The Civic Innovation Challenge Program (CIVIC)

Prospective Panelist Webinar

April 18th, 2022

U.S. Department of Energy
Co-Lead and Co-Funder

National Science Foundation
Challenge Lead and Funder

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Co-Lead and Co-Funder

METROLAB NETWORK

Community-of-Practice Builder and Communications Lead

Website: https://nsfcivicinnovation.org/

Webinar Agenda

1. **Introduction to serving on an NSF panel**

2. **Introduction to the CIVIC Program**

3. **Overview of CIVIC Solicitation**

4. **Reviewing CIVIC Proposals**

5. **Panel Process: Individual Reviews and Panel Outputs**

6. **Q&A**

1. Introduction to serving on an NSF panel

- **Provide *quality feedback* to the PIs, keeping in mind that proposals may be among the first ones the PI has written**

- **Provide *advice* to NSF Program Directors for funding recommendations**

Panel Time Commitment

Prior to the Panel:

Review proposals

<mark>Submit individual reviews at least three days prior to the start of the panel</mark>

Day 1:

10:00–10:30: Logistics and Panel Charge

10:30–17:00: Proposal Discussion/Binning

Evening: Complete Panel Summaries

Day 2:

10:00–10:30:   Final ranking of proposals

10:30–2:30:   Reading/review of panel summaries

        Open discussion/Feedback

*All times are EDT

Conflict of Interest

- Remove or limit the (appearance of) influence of ties to an investigator/institution that could affect reviewer advice
- Preserve the trust of the scientific community, Congress, and the public in the integrity and evenhandedness in the review process
- The proposer is a:
  - close friend, relative, or business partner
  - student or your advisor
  - collaborator on a project/book/article/paper within the last 48 mo.
  - co-editor of a journal/compendium/conference proceedings within the last 24 mo. Note: No COI by virtue of listing as an editor
- The institution:
  - is your current, previous (12 mos.), or potentially future employer
  - provided payment (e.g., honorarium >$1,500)
- Declare and turn in COI forms; leave zoom meeting during proposal discussion

If your institution is in a proposal, you need to step out for that discussion

If you are a PI/co-PI or other Senior Person in a proposal submitted to a CIVIC track, you CANNOT review proposals in that track! You can however review proposals in the track you have not submitted to

Confidentiality

- Process and results are confidential!
  - Do not disclose identities of anyone on the panel
  - Do not disclose identities of anyone associated with the proposals
  - Do not discuss proposal or recommendations with anyone outside this panel
  - Do not disclose identities in reviews or panel summaries

- Proposals contain sensitive information and are not in the public domain – do not copy, distribute or quote from them.

- You can indicate (e.g., on a resume) that you served on an NSF review panel— just do not identify which panel(s).

- Do not discuss panel outside the zoom meeting, or inside the zoom meeting when no Program Director is present.

