

The Future PIT Workforce

PIT People, Products and Pipelines

2027 Y5 Community-Centered PITathon Request for Proposals

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Purpose

Communities have long been subjects of technology — surveilled, scored, and optimized by systems designed without them. PITathons are conditioned on a different premise: that the people most affected by a problem are its most essential designers.

The animating question is not “What can students build?” but “**What does this community need, and how can students help build it?**”

PITathons are civic design challenges where students and community members work as genuine partners to develop technology responses to community-defined problems. The animating question is not “What can students build?” but “What does this community need, and how can students help build it?”

In 2026, PIT-UN is prioritizing proposals that bring a genuinely new approach to community-centered tech design. We are not accepting iterations of past models. We are looking for PITathons that demonstrate what technology looks like when justice, safety, and community power are the design constraints — not afterthoughts.

What Makes a PITathon

PITathons are distinguished from standard hackathons by four core commitments:

Community Authorship

Problem statements must be sourced from, refined with, and approved by the communities most affected by the problem(s). Community members shape the challenge from the start and remain engaged throughout, not just at opening and closing ceremonies. PITathons require different partnership development from standard hackathons. Community partnership recruitment is relationship building, not outreach. Organizations have heard universities and colleges promise before; PITathons are your chance to be different. (See an example of community engagement worksheets in [Exhibit F.](#))

Equity as the Design Standard

Tracks, prompts, and judging criteria are built around justice outcomes, not technical novelty. A solution that is elegant, but extractive should not win. Proposals must articulate what success looks like for the community and how that success will be measured beyond the event itself: How does the event structure teach students to build *with* communities rather than *for* them? How are affected communities involved in defining the problem, shaping the process, and evaluating the outcome? What methods — participatory design, asset-based community development, co-design — are embedded in the process? What compensation, access, and power do the affected communities hold throughout?

Student Growth through Service, Not Showcase

PITathons cultivate the next generation of public interest technologists by putting them in genuine relationships with community challenges. Students from both technical and non-technical disciplines should leave with deeper civic commitments, not just stronger portfolios.

Sustained Impact

What happens after the event? How will the institution remain accountable to the community partners it engaged? How will solutions be tested, refined, or handed back to communities?

Proposal Requirements

PITathon competitions intentionally avoid the assumption that a technology intervention is the right response to a problem, regardless of whether the problem is technical in nature. Any response should include workshops or student/employer informational sessions that avoid:

- Treating a political or relational problem as a data or efficiency problem.
- Assuming more information, transparency, or connectivity automatically produces better outcomes.
- Centering the technology minimum viable product rather than the community condition it is meant to address.
- Proposing automation or AI where human judgment, trust, and relationships are what's required.

PIT-UN is prioritizing proposals that bring a genuinely new approach to community-centered tech design, not iterations of past models. We are especially interested in proposals that:

- Center communities and neighborhoods that have been harmed by, excluded from, or inadequately served by existing technology systems. Use a [community-centered evaluation rubric](#) with criteria that avoid replicating or creating new harms.
- Provide community relevance and impact by addressing community needs with community inclusion in the design, development, and evaluation of the solution.
- Demonstrate a clear and accountable relationship between the host institution and the community whose problem(s) are being addressed.
- Develop a dedicated session(s) during the build period that distinguishes a PIT vs. a non-PIT build/design process.
- Offer workshops and skills-based training, including sector-driven [PIT identified skills and competencies](#), that empower students as future PIT employees.
- Integrate students across disciplines, recognizing that public interest technology requires policy, social work, law, design, and community organizing alongside engineering and computer science to develop technical solution feasibility and community fit where the solution accounts for real constraints (digital access, language, trust, staff capacity, cost, and the like).
- Move beyond the event itself with pathways for piloting, community feedback, or continued collaboration after the PITathon.

PITathon Challenge Tracks

- **Tracks should name the harm before naming the solution space.** Starting with what technology should *do* skips the community diagnosis step that the framework requires.
- **Tracks should be porous across disciplines.** Each track should be legible and enterable by students in law, social work, public health, urban planning, and organizing — not just those majoring in engineering or computer science.
- **Tracks should have a community partner requirement built in.** Each track must have a least one named community partner organization whose challenges anchor the problem statement. No team should be able to compete in a track without a named community organization co-shaping the problem statement.

Proposals must be anchored in one of the following tracks. (See [Exhibit E](#) for track descriptions.)

- Algorithmic Accountability & Community Power
- Housing Stability & Displacement Prevention

- Environmental Justice & Climate Resilience
- Economic Justice & Worker Power
- Health Equity & Community-Controlled Care
- Digital Equity & Technology Self-Determination
- Civic Participation & Democratic Infrastructure
- Open Community Track

View expanded explanations of the PITathon tracks in [Exhibit E](#).

Award Information

In this fifth year of the PITathon, PIT-UN will accept the following types of proposals in response to its request for proposals (RFP):

- **New projects:** Projects that have not received prior funding from PIT-UN for a PITathon (“new projects”).
- **Expansion and scale** of an existing institutional sponsored Tech for Change Hackathon that conforms to the PITathon purpose, challenge tracks, core elements, and outcomes.

Both types of proposals will be evaluated using the same [RFP Evaluation Criteria](#).

Winning teams from any spring 2027 PITathons will be invited to apply to be considered for a summer 2027 post-PITathon Lab for further exploration of technology in the public interest.

Eligibility

PIT-UN anticipates supporting several PITathons across United States based on PIT-UN member institutions and PIT-UN--identified regions (New England, New York, Midwest, and West).

Proposals that are a partnership between two or more universities should submit a single application from the lead institution. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of a PITathon, groups seeking an award should partner with an active PIT-UN member institution or region since funding can be awarded to only one hosting institution. Proposals should explain the nature of the alliance, including the division of labor, subgrant agreements, and distribution of funds.

Please follow your institution’s process for submitting responses to RFPs. Typically, each PIT-UN member has identified a [PIT-UN Designee](#) who should be informed of the intention to submit a proposal.

PIT-UN Funding, Proposed Budgets & Allowable Uses

PIT-UN is inviting proposals for PITathon events where grant funding is capped between \$15,000 and \$18,000 total costs ([indirect costs are capped at 20%](#)). Proposals for funding must include all revenue and expenses associated with an institution hosting the PITathon and cannot supplant existing funding for similar events.

Funding proposals must include funding activities such as:

- Community co-development of public interest technology design challenges.
- Engagement of participants in public interest design processes during the PITathon.
- Community engagement feedback loops to evaluate and refine solutions designed to address community challenges.
- Support of PITathon winners after the event. Support activities could include:

- Additional resources for the team to further develop the winning tech.
- Travel and expense coverage for winning teams to present their work at a regional or national conference.
- Development of an incubator with industry representatives or employers that assist student teams in advancing the development of the tech incorporating user feedback cycles.

Note: Proposals that show institutional in-kind funding will receive additional evaluation points in the Budget and Institutional Support section of the rubric.

Unspent grant funds must be returned after the closeout of the grant, and cost extensions will not be granted.

What PIT-UN Will Not Fund

We recognize these are high standards. They are intentional. The communities whose problems anchor these events deserve institutions that are ready to address their problems.

PIT-UN will not fund PITathons that:

- Replicate a previous Tech for Change Hackathon model without a substantive new approach.
- Treat community engagement as outreach rather than co-authorship.
- Fail to compensate community partners.
- Center student portfolio development or employer recruitment as primary outcomes.
- Propose technology solutions to problems that are primarily political, relational, or structural without an honest reckoning with that distinction.
- Collect community data without explicit consent and community-controlled governance.

Timeline

Dates subject to change

- July 20, 2026: Public announcement of the Thematic Request for Proposals
- **Aug. 3: Grant RFP opens for applications**
- Aug. 6: [Live Zoom sessions](#). Open office hours to answer RFP questions start weekly on Thursdays, noon–1 p.m. EDT.
- Aug. 17: RFP questions due by **noon EDT** to info@pit-un.org
- Aug. 20: Answers to RFP questions due to be posted to a message thread in the All PIT-UN member Basecamp
- **Sept. 25: Applications due in [Submittable](#) by 5 p.m. EDT. Late submissions will not be accepted.**
- Oct. 7: PIT-UN notifies grant recipients of their upcoming award
- Nov. 2: All redlines on Exhibit A: New Venture Fund Subgrant Agreement Template due to NVF
- Dec. 1: Grant term starts
- Jan. 1–Sept. 30, 2027: Post PITathon snapshot survey due 10 calendar days after the event
- Summer 2027: PITathon Lab
- Sept. 30: Grant period ends
- Nov. 30: Final reports due

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be required to submit mid-grant and final reports describing their project, including budget reconciliations. Grant recipients will meet monthly with PIT-UN throughout the award period to shape their PITathon, evaluate their projects, and present their work.

Key Processes

1. Submitting questions
 - a. Any questions regarding the specifics of the RFP and its language must be submitted by email to bperea@pit-un.org by noon EDT Aug. 17, 2026. Submitted questions must have "Grant Questions" in the subject field. PIT-UN assumes no liability for assuring accurate, complete, or on-time email transmission and receipt.
2. Submitting proposals
 - a. Applications due: Applications must be received by **5 p.m. EDT Sept. 25, 2026**. Applications received after the deadline will be ineligible for award consideration.
 - b. Submission instructions: Applications are to be submitted at <https://pitcases.submittable.com/submit> by the submission deadline.

