



# SUSTAINING

# HOOSIER

# COMMUNITIES

*Request for Proposals*



CENTER FOR  
**RURAL ENGAGEMENT**



# The Center for Rural Engagement *is seeking applicants to be the next* Sustaining Hoosier Community.

## Sustaining Hoosier Communities

Sustaining Hoosier Communities (SHC) partners one Indiana Uplands county with Indiana University faculty, students, and staff, focusing their collective effort on community-identified projects. These transformative partnerships improve community quality of life, from health and wellness to arts and culture.

Successful SHC communities nurture a diversity of individuals and perspectives, fostering a strong social fabric and culture of civic engagement. Marshalled around a common cause, effective SHC community leaders come from all walks of life, such as passionate residents, business professionals, and elected officials.

## Impact

Since the launch of SHC in 2017, more than 1,500 students and 50 faculty collaborated on more than 60 community-identified projects, mobilizing more than 100,000 hours of service. This scale of impact makes SHC unique among community development initiatives. Additionally, each project benefits from:

- Energetic students, guided by faculty who share relevant knowledge and best practices for the project;
- Dedicated staff who build relationships with residents, ensuring a community-driven approach;
- Community excitement generated from the innovative partnership, resulting in immediate, tangible progress;
- Access to the Center for Rural Engagement, which will serve as a resource for ongoing collaboration.

The collaboration continues beyond the SHC engagement. In Lawrence County, Professor John Keesler continues the work his class began, [surveying community perceptions](#) of addiction and related mental health issues. In Orange County, an innovative rural nursing initiative continued serving patients. Once projects begin, their momentum lasts.

## Process

In the fall, before the engagement begins, communities are invited to apply to be the next SHC partner. Once the SHC partner is selected, community leaders, staff, and faculty work together in a three-phase project process.

### *Preparation*

The projects first proposed by the community will be further developed throughout the spring and summer. SHC staff meet with community leaders to refine project proposals, translate them into scopes of work, and begin matching the scopes of work with faculty teaching relevant classes. Before projects commence, community leaders, faculty, and SHC staff agree to a scope of work.

### *Implementation*

Projects will be undertaken in the fall and spring semesters and are previewed at the SHC launch event. During this phase, the community can expect a surge of activity: visits from students, faculty, and staff; trips to campus for class presentations; and regular communication by email and phone.\* These efforts result in the fulfillment of the scopes of work.

### *Resolution*

At the end of each semester, students will present their deliverables to the community leaders. In late spring, the community, students, faculty, and staff review the collaboration at an SHC celebration event.\*

## Support

Aspiring SHC communities are not expected to spend financial resources on the program — a sustained investment of passion, expertise, and time is all that is required from the community and its leaders. Logistics such as transportation, meeting space, hospitality, assessment, and media relations will all be coordinated by SHC staff, who are committed to fostering a transformative partnership.

*Take the right steps  
to develop your proposal.*

**1**

**review**

Review this request for proposal guide with community members who might be interested in building an application and partnering on SHC projects.

**2**

**activate**

Activate your community by organizing a diverse coordinating committee and engaging many outside the committee.

**3**

**connect**

Connect with SHC staff by emailing [iushc@indiana.edu](mailto:iushc@indiana.edu), requesting a community workshop, and asking questions.

**4**

**build**

Build your community's proposal with appropriate materials and collect completed project proposal forms from community leaders.

