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Community context comes from using community-based information led by other organizations. In addition to online research, a deeper community understanding is demonstrated by referencing sources of information from organizations previously engaged in the community (e.g., a needs assessment).

☐ NEEDS WORK

Community context comes from using the internet. Project team's only effort to engage communities is to use a state or federal tool or data to identify communities.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

Overall Approach

NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Needs assessments by and for the community. A community-led needs assessment, focused on community needs and strengths, is available. Proposed project is informed by these findings.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Needs assessment by an external organization. A needs assessment was conducted, but no community-based organization or community members were involved.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No needs assessments. There's no evidence of a needs assessment or the community expressing a need for the proposed project.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED
Builds community strengths. Proposed project not only addresses needs, but acknowledges and leverages existing community strengths (e.g., strong social networks).

☐ MAKING PROGRESS
Strengths are only identified. Proposal identifies community strengths and assets, but doesn't define how the proposed project will build on these.

☐ NEEDS WORK
Focus is on needs and vulnerabilities. No community strengths or assets are mentioned. Proposed project focuses on community needs, vulnerabilities, and deficits only.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY VISION

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED
Implements community vision. The proposed project demonstrates alignment between the community's vision for the future, specifically referencing vision elements and project tie-ins.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS
Unclear connection between community vision and proposal. The community's vision is acknowledged but it's unclear how the proposed project helps implement said vision.

☐ NEEDS WORK
No community vision referenced. The proposal doesn't reference the community's vision for the future.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

VALUES ALIGNMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Aligns with community values and priorities. Proposed project provides evidence of this alignment.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Acknowledge community values and priorities. Proposal recognizes a variety of community priorities but doesn't identify clear pathways or partners for advancing these community priorities.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Community values and priorities are not understood. The proposed project is being driven by the organizational missions of the project team. There's minimal evidence of the project being connected to broader community values and priorities.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMMUNITY EXPERTISE

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Local expertise and knowledge is included. Best available science used to guide projects includes local knowledge, methods, and expertise. The definition of "science" is critical here, as it's important to understand how "science" is used and what's included.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Local expertise and knowledge is acknowledged. Local knowledge is referenced but there's minimal understanding of how this information will shape the project.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Local expertise and knowledge excluded. Only scientific or technical reasoning is used to design the project's approach; no local knowledge is used.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

DATA MANAGEMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Co-developed plan for sharing and managing data. Agreement between the community and the project team regarding how data will be collected, used, shared, and managed (e.g., Indigenous data sovereignty). There is free and prior informed consent by all parties.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Vague data sharing and managing plan. Data management plan minimally considers community role in data management.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Data management meets minimal standards. Recognition that data needs to be managed, but focus is data management solely to meet federal or institutional regulations. No evidence community was consulted.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

Engagement Approach

ENGAGEMENT PLAN

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Developed to overcome participation barriers. The first task of the proposed project is to co-develop an engagement plan with a deliberate approach for working alongside community members, and clearly articulate a collaborative decision-making process. Includes steps for overcoming engagement barriers and barriers for accessing project benefits.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Proposal is treated as the engagement plan. A rough sketch of an engagement plan is outlined in the grant proposal, but there's no stated task that ensures engagement and collaborative decision-making will be deliberately refined and completed once project is funded.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No engagement plan. There is no mention of an engagement plan.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

RECIPROCAL ENGAGEMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Full reciprocal engagement. Project engagement strengthens community leadership and decision-making. Project goes beyond awareness building and fully supports reciprocal knowledge sharing and community dialogue.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Information flows from community to project team. There's opportunity for community feedback and project direction input, but information is flowing in one direction – from the community to the project team. The project team is not accountable for incorporating community feedback or looping back with the community. It's unclear where the community fits into the decision-making process.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Information flows from project team to community. Engagement is characterized as education and outreach (flow of information from project team to community) only. Project team only uses easy and passive methods for advertising convenings (e.g., the organization's Facebook page, flyers)

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Creates professional development opportunities for the community. Includes paid internships, job training, apprenticeships, or incorporation into the curriculum at a community college. Professional development for "underrepresented" community members is prioritized, and creates lasting benefits for the community.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Professional development opportunities are inaccessible to community members. Opportunities are created but are not specifically offered to community members (e.g., post-docs at universities not located in the community; internships created but not accessible due to being unpaid or difficult to access with no transportation).