Note: The grant management system, Submittable, will allow only one application to be completed at a time. Please have all the application answers and the necessary documents in hand before starting an application.
3. Selection procedure
 - a. A qualified evaluation team will evaluate proposals using the Response Evaluation Rubric. Applicants may be contacted in writing to answer questions or provide clarification to the evaluation team. Upon completion of the evaluation process and submission of supplemental documents, staff will notify all submitters of their proposal's status.

PIT-UN is a project of the New Venture Fund (NVF), a 501(c)(3) public charity that supports innovative and effective public interest projects.

Technical Standards for Assets

The PIT-UN program is an investment in the next generation of public interest technology workforce. To ensure that the investment of these funds has as broad an impact as possible and to encourage innovation in the development of new PIT materials, as a condition of the receipt of this grant, the grantee will be required to license to PIT-UN all work (except for computer software source code, discussed below) created with the support of the grant under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY) license. Work that must be licensed under the CC BY comprises both new content created with the grant funds and modifications made to preexisting, grantee-owned content using grant funds. The use of the CC BY license allows subsequent users to copy, distribute, transmit, and adapt the copyrighted work and requires such users to attribute the work in the manner specified by the grantee. Notice of the license shall be affixed to the work. (For general information on CC BY, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>. Instructions for marking your work with CC BY can be found at http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Marking_your_work_with_a_CC_license.)

Only work that is developed by the grantee with the grant funds is required to be licensed under the CC BY license. Preexisting copyrighted materials licensed to or purchased by the grantee from third parties, including modifications of such materials, remain subject to the intellectual property rights the grantee receives under the terms of the license or purchase. In addition, works created by the grantee without grant funds do not fall under the CC BY license requirement.

Grantee resources will be expected to upload the work to a PIT-UN online library for members funded by the PIT-UN program. Resources will continue to be available through PIT-UN for its members. If applicable, the following needs to be on all products developed in whole or in part with grant funds: **“This [research, asset, product or event] was funded by a grant award by PIT-UN, a project of the New Venture Fund (NVF), a 501(c)(3) public charity that supports innovative and effective public interest projects.”**

Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

All organizations and facilities must comply with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Under Title III of the law, all privately operated public accommodations, commercial facilities, and private entities offering examinations or training must make their goods and services accessible to people with disabilities.

RFP Questions

The PITathon proposal is for a:

- Single Institution developing a new fully branded PIT-UN PITathon.
- Multi-Institution or Regional new fully branded PIT-UN PITathon.
- Multi-Institution or Regional previous Tech for Change Hackathon converted to a PITathon.

Project Naming Convention

Primary institution that will be fiscally responsible for the grant

Proposal Title

Submission titles should follow a specific format for all proposal titles that is used to create a unique identifier for this submission and project. The unique identifier in this step will follow the application form submission through project reporting if accepted.

All submissions must follow the same naming convention:

Member institution code (see the adjacent chart) **HYPHEN**, 2026 PITUN Tech for Change, Theme of the PITathon

Examples of Submission/Project Names

UPEN-2026 PITUN PITathon Data Anomalies in Justice Impacting Marginalized Communities
MUST-2026 PITUN PITathon Exploration of AI Data and Community Privacy Rights
ASU-2026 PITUN PITathon Environmental Justice When Addressing Regional Water Quality

Elevator Pitch (25-word limit): Describe your PITathon event in one sentence.

Estimated Date of the PIT-UN PITathon: Date range must be between Feb. 1–Oct. 31, 2027.



Please review the [2022 NVE Minor Safeguarding FAQs and Resources Grantees document](#).

Will this grant be used to support work that includes interacting or communicating with minors (defined as individuals under age 18)?



If you select “Yes,” you are required to complete and submit the [NVE Minor Safeguarding Information Sheet](#) and acknowledge that you have done so.

Code	Institution	Code	Institution	Code	Institution
ASU	Arizona State University	JCU	John Carroll University	UTA	The University of Texas at Austin
BARC	Barnard College	LOC	LeMoyne-Owen College	UTSA	The University of Texas at San Antonio
BRAN	Brandeis University - Heller School for Social Policy and Management	MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	TUFU	Tufts University
BROW	Brown University	MMC	Meharry Medical College	UCB	University of California Berkeley
CALP	California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly State University)	MDC	Miami Dade College	UCSC	University of California Santa Cruz
CMU	Carnegie Mellon University	MUST	Missouri University of Science & Technology	UCHI	University of Chicago
CWRU	Case Western Reserve University	NYIT	New York Institute of Technology	UEDIN	University of Edinburgh
CEPI	Center for Education and Research on Innovation (CEPI FGV São Paulo Law School)	NYU	New York University	UCIL	University of Illinois at Chicago
CSUO	Cleveland State University	NORW	Northwestern University	UMASS	University of Massachusetts at Amherst
DUKU	Duke University	OLIN	Olin College of Engineering	UMICH	University of Michigan
FORU	Fordham University	PEPU	Pepperdine University	UPENN	University of Pennsylvania
GEOT	Georgetown University	RIT	Rochester Institute of Technology	URIJ	University of Rijeka
GIT	Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech)	RUSC	Rust College	USF	University of San Francisco
GSU	Georgia State University	SJSU	San José State University	UVA	University of Virginia
HARU	Harvard University	STAU	Stanford University	UWAS	University of Washington
HOWU	Howard University	TEMU	Temple University	VT	Virginia Tech
IIT	Illinois Institute of Technology	TAMU	Texas A&M University - The Bush School of Government & Public	WVU	West Virginia University
INDU	Indiana University	CUNY	The City University of New York	WM	William and Mary
JMU	James Madison University	GWU	The George Washington University	WPI	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
		OSU	The Ohio State University		

Will any part of this grant funding be used to conduct lobbying as defined by federal tax law?
(See Exhibit C to determine if the activities fall under lobbying.)

Institutional Grant Administration Contacts

Primary PITathon point of contact (POC) for this response (this person is responsible for executing the PITathon):

PITathon POC's title and department for the project on this application

PITathon POC's email address

PITathon POC's phone number

Identify the student group or club(s) that will be co-hosting/co-sponsoring the PITathon:

Pre-Award Grant Officer or Contract Manager POC first and last name

Pre-Award Grant Officer or Contract Manager POC title and department

Pre-Award Grant Officer or Contract Manager POC email address

Post-Award Grant Officer or Contract Manager POC first and last name

Post-Award Grant Officer or Contract Manager POC title and department

Post-Award Grant Officer or Contract Manager POC email address

Institutional Signatory's first and last name for this grant project

Institutional Signatory's title and department

Institutional Signatory's email address for this specific grant project

Institutional Signatory's phone number for this specific grant project

Community Inclusion & Impact

All questions below are required field(s).

Community Engagement, Recruitment, & Inclusion (500-word limit): Describe your ideas and plan for genuine community engagement in identifying the challenges the community is facing, determining the problem definition and the inclusion of the community in the solution design process.

In your response include answers to the following:

- What are your ideas and plan(s) for genuine community co-design experience and not just community outreach?
- How will you recruit participants — and not just professional developers — who reflect the communities facing the challenges?
- What mechanisms will you use to gather input from communities with limited digital access?
- What accommodations and support will you provide for participants without a traditional tech background (e.g., organizers, residents, frontline workers)?
- What will be the process for compensating community members for their time and expertise in defining problem statements?
- What is your approach to stipends, childcare, language access, and other inclusion supports?
- How will you ensure that problem framing doesn't get reinterpreted by technologists during the PITathon itself?

Judging Criteria & Success Metrics (300-word limit): Describe your ideas and plan for genuine community engagement in establishing the judging criteria and the success metrics. In your response, include answers to the following:

- How will community members be represented in the judging process, and what weight will their criteria carry?
- How does your organization handle situations where a technically strong solution conflicts with community preferences?
- What does “success” look like beyond a working prototype? How will you measure community buy-in or problem-fit?
- How will you prevent solutions from being evaluated primarily on technical novelty rather than community utility?

Tech Design Process and Methodology (300-word limit): Describe your ideas and plan in establishing participatory design methods. In your response, include answers to the following:

- Describe what experience or prior work among project team members demonstrates the ability to produce a PITathon with the necessary knowledge of public interest technology.
- Describe how your PITathon structure incorporates participatory design, co-design, or human-centered design methods.
- How will community members remain engaged **during** the build period, not just at the beginning and end?
- What guardrails will you put in place to prevent teams from pivoting away from the community-defined problem?

Post PITathon Sustainability (300-word limit): Describe your ideas and plan for supporting and sustaining PITathon solutions beyond the event. In your response include answers to the following:

- What is your plan for connecting winning or promising solutions to communities for real-world piloting?
- How will intellectual property be handled, particularly for solutions built around community-generated knowledge or data?
- What will be the approach to preventing “hackathon graveyard” outcomes where solutions are never implemented?

Challenge Categories Identified

All choices below are required field(s).

Challenge Categories Sourced and Identified Methodology (300-word limit): Describe how the project team is knowledgeable about the surrounding community so that the selected focus, theme, and topic tracks are cohesive and enable students to identify and prioritize technology challenges sourced from affected communities rather than from technical experts or funders.