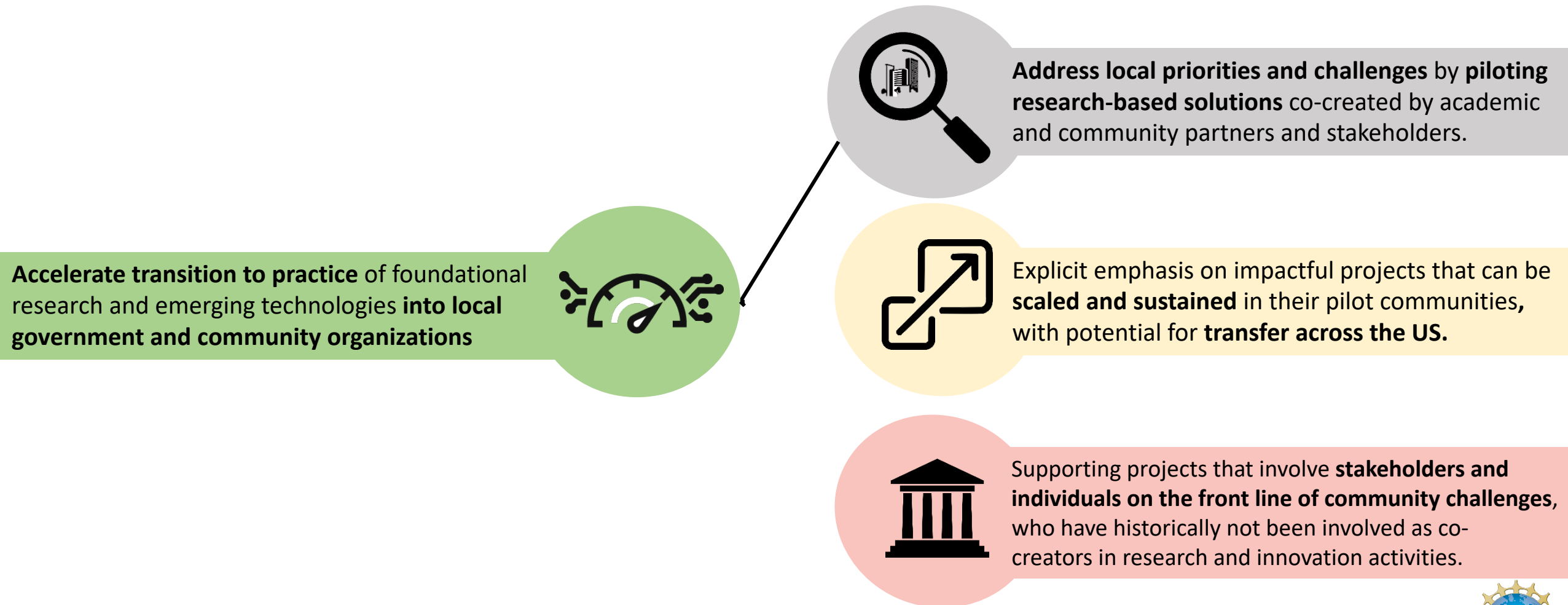# 2. Introduction to the CIVIC Program

Program Goals:
Research and Action Competition Driven by Community Priorities

Address local priorities and challenges by **piloting research-based solutions** co-created by academic and community partners and stakeholders.

Accelerate transition to practice of foundational research and emerging technologies **into local government and community organizations**

Explicit emphasis on impactful projects that can be **scaled and sustained** in their pilot communities, with potential for **transfer across the US.**

Supporting projects that involve **stakeholders and individuals on the front line of community challenges**, who have historically not been involved as co-creators in research and innovation activities.

Program Structure

CIVIC INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Develop solicitation with focused track themes, relevant to the co-funding agencies and with the input from local communities.

Outreach to a broad range of communities for project ideas that align with program goals

NSF merit review of proposals involving civic and academic reviewers

Program specific review criteria focusing on strength of civic-academic partnerships, ability to execute a fast-paced pilot, and potential for transferring, scaling and sustaining project outcomes

Stage 1 Planning Grant Awards ($50K for team capacity building and pilot idea refinement over 6 months)

Down-select Stage 2 Pilot Awards ($1M to execute fast-paced pilot project in 12-months)

Active project management by NSF and federal partners to maintain focus on pace, impact, and scalability and sustainability

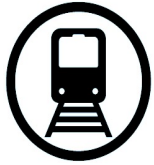**Create nationwide "communities of practice"**, testing multiple approaches to address track themes.

First Iteration of CIVIC (NSF 20-562)

Track A
Communities and Mobility
Offering Better Mobility Options to Solve the Spatial Mismatch Between Housing Affordability and Jobs

