



Press Forward Minnesota Civic Health and Community Collaborations

Evaluation Rubric

Press Forward Minnesota will evaluate applications using key criteria that reflect our core values and grant priorities: Civic Impact & Community Building, Community Collaborations, Equity, and Sustainability.

Civic Impact & Community Building

Press Forward Minnesota will prioritize proposals that demonstrate enhanced accessibility to civic and community information. The strongest proposals will show how applicants ensure Minnesota residents feel connected to and build relationships with local news. Strong proposals also build trust in local news as a civic resource and promote community cohesion and belonging.

[See Civic Health Pillars 1 and 2](#): News and Information and Civic Participation Ecosystem

Score	Criteria
9-10	Extensive Experience: Deep, multi-layer civic participation and engagement with measurable outcomes. Creates pathways for engagement beyond traditional civic acts. Connects people to local services and civic voice opportunities.
6-8	Relevant Experience: Clear strategies for civic participation that account for meaningful participation.
3-5	Some Experience: Limited civic participation activities that may lack depth or clear strategy,
1-2	Little Experience: Some civic participation activities but may be surface level.
0	No Experience: No clear civic impact

Community Collaborations

Press Forward Minnesota will prioritize proposals that strengthen partnerships between newsrooms and community organizations to create enduring collaborations. Proposals should include clearly defined roles for all partners and indicate how they will work together. The strongest proposals demonstrate authentic, mutually beneficial partnership between newsrooms and community-based organizations, include grassroots connectors or trusted local leaders, and show shared decision-making and trust.

[See Civic Health Pillars 1 and 2](#): News and Information and Civic Participation Ecosystem

Score	Criteria
9-10	Extensive Experience: Strong evidence of deep collaboration with multiple networks and community partnerships. Clear evidence of deep collaboration where partners co-lead and share power in decision-making.
6-8	Relevant Experience: Meaningful evidence of collaboration with strong networks or community partnerships. Defined roles and decision-making structure exist.
3-5	Some Experience: Some evidence of network collaboration and community partnerships, but limited in scope. Partnerships may be superficial or unbalanced.
1-2	Little Experience: Has not yet collaborated but plans to collaborate with the community.
0	No Experience: Does not collaborate or plan to collaborate with its community.

Equity

Press Forward Minnesota will prioritize proposals that center equity in both processes and outcomes. The strongest proposals will include project activities, outcomes, and goals that are designed to ensure that, regardless of race or ethnicity, physical or mental abilities, age, gender, or other factors, all people have equal access to civic life and opportunity.

[See Civic Health Pillar 3: Equity and Justice](#)

Score	Criteria
9-10	Extensive Experience: Equity is central in the proposal and outcomes; planning, activities, and goals are co-created with impacted communities to ensure all people have access to civic life and opportunity.
6-8	Relevant Experience: Equity is incorporated throughout the proposal, but outcomes and activities are not co-created by impacted communities.
3-5	Some Experience: Equity is mentioned as a goal but plans to engage partners and communities are not comprehensive.
1-2	Little Experience: The organization includes some measures to reach diverse and underserved audiences, but it may be surface level or transactional. No plan exists for continued community engagement.
0	No Experience: Does not take meaningful measures to address equity.

Sustainability

Press Forward Minnesota will prioritize organizations that demonstrate strength across LION Publishers' three pillars of sustainability: editorial impact, operational resilience, and financial health. We will support organizations with clear plans for using this investment as a foundational step toward developing and maintaining a long-term business model. The strongest proposals include plans for building local capacity to promote continued civic participation and community cohesion.

The Three Pillars:

- **Editorial Impact:** Clear mission, audience engagement, and measurable community impact
- **Operational Resilience:** Stable workflows, reliable systems, and adaptive capacity
- **Financial Health:** Diversified revenue streams, sound financial management, and growth planning

Score	Criteria
9-10	Extensive Experience: Demonstrates strength in all three pillars (editorial impact, operational resilience, and financial health). Has a sustainable business model with clear plans for using funding to maintain and strengthen operations.
6-8	Relevant Experience: Strong in two of the three pillars, with clear plans for using funding to address gaps and move toward complete sustainability.
3-5	Some Experience: Strong in one pillar with some development in others. Has realistic plans for using funding to build capacity across all three areas.
1-2	Little Experience: Limited strength across all pillars but demonstrates understanding of sustainability needs and has a clear plan for using funding to build foundational capacity.
0	No Experience: Lacks evidence of sustainability planning across all three pillars and provides no clear implementation plan for the near future.



Overall impression

Alignment with grant focus, impact, reach, etc. _____/10

Does this proposal align with the goals to strengthen civic health and media collaboration?

Does this proposal reflect Press Forward Minnesota's values and priorities?

Overall score _____/50