The focus of the PITathon (select one)

- Solutions Developed to Address Community Issues
- Introducing PIT and Technology within Non-tech Disciplines
- Increasing Employer Engagement in PIT

The PITathon Theme (select one)

- Innovation & Entrepreneurship through PIT Student Community Catalyst Projects
- Improving Quality of Life & Economic Opportunities through PIT Catalyst Projects
 - Examples could include Tech Leadership Skill Development while Addressing Complex Community Challenges, Curating Partnerships with a Nonprofit to Solve Tech Integrations, or Private Sector or Affinity Groups Developing Solutions for Working PIT Professionals

- Regional Industry-driven Technical Projects in AI, Augmented Analytics, Machine Learning, or Robotics

The PITathon Challenge Categories (select no more than four challenge categories; if more are selected, evaluators will view only the first four in alphabetical order)

- Algorithmic Accountability & Community Power
- Housing Stability & Displacement Prevention
- Safety Beyond Policing
- Environmental Justice & Climate Resilience
- Economic Justice & Worker Power
- Health Equity & Community-Controlled Care
- Digital Equity & Technology Self-Determination
- Civic Participation & Democratic Infrastructure
- Open Community Track

PIT Workforce Opportunities

Workforce Impact (300-word limit): Describe how the PITathon will meaningfully advance the field of public interest technology. In your response include answers to the following:

- How will the PITathon further students' interest in public interest technology and further the goals stated in this RFP?
- What workshops are proposed to guide students as future PIT employees, including sector-driven, and PIT identified skills and competencies?
- What assumptions is the project making about the work, its prioritized activities, and its long-term impact?
- How will the PITathon further employers' interest in employing public interest technologists within their industry sector, and do you expect the invited employers to offer additional workforce commitments after the PITathon?
- How will a PITathon complement your project team's institutional plan(s) to advance the field of public interest technology within academia?

PITathon Partnerships & Collaborators

In this section, you will be asked to list partners and collaborators that you have formally engaged or plan to formally engage to undertake a PITathon. Partners will assist the organizing team to secure additional support through mentorship and evaluations, funding, in-kind contributions, and post-PITathon winner engagement.

See the [Evaluation Criteria](#) section for guidance on distinguishing between meaningful and equitable partnerships and collaborators, as well as classifying the identifying information.

Select the type of Partner(s) or Collaborator(s) for the PITathon:

- We have engaged one or more PIT-UN institution(s) as partners (letters of support required).
- We have engaged non-PIT-UN educational institution(s) as partners (letters of support required).
- We have engaged nonprofit, private, or governmental partners (letters of support required).
- We have not formally engaged any partners for the PITathon.
- We have engaged one or more PIT-UN institution(s) as collaborators.
- We have engaged non-PIT-UN educational institution(s) as collaborators.
- We have engaged nonprofit, private, or governmental entities as collaborators.

- We have not engaged any collaborators for the PITathon.

Partnerships.

The following questions apply to the identification and summary of the PIT-UN member institutions, other educational institutions, and nonprofit, private, or governmental organizations you have engaged for this project.

- List the names of the partner(s). (100-word limit)
 - Identify if any of the partners are an MSI (Minority Serving Institution) or an HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)?
- Describe the partner(s) **(300-word limit)**
 - **Describe** how you have cultivated a meaningful and equitable relationship with the partner(s). If this project consists of a partnership with more than one partner, describe how the partnership will operate, including division of work, role of principal investigator(s), and allocation of funds. Include the following details on each partnership:
 - Describe the role the partner will play on the project and how the partnership will enhance or expand the impact of the project.
 - List the of deliverables that the partner institution will be responsible for (if applicable).
 - State the amount of monetary support the partner will provide (if applicable).
 - Describe the type and value of any in-kind support the partner institution will provide (staff time, facility space, supplies, equipment, and the like).
- Upload memorandums of agreement (MOAs), memorandums of understanding (MOUs), and letters of tangible support from each of the partners listed.

Collaborators

The following information will be needed to identify and summarize the identification of each collaborator(s) (PIT-UN member institutions, other educational institutions, or nonprofit, private, or governmental organizations) you have engaged for this project.

Identify the collaborator(s)

- List the names of the collaborator(s) **(100-word limit)**
- Describe collaborators **(300-word limit)**
 - Describe why the collaborator's involvement is essential to the project, how the collaboration will operate, including division of work, the role the collaborator(s) will play on the project and how the collaboration would enhance or expand the impact of the project. Include the following details:
 - List the deliverables that the collaborator(s) will bring to the project (if applicable).
 - What is the amount of monetary support the collaborator(s) will provide (if applicable).
 - What type and value of any in-kind support the collaborator(s) will provide (staff time, facility space, supplies, equipment).
 - Include letters specifying collaborator(s)' support
- Upload letters of support from each of the collaborator(s) listed.



Proposed Budget

Proposals for a new PITathon event are capped at \$15,000. ***Institutions may receive funding for no more than one PITathon event per institution or region.*** Budgets should be inclusive of an indirect rate, set at 20% of total direct costs.

Budget Numbers

In this first section, you will be required to provide:

1. the total amount of requested grant funding and the total amount of in-kind funds for hosting a PITathon from the proposed budget for the line items in the [New Venture Fund Budget Template](#)
2. the total expenses for the major categories (e.g., salaries, travel, community support).
3. The total expenses to sustain the project's impact post-event.

Budget Narrative

In the second section (**300-word limit**), describe how funds are allocated for pre- and post-PITathon community engagement and how the funding will be used to sustain the project's impact for the winning teams. Include details of the projected costs for post-PITathon winner support. Describe how the institution demonstrated buy-in for your project to sustain the project's impact. Are there specific funding commitments by the institution, employers, or community to support winners of the challenges?

In the final section, Proposed Budget, upload your project's budget using the [New Venture Fund Budget Template](#) to include any funds contributed by your institution or other sources.

Due Diligence Document Uploads

All proposals must include the following documents at the time of submission.

- List of main staff for the project
- List of board of directors or board of trustees
- IRS Form 990 (proof of legal status/IRS Letter of Determination)
- Audited financials (upload for 2024 or 2025); if no audited financials are available for those years, you will need to explain why the documents are missing
- Completed [IRS Form W-9](#)
- Completed [NVF Electronic Fund Transfer \(EFT\) Form](#)

Appendix

Exhibit A: New Venture Fund Subgrant Agreement

newventurefund

DATE

[SIGNATORY CONTACT]

[GRANTEE]

ADDRESS

RE: Grant No: [PROJ ABBREV. – SUBGRANTEE NAME – FUND ABBREV. – REF NO. – EFF. DATE]

Dear SIGNATORY:

The New Venture Fund is pleased to inform you that it has approved a grant to your organization in the amount of \$AWARD AMOUNT through our Public Interest Technology University Network Fund project. This grant is for the Grant Period[START DATE]– [END DATE], and is subject to the terms and conditions contained in the enclosed Grant Agreement.

On behalf of the New Venture Fund, I would like to congratulate your organization on its valuable work and wish you great success in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Lee Bodner
President

Enclosure

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please review and sign this form.
2. Return electronically to pitun@sunflowerservicespbc.com.
3. NEW VENTURE FUND SUBGRANT AGREEMENT

GRANT NUMBER: [PROJ ABBREV. – SUBGRANTEE NAME – FUND ABBREV. – REF NO. – AWARD DATE]

DATED: DATE GENERATED

The New Venture Fund (“NVF”) and GRANTEE (the “Organization”) hereby agree as follows:

I. **Tax Status.** Organization represents that it is a tax-exempt organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and that it is not a “private foundation” as defined in Code Section 509(a). Organization shall notify NVF immediately of any anticipated or actual changes in its tax-exempt status.

II. **Grant Term.** This Grant Agreement (the “Agreement”) shall be effective as of [START DATE](the “Effective Date”), and shall continue through completion, no later than [END DATE] (the “Grant Period”).

III. **Payment Terms.** NVF grants the Organization \$AWARD AMOUNT (the “Grant”) to be paid in one lump sum within 30 days of execution of this Agreement. Grant funds must be fully expended during the Grant Period. All contracts and subgrants funded using Grant funds must be completed by the end of the Grant Period.

IV. **Grant Purpose.** The Grant may be used only for the following charitable, scientific, literary, religious or educational purposes: to fund the Organization’s NAME OF PROJECT project (the “Project”), as described in the proposal that the Organization provided to NVF dated DATE SUBMITTED, and attached hereto as Exhibit A.

V. **Lobbying and Voter Registration.** So that NVF may comply with United States tax laws and maintain its status as a tax-exempt public charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”), it is understood that the Organization agrees to the following:

A. Not to use any funds from this Grant for lobbying activities, as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

B. Not to use any funds from this Grant to intervene in any election, to support or oppose any political party or candidate for public office.

C. To familiarize itself with the federal, state, local and foreign rules and regulations applicable to nonprofit organizations, including, but not limited to, (1) lobbying rules under the Code and the Lobbying Disclosure Act (“LDA”); (2) Federal Election Commission (“FEC”) rules, including those regarding “electioneering” communications; (3) rules governing political activities; (4) ethics rules applicable to interactions with Members of Congress and Executive Branch officials and entities like NVF that retain or employ lobbyists; and (5) any equivalent rules and regulations applicable to activities conducted in any state, local, or foreign jurisdiction, and to obtain training as necessary. Basic lobbying compliance information is provided in Exhibit C. Organization will consult with legal counsel to determine how these rules and regulations apply and will comply with all relevant restrictions and reporting requirements.

D. Not to use any funds to carry on, directly or indirectly, a voter registration drive.

E. The funds from this Grant are not traceable monies as defined in Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-971(18). Grantee will not directly or indirectly use or transfer any funds from this Grant for campaign media spending, as defined in Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-971(2), nor will Grantee use any funds from this Grant to pay for in-kind contributions to a third person to enable campaign media spending. This agreement does not affect Grantee's obligation to provide notice to New Venture Fund pursuant to Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 16-972.

VI. **Unspent Funds.** The Organization will return to NVF any portion of the Grant not expended or committed to be expended for the Project by the Grant Period end date. To request a no-cost extension of the grant term, the Organization must provide a written request, including reason and new requested end date, to NVF before the end date of the Grant Period. The Organization must receive an amendment to the Grant to expend funds beyond the Grant Period.