Track B
Resilience to Natural Disasters
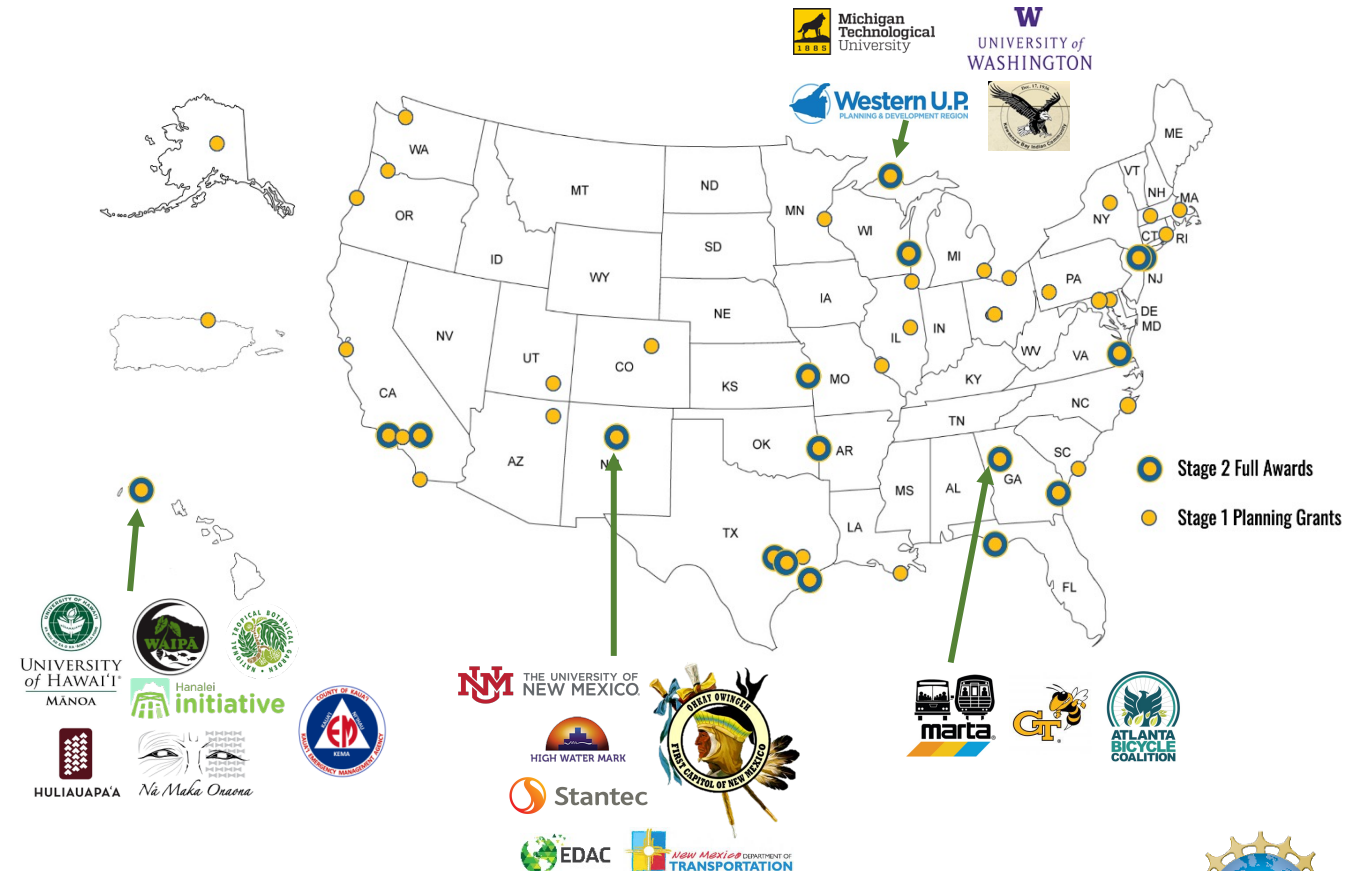Equipping Communities for Greater Preparedness and Resilience to Natural Disasters

	Awards	Timeline
Stage 1 Awards	52	January 2021 – June 2021
Stage 2 Awards	17	October 2021 - September 2022

Visit the CIVIC website to see the work and progress of Stage 1 and Stage 2 Awardees: www.nsfcivicinnovation.org

