

Criteria for Evaluation

We are dedicated to supporting projects that enable early-career scientists to engage with public officials (elected and nonelected), community leaders, and community members. Projects may consist of a single event or a series of activities and workshops.

Competitive proposals may demonstrate strong alignment with one or more program themes: Collaborations, Civic Science at Scale, Recognizing Lived Experience, and Neuroscience.

The strongest proposals will demonstrate meaningful engagement and, where appropriate, collaboration with community organizations, public officials, community leaders, community members, and partners across STEM disciplines.

Highly competitive proposals will address the following:

1. **Goals:** The proposed goals are clearly articulated and directly address the problem or need identified in the application.
2. **Potential Impact:** The proposal explains how the project will foster meaningful dialogue, engagement, or mutual learning among scientists, community members, public officials, community leaders, and/or other stakeholders. The proposal also describes how project organizers will develop new skills through participation.
3. **Activities:** Proposed activities are clearly described, nonpartisan in nature, feasible, and demonstrate meaningful engagement and/or collaboration with community partners, public officials, community leaders, and/or community members.
4. **Scientific Content:** The proposal identifies the scientific concepts to be explored and explains how they will be thoughtfully adapted for engagement with non-scientific audiences.
5. **Evaluation:** Appropriate metrics and assessment methods are identified to measure project implementation and impact.
6. **Budget:** A clear line-item budget is provided, and all expenses are adequately justified. A fiscal sponsor, including direct contact information (email address and phone number), is identified.

Research!America Microgrant Scoring Assessment

Updated 10/15/26

	Meets All Expectations (3)	Meets Many Expectations (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Missing Key Elements (0)	Score
Goal(s)	The goals are clearly stated and directly address the problem described.	The goals are generally clear and address the problem described, though some details or connections could be strengthened.	The goals are vague, incomplete, or only partially address the problem described.	The goals are not clearly stated and do not address the problem described.	
Potential Impact	The proposal clearly explains how the project will create meaningful dialogue, engagement, or mutual learning among stakeholders and provides a strong rationale for how project organizers will develop new skills.	The proposal generally explains how the project will foster dialogue, engagement, or mutual learning and support skill development, though details may be limited.	The proposal minimally addresses dialogue, engagement, mutual learning, or skill development, with unclear or incomplete details.	The proposal does not explain how the project will create dialogue with the target audience or support skill development.	
Activities	Activities are clearly described, nonpartisan, and follow a feasible timeline. Activities demonstrate meaningful engagement and/or collaboration with community partners, public officials, community leaders, and/or community members.	Activities are clearly described, nonpartisan, and feasible. They demonstrate some engagement and/or collaboration with community partners, public officials, community leaders, and/or community members.	Activities are only partially described and may lack feasibility or meaningful engagement and/or collaboration with community partners, public officials, community leaders, and/or community members.	Activities are unclear, partisan, infeasible, or do not demonstrate meaningful engagement with relevant stakeholders.	
Scientific Content	The proposal clearly identifies relevant scientific concepts and explains how they will be effectively adapted for non-scientific audiences, demonstrating accuracy, relevance, and strong potential for public understanding.	The proposal identifies scientific concepts and generally describes how they will be adapted for non-scientific audiences, with content that is mostly accurate and appropriate.	The proposal mentions scientific concepts but lacks clarity or detail and provides only minimal or incomplete adaptation for non-scientific audiences that is not well aligned with project goals.	The proposal does not specify the scientific concepts or explain how they will be adapted for non-scientific audiences.	
Evaluation	The proposal identifies clear metrics (e.g., surveys, interviews, attendance data, etc.) and provides a detailed, feasible plan for measuring outcomes and impact.	The proposal identifies some metrics and offers a general plan for measuring outcomes, though details may be limited.	The proposal mentions metrics or methods but provides limited clarity, feasibility, or alignment with project goals.	The proposal does not include metrics or a plan for evaluating outcomes or impact.	

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Budget	Clear, detailed line-item budget with justified expenses that fully support activities. Fiscal sponsor and full contact information included.	Clear budget with mostly appropriate expenses; some justifications may be limited. Fiscal sponsor and contact information included.	Budget lacks detail, justification, or clear alignment with activities, and fiscal sponsor information may be incomplete.	Budget is unclear, lacks line items or justification, or does not align with activities. No fiscal sponsor listed.	
Total Score				(Maximum Score: 18)	