VII. **Reporting Requirements.**

- A. The Organization shall provide NVF with an interim report immediately after the PITathon event. This report shall be due on or before 10 business days post PITathon.
- B. The Organization shall provide NVF with a final report that is due to NVF on or before [ONE MONTH AFTER COMPLETION DATE].

The full report must include the following certification:

All [ORGANIZATION] activities conducted with the Grant funds were and are consistent with charitable purposes as set forth in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and [ORGANIZATION] complied with all provisions and restrictions contained in this Agreement, including, for example and without limitation, those provisions relating to lobbying and political activity.

- C. The Organization shall prepare the reports in accordance with the reporting guidelines attached hereto as Exhibit B.

VIII. **Interest.** The Organization is encouraged to use all interest earned on Grant funds to further the Project; however, a formal accounting of such income is not required.

IX. **Records.** Organization shall (i) maintain complete and accurate separate accounting for the Grant, detailing receipts and expenditures made under the Grant; and (ii) retain these records during the Grant Period and for at least four (4) years after receipt and acceptance of the final report. During this time, Organization shall make such records available to NVF (or its designated representatives) for inspection or audit at NVF's expense and on reasonable notice to Organization.

X. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** NVF may, at its expense and on reasonable notice to Organization, monitor and evaluate operations under this Grant. Such monitoring and evaluation may include on-site visits and/or discussions with Organization's personnel.

XI. **Publicity.** NVF shall include information regarding the Grant in its periodic public reports and may include such information in press releases or other publicly available materials.

XII. **Additional Requirements.** Additionally, the Organization agrees:

- A. To comply with all applicable laws or regulations in any jurisdiction in which it conducts activities.
- B. If the Organization's project involves providing services to, interacting with, or communicating with minors, (a) to comply with all applicable laws regarding reporting of child abuse or neglect; (b) to implement child protection policies as required by law and industry best practices, and as outlined in its proposal and/or Exhibit A; and (c) to notify NVF immediately in writing of any material changes to its child protection policies.
- C. To cooperate with NVF in supplying any additional information or complying with any procedures that any governmental agency might require for NVF to establish that it has observed all requirements of the law with respect to this Grant.
- D. To notify NVF immediately of any anticipated or actual changes in the president, executive director or other key personnel identified in the Grant proposal, award letter or this Grant Agreement, or of any anticipated or actual merger, consolidation, sale, or transfer of all or substantially all of the Organization's assets. The Organization acknowledges that these changes may trigger NVF's review and reassessment of the Organization's ability to meet the purposes of the Grant. Such review may lead to additional grant provisions or other limitations for unexpended funds.
- E. Not to use NVF's name in any report or other document prepared for distribution outside of the Organization, either in printed or electronic form, with the exception of listing NVF along with other donors in an annual report or Grant application.
- F. Not to disclose the name of or any information concerning the funder of any NVF project without the explicit written consent of both the relevant funder and NVF.
- G. To make any data, research, knowledge, and other information developed with these Grant funds freely available to NVF. Organization hereby grants to NVF a perpetual, worldwide right and license to use, publish, distribute, reproduce, copy, and modify any intellectual property developed with the Grant funds for non-commercial purposes. NVF shall have the right to grant to third parties sublicenses under the license granted herein. At NVF's request, the Organization agrees to execute all necessary or appropriate documents and take all other reasonable steps to document or formalize such rights in these materials.
- H. To use any revenue realized by the Organization from sales or licenses of the intellectual property created or developed with the Grant funds exclusively for the Project or for educational and charitable purposes, and to ensure that such revenue does not inure to the personal benefit of individual(s) or noncharitable entities.
- I. Not to engage in intentionally deceptive practices that spread misinformation.
- J. Not to denigrate, discriminate against, or encourage others to denigrate or discriminate against any person or group based on factors including, but not limited to, race, nationality, age, religion, mental or physical ability, gender, sex, or sexual orientation.
- K. Not to regrant any of the Grant funds without NVF's explicit prior approval.

XIII. **Representations and Warranties.** NVF unconditionally condemns violence in all forms. The Organization shall not engage in, support, or promote acts of violence in any way. In addition, the Organization hereby represents and warrants that Grant funds will be used in compliance with this principle at all times, and in compliance with all applicable anti-terrorist financing and asset control laws, regulations, rules, and executive orders, including, but not limited to, the USA Patriot Act of 2001, as amended. The Organization agrees that it is not, and does not employ or associate with, and is not owned, controlled by, or acting for or on behalf of, and that it will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no person or entity expected to receive funds in connection with this Grant is, (1) a "suspected terrorist" as defined in Executive Order 13224; (2) a person that is on the Specially Designated Nationals List maintained by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control; or (3) a person with whom NVF is prohibited from doing business with under any anti-terrorism laws of the United States. The Organization will use reasonable efforts to ensure that it does not support or

promote in any way violence, terrorist activity or related training, or money laundering. The Organization represents that none of the activities financed by this Grant violate U.S. laws that prohibit corrupt payments to foreign officials for the purpose of obtaining or keeping business, and acknowledges that the NVF has not authorized any activity that would constitute such corrupt payments. The Organization will use reasonable efforts to ensure that Grant funds are not used to make corrupt payments to foreign officials for the purpose of obtaining or keeping business.

XIV. Right to Modify or Discontinue Funding.

A. NVF reserves the right to discontinue funding of the Grant and terminate this Agreement at any time if NVF determines, in its sole discretion, that: (i) it is not satisfied with the progress of the Grant or the content of any written report; (ii) Grant funds are not being used by Organization in an effective and efficient manner to further the Grant's purpose; (iii) there is any anticipated or actual changes in the president, executive director, or other key personnel; (iv) Organization fails to follow industry best practices, including any applicable child protection policies; or (v) Organization has otherwise failed to comply with the terms of this Agreement.

B. In the event that NVF makes any such determination, NVF shall have the right to (i) discontinue any further payments to Organization; and/or (ii) direct Organization to repay to NVF any Grant funds not used in accordance with this Agreement. NVF reserves the right to discontinue, modify, or withhold any payments due under this Grant, or to modify the terms of this Agreement, to comply with any law or regulation applicable to this Grant or to protect and maintain NVF's tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

XV. Budget Revisions. Organization must submit a request for a revision to the Project budget under the following conditions:

A. For grants of less than three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000), Organization must seek prior written approval from NVF for (i) any Project budget revision that involves moving funds to a previously unfunded line item; or (ii) any Project budget revision that results in a variance of twenty-five percent (25%) or more of any line item.

B. For grants of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) or more, Organization must seek prior written approval from NVF for (i) any Project budget revision that involves moving funds to a previously unfunded line item; or (ii) any Project budget revision that results in a variance of ten percent (10%) or more of any line item.

C. Budget Revision requests should detail the original Project budget, requested new budget, and variance with explanation.

XVI. Release and Indemnity. To the fullest extent permitted by law, Organization shall release, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless NVF and its directors, officers, trustees, employees, representatives, and agents from and against any and all claims, demands, suits, damages, liabilities, injuries (personal or bodily), property damage, causes of action, losses, judgments, costs, expenses, and penalties, including, without limitation, court costs and attorney's fees, arising out of (directly or indirectly) or related in any way to the negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of Organization or any Organization director, officer, employee, or agent in connection with this Grant or the Project, except to the extent resulting from the negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of NVF.

XVII. Human Subject Research. If the Grant is to be used in whole or in part for research involving human subjects, you hereby certify that you will conduct the research in compliance with the ethical standards and the criteria for approval and conduct of research set forth in United States Department of Health and Human Services policy for the protection of human research subjects (45 C.F.R. Part 46 and related guidance, as amended from time to time) and all other federal and state laws applicable to the research project. Such requirements may include, but are not limited to, obtaining and maintaining

institutional review board (IRB) approval and obtaining informed consent of participating research subjects.

XVIII. **No Waiver.** Failure by either party to require the other party's performance under any provision of this Agreement shall in no way affect such party's right to require full performance under that or any other provision at any time thereafter. In addition, a party's waiver of a breach of any provision of this Agreement shall not constitute a waiver of any succeeding breach of the same or any other provision, or constitute a waiver of the provision itself.

XIX. **Entire Agreement.** This Agreement (a) constitutes the entire understanding of NVF and the Organization with respect to the subject matter herein, and supersedes all prior agreements and understandings, whether oral or written; (b) is made exclusively with the Organization and may not be transferred or assigned to any other organization or person without NVF's prior written approval; and (c) may be amended or modified only by a mutual written agreement between the parties.

XX. **Notices.** All notices and other communications under this Agreement shall be in writing, and shall be deemed duly given (a) on the date sent by e-mail if sent during normal business hours of the recipient during a business day, and on the next business day if sent after normal business hours of the recipient; (b) if sent via a nationally recognized overnight courier service (delivery receipt requested), with charges paid by the mailing party, on the later of (i) the first business day following the date of dispatch, or (ii) the scheduled date of delivery by such service; or (c) on the fifth business day following the date of mailing, if mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid to the party receiving the notice or communication.

All notices and other communications shall be sent to the following addresses, or such other addresses as the parties may designate from time to time by notice in accordance with this Section XX:

To New Venture Fund:
Ryan Dalton
Ryan.dalton@sunflowerservicespbcc.com
1828 L Street, NW, Suite 400-A
Washington, DC 20036

To <GRANTEE>:
[PRIMARY CONTACT Name]
[PRIMARY CONTACT Email Address]
[GRANTEE Mailing Address]

XXI. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be deemed to be made under, and in all respects shall be interpreted under and governed by, the laws of the District of Columbia.

