1. **Originality and transferability. Document how the program uses new ideas or combines tools to address a demonstrated need for planning information or education within the community. Illustrate how your entry has potential application for others and how use of your entry's components and methodology would further the cause of good planning.**

The People Powered Planning Academy (PPPA) for Racial Justice is a 10 week course created to empower grassroots leaders to participate fully in planning, land use, zoning and public policy processes. The chapters and educational materials are tailored to the specific community’s needs. The materials were all based on the City of Dallas zoning code and public policies, to connect the lived experiences of the residents and the existing or proposed policies directly to real-world advocacy opportunities. The goal of the academy is to break down many of the existing barriers that Black, Brown, and low income people face to participate in planning processes. We do this by providing education on these processes in an accessible way, building solidarity across neighborhoods dealing with similar issues of gentrification or environmental racism, and providing the individualized coaching needed to start campaigns.

The PPPA launched because of a demonstrated need for planning information and education in the Oak Cliff Community in Dallas. The City launched the West Oak Cliff Area Planning process during the pandemic in a virtual format and initially had little to no Spanish translation services. RAYO Planning organized with West Oak Cliff residents to advocate for an inclusive outreach and engagement process. Consequently, the Automotive Association of Oak Cliff (AAOC), composed of Hispanic/Latinx entrepreneurs, was created. AAOC successfully advocated against an initial recommendation that had disparate impact concerns. The PPPA helps residents understand urban planning topics, be equipped to engage and advocate during future urban planning efforts, and to address inequities in their neighborhood. The academy model is replicable and in high demand within DFW. We graduated the first cohort Spring 2023 and are launching the Fall cohort in the Pleasant Grove neighborhood, with interest in Fort Worth and other cities.

1. **Effectiveness and results. State how your entry addressed the need or problem that prompted its initiation. Be explicit about how the results make a difference in the lives of the people affected now and in the future. Show how your entry has increased the understanding of planning principles and the planning process. Provide measurable results if possible or appropriate.**

The PPPA was successful in creating a cohort of community leaders in West Oak Cliff that understand the basics of zoning, land use, public policy and how to advocate for their communities. The video testimonials submitted as part of the application illustrate the impact that the PPPA had on the participants lives now and in the future. Many members shared the transformative impact of actually understanding ‘how things work’ and that they can move from being passive participants to active change makers in their communities by participating meaningfully in planning and policy processes. Many of the academy members became involved in various local city council campaigns and some even launched advocacy efforts of their own while completing the course. One example was the creation of a new neighborhood association in a previously under-organized area of West Oak Cliff. As alumni, there are many ways that we plan to keep them engaged and tap into them as zoning cases or other neighborhood issues arise.

The chapters for this cohort were centered on issues that we believed were most pertinent to the community and in collaboration with community members in advance of launching the program. Many participants had little to no knowledge about zoning, land use, non-conforming uses and how to engage. The pre and post survey of the participants demonstrated the extent of the knowledge gained, with some of the participants ranking the increase in their knowledge by up to 5+ points when asked to rank their level of understanding on the topic on a scale of 1 to 10. The average increase in knowledge on a scale of 1 to 10 was 1.76 points. We plan to continue quantifying the impact of the program as we graduate more members to expand the alumni network, expand the chapters taught and the geographic areas we serve.

1. **Engagement. Explain how various public interests were involved and how your entry obtained public and private support. Competitive entries demonstrate a strong effort to solicit input from those who historically have been left out of the planning process. Clarify the role, significance, and participation of planners. Demonstrate the connection between the effort's success and increased awareness in the community of planners and planning.**

The participants of the academy came from all fields and disciplines. We had mechanics, artists, urban farmers, economic development professionals, teachers, doctors and more. Our classroom was representative of the West Oak Cliff community. Majority of the participants were from the Hispanic/Latinx community - the predominant population in West Oak Cliff. The goal was to create an inclusive and accessible environment for ALL members of the community that have been historically left out to be the center of the learning experience. The academy sessions had guest speakers from other neighborhoods who had gone through or were currently involved in some planning, zoning or other land use related advocacy effort. We had neighborhood leaders from a Freedman community in NorthWest Dallas speak about their zoning change process and how they are fighting gentrification and displacement. We had a young Latina mother who is leading the fight to remove a non-conforming shingle factory from her neighborhood and speak about the campaign’s wins and challenges.

Planners participated as educators to break down many of the technical processes and jargon used and then connect it to the real world experiences shared by the neighborhood advocates. Dallas Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation is a local racial justice non-profit that provided the initial grant funding for the academy. Other individual donors to sponsor academy member participation were often planners or people adjacent to planning fields. Dallas County Community College is a sponsor for the Fall academy, providing space for the sessions on their campus and in kind donations for materials such as printing supplies. This cross-sectoral nature of the participants in the academy, and the various sponsors (both private and public) led to an overall increased knowledge of planning and of planners.

1. **Support of planning and planners. Describe how your entry has built support for planning and increased understanding of the planning process. Describe why this effort was undertaken and the desired outcomes.**

Black, Brown and low-income people have historically been left out of the planning process by design. Government actions such as redlining, urban renewal, slum clearing and highway construction have destroyed Communities of Color, led to displacement, cultural erasure, segregation and widened health, wealth and opportunity gaps with White communities. This has led to a deep mistrust of government and especially of public works, planning and land use policies and practices. The academy addresses this legacy and creates a foundation for potential restorative justice by increasing participation by arming residents with knowledge that they had been denied for generations. We want to widen the bench of planners by ensuring that the lived experiences of residents in Communities of Color are front and center in all planning processes. Our cities have been shaped by racism, and so the future must be shaped by anti-racism. The academy challenges residents to engage in planning processes because they have been excluded in the past, which in turn is challenging city planners and the planning community at large to value the lived experiences of residents who have been harmed in shaping planning projects.

This effort was undertaken to make planning processes more inclusive and accessible based on the negative experiences of residents during the city-led West Oak Cliff Area Plan. We were successful in arming residents with knowledge that demystified the planning process, the role planners play in shaping our cities, and their roles and members of the public in participating fully.