Adaptive Capacities for Transformation (ACT) Initiative Planning Grants: Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Can sub-awardees (such as community-based organizations) on the award also charge an indirect fee of 20%?**
   Yes. Any group, organization, or institution who has an individual named on the Project Team (i.e., Project Director or Key Personnel) may include indirect fees, up to 20%, on the budget template. This includes all sub-awardees.

2. **What if I do not have partners to help me on my project?**
   The RFA requires that each working group must consist of individuals from at least three of the following groups, organizations, or institutions: local nonprofits, foundations, academia, and government. If you do not have partners from at least three of these groups, you may still apply, but we ask that you use some of the space in your application to discuss how you plan to recruit new team members during the planning grant process.

3. **Can any of the funding be used for implementation?**
   No. Planning and Implementation Grants will be two separate awards. As a result, there will be no carryover between awards. Any leftover planning grant funds not spent by the end of the period of performance must be returned to the GRP.

4. **Will a grant opportunity for implementation be made available?**
   Yes.

5. **Will you be eligible for an implementation grant if you have not received a planning grant?**
   No.

6. **Do you give preference to projects where the working group is already formed or for those who are forming a new working group?**
   No. Both new and existing collaborations will be given equal consideration for funding.

7. **Can the projects be science-based or community-driven or do they have to be both?**
   Activities supported by an ACT Planning Grant should be both science-based and community-driven.

8. **Are there any best practices or approaches for doing ethical community-engaged research you would recommend?**
   Yes. Through a public health lens, principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR) are often used as an approach for ethical community-engaged research (or practice). The most commonly followed CBPR principles are listed below.

   1. Recognize community as a unit of identity

2. Build on the strengths and resources within the community
3. Facilitate a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of research (or practice)
4. Balance knowledge and action for the mutual benefit of all partners
5. Promote a co-learning (capacity building) and empowering process that mitigates power imbalances
6. Involve systems development using a cyclical and iterative process
7. Address health from both positive and ecological perspectives
8. Disseminate findings and knowledge gained to all partners
9. Involve a long-term process and commitment to sustainability

For more information, see Israel BA, Schulz AJ, Parker EA, Becker AB. Review of community-based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health. Annu Rev Public Health 1998; 19: 173-202. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9611617/ Accessed November 19, 2025.

With respect to Objective 1, the article below presents a synthesis of best processes for forming, operating, and maintaining a community-academic partnership. If followed, these processes can help Working Groups reach the intended outcomes of the Planning Grant.

Newman SD, Andrews JO, Magwood GS, Jenkins C, Cox MJ, Williamson DC. Community advisory boards in community-based participatory research: a synthesis of best processes. Prev Chronic Dis 2011; 8(3). http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2011/may/10_0045.htm Accessed November 19, 2025.

9. **Do we need to design our own evaluation framework for the funding opportunity?**
No. The evaluation section of the RFA specifies that if the GRP were to evaluate the grants cycle, grantees would participate accordingly, but grantees need not develop their own evaluation plan.

10. **Could an academic participate in a working group as an independent consultant if the academic institution does not sign on to their participation?**
Yes.

11. **Can we set up for implementation grants that are "shovel in the ground"? Do we need to make sure that we are planning for implementation of projects that do not involve any physical infrastructure?**
GRP funds cannot be used for building physical infrastructure including for planning grants and implementation grants.

12. **How many people should be on the project team?**
The project team (i.e., Working Group) should include the Project Director and Key Personnel. Overall, working groups should consist of individuals from at least three of the following groups, organizations, or institutions: nonprofits (including community- and faith-based organizations), foundations (public charity), academia, and local government. Beyond those requirements, the number of individuals who serve on the project team is at the discretion of the applicant.

13. **Can you give us a better idea about what the deliverable for the planning grant might look like?**
The final written grant report shall address the original objectives of the project as identified in the grant application, describe any changes in objectives, describe the final project accomplishments, and include a final project accounting of all grant funds in the final financial report.