

# Track I Applications

*Community Change Technical Assistance*

**WEBINAR SERIES**

Larry Weinstock, *Abt Global*



February 20, 2024



# Spanish Interpretation Available

If you would like to listen to today's webinar in Spanish, please do the following:

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- Choose Spanish
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- As a participant joining a language channel, you can broadcast back into the main audio channel if you unmute your audio and speak.





# Using the Q&A Function

**Participant Q&A:** Please use the Q&A function for your comments. We will attempt to answer as many questions as we can, but questions specific to an individual applicant or project will be addressed through individual TA.

EPA will also regularly update the ***Frequently Asked Questions—Community Change Grants NOFO*** (found on the EPA's CCG Website

<https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/inflation-reduction-act-community-change-grants-program>).

**No Soliciting will be allowed.**





# About This Webinar Series

## Community Change Grants Track I

### The CCG Program Offers:

- ✓ Unprecedented Opportunity: Reshape disadvantaged communities into vibrant, resilient, and prosperous areas.
- ✓ Historic Support: Significant funding dedicated to overcoming deep-rooted environmental issues and fostering sustainable solutions for immediate and long-term community benefits.
- ✓ Community Specific: Grants are for defined disadvantaged communities.





# Today's Program

**Welcome and Speakers**

**Track I Applications**

Objectives | Community Description Vision | Climate Action Strategies | Pollution Reduction Strategies | Bringing it all Together

**Q & A Session**

**Closing Remarks**





# Disclaimer

This webinar is designed to describe and clarify aspects of the Community Change Grants Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). As an EPA technical assistance provider for this program, EnDyna strives to present accurate information and technical assistance about the NOFO. However, **none of the statements made by EnDyna during this webinar constitute official EPA advice, interpretations, or positions.**

During this webinar, the presenters will not give individualized advice on specific applications, the merits of specific applications, or how an application may be evaluated and scored by EPA. If you need individualized technical assistance, please visit [communitychangeta.org](http://communitychangeta.org) for further information.

**There is no guarantee that following the advice in this briefing will result in you receiving a grant. Remember:**

- All communities are different, you must apply the concepts given in this briefing to your community's situation
- This is a competitive grant program





# Featured Presenters



## Larry Weinstock

*Client Solution Architect*

Abt Global

- Larry Weinstock is an environmental consultant at Abt Associates.
- Before Abt, he worked at the EPA for over 35 years.
- Larry led the creation and development of EPA's Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) grant program.
- He also was the Acting head of the Urban Waters Program.
- Larry has a BS in Psychology from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a JD from George Washington University.



# **CCG Track I Applications**

**Program Objectives and Community Vision Description**







# Track 1 Objectives

From the NOFO Section I G:

- **Increase community resilience through climate action activities:** Implement comprehensive Climate Action Strategies and infrastructure that build the resilience and adaptive capacities of communities, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and better prepare for and reduce the impacts of climate change.
- **Reduce local pollution to improve public health:** Reduce and remediate quantifiable health-harming pollutants to improve public health.
- **Center meaningful community engagement:** Conduct robust community engagement throughout the project – from design to implementation.
- **Build community strength:** Develop strategies to increase the likelihood that benefits of the investments accrue to existing residents of disadvantaged communities, both immediately and sustainably beyond the grant period.
- **Reach priority populations:** Support people within the Project Area as described in Appendix A who are acutely exposed to and impacted by climate, pollution, and weather-related threats, and / or who exhibit acute vulnerabilities to the impacts of environmental pollution.
- **Maximize integration across projects:** Ensure that the projects and activities within the Project Area are integrated and complement each other to maximize benefits.





**Have you reflected on if and how your current project ideas fulfill these objectives?**





# Community Vision Description

The first part of your Project Workplan should be the Community Vision Description.  
(Remember, your Project Narrative = Executive Summary + Project Workplan)

The Community Vision Description contains three parts:

**1. Community Description**

**2. Community Challenges**

**3. Community Vision**

From the NOFO Section IV.B:





# Community Vision Description

From the NOFO Section I G:

“Track I applications should be rooted in addressing **specific, community-driven environmental justice challenges**. Accordingly, Track I applications should begin with a Community Vision Description that, at a minimum, provides **an overview of the Project Area community** to benefit from the grant, a clear **description of the challenges the community faces**, and a **vision for how the grant will respond to those challenges** to advance environmental and climate justice in the community.

