A detailed overview of the proposal

Project proposals will be judged on a variety of criteria, such as whether or not the proposal identifies a natural hazard issue and how the project idea would help address the concern. Does it clearly communicate a specific plan/course of action for the project idea? Is the project idea realistic? Does the proposal include a budget? Are there helpful visuals? And does it demonstrate a solid understanding of the issue, proposed solution, and their complexity?

This guide, along with the RISE Challenge Judging Rubric, is meant to serve as a reference for what judges will be looking for, and what details are important to include. There is no suggested written length for the proposal or its sections, with the expectation that the proposal should be explanatory and succinct, without missing important/relevant information.

1. Introduction

This is your chance to catch our attention and tell us what you are going to talk about in your proposal. Make us care about your project by thinking about why it is important to you.

2. Define your "community" of focus

Tell us what community your issue takes place in. Why did you choose to focus on this community? What natural hazards are present and impacting your community? Keep this section brief. Remember this is not a report on the state of your community but a proposal for a solution to a natural hazard affecting it.

3. Identify the issue or concern you chose

Tell us about the natural hazard issue you have chosen to address. What community inventories did you use to discover your issue? As a group, how and why did you select this issue?

4. Describe how you went about researching your issue

What policies and/or community practices contribute to this issue? What research did you undertake to understand this issue? Did you consult experts or stakeholders involved with the issue? If so, what information did they share? Did you get different points of view on your issue? How did your research inform your understanding of the strategies suited to addressing your issue?

5. Explain your proposed solution

What overall strategy are you proposing to take to address your issue? How is your proposed action appropriate to address the issue? How does your solution address the root cause(s) of your issue in terms of policy or community practice? If your project requires you to ask for change from those in power, how do you plan on doing so? Be specific and realistic about what you will do, how it will work, and what it will take to make it happen.

6. Explain the scope of your project

How big of a project is this and what impact will it have? Is this a project that will affect your school, your watershed, your county, or beyond? What is your timeline for this project? Is this project something that you can do alone, or will you need help? How many people will be affected by this? Think about project scope in terms of the amount of work you need to put in, the number of people it affects, and the area it will impact.

7. How will this benefit the community?

Explain to us how your idea is going to make positive changes to your community. Maybe you plan to educate people so they change how they do things. Maybe you will make the physical/environmental features of your community stronger, safer, or more able to bounce back from natural hazards. How are you going to measure the success of your project? Tell us how and why this is going to work!

8. Describe the resources needed to make this idea happen

You should be able to implement this project; what will you need to make it happen? What will it cost and where will you get the funding to pay for it? Do you have additional sources of funding? What approvals do you need to get and how will you obtain them to do the project? Tell us where and how you will make this project happen. Think about the materials needed, the costs involved, as well as the time required to make this project happen.

9. Conclusion

Sum up your project and why it will help your community and the environment. Remember, don't introduce anything new about your idea, just go over what you've told us to remind us how great your idea is.

10. Include visuals

Show us what your project would look like in a model, drawing, cartoon, video, or graph – whatever creative way you want to express your solution. For example, if you want to make natural hazards signage - design a template and a map of proposed locations! If you want to create a rain garden – draw us a picture or make a magazine collage of the plants you would include, the size it would be, where it would be located etc.

11. Cite references

Community judges will be reading your proposal and they are often professionals and natural hazard experts so it is important that you cite your references. Who knows . . . you might be citing some of their work!