[Remainder of Page Intentionally Left Blank; Signature Page to Follow]

Agreed to and accepted on behalf of **<ORGANIZATION>**:

Signature

Date

Name: [SIGNATORY CONTACT]

Title: [TITLE]

Agreed to and accepted on behalf of the New Venture Fund:

Signature

Date

Name:

Title:

Exhibit B: Reporting

PIT-UN is interested in understanding how you used the Thematic Request for Proposals funds and the impact you were able to achieve during the grant period. The Network is equally interested in learning about your successes and challenges and would like to hear what you learned in the process. Please provide candid, reflective responses to the questions below. The information you share as part of your final report will help inform PIT-UN's future strategy and programs.

As part of the Grant Agreement, you are required to submit all final reports no later than November 30, 2027, which is 30 days after the close of the grant term, September 30, 2027.

Mid-Grant Reports

In a narrative report, [submitted through a Google form](#), please answer the following (if your institutions doesn't allow use of Google, submit your answers in a Microsoft Word document).

1. The Estimated Numbers:

- a. Students invited
- b. Students attended
- c. Employers invited
- d. Community members invited
- e. Community members attended
- f. If employers offered onsite or on-the-spot interviews, how many students were offered one-on-one time with an employer regarding career opportunities?
- g. Were any other opportunities external to the institution offered to the students such as site visits, externships, unpaid internships, and other types of experiential learning opportunities? If so, can you briefly describe the opportunities?

2. Summary and Outcomes of the PITathon

- a. Write a summary (**200 words maximum**) of your PITathon, including:
 - i. Highlights of the PITathon including pre-event activities completed and post-event activities planned.
 - ii. What challenges you experienced in encouraging a multidisciplinary aspect related to your event.
 - iii. Some new possibilities that became available because of the PITathon.
- b. In **200-500 words**, what are your quick, on-the-spot learnings from the PITathon? Do you have any ideas for how you can build on challenges and successes for future PIT tech entrepreneurs? (No more than two or three paragraphs please.)
- c. In **100 words or less**, if you could do one thing differently, what would it be?
- d. Did you have:
 - i. A sponsor/employer who was enthusiastic about continuing their engagement with the PITathon and the participants?
 - ii. Any sponsor/employer who surprised you the most about their presence at the PITathon?
 - iii. Any exciting or interesting comment you overheard or received from a student?

3. Summary of the Number and Types of Awards

- a. Please give a quick summary of the number, types, and awards given to winning teams at your PITathon. (You can use this question to complete the answer in text format or upload a document with the information.)
 - i. Indicate the number of awards, the winning team name, and level of award (Overall winner, 1st Place, Most Innovative, and the like), a three- or four-sentence summary of the solution the team produced. An example would be: 10

total awards: Team: Slide Share-Invent Penn State Winner and NAIC Second Place Winner, Slide Smart-Interactive study tool that allows users to upload PowerPoint presentations and PDFs autogenerating study guides that include a list of topics, detailed explanations, examples, and Q&As.

Final Reports

In your narrative report, [submitted through the grant management portal](#), please address the following:

1. **Project Summary (500-word limit):** Provide a summary of the PITathon event. In your narrative of the event include:
 - a. Activities and what goals were reached or not reached.
 - b. Key drivers or enabling conditions that affected the success of the PITathon.
 - c. Institutional issues and/or project challenges.
2. **PIT Catalyst Impact on Student Engagement (200-word limit):** Describe what you saw as the key drivers or enabling conditions of how the PITathon meaningfully addressed the barriers to students engaging in public interest technology.
 - a. Share a specific instance or event that illustrates the impact of the PITathon event.
 - b. Upload a spreadsheet or MS Word table with the winning team(s), level of award(s), PITathon track(s) their project was judged in, winning team members' contact email(s), and summary of their product(s).
3. **Community Impact (300-word limit):** Describe how your project meaningfully addressed the targeted community, and the demographics of the project participants compared with the demographics of the population of the surrounding community. If your PITathon could not address these barriers as meaningfully as intended, describe what challenges you experienced or lessons you learned. What sources of bias were the project subjected to, and what mitigation strategies did you employ to generate more equitable outcomes to engage, serve, and collaborate with those populations in ways that are informed by best practices?
4. **Lessons Learned and Challenges (500-word limit):** Reflecting on event planning, organization, and the event itself, highlight any challenges (expected or otherwise), or lessons learned throughout the grant period. Describe any adjustments or changes you made to your activities to address challenges as they arose.
5. **Partnerships and Sponsorships (200-word limit):** Provide a summary of how you engaged partners and sponsors for the PITathon and how will you be maintaining those relationships to benefit PIT students.
6. **Budget Reconciliation**
 - a. Explain how the grant funds have directly supported hosting the event.
 - b. Explain any unforeseen expenses or other adjustments you have had to make to your proposed budget.
 - c. Total funding request.
 - d. Total expenses to date.
 - e. Total in-kind funding proposed.
 - f. Total In-kind funding used to date.
7. In addition to the report narrative, please submit the following attachment
 - a. Financial report detailing final accounting of budgeted vs. actual expenditures of all grant funding, including the entire project budget and all sources of revenue and expenditures (such as grassroots and direct lobbying expenditures, if applicable), in addition to this grant.
8. **Artifacts and Open Educational Resources** and other artifacts developed with grant funds
 - a. A list of all intellectual property and assets purchased or created with the grant.

- b. Any publications or media generated because of your project.

Certification: All [ORGANIZATION] activities conducted with the Grant funds were and are consistent with charitable purposes as set forth in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and [ORGANIZATION] complied with all provisions and restrictions contained in this Agreement, including, for example and without limitation, those provisions relating to lobbying and political activity.

Exhibit C: Advocacy Definitions

Please see graphic on next page.

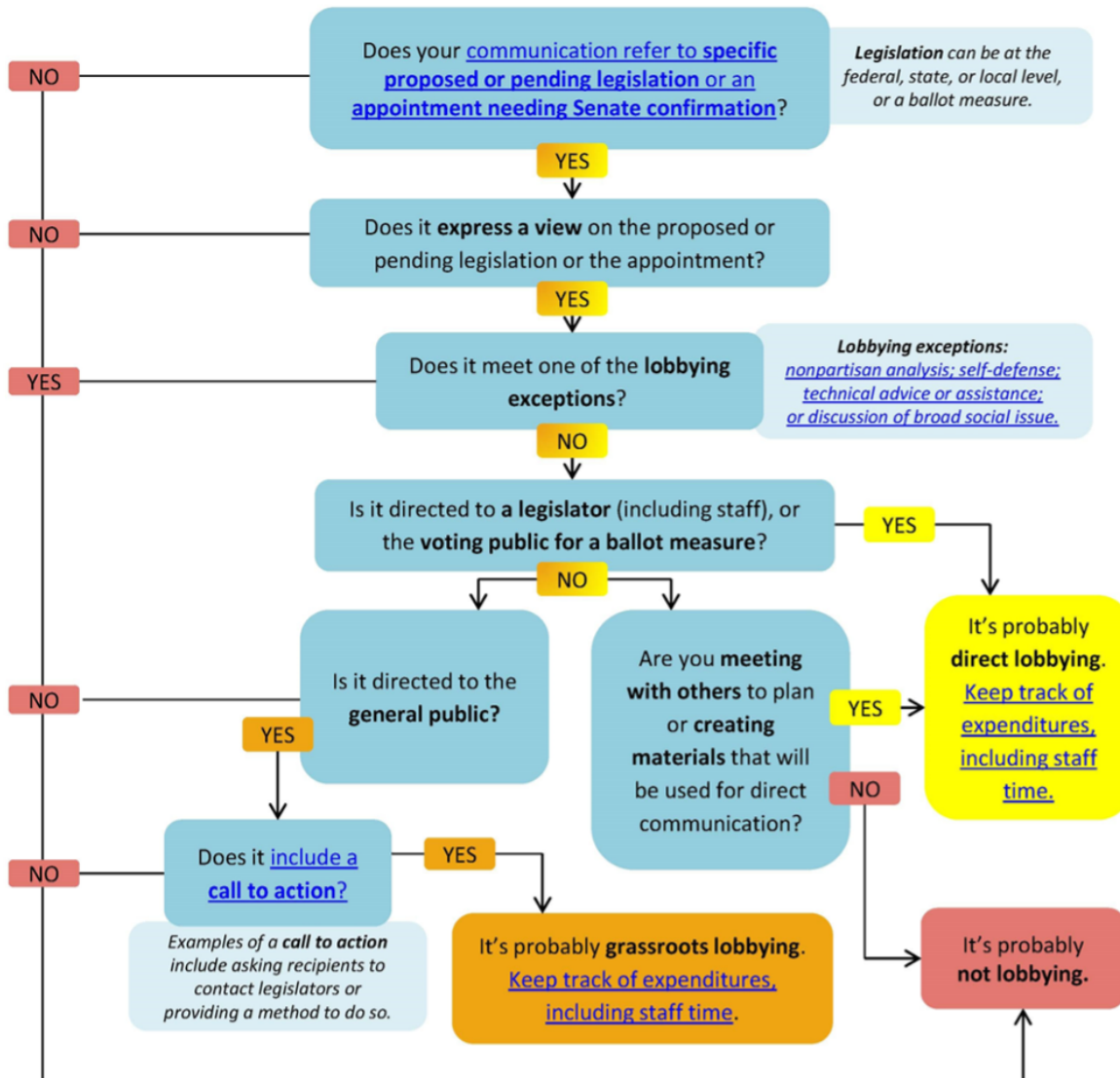
Source: Bolder Advocacy (www.bolderadvocacy.org)

Please note that the information in this chart applies only to Organizations that have formally elected to measure their lobbying activities under Section 501(h) of the Internal Revenue Code. Please consult with counsel on any questions regarding whether an activity is lobbying, and for guidance on measuring lobbying activity if you are an organization that has not filed IRS Form 5768.