This description should provide **essential context** for the rest of the application, informing **how the Climate Action and Pollution Reduction Strategies were selected** and the positive **impact the applicant envisions** the grant will have in the community.”





# Community Vision Description – A Way to Organize Thinking About Project

**As you think through your project what are:**

- The problems you are trying to solve
- The solutions you are proposing – which should connect to the problems
- The ways your solutions will benefit local residents
- The ways you are strengthening the community
- The benefit the community will receive now and in the future





**Your application will be evaluated on the  
Community Vision Description AND how your  
selected Climate Action Strategies and  
Pollution Reduction Strategies connect back to  
the Community Vision Description!**





# 1. Community Description

## From the NOFO Section IV B

“Provide an overview of the Project Area described in Appendix A, including its resources, assets, and characteristics. Describe how the boundary of the Project Area was determined and demonstrate how the project activities in the Project Area are designed and focused to provide impactful benefits to the residents of disadvantaged communities in the Project Area as defined in Appendix A.”



***How would you describe your community in these terms?***





## 2. Community Challenges

### From the NOFO Section IV B

“Describe the needs and challenges the Project Area is facing, including climate impacts, climate change risks / exposures, and / or localized pollution. Describe the impact of these challenges on the residents of the disadvantaged communities in the Project Area as defined in Appendix A and particularly on priority populations within the Project Area who are acutely exposed to and impacted by climate, pollution, and weather-related threats, and / or who exhibit acute vulnerabilities or susceptibilities to the impacts of environmental pollution. See footnote 3 for more information on priority populations. ”



***How would you describe your community in these terms?***







# Consider the data sources you want to use to describe community challenges

There are many data sources out there. Look for credible, scientifically-driven sources.

For example:

- [EPA's EJScreen](#)
- [U.S. Climate Vulnerability Index](#) (Environmental Defense Funds and Texas A&M)
- [U.S. National Climate Assessment](#)
- [CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking](#)
- Data from your State or local public health agency
- ... and many more!





## 3. Community Vision

### From the NOFO Section IV.B

“Articulate an overall vision for the impact and benefits the grant would have on the Project Area in the near and long term, including the effect it will have on reducing and preventing pollution; building resilience to climate change and mitigating current and future climate risks; creating high-quality jobs and expanding economic opportunity through workforce development; and bolstering Project Area strength by ensuring that residents of the disadvantaged communities in the Project Area receive the benefits of investments and have the opportunity to build on them for current and future generations.”



***How would you describe your community in these terms?***





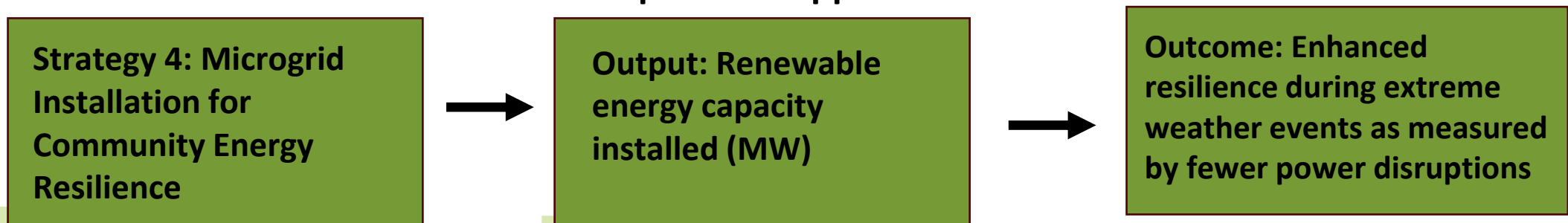
# Tip: Alignment with Outputs and Outcomes

From the NOFO Section IV.B

## 2.1 Performance Management Plan, Outputs / Outcomes:

Applicants should describe the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of **well-defined outputs** and, to the maximum extent practicable, **well-defined outcomes** that will **demonstrate how the project will contribute to the Community Change Grants goals and objectives**. (See Section I.I and Appendix F for more detail on expected outputs and outcomes).