**5**

**submit**

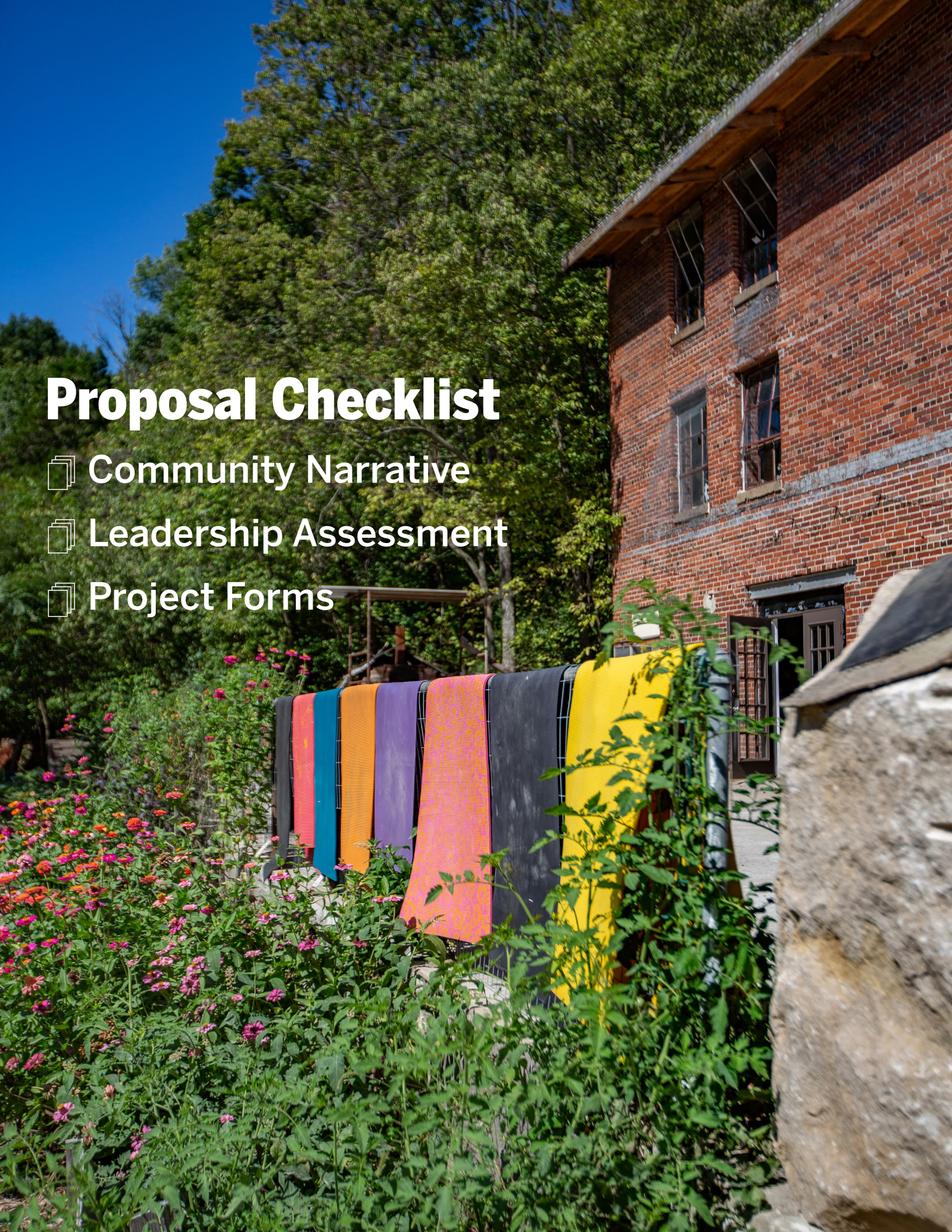
Submit the completed application to [iushc@indiana.edu](mailto:iushc@indiana.edu) as one file by the deadline: **November 19, 2021.**

**\*Due to the pandemic, some activities may be held virtually rather than in person.**



# Proposal Checklist

- 📄 Community Narrative
- 📄 Leadership Assessment
- 📄 Project Forms





## Proposal Requirements

To become an SHC community, your committee will submit three collections of materials. SHC staff recognize that proposals put together through an inclusive process will include materials of varying quality. This means informal language, incomplete information, and hand-written project proposal forms are all acceptable, so long as a broad representation of community leaders participate.

## Community Narrative

Relationships are the foundation of a successful SHC partnership. Help us get to know your community — the place and the people — with a narrative (up to 1,500 words) addressing these questions:

- What stories does your community have to share?
- Who and what makes it a special place?

The narrative should shed light on why your community is interested in becoming an SHC community, and why your community is unique in terms of its strengths, opportunities, and challenges.

## Leadership Assessment

Each separate SHC project has a community leader, who communicates the project goals and serves as a point of contact in the community. SHC staff support all community leaders, ensuring their success. In a narrative (up to 500 words), describe your community's leadership, its capacity, and its diversity. Who are your movers and shakers?