IRS Lobbying Flowchart

This graphic can help you determine if your communication is considered lobbying under federal tax law rules for electing 501(c)(3) organizations. It does not cover situations or communications that take place in a candidate election context.



The information contained in this fact sheet and any attachments is being provided for informational purposes only and not as part of an attorney-client relationship. The information is not a substitute for expert legal, tax, or other professional advice tailored to your specific circumstances, and may not be relied upon for the purposes of avoiding any penalties that may be imposed under the Internal Revenue Code. Alliance for Justice publishes plain-language guides on nonprofit advocacy topics, offers educational workshops on the laws governing the advocacy of nonprofits, and provides technical assistance for nonprofits engaging in advocacy. For additional information, please feel free to contact Alliance for Justice at 866-NPLOBBY.

www.bolderadvocacy.org | www.allianceforjustice.org



Source: Bolder Advocacy (www.bolderadvocacy.org)

Exhibit D: Proposal Response Evaluation Rubric

The table below shows the criteria PIT-UN uses when evaluating proposals. This rubric has two parts:

- The left column has the criteria the proposal reviewers will assess. A winning proposal will demonstrate that a project meets or exceeds all criteria.
- The right column has the total number of points (or eligibility status) a proposal can be awarded based on how completely it meets each criterion. PIT-UN will consider proposals with the most possible points.

Responses must meet all RFP stated requirements for completion.	Evaluation Points 100
 Community Inclusion & Impact Proposed PITathon summary includes the following details: • Details and plan for genuine community co-design experiences and not just community outreach • Details and plan for genuine community engagement in identifying the challenges the community is facing, determining the problem definition, and including the community in the solution design process. • Details and plan for genuine community engagement in establishing the judging criteria and the success metrics. • Details and plan in establishing participatory design methods. • Details and plan for supporting and sustaining PITathon solutions beyond the event.	Up to 30 points
 Challenge Categories Sourced and Identified The proposal details how the PITathon project team understands the surrounding community so that the focus, theme, and topic tracks are cohesive and can enable students to identify and prioritize technology challenges sourced from affected communities rather than from technical experts or funders. Focus identified as one of the following: • Solutions Developed to Address Community Issues • Introducing PIT and Technology within Non-tech Disciplines • Increasing Employer Engagement in PIT Theme identified as one of these: • Innovation and Entrepreneurship through PIT Student Community Catalyst Projects • Improving Quality of Life and Economic Opportunities through PIT Catalyst Projects	Up to 20 points

○ Examples could include Tech Leadership Skill Development while Addressing Complex Community Challenges, Curating Partnerships with a Nonprofit to Solve Tech Integrations, or Private Sector or Affinity Groups Developing Solutions for Working PIT Professionals ● Regional Industry-driven Technical Projects in AI, Augmented Analytics, Machine Learning, or Robotics PITathon Topic Track (select no more than four challenge tracks; if more are selected, evaluators will view only the first four in alphabetical order): ● Algorithmic Accountability & Community Power ● Housing Stability & Displacement Prevention ● Environmental Justice & Climate Resilience ● Economic Justice & Worker Power ● Health Equity & Community-Controlled Care ● Digital Equity & Technology Self-Determination ● Civic Participation & Democratic Infrastructure ● Open Community Track	
 PIT Workforce Opportunities The proposal clearly indicates how hosting a PITathon will meaningfully advance the field of public interest technology. Responses include proposed workshops and inclusion of PIT identified skills and competencies. Details will include how the PITathon will further employers' interest in employing public interest technologists within their industry sector, and how you expect the invited employers to offer additional workforce commitments after the PITathon, as well as how a PITathon will complement your project team's institutional plan(s) to advance the field of public interest technology within academia.	Up to 10 points

■ Partnerships and Collaborators

What is the difference between a partner and a collaborator? Partners assist the organizing team to secure additional support through mentorship and evaluations, funding, in-kind contributions, and post-PITathon winner engagement. A partnership has a formal relationship defined by different arrangements such as memorandum(s) of understanding or of agreement or letters of commitment where a dependency of resources and funding is negotiated to achieve the project or event outcome. Event or project leads retain their authority and develop a separate structure to oversee or manage the engagement with the different elements or identified contributions.

A collaborator has an informal relationship with a PIT-UN member in an agreed-upon way to make decisions yet operate independently. Collaborators retain their autonomy and have complete control over the individual resources they bring to the table.

Up to 20 points

Meaningful and equitable partnerships should include: • Other PIT-UN member institutions. • Other educational institutions in their proposals, including those that are not part of the Public Interest Technology University Network, in particular Minority-Serving Institutions, and two-year community colleges. • Other educational institutions, including those that are not part of PIT-UN, affinity groups, or organizations that focus on ethnic studies, disabilities studies, history, humanities, social sciences, and other non-tech disciplines. • Organizations that identify as part of disadvantaged/underrepresented communities. • Organizations including those that are nonprofits, private industry, government agencies, affinity groups, or organizations that focus on tech and non-tech disciplines (accrediting agencies, industry representatives, regulators, legislative bodies). • Community organizations that have a specific focus on workforce development or creating career pathways for populations currently underrepresented in public service or the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. • Affinity groups or organizations that support academic leadership among communities of color or that are part of the disadvantaged/underrepresented communities. • Letters detailing the support the partner will contribute to the project. Meaningful collaborators should include the following entities: • Partnerships with nonprofit, private sector, or affinity groups to educate working professionals in public interest technology. • MOUs or MOAs for sponsorships, internships, apprenticeships, fellowships, clinics, labs, and practicum/practica. • Articulation agreements. • Documentation of community listening sessions, focus groups, training, and workshop sessions. • Letters detailing the support the collaborator will contribute to the project. The description of the partnership or collaboration must be clear as to why the involvement of partner(s) is essential to the project and how the partnership will operate, including division of work, role of the principal investigator(s), and allocation of funds.	
 Proposed Budget In the budget narrative the proposal describes how the funds will be used for pre- and post-PITathon community engagement and how the funding will be used to sustain the project's impact for the winning teams. Are there any specific funding commitments by the institution, employers, or community to support winners of the challenges?	Up to 20 points

Exhibit E: PITathon Challenge Tracks

1. Algorithmic Accountability & Community Power

Many of the systems that govern daily life in communities — pretrial risk scores, child welfare algorithms, benefits eligibility tools, credit scoring — were built without community input and operate without community oversight. Needed: tools that help communities understand, challenge, and shape the algorithmic systems that affect them. Example areas: transparency tools for automated decision systems, community-controlled data dashboards, appeal and grievance navigation tools.

Core question: How do we build tools that help communities understand, challenge, and shape the algorithmic systems that affect them?

Example problem areas: Transparency tools for automated decision systems, community-controlled data dashboards, appeal and grievance navigation tools, algorithmic audit frameworks designed for non-technical users.

Where to Find Partners

Civil rights legal organizations, digital rights nonprofits, public defender offices with tech accountability programs, ACLU chapters, community organizations working on benefits access or pretrial justice.

2. Housing Stability & Displacement Prevention

Gentrification, eviction, code enforcement, and speculative investment are technology-legible problems that communities are already trying to solve — often without adequate tools. Needed: technology that supports community-led strategies to maintain affordable, stable, and dignified housing. Example areas: tenant organizing tools, eviction early warning systems, community land trust management, displacement mapping built with residents.

Core question: How can technology support community-led strategies to maintain affordable, stable, and dignified housing?

Example problem areas: Tenant organizing and communication tools, eviction early warning systems governed by tenants rather than landlords, community land trust management, displacement mapping built with and for residents.

Where to Find Partners

Tenant unions, community land trusts, housing justice coalitions, legal aid housing units, neighborhood associations in gentrifying areas, homeless services organizations led by people with lived experience.

3. Environmental Justice & Climate Resilience

Frontline communities face disproportionate environmental harm and are frequently excluded from the planning processes meant to address it. Needed: tools that support communities in monitoring environmental conditions, demanding accountability, and building resilience on their own terms. Example areas: community-controlled air and water quality monitoring, climate adaptation planning tools, environmental violation tracking.

Core question: How can technology support communities in monitoring environmental conditions, demanding accountability, and building resilience on their own terms?

Example problem areas: Community-controlled air and water quality monitoring, climate adaptation planning tools built with affected residents, environmental violation reporting and tracking, green infrastructure equity mapping.

Where to Find Partners

Environmental justice coalitions (particularly those led by members of underrepresented groups), frontline climate organizations, community healthcare workers in pollution-burdened neighborhoods, tribal environmental programs.

4. Economic Justice & Worker Power

Gig economy platforms, wage theft, predatory lending, and opaque hiring systems concentrate economic harm in communities already facing structural disadvantage. Needed: technology that shifts economic power toward workers, small businesses, and community-rooted institutions. Example areas: worker organizing tools, cooperative business infrastructure, community investment platforms, benefits access navigators.

Core question: How can technology shift economic power toward workers, small businesses, and community-rooted institutions?

Example problem areas: Worker organizing and wage theft documentation tools, cooperative business infrastructure, community investment and credit-building platforms, benefits access navigators for workers in informal economies.

Where to Find Partners

Worker centers, domestic worker alliances, gig worker organizations, community development financial institutions, cooperative development organizations, labor unions with community ties.