Geographic Distribution of Awardees

- Stage 2 Full Awards
- Stage 1 Planning Grants

CIVIC Program Team

National Science Foundation

David Corman
Program Director

Michal Ziv-El
Program Director

Linda Bushnell
Program Director

Barbara Ransom
Program Director

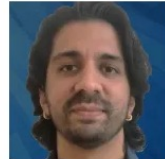**Sandip Roy**
Program Director

Sara Kiesler
Program Director

Yue Yue Fan
Program Director

Daan Liang
Program Director

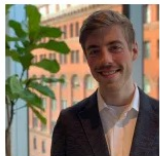**Vishal Sharma**
AAAS STP Fellow

Ralph Wachter
Program Director

MetroLab Network

Kate Burns
Executive Director

Kim Lucas
Senior Advisor

Josh Schacht
Director of Strategy &
Technology

Elias Gbadamosi
Civic Research
Communications Manager

Department of Homeland Security

David Alexander
Senior Science Advisor –
Resilience

Paul Huang
Assistant Administrator for
Federal Insurance

Elizabeth Asche
Director of Research and
Development in the Federal
Insurance Directorate

Department of Energy

Mark Smith
Program Manager, Technology
Integration, Vehicle Technologies
Office

David Howell
Director, Vehicle Technologies
Office, Energy Efficiency and
Renewable Energy

3. Overview of Solicitation NSF 22-565

Solicitation Overview

This round of CIVIC has new focused track themes that teams can apply to:

Track A: Strategies for climate adaptation, mitigation, and/or resilience in communities
Track B: Enhancing peoples' access to essential resources and services

Stage 1 Planning Grants

Proposals submitted by: May 5, 2022

Anticipated Awards: ~50 awards, $50K per award

Anticipated start of Stage 1 awards: October 2022 - March 2023

Planning grants will enable teams to strengthen collaborations with relevant partners and stakeholders, solidify their deliverables and the academic and civic partner team members' roles, and refine the vision and plan for executing the research-centered pilot project.

Stage 2 Full Awards

Proposals submitted by: Feb 1, 2023

Anticipated Awards: ~20 awards, $1M per award

Only Stage 1 Awardees can submit proposals for Stage 2

Full awards will enable teams to execute a research-centered pilot project in either one of the two tracks specified in this solicitation and develop pathways for scaling and sustaining the outcomes of their pilot beyond the period of the NSF award.

Track A: Living in a Changing Climate

This track is interested in projects that pilot community-driven, innovative, and actionable research-centered strategies for adaptation, mitigation, and resilience in community systems, services, and economic drivers that are vulnerable in the face of a changing climate.

Projects must focus on aspects essential for the proper functioning of a community and its economy such as (but not limited to):

- Access to digital infrastructure and services
- Public utilities
- Food and agriculture
- Ecosystem services
- Residential and commercial buildings
- Education and workforce development.

Teams may explore topics such as:

• What is needed to adapt a given economic driver or critical infrastructure to environmental variations the community is experiencing due to the changing climate?

• How can the partnering community improve resilience of its built or natural environment—or services within a specific sector—to minimize the threat of increased climate variability as well as rapid-onset or slow-developing hazards?

•What meaningful mitigation approaches can be implemented within a given sector to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and promote decarbonization, while considering the views and possible consequences and impacts on the affected community and stakeholders?

• What are the potential policy and economic impacts of the proposed pilot project outcomes on the community, especially economically disadvantaged and marginalized populations?

Track B: Resource and Service Equity

This track is centered on enhancing peoples' access to essential resources and services—through efforts at the level of communities—where better accessibility could significantly improve quality of life and community resilience.

Projects may consider gaps and inequities in resource and service allocation resulting from (for example):

- Long-standing, systemic issues around accessibility
- Economic disparities
- Poorly designed interfaces
- Disruptions caused by a shock or disaster.

Teams may explore questions such as:

• What inefficiencies or inequities in access or distribution exist regarding a given type of service, and are the problems occurring as a result of, for example, gaps in information, lack of coordination, a technological divide, design flaws, limited resources, inadequate community voice, or lack of infrastructure?

• What innovative technological, financial, or organizational approaches can be used to improve access to and coordination of essential resources and services, thus improving the connection between service providers and service seekers? How might community-wide expertise and innovative thinking be brought to bear?