### Example from Appendix F



# Track I Grants

\$1.96B for ~150 large,  
\$10 – 20 million grants

Requirement 1. Climate Action Strategy

Requirement 2. Pollution Reduction Strategy

Requirement 3. Community Engagement and Collaborative Governance Plan

Requirement 4. Community Strength Plan

Requirement 5. Readiness Approach

Requirement 6. Compliance Plan



# Climate Action Strategies

NOFO in Section I.G,  
Appendix C

- Applications must include at least one project aligned with at least one of the Climate Action Strategies
- Climate Action Strategies focus on strengthening the community's climate resilience and/or reducing GHG emissions
- **Climate Action Strategies should be responsive to the community challenges described in the Community Vision**





# Only Allowed Strategies

NOFO in Section I.G,  
Appendix C

**Strategy 1:** Green Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions

**Strategy 2:** Mobility and Transportation Options for Preventing Air Pollution and Improving Public Health and Climate Resilience

**Strategy 3:** Energy-Efficient, Healthy, and Resilient Housing and Buildings

**Strategy 4:** Microgrid Installation for Community Energy Resilience

**Strategy 5:** Community Resilience Hubs

**Strategy 6:** Brownfield Redevelopment for Emissions Reduction and Climate Resilience

**Strategy 7:** Waste Reduction and Management to Support a Circular Economy

**Strategy 8:** Workforce Development Programs for Occupations that Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Air Pollutants





# Important Reminder

**REMEMBER:** The Appendix of the NOFO contains critical information elaborating about each of the strategies, including examples and guidelines in some cases.



# Climate Action Strategy 2

Mobility and Transportation  
Options for Preventing Air  
Pollution and Improving Public  
Health and Climate Resilience

NOFO Appendix C

## Examples from Appendix C:

- Construct new or expanded bikeways, walkways, or non-motorized urban rails
- Implement “Complete Streets” projects to improve walkability, bike-ability, and transit use
- Purchase, construct and/or install infrastructure to create low or zero-emission transportation options

## Guidelines articulated in Appendix C:

- Transportation projects that involve public transit or improvements to public property should include a governmental agency as a Collaborating Entity that will help perform and oversee the project.





# Climate Action Strategy 3

## Energy-Efficient, Healthy, and Resilient Housing and Buildings

NOFO Appendix C

### Examples from Appendix C:

- Install energy efficient measures in public buildings
- Install ventilation system to improve indoor air quality during high pollution events such as wildfires
- Reduce urban heat islands by installing cool roofs

### Guidelines articulated in Appendix C:

- In their Project Narrative, applicants should describe how low-income residents will directly benefit from the project through lower costs and how residents will be trained on how to operate and maintain new technology and equipment, where applicable.
- For projects that will fund home or multi-family housing improvements, applicants should include details of their target tenants or homeowners, such as with those incomes at or below the greater of:
  - For Metropolitan Areas: (1) 80% Area Median Income (AMI) and (2) 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
  - For Non-Metropolitan Areas: (1) 80% AMI; (2) 80% Statewide Nonmetropolitan Area AMI; and (3) 200% of the Federal Poverty Level

*(Continued in the NOFO)*





**Does your proposal include at least one of these Climate Action Strategies?**

***How does it fit into your Community Vision Description?***





# Only Allowed Strategies

NOFO in Section I.G,  
Appendix C

**Strategy 1:** Green Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions

**Strategy 2:** Mobility and Transportation Options for Preventing Air Pollution and Improving Public Health and Climate Resilience

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# Track I Grants

## Pollution Reduction Strategy

NOFO Section I.G,  
Appendix D

- Applications must include at least one project aligned with at least one of the Pollution Reduction Strategies
- Can include monitoring, prevention, reduction, and remediation activities that support community efforts to address quantifiable and health-harming pollutants
- **Pollution Reduction Strategies should be responsive to the community challenges described in the Community Vision**