☐ NEEDS WORK

No professional development opportunities. Doesn't create professional development opportunities as part of the project.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

LOCATION OF ENGAGEMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Going where the community already is. Provides engagement opportunities at events that community members already attend (e.g., festivals, neighborhood parties). A place's cultural and historical context is considered when choosing a workshop location (e.g., gatherings are not held at an agency's building if the community does not have deep trust in the institution).

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Gatherings occur in community facilities. Engagement happens in a community-based facility that requires effort if community members want to be involved, such as a building not on a bus route.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Engagement is held at government facilities. Convenings are hosted at the project team's headquarters or in government buildings, sending the message that community members should come to us.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

TIMING OF ENGAGEMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Reflects daily life of community members. Engagement opportunities are held on different days of the week and during different times, accommodating community members' work and family commitments (e.g., hosting weekend and evening events).

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Engagement primarily driven by project team schedules. The team may provide only one or two engagement opportunities where community work and family commitments are considered.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Engagement only occurs during project team work hours. Engagement opportunities happen when the project team is working (e.g., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL TRANSLATION

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Language translation complexity is recognized. Nuances of cultural and language translation are recognized (e.g., different dialects), and a clear purpose for translation of project materials is identified (e.g., why are materials being translated into Spanish?). The proposal provides a clear method for both oral and written translation.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Cultural and language translation is overly simplified. Method for engagement is simple translation of findings into multiple languages (e.g., Spanish handouts, websites) without considering cultural context, different dialects, and different pathways for multilingual engagement beyond one-pagers.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No cultural and language translation. No cultural or language translation is mentioned in areas with large multilingual populations.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

Timeline

TIME FOR PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Framed around community decision-making. Timeline focuses on a fully participatory process with a clear purpose for each engagement; includes multiple methods of engagement (e.g., more than workshops); and provides opportunities for iterative and flexible engagement, which creates space for community decision-making processes.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Framed around some community engagement. Timeline includes the time to inform or consult the community, but not enough time or consistency for full community decision-making. Minimal understanding regarding the need for an adaptable timeline to ensure full community buy-in and leadership.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Framed around research and regulatory constraints. Timeline only focuses on technical, scientific, or regulatory constraints and outcomes.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

TIME FOR COMMUNITY-LED OUTCOMES

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Allows enough time to foster community-led outcomes. Timeline provides a full participatory process that includes time needed to build buy-in and collaborative decision-making. May even acknowledge engagement to continue after the grant cycle to demonstrate ongoing commitment to community outcomes.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Not enough engagement to achieve outcomes. The outcomes identified in the proposal are reasonable and achievable during the grant cycle, but the timeline doesn't budget enough engagement opportunities and strategies to ensure the process leads to full community decision-making.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Overly ambitious outcomes. Engagement takes time, so it's unlikely that consensus will be reached at the end of a grant without a demonstrated history of engagement with the community.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

FLEXIBILITY AND ITERATION

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED
Engagement happens throughout the project lifecycle. Engagement is iterative and flexible during each project phase, providing many engagement opportunities. Space is provided to adapt and be responsive to multiple visions for the future, new partners, and fostering full community buy-in and leadership.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS
Fragmented and irregular engagement opportunities. Engagement occurs only during limited time frames (e.g., kick-off workshop and wrap-up workshops at the beginning and end of the project).

☐ NEEDS WORK
Engagement scheduled after decisions are made. Engagement opportunities are an afterthought, incorporated at the end of key project phases to report out on project progress.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED
Demonstrated long-term community commitment. Partnership has foundations that allow long-term collaboration and follow-through (e.g., other ongoing projects the project team is working on).

☐ MAKING PROGRESS
Intention of engagement beyond grant cycle. The project team expresses an intention, but there's no evidence the project team or the community has the capacity, incentive, or pathway for continued engagement.

