

**Community Investment Fund
Tips from Application Reviewers**

Thank you for your interest in the Rural Institute Community Investment Fund. Following are tips the application review committee thought you might find helpful.

* To learn more about the Fund, please watch our video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrm9B1tqEqQ>
* If you are interested in reading about projects that have been funded in the past, visit our web page at: <https://www.umt.edu/rural-institute/about/cac/community_invest_fund.php>
* Inclusion is the foundation of Community Investment Fund projects and the most important thing reviewers look for in the applications.
* “Nothing about us without us” means that people with disabilities should be included in proposals from the earliest stages, and that their meaningful involvement should continue throughout the project. Here are questions you might ask yourself:
	+ How did you come up with your idea?
	+ When you came up with a plan, did you ask people with disabilities what they thought?
	+ How were people with disabilities a part of developing the idea, plan, project, or solution?
	+ Did they help with the answers for the application?
	+ How will they help pull off the project?
	+ Will they review its impact?
* Sometimes an idea seems inclusive but actually is not. Inclusion means people with and without disabilities are accomplishing something together and seeing the value in each other. It means everyone belongs. For example:
	+ A coed softball team made of people with disabilities, staff who provide services to people with disabilities, and community members. The team competes in a league open to everyone. Everyone is able to experience a community summer activity with equal participation.
	+ A school coffee cart where youth with and without disabilities learn skills and work together, and where all the employees value one another.
	+ An improvisational comedy show where people with and without disabilities perform for an audience with and without disabilities.

Maybe YOUR inclusive idea will be the next one on this list!