# Only Allowed Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Indoor Air Quality and Community Health Improvements

**Strategy 2:** Outdoor Air Quality and Community Health Improvements

**Strategy 3:** Clean Water Infrastructure to Reduce Pollution Exposure and Increase Overall System Resilience

**Strategy 4:** Safe Management and Disposal of Solid and Hazardous Waste



NOFO in Section I.G,  
Appendix D



# Pollution Reduction Strategy 2

## Outdoor Air Quality and Community Health Improvements

NOFO Appendix D

### Examples from Appendix D:

- Reduce exposure from mobile and stationary sources by developing vegetative barriers, creating alternative truck routes, funding backup battery systems to replace diesel backup generators
- Implement sustainable construction practices to reduce dust and emissions
- Electrify local-government owned fleets such as sanitation trucks or public buses

### Guidelines articulated in Appendix D:

- Communities seeking funding for zero-emissions school buses should apply to EPA's \$5B Clean School Bus Program





**Does your proposal include at least one of these Pollution Reduction Strategies?**

***How does it fit into your Community Vision Description?***





# Only Allowed Strategies

**Strategy 1:** Indoor Air Quality and Community Health Improvements

**Strategy 2:** Outdoor Air Quality and Community Health Improvements

**Strategy 3:** Clean Water Infrastructure to Reduce Pollution Exposure and Increase Overall System Resilience

**Strategy 4:** Safe Management and Disposal of Solid and Hazardous Waste



NOFO in Section I.G,  
Appendix D





# Additional considerations when selecting Strategies

- **Award size: \$10-20M.** There may be *many* projects you want to bring to your community. Consider how to prioritize high-impact projects that will fit within the award range.
- **Period of Performance:** Do not forget that projects need to be completed within three years of the grant award. Have you mapped out your project timeline?
- **Community Priorities:** How does your proposal reflect community priorities and community engagement?
- **Partnerships:** What strengths do your partners bring to your proposal? What additional partners might you need to carry out the activities you'd like to propose? (Remember Lead Applicant, Statutory Partner, and Collaborating Entities)
- **Community Assets:** How is your proposal taking advantage of the strengths of your community? Is there existing data, research, or State/local climate plans that can be leveraged? Do you have strong partnerships where needed to execute projects in 3 years?





# Keep in Mind

## Award Size:

- Amount
    - \$10 – 20 Million – EPA is flexible on the 10 but not the 20
    - It's a lot but you have a lot to do at least 2 different project (one climate and one pollution reduction)
  - Allowable expenses
  - Required expenses
- Budgets will be covered in a future webinar

## • Period of Performance:

- Must start within 120 days and finish in 3 years
- Must convince EPA you can meet timelines
  - Think through all approvals needed and make sure you already have them or can you can get them quickly
  - What resources (land, materials, people) do you need? Do you already have them? Are you sure you can get them? Can you show how you can get them?
  - Don't forget any competitive bidding processes that you will need to do and make sure you plan time for them





***How do these considerations shape your proposal?***



# Community Change Grant Program Objectives

NOFO Section I.C

- Provide resources for **community-driven projects** to address environmental and climate challenges in communities **facing disproportionate and adverse health**, pollution, and environmental impacts, and suffering from generations of disinvestment
- Invest in **strong cross-sectoral collaborations** with partners who bring a robust commitment to working with and for communities with environmental and climate justice concerns
- **Unlock access to additional and more significant resources** to advance environmental and climate justice goals from across the federal government and other sources
- **Empower communities** and strengthen capacity to drive **meaningful positive change on the ground for years to come**
- **Strengthen community participation** in government decision-making processes





# Track 1 Objectives

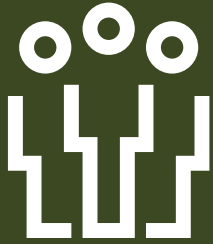
From the NOFO Section I G:

- **Increase community resilience through climate action activities:** Implement comprehensive Climate Action Strategies and infrastructure that build the resilience and adaptive capacities of communities, reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and better prepare for and reduce the impacts of climate change.
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- **Maximize integration across projects:** Ensure that the projects and activities within the Project Area are integrated and complement each other to maximize benefits.