☐ NEEDS WORK
Community engagement ends with the grant cycle. There's no mention of engagement beyond the end of the proposed project's funding timeline.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

Budget

EQUITABLE ACROSS PROJECT TEAM

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Equitable funding. Budgeted amounts for project team members are equitable (e.g., academic, agency, and local primary investigators are funded to spend the same amount of time on the project). There's adequate funding for community-based organizations to dedicate time and capacity to playing a leadership role in the proposed project.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Limited funding for community participation. A community-based organization or community member is directly funded but there is only enough funding provided for a supporting role.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No funding for community participation. All or the majority of funds go to academic institutions, consultants, and agencies.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

IDENTIFY SPECIFIC COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Specific community-based organizations identified. These participants are directly funded.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

No specific community-based organizations identified. There's budgeted funding for community-based organizations and members, but the specific organizations or people have not been identified.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No mention of community-based organizations. No line item for community-based organizations or members to lead or participate in the project.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMPENSATE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Equitable compensation for community members. Community members' time and expertise is equitably funded alongside scientific and technical expertise through honorariums and stipends, providing support for consistent local engagement.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Minimal compensation for community members. Community members receive stipends or honorariums that allow only intermittent participation in events and advisory committees.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No funding for community members. No funding for community member time, participation, or expertise.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

FUNDS STAY IN COMMUNITY

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

All funds stay in the community. All funds flow to community organizations, businesses, and people.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Some funds stay in the community. Some funds flow to community organizations, businesses, and people.

☐ NEEDS WORK

All funds leave the community. Funds flow only to external organizations, businesses, and people.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

FUNDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Paid professional development opportunities. Provides significant funding for paid internships, job training, or apprenticeships. Funding provides a living wage and adequately considers housing costs.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Underfunded professional development. Provides a minimal stipend for internships, job training, or apprenticeships. Funding doesn't provide a living wage or consider housing costs.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Unpaid professional development opportunities. Only provides volunteer or unpaid internships, making them inaccessible to community members.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Barriers are removed. Budget supports each engagement event, removing barriers to participation, including funds for transportation costs, childcare, or food.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Barriers to participation in events are lessened. Budgets minimal participant support for event costs and doesn't provide enough incentive for community members to fully engage in the process.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Barriers to participation are not funded. No funding is provided for participant support.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Translation is fully funded. Adequately funds both written and oral translation services. Does not rely on staff who speak a second language without providing additional capacity.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Translation is underfunded. Minimally funded with materials being primarily translated for outreach, as opposed to continued and iterative engagement. Relies on staff who speak a second language without providing additional capacity, which is not equitable.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No translation funded. No language translation is funded.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

Letters of Support

COMMUNITY LETTERS

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Majority are from the community. Most are written by community-based organizations or community members.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Some are from community. One or two letters from community-based organizations or community members, but majority come from external organizations.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No community letters of support. Letters are primarily from outside the community (e.g., academic, federal, and state agencies).

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

COMMITMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Strong project commitment. Letters demonstrate commitment to being engaged in all phases of the project cycle, and commit organizational or individual capacity and expertise to the proposed project.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Minimal commitment. Letters demonstrate commitment to the project through minimal engagement (e.g., attend a workshop), but there's no capacity or expertise committed.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No commitment. Letters simply state support for the project without providing a description of how the organization or community will be directly involved.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

GENUINE SUPPORT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Genuine letters of support. Each letter is different, providing unique community insights about project support and community benefits.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Letters of support are templates. Most letters use a template with only a paragraph providing additional context and support.

☐ NEEDS WORK

Letters of support are all the same. The same boilerplate language provided by the applicant is used. No unique insight into how the community truly feels about the project is provided.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

DESCRIBES LONG HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Describes a long history of engagement. Letters describe a strong relationship with the community, providing historical and recent examples. An indication of how effective engagement has been and the level at which the community has been engaged.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Describes recent engagement. Describes recent community engagement (e.g., conversations during the proposal writing process). An indication of how effective recent engagement has been.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No history of engagement. No mention of any engagement by the project team with the community.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE

DESCRIBES PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

☐ FULLY INTEGRATED

Demonstrates community-led proposal development. Information provided about community leadership throughout the proposal development.

☐ MAKING PROGRESS

Demonstrates community-involved proposal development. Provides a narrative describing how the community was consulted throughout the proposal development process.

☐ NEEDS WORK

No indication the community was engaged. Nothing describing how the community was engaged.

☐ NOT APPLICABLE