5. Health Equity & Community-Controlled Care

Health data, telehealth platforms, and care navigation tools are often built by systems that don't trust communities to make decisions about their own health. Needed: tools that support community-defined health while keeping data sovereignty with patients and communities. Example areas: community healthcare worker tools, mental health peer support infrastructure, maternal health navigation, patient-designed chronic disease tools.

Core question: How can technology support community-defined health — not just clinical outcomes — while keeping data sovereignty with patients and communities?

Example problem areas: Community healthcare worker tools, mental health peer support infrastructure, maternal health navigation for Black women, chronic disease self-management tools designed with rather than for patients.

Where to Find Partners

Federally Qualified Health Centers, community healthcare worker networks, Black maternal health organizations, peer support networks, patient advocacy organizations led by affected communities.

6. Digital Equity & Technology Self-Determination

The digital divide is not only about access — it is about who controls the infrastructure, the data, and the terms of participation in digital life. Needed: tools that help communities build and govern their own technology infrastructure. Example areas: community mesh networks, digital literacy tools designed by and for specific communities, data sovereignty frameworks, open-source civic tech alternatives.

Core question: How do communities build and govern their own technology infrastructure rather than depending on systems owned by others?

Example problem areas: Community mesh networks, digital literacy tools designed by and for specific communities, data sovereignty frameworks for community organizations, open-source alternatives to extractive civic tech platforms.

Where to Find Partners

Digital equity coalitions, community media organizations, libraries with digital inclusion programs, community broadband initiatives, organizations serving seniors or rural residents.

7. Civic Participation & Democratic Infrastructure

Voting, public comment, community organizing, and civic engagement are all mediated by technology systems that frequently exclude the communities most affected by policy decisions. Needed: technology that lowers barriers to civic participation and strengthens community power in democratic processes. Example areas: multilingual civic engagement tools, participatory budgeting platforms, know-your-rights tools, redistricting engagement tools.

Core question: How can technology lower barriers to civic participation and strengthen community power in democratic processes?

Example problem areas: Multilingual civic engagement tools, participatory budgeting platforms, community organizing infrastructure, know-your-rights tools, redistricting and planning engagement tools for underrepresented communities.

Where to Find Partners

Civic engagement organizations (particularly those serving communities of color), immigrant rights organizations, participatory budgeting networks, community organizing groups.

8. Open Community Track

This track honors the reality that the most pressing local challenges are not always aligned with predetermined categories. It's for institutions with a community partner whose challenge does not fit into a named track. The problem statement must be entirely sourced from and validated by the community partner. The community organization must coauthor the Community Problem Brief.

Where to Find Partners

Any of the above — or neighborhood associations, mutual aid networks, faith-based community organizations, and place-based nonprofits with a specific local technology challenge

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Exhibit F: Example of a Community Problem Brief Template

Development of a community problem brief sets the context, names the harm, and establishes what a meaningful solution must do. PIT-UN suggests that community partners be compensated for the time required to complete it.

Community Problem Brief Template

This brief must be coauthored by a community partner organization before the start of a PITathon. This brief should be shared with all competing teams at the start of the PITathon.

PITATHON COMMUNITY PROBLEM BRIEF

Track: _____ Community Partner Organization: _____

Institution Host: _____

Brief Coauthors (names and roles): _____

Section 1: Who We Are *(Written by the community partner in their own voice)*

- Who does your organization represent or serve?
- What is your relationship to the community affected by this problem?
- How long have you been working on this issue, and what have you learned?

Section 2: The Problem as We Name It *(This section should be written before any technologist is in the room)*

- What is the specific harm or unmet need your community is experiencing?
- Who is most affected, and how?
- What has already been tried — by your community, by institutions, by government — and why has it been insufficient?
- What does this problem cost your community in concrete terms — time, money, safety, dignity, opportunity?

Section 3: What We Have Already Built *(Asset-based framing — name community strengths before naming gaps)*

- What informal or formal systems does your community already use to address this problem?
- What relationships, knowledge, or infrastructure exist that any solution must work with, not around?
- Who in your community are the trusted connectors, experts, or leaders on this issue?

Section 4: What We Are Asking For

- What kind of technology tool, platform, or resource would genuinely help?
- What would it need to do — and what must it never do?
- What does success look like to your community, six months after the PITathon ends?
- What would make you trust a solution enough to use it?

Section 5: Our Commitments & Boundaries

- How will your organization participate during the PITathon itself?
- What data, knowledge, or relationships are you willing to share — and what is off-limits?
- How do you want to be credited and involved if a solution moves forward after the event?

- What are your non-negotiables for any team working in this track?
-

Section 6: How to Reach Us

- Primary contact name, role, and preferred contact method
 - Availability during the PITathon for team questions
 - Languages spoken
-

This brief should be shared with all competing teams at the start of the PITathon. Community partners should be compensated for the time required to complete it.

Exhibit G: Example of a PITathon Specific Project Evaluation Rubric

Please see example rubric on next page and note that community judges must comprise at least 20% of every judging panel.

PITathons are not evaluating:

- Technical sophistication for its own sake.
- How well a team presents.
- How ambitious or scalable a solution sounds.
- Whether the team worked hard or showed hustle.

PITathons are evaluating:

- Whether the community's problem was honored, not reframed.
- Whether the solution could actually work for the people it is meant to serve.
- Whether the team reckoned honestly with what technology can and cannot do.
- Whether a community organization could pick this up and use it.

What PITathons Are Evaluating

Did the team build something with the community or for the community — and do they know the difference?

Every category in the rubric is a different way of asking that question. A team can have a technically impressive prototype, a polished pitch, and a compelling vision — and still fail this test. Your job as a judge is to see through the performance to the substance underneath.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Community Relevance & Impact (20 points) Guiding Question: Did the team genuinely engage the community problem brief or treat it as a prompt to technically interpret?	5 points Little or no evidence of community engagement. Solution could have been built without the community brief. The solution does not reflect the community needs as defined by the challenge.	10 points Solution reframes the problem around what the team found technically interesting. Community briefs are treated as background context rather than as a design mandate.	15 points Solution addresses the general problem area but drifts from the specific harm or constraints named by the community. Community engagement is present but surface-level. Strong alignment between solution and need as defined by the challenge	20 points Solution directly addresses the harm named by the community partner. Community voice is evident in framing, constraints, and design decisions throughout. Team can speak to specific feedback received from community members during the event. The solution fundamentally challenges status quo assumptions about the role of technology in civil society.
Equity & Ethics as Design Standard (20 points) Guiding Question: Does the solution avoid replicating harms or creating new ones?	5 points Solution creates harms or replicates identifiable ones. No equity analysis present.	10 points Equity is treated as an add-on rather than a design constraint. Team defaults to efficiency or scale as success metrics.	15 points Team has considered equity implications, but analysis is incomplete. Some risks are named without clear mitigation.	20 points Team has explicitly identified who could be harmed by their solution and built in safeguards. Privacy, data sovereignty, and potential for misuse have been considered and addressed. Solution does not require communities to trust institutions they have reason not to trust.
Technical Solution Feasibility & Community Fit (20 points) Guiding Question: Could this work for the community that needs it, not just in a demo environment?	5 points Solution is not viable for the community as described. Significant technical or contextual gaps exist.	10 points Solution requires significant institutional resources or technical capacity the community partner does not have. Feasibility relies on ideal conditions.	15 points Solution is feasible in principle but makes assumptions about community capacity or infrastructure that may not hold. Some constraints are acknowledged but are not fully addressed.	20 points Solution accounts for real constraints — digital access, language, trust, staff capacity, cost. Community partners can envision adopting or piloting it. Technical execution is sufficient to demonstrate the core function.
Sustained Impact	5 points	10 points	15 points	20 points

Potential (20 points) Guiding Question: Is there a realistic path beyond the event?	No post-event plan. Solution exists only as a hackathon artifact.	Team has thought about post-event impact, but the plan is vague or dependent on uncertain resources. Team hasn't engaged community partners in continuing.	Team has proposed a feedback loop with the community partner. Community partner has expressed interest in continuing.	Team has a concrete next step — a pilot, a follow-up meeting with the community partner, an open-source release, a handoff plan. Community partner has expressed interest in continuing.
Multidisciplinary Collaboration (15 points) Guiding Question: Did the team integrate non-technical perspectives as genuine design inputs, not decorative additions?	5 points No meaningful multidisciplinary integration.	7 points Team is primarily technical with limited disciplinary diversity.	10 points Multiple disciplines are present, but technical members drove most decisions. Non-technical contributions are visible in framing but not in architecture.	15 points Non-technical team members (policy, social work, organizing, public health, law, design) shaped core decisions, not just the pitch deck. Team can name specific moments where a non-technical insight changed the solution.
Presentation (5 points) Guiding Question: Did the content directly address the prompt and community engagement of the challenge track?	0 points Unclear communication of the idea, purpose, and impact. Problem importance not conveyed. Relationships between team members during the project are not described at all.	2 points Clear statement of the problem. Good explanation of the project's purpose and impact. Team members are recognized but not as to their contributions.	3 Points Very clear and effective communication. Relationships between team members are described to a high level. Engages the audience throughout the presentation.	5 points Exceptionally clear, engaging presentation. Strong and memorable opening and closing statements. Team has carefully articulated what each member of the interdisciplinary team has learned from each other and the community the solution addresses.
Bonus Points or Penalty Points				
Resisting Techno solutionism (20 points) This category does not penalize teams for building technology. It evaluates whether the team demonstrated critical awareness of	5 points Solution actively obscures the structural or political nature of the problem. Technology is proposed as a substitute for accountability, organizing, or policy rather than a complement to it.	10 points Solution treats a political, relational, or structural problem primarily as a technical one. Team conflates efficiency with justice, or access with power.	15 points Team shows awareness of techno solutionism as a risk but does not fully apply that awareness to their own solution. Some overclaiming is present — the solution is positioned as more	20 points Team can clearly articulate why a technology intervention is appropriate for this specific problem, and what it cannot replace — organizing, policy change, trust-building, funding, or human relationships. Solution is scoped to what

what technology can and cannot do in the context of the community problem they addressed — and whether their solution reflects that awareness. Guiding Question: Did the team honestly reckon with whether technology is the right tool, and if so, which kind?	Solution could create the appearance of progress while leaving the underlying harm unaddressed or worsening it.	The assumption that building the tool is sufficient is present throughout the pitch. Community complexity is flattened to fit what the technology can do.	comprehensive or transformative than the evidence supports. Non-technical dimensions of the problem are acknowledged but treated as outside scope rather than as essential context.	technology can genuinely contribute without overpromising. Team has named at least one thing the solution deliberately does not try to do, and why. Non-technical interventions are acknowledged as necessary complements, not failures of ambition.
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Understanding the Rubric Categories