• What are the holistic requirements in terms of social, physical, environmental, and digital infrastructure that can realistically be designed, developed, and/or deployed within communities in a 12-month time frame to promote successful outcomes?

CIVIC Key Proposal Components

PG proposals should describe the plan that will prepare the team to propose and execute a Stage 2 Full Award

All proposals must include all sections required by the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)

Key parts of the proposal to pay attention to:

- Project summary
- Seven-page project description must include separate sections labeled:
  - Vision for a Research-Centered Pilot Project
    - Research Questions
  - Civic Partnerships and Engagement
  - Broader Impacts
  - Results from Prior NSF Support
- Facilities --- may describe further information about facilities and resources available to the team (including physical and personnel)
- Data Management plan – what data will be generated, access, and archiving
- Bio-sketches
- Letters of Collaboration

The **"Vision for a Research-Centered Pilot Project"** section must be the central focus of the Project Description.

This section must outline the vision and goals of the pilot project that would be carried out within a real-world context in Stage 2; indicate the partners involved in the project; and the tasks to be performed during the Stage 1 PG.

This section should also include a subsection called Research Questions that must detail technical and social science questions, hypotheses, and research gaps that will be explored during the planning period in order to refine the Stage 2 pilot project.

Teams are asked to address questions such as:

- In what ways does the envisioned Stage 2 pilot project go beyond the state-of-practice and state-of-the-art?
- Who are the partners (academic and civic) on the project and what are their roles?
- Will the research questions addressed in the planning phase strengthen the Stage 2 pilot project?
- Is the envisioned Stage 2 pilot project suitable for the fast-paced timeline of CIVIC?
- Will the activities undertaken during the planning phase to prepare the team to propose a competitive Stage 2 Full Award proposal?

The **"Civic Partnerships and Engagement"** section of the project description must describe the community(ies) where the activities will be undertaken and detail how the team will work together to "close the loop" and achieve significant impact with their proposed activities.

NSF expects strong collaboration across the PG team.

Details of the collaboration should be included, both previous partnerships and engagement, and the specific proposed roles and responsibilities for this project.

Teams are asked to address questions such as:

• Who from the community is being engaged in the project? This may include city or state departments or agencies, regional councils of government, human and social service providers, city planners or land/resource managers, as well as other stakeholders.

• How will the collaborative approach break down barriers between academia, civic organizations, and local and state governments to achieve desired impact?

• From the community's perspective, do the proposed activities address a problem of significance? In what ways has the community worked to address this problem previously? Why does the community believe this problem will benefit from inclusion of researchers?

• Does the team have the capacity to undertake a fast-paced research-centered pilot project in Stage 2, including the ability to meet regularly?

• Is there a need for skill building or workforce development elements in order for the community to be an integral part of the pilot project and adopt the pilot project outcomes long term?

4. Reviewing CIVIC Proposals

CIVIC proposals are not typical NSF proposals and must be reviewed within the context of the CIVIC program goals, scope, and award sizes

Address local priorities and challenges by piloting research-based solutions co-created by academic and community partners and stakeholders.

Accelerate transition to practice of foundational research and emerging technologies into local government and community organizations

Explicit emphasis on impactful projects that can be scaled and sustained in their pilot communities, with potential for transfer across the US.

Supporting projects that involve stakeholders and individuals on the front line of community challenges, who have historically not been involved as co-creators in research and innovation activities.

A
"Vision for a Research Centered Pilot Project" and "Civic Partnerships and Engagement"

Proposals will be reviewed for intellectual merit and broader impacts following <u>NSF's general review process</u>.

<u>Intellectual Merit:</u> The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and

<u>Broader Impacts:</u> The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The following are questions considered for both criteria:

- To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?

- Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?

- How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?

- Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

For each proposal, reviewers must assess whether proposals address the following key questions:

- Is it evident that the envisioned CIVIC project is:
  - (a) addressing a **community-identified priority** with a pilot that has the potential to be scaled and sustained, and
  - (b) driven by **strong partnerships** between the necessary set of civic organizations, local and state governments, researchers, and other partners and stakeholders?