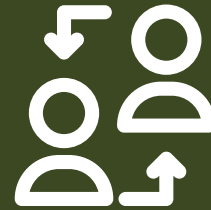




# Implications of the Objectives



Projects that are  
community-driven



Meaningful  
change



Change  
that lasts





# Community Driven

## What is Community Driven?

- Community input must be real and significant
- Community will have continued oversight and input after you get the money
- CBOs must be either the Lead Applicant or Statutory Partner

## It's Community Driven when

- You're serving community needs
- Community is involved in establishing project direction and benefits





# Meaningful Change

- Significant long-term change in communities
- Focus on important issues in the community that the grant can address
  - Be clear how your project will solve a significant issue (preferably issues) in the community
- Connections between the projects
  - EPA wants to see programs that fit together to create a larger whole







# Change That Lasts

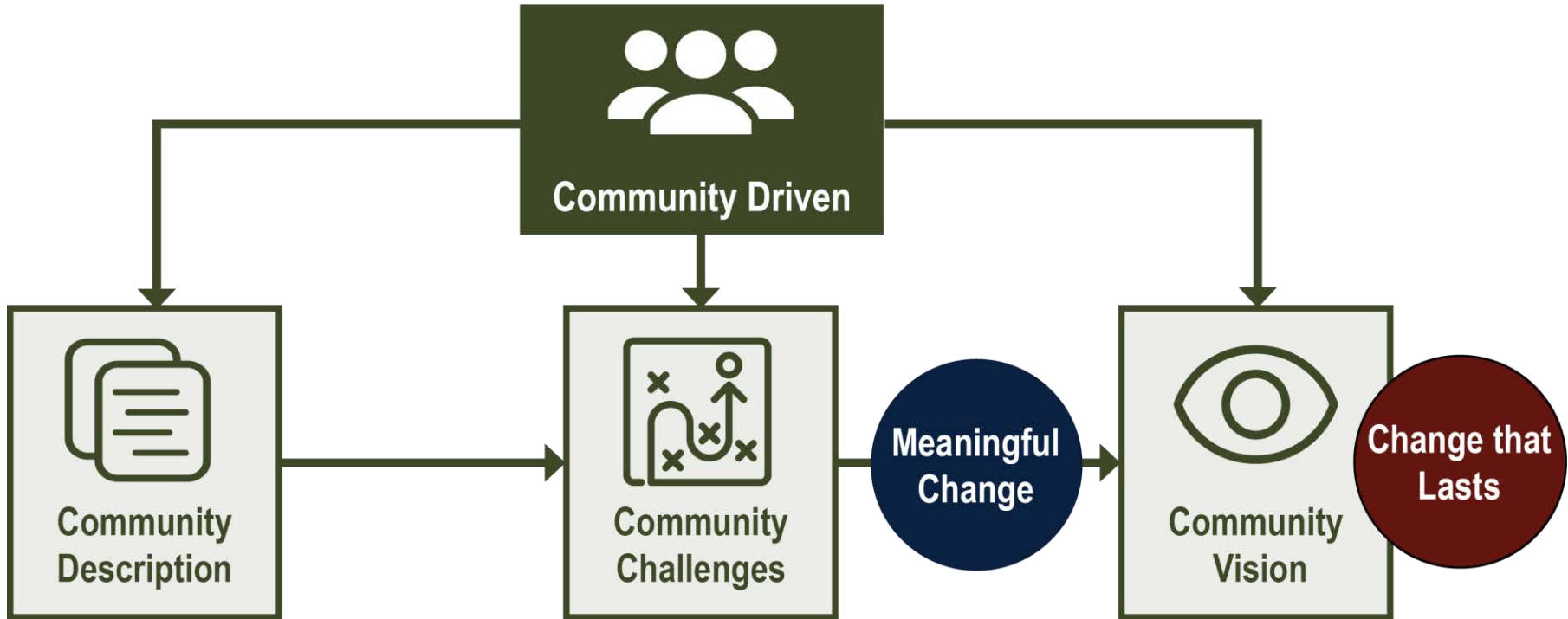
## Building change that lasts

- Demonstrate how the project will meaningfully advance environmental and climate justice
- Demonstrate that the results and benefits of projects will last beyond the three-year grant period
- Look for actions that make the community stronger in the long-term – build social capital