- Community Relevance & Impact (20 points)

This is the highest-weighted category because it is the foundation of everything else. A solution that is technically brilliant but disconnected from the community problem brief should not score well here, regardless of its other merits.

What you as a judge are listening for: Can the team speak specifically about the community partner's problem, not just the general issue area? Did the community brief shape their constraints, not just their framing? Can they name a moment when something a community member said changed what they built?

What to watch for: Teams that use the language of the community brief without its substance. Quoting the brief is not the same as being shaped by it.

- Equity & Ethics as Design Standard (20 points)

This category asks whether the team thought about who could be harmed by their solution, not just who could be helped. In civic tech, solutions that help some community members while exposing others to surveillance, data extraction, or increased institutional control are common failures.

What you as a judge are listening for: Has the team identified specific risks their solution creates, and built in specific responses to those risks? Do they understand that privacy, consent, and data sovereignty are design requirements, not legal fine print?

What to watch for: Teams that treat equity as a values statement rather than a design constraint. Saying “we care about equity” is not the same as building for it.

- Technical Solution Feasibility & Community Fit (20 points)

This category is not about whether the prototype works in a demo. It is about whether the solution could work in the actual conditions — including limited bandwidth, limited staff capacity, limited trust in institutions, and languages other than English — of the community it is meant to serve.

What you as a judge are listening for: Does the team know what it would take for the community partner to actually adopt this? Have they accounted for maintenance, training, and cost after the event ends?

What to watch for: When you feel pressure to reward ambition. PITathons are not venture pitch competitions. A small, honest, community-validated solution that does one thing well for the people who need it is more aligned with PITathon values than a large, ambitious solution that has drifted from the community brief. Other things to watch for: Solutions that work beautifully under ideal conditions and collapse under real ones. Feasibility claims that depend on the community having resources or infrastructure they do not have. **Reward honesty over scale.**

- Sustained Impact Potential (20 points)

This category is deliberately modest in weight because post-event impact is genuinely hard to predict. What it is asking is whether the team has thought honestly about what happens next — not whether they have a perfect road map.

What you as a judge are listening for: Is there a concrete next step, even a small one? Has the community partner expressed interest in continuing? Does the team understand what would need to be true for their solution to have lasting impact?

What to watch for: Vague scaling language that substitutes ambition for a plan. “This could be deployed in cities across the country” is not a next step; it is an evasion of the question of what happens Monday morning.

- Multidisciplinary Collaboration (15 points)

This category asks whether non-technical perspectives shaped the solution or decorated it. A team with a lawyer, a social worker, and three engineers that built a purely technical solution without integrating the expertise of the lawyer or social worker has not collaborated — it has assembled.

What you as a judge are listening for: Can non-technical team members speak to specific decisions they influenced? Is the disciplinary diversity visible in the solution itself, not just in the team roster?

What to watch for: Teams where non-technical members present the problem framing and technical members present everything else. That division of labor is a signal that disciplines were siloed, not integrated.

- Presentation (5 points)

This category asks whether the polished pitch of the team is influencing your score.

What you as a judge are listening for: Are you responding to the quality of the solution or the quality of the presentation. Then ask whether a less polished team with a more genuinely community-rooted solution would score lower under your current reasoning. If yes, recalibrate.

What to watch for: Teams where one member seems to present and answer questions on the entire solution. Was there little division of labor in developing the presentation and solution or did the team have unequal labor division so that development was siloed.

Resisting Techno solutionism (Bonus/Penalty Modifier, +/- 10 points)

How to Apply the Bonus/Penalty Modifier

Award the +10 bonus when: The team has explicitly named what their solution cannot do and why. They have described a non-technical intervention their solution depends on to have real impact. The community partner has confirmed that the solution reflects what they actually asked for rather than what was technically interesting to build. The solution is scoped honestly and does not overclaim.

Apply the -10 penalty when: The solution treats a structural or political problem as primarily a technical one. The team cannot name a single way the community shaped what they chose not to build. The solution increases institutional visibility into community behavior without increasing community power over institutional behavior. The pitch substitutes confidence for evidence that the solution addresses the harm the community named.

This is the category most judges find hardest to apply consistently, because it requires evaluating not just what a team built but what it chose not to build — and why.

How to Recognize and Name Techno solutionism

Techno solutionism is the belief that a technology intervention is the right response to a problem regardless of whether the problem is technical in nature. It is not a character flaw — it is a default mode of thinking that hackathon formats actively encourage. Your job as a judge is to interrupt that default when it produces solutions that are impressive but inadequate.

The Core Test

Ask yourself: **Is the problem this team solved the same problem the community named?**

If the community named a problem of power, accountability, or structural harm — and the team built a tool for information, efficiency, or connectivity — something went wrong in translation. That translation failure is techno solutionism.

What It Looks Like in Practice

- **Reframing a political problem as a technical one.** A community names the problem as landlords using algorithmic pricing tools to coordinate rent increases in ways that evade antitrust law. A team builds a rent-tracking dashboard for tenants. The dashboard is real and potentially useful. But it locates the solution in tenant awareness rather than in landlord accountability, which is where the community located the problem. That is a political reframe dressed as a technical solution.
- **Substituting visibility for power.** Many civic tech solutions give communities more information about systems that harm them without giving communities any ability to change those systems. Knowing your air quality is bad is not the same as having the power to make it better. Solutions that increase community awareness of harm without increasing community power over the sources of harm are techno solutionist even when they are technically accurate and well-designed.
- **Proposing automation where trust is the actual requirement.** Some problems require human judgment, human relationships, and human accountability and cannot be improved by making them faster or more efficient. A community navigating a crisis response system that has historically failed does not primarily need a better algorithm. It needs systems that are accountable to the community. Automating an unaccountable system makes it faster and less accountable. Teams that propose AI or machine learning for problems that are fundamentally about institutional accountability should be pressed on this directly.
- **Scaling language that erases local specificity.** “This solution could work in any city” is almost always a red flag in a PITathon context, because the entire framework is built on the premise that community-specific knowledge is replaceable. Solutions that can be deployed anywhere without community co-

design are solutions that have not actually been co-designed. Genuine community rootedness produces solutions that are specific, contextual, and not easily generalizable — and that is a feature, not a limitation.

- **Appearing to show progress.** This is the most consequential form of techno solutionism and the hardest to name because it is also the most polished. A solution that looks like it addresses a community problem — one that has the right language, the right values, the right team composition — but that leaves the underlying structure of harm untouched is not a solution. It is a demonstration. Judges should ask: If this were deployed at scale, would the community that named this problem be better off in ways that matter to them? If the honest answer is uncertain, that uncertainty belongs in the scoring.

What It Does Not Look Like

Resisting techno solutionism does not mean being anti-technology. It does not mean that only non-technical solutions are valid. It does not mean penalizing teams for building something ambitious or innovative. It means holding teams to honesty about what their technology can and cannot do — and rewarding teams that demonstrate that honesty clearly. A team that says “we almost built a predictive model but realized it would have reproduced the bias in the underlying data, so we built a community-controlled reporting tool instead” has demonstrated exactly the kind of critical awareness this category rewards. That team should score well even if the final prototype is simpler and less impressive than what they started out to build.

Public Interest Technology University Network

The Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN) is a partnership of colleges and universities committed to educating students who can better apply technical understanding and practice to questions of individual rights, justice, social welfare, and the public good. As it nurtures the pipeline of emerging technologists prepared to approach these questions, PIT-UN envisions a future in which technology policy actively challenges structural inequalities in power, resources, and access by centering the needs of people and communities, particularly for those who have been historically marginalized. In practice, this means that the traditional gatekeepers of technological advancement and public policy interrogate how they can better identify and work with communities in the development of public interest technology as ecosystems and elevate these communities as co-creators and leaders.

The broad goals of PIT-UN are to:

- Connect accredited nonprofit institutions of higher education in the U.S. that seek to take the lead in establishing and defining the field of public interest technology within academia.
- Spur the development of a strong pipeline of students seeking to pursue careers in public interest technology, broadly defined, and taking active measures to ensure that this pipeline is diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, ability, gender, and socioeconomic status and that it is characterized by a sense of inclusion and belonging for students and practitioners.
- Foster collaborations and connections across the network and to practitioners in the wider ecosystem.
- PIT-UN is a project of the New Venture Fund (NVF), a 501(c)(3) public charity that supports innovative and effective public interest projects.