- Is the proposed pilot project well-suited for **execution in the fast-paced 12-month** timeframe of the CIVIC program, including a rapid start-up at the onset of Stage 2?

5. Panel Process:
Individual Reviews and Panel Outputs

Implicit Evaluation Bias

What it is:

- Implicit bias towards a group.

- It may be unintentional, automatic, and outside our awareness. It may also be contradictory to our conscious beliefs.

Ways to Mitigate:
- Increase awareness of how implicit bias might affect evaluation.
- Decrease time pressure and distractions in the evaluation process.
- **Rate on explicit criteria** rather than global judgments.
- **Point to specific evidence** supporting judgments.

- **<u>Reviewing</u>**
  - NSF uses FastLane for reviews – reviewers will receive a letter granting them FastLane access.
    - There is a great (but long) help section in FastLane --- go to nsf.fastlane.gov, select proposal review and then on left side "Proposal Review Instructions" --- don't be intimidated you need to look through it all --- <mark>you may want to jump ahead to page 802 --- which tells you all you need to know about mechanics.</mark>
  - Download the proposals (see page 730)
  - Write your reviews in word or another text editor using the NSF-provided template
    - Copy and paste into the FastLane boxes
    - <mark>**You need to submit the reviews not just save them**</mark>
  - You can edit and update the reviews.

- **<u>At the Panel</u>**
  - Login to Fastlane – <mark>and use the panelist function tab</mark>
  - You should be able to see your reviews, and, when enabled by NSF, others' reviews

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Ratings for Individual Reviews

- Ratings can range from E to P
  - E – Excellent
  - V – Very good
  - G – Good
  - F – Fair
  - P – Poor
- You can use half scores (e.g. V/G)
- Think of your rating as a grade in a class: (E~"A", V~"B", G~"C", F~"D", and P~"F") where ~ means similar to.

Triage

- The panel may agree not to discuss proposals that received uniformly unenthusiastic reviews. The triage decision will be based on unanimous consent by the panel. A proposal is NOT a triage candidate if it has at least one rating above G

- Any panelist (or program officer) may request that a proposal be discussed. If a request is made, the proposal will be discussed, and a panel summary will be prepared

Panel Summaries are **not "cut and pasted reviews"**   They are at a higher level and should address the **major strengths and weaknesses**.   Leave lower level issues to the individual reviews.

- Produced after discussion, should be drafted and "Submitted for Comment" before panelists wake up in the morning.

- Each panel summary **must address the Major issues** with the proposal -- it should tell the story of how the proposal ended up where it did:
  - Intellectual Merit (strengths and weaknesses)
  - Broader Impacts (strengths and weaknesses)
  - Solicitation-specific review criteria

- Panel recommendation and rationale
  - Should make the case for the panel's classification of the proposal (HC, C, LC, NC, ND).
  - Use the template that is provided to you.
  - Don't forget to delete the instructions but keep the required final sentence.

Panel Recommendations

- **Panel recommendations:**
  - <u>Highly Competitive (HC)</u>: Strong research pilot project with potential for significant impact in community(ies); highest priority of consideration for funding
  - <u>Competitive (C):</u> Solid research pilot project plans; should consider supporting if funds are available
  - <u>Low Competitive (LC):</u> Elements of the project may be worthy of support but addressing the weaknesses would require significant changes
  - <u>Not Competitive (NC)</u>: Project idea requires significant rethinking as it fail to meet one or more criteria of the CIVIC program (e.g. scope, scale, vision, partnerships)
  - <u>Not Discussed In Panel (NDP)</u>: Proposal was triaged

> The panel's recommendations are advisory to the NSF—final recommendations for awards by the CIVIC program team must also consider a variety of other issues (e.g. include results from many other panels).

A recording of this event will be made available for public viewing in the coming days.

Visit the program website: https://nsfcivicinnovation.org/ to access:
- The solicitation (NSF 22-565)
- Past webinars and Q&A sessions
- Information about past and on-going CIVIC awards
- FAQs

Program email address for further inquiries: civic@nsf.gov

6. Q&A