## Project Forms

Complete at least 20 project forms, filled out as recommended on the next page.

## Activating Your Community

Applying to be an SHC community requires engaging diverse individuals and perspectives in the community. To activate their community to apply for SHC, Orange County developed a coordinating committee, taking a grassroots approach to the process. Communities applying are encouraged to start a coordinating committee. Members might include public employees, elected officials, non-profit professionals, business owners, and residents, especially those who usually are not at the decision-making table.

Coordinating committees are not responsible for leading individual projects, and community leaders associated with projects are not expected to sit on the coordinating committee. At times, SHC staff may check in with the coordinating committee to make adjustments. It is helpful for coordinating committees to designate one or two individuals to serve as the primary points of contact for SHC staff during the application process.

## Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria, listed in no particular order, will be used by SHC staff to determine if a community will be a successful SHC partner for this round of proposals.

### Impact

- Proposed projects directly relate to the strengths, opportunities, and challenges expressed in the community narrative.
- Proposed projects have positive and measurable impacts on the community.

### Sustainability

- Proposed projects focus on social, environmental, and economic sustainability and resilience.
- Proposed projects may have a lasting impact.

### Leadership

- Community leaders who propose projects demonstrate commitment to work on projects through the project preparation, implementation, and resolution phases.
- Community members and organizations working on projects comprise a diverse representation of the community, collaborating when possible.

### Timing

- Proposed projects will be ready for student engagement beginning in August 2022.

# Project Form Guidelines

This page provides guidelines on completing a project form. A template is included on the next page for communities to use.

Project forms will help SHC staff understand the proposed projects and how well each project will match with courses taught by faculty. Forms will be used to start conversations about proposed projects, allowing for projects to evolve as details emerge in early discussions between the community and faculty.

## Project Form

This form will help SHC staff understand the proposed project, and how well it will match with courses taught by faculty

Title

The title for a project should be succinct, and related to the issues or opportunities addressed in the proposal.

## Leaders

First and Last Name

Email

Phone

First and Last Name

Email

Phone

Describe the leaders' roles in the community, their relevant experience, and why they are interested in this project.

At least one community leader must be associated with each project proposal. Appoint a leader to work with SHC staff on the project over many months. This section will help demonstrate the *leadership evaluation criteria*.

## Issues, Opportunities, and Assets

Describe the overarching issues, opportunities, and assets that contextualize and necessitate the deliverables.

Highlight the broad issues that the deliverables might address, but also note the assets and opportunities available to the community to achieve progress. This section will help demonstrate the *impact and sustainability evaluation criteria*.

## Deliverables

Describe the material or service that will be created or conducted by student to address the issues and opportunities.

Deliverables may take the form of reports, business plans, stories, town halls, designs, grant strategies, etc. This section will also help demonstrate the *impact and sustainability evaluation criteria*.

## Historical Efforts

Describe community efforts in the past that addressed the issues and opportunities.

List past community efforts related to the issues or opportunities so projects can build off momentum or make smart adjustments to existing efforts. This section will help demonstrate the *sustainability evaluation criteria*.

## Comments

Share other information, thoughts, concerns, or questions related to the project.

What else can be shared that may not be captured in the other sections?

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Describe the overarching issues, opportunities, and assets that contextualize and necessitate the deliverables.

## Deliverables

Describe the material or service that will be created or conducted by student to address the issues and opportunities.

## Historical Efforts

Describe community efforts in the past that addressed the issues and opportunities.

## Comments

Share other information, thoughts, concerns, or questions related to the project.

# Reach Out

**Email:** [iushc@indiana.edu](mailto:iushc@indiana.edu)

**Web:** [shc.indiana.edu](http://shc.indiana.edu)



CENTER FOR  
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Sustaining Hoosier Communities is an initiative of the Center for Rural Engagement which improves the lives of Hoosiers through collaborative initiatives that discover and deploy scalable and flexible solutions to common challenges facing rural communities. Working in full-spectrum community innovation through research, community-engaged teaching and student service, the center builds vision, harnesses assets and cultivates sustainable leadership structures within the communities with which it engages to ensure long-term success.