# Putting it All Together: Tell a compelling and consistent story



NOFO Section IV.B





# Questions to Brainstorm With Your Partners

- This briefing has pointed out many questions that you need to think about and discussion with your organization and your partnership. They will help you create a better application:
  - Have you reflected on if and how your current project ideas fulfill the Track I objectives?
  - How would you describe your community in the Community Description?
  - How would you describe your community in the Community Challenges?
  - How would you describe your community in the Community Vision?
  - Does your proposal include at least one of the Climate Action Strategies?
  - Does your proposal include at least one of the Pollution Reduction Strategies?
  - How do the considerations of award size and period of performance shape your proposal?
  - Did this webinar inspire any ideas for areas you'd like to research, discuss with your partners, or start writing into your grant proposal?
- We also recommend that you:
  - Make a list: What are your next steps after this webinar?



# Q & A

- Use Q & A chat feature
- Selection of FAQs





# Selection of FAQs

- **Can applicants include multiple projects (in the same geographic area) in an application?**
  - Yes, as described in the NOFO, multiple projects may be included in an application if the NOFO requirements are met and if the projects are designed and focused to maximize benefits for the residents of disadvantaged communities in the Project Area
- **Will new construction be allowed under the NOFO?**
  - Yes. Construction activities for new structures are eligible if the other requirements of the NOFO are met and as noted in Appendix G.
- **Can we include planning phases in our project?**
  - Please refer to the Readiness Approach requirements in Section I.G of the NOFO and other sections in the NOFO, including the evaluation criteria in Section V that relate to this. While some planning activities may be necessary for some projects, projects must be completed within the three-year statutory period of performance. EPA cannot provide extensions. In addition, readiness to perform is an evaluation factor under Section V. If a project is not ready to be performed upon award or soon thereafter, it may impact the evaluation of the application. Please also note the Readiness to Perform Requirements clause in Section VI of the NOFO





# Questions from Registration

- **How to access the capital to complete an affordable housing project, both rehabilitation and new construction?**
  - Please see guidelines on how to plan within the Readiness Approach under section 1.G of the NOFO
- **Can you propose a project start date that is 6 months or later than the award - or must the project start upon award?**
  - No, Please also note the Readiness to Perform Requirements clause in Section VI of the NOFO.
- **What are the project qualifications and grant application requirements?**
  - Please refer to the Section 1 of the NOFO



# Closing Remarks

- Key Messages
- Next Steps



# Key Messages

- When designing your proposal, keep in mind the objectives for Track 1 grants
- Develop a compelling and thoughtful Community Vision Description to inform your proposal
- Make sure projects are community-driven and result in meaningful change for the community
- Pay careful attention to the NOFO, timeline, and limitations





# Next Steps

## Upcoming Webinars

Next Tuesday 3pm ET:

**Community Change Grants NOFO Track II  
Overview**





# Community Change Technical Assistance (CCTA) Webinar Series Schedule

All sessions at 3pm ET, Tuesdays

**30 JAN**

**Kickoff & Program  
Overview**

TA Process, CCG Overview

**6 FEB**

**Eligibility & Partnerships**

Applicant Criteria,  
Partnership Dynamics

**13 FEB**

**Defining Disadvantaged  
Communities**

Community Mapping, EJ  
Indicators

**20 FEB**

**CCG NOFO Track I Overview**

Project Strategies,  
Community Needs

**27 FEB**

**CCG NOFO Track II Overview**

Policy, Capacity Building

**5 MAR**

**Community Engagement &  
Governance**

Engagement Models,  
Governance Strategies

**12 MAR**

**Federal Grants Requirements  
& Compliance**

Compliance Requirements  
Developing Outputs & Outcomes  
Tracking Project Progress

**19 MAR**

**Preparing a Grant Budget**

Budgeting Techniques

**ENDYNA**



**Thank You!**

