Minimum Steps that Must Be Included in Partners for Places Grant Proposals to Create a Climate Action or Sustainability Plan

Minimum Steps That Must Be Included in Grant Proposals to Create a Climate Action Plan:
1. Secure political leadership support for climate action planning
2. Create an internal cross-departmental team and a diverse community-wide steering committee
3. Develop a work plan and community outreach strategy that involves a cross-section of residents in the planning process, including people of color, people with low-incomes, and/or residents from immigrant or refugee communities
4. Inventory municipal government and community-wide greenhouse gas emissions
5. Set target emissions reduction goals and deadlines
6. Evaluate and select government and community-wide emission reduction strategies that could meet the target (the evaluation should consider ways to achieve equitable distribution of costs and benefits across the community), including strategies already planned, but not yet implemented
7. Vet and prioritize strategies through an inclusive public process
8. For each strategy identify key government and community leaders, timelines, and potential funding sources
9. Adopt targets and benchmarks for each strategy and a public reporting mechanism
10. Incorporate selected strategies into a public Climate Action Plan
11. Adopt a multi-stakeholder process for taking corrective action to stay on course to achieving the emission reduction goals

The strategies must at least address buildings, transportation, land use and community design, clean energy supply, water, and waste.

Source: ICLEI, Chicago Climate Action Plan

Minimum Steps That Must Be Included in Grant Proposals to Create a Sustainability Plan:
1. Secure political leadership support for sustainability planning
2. Create an internal cross-departmental team and a diverse Sustainability Commission
3. Develop a work plan and community outreach strategy that involves a cross-section of residents in the planning process, including people of color, people with low-incomes, and/or residents from immigrant or refugee communities
4. With the community, develop a vision of what is a sustainable community
5. Conduct a baseline assessment of environmental, economic, and social equity challenges in the community and how they interrelate, current policies and programs in place to address these issues, and gaps
6. Identify with the community what are the highest priority concerns and issues for the sustainability plan and ways to address them
7. With the community adopt sustainability goals and strategies and actions for achieving the goals
8. Identify key government and community leaders responsible for each action, timelines, and potential funding sources
9. Adopt targets and benchmarks for each action and a public reporting mechanism
10. Adopt a multi-stakeholder process for taking corrective action to stay on course to achieving the sustainability goals
11. Adopt a plan for communicating progress to the public

Sustainability challenges could include, for example, population loss, greenhouse gas emissions, high housing costs, poor air quality, rising energy costs, limited energy supply, flooding risks, endangered natural resources, or aging infrastructure.
Sustainability goals must either include (1) priorities for the environment, economy, and social equity or (2) priorities for improving the environment in ways that create jobs, increase economic development, and target environmental and economic improvement to communities most in need. The sustainability plan must acknowledge how challenges and issues are interrelated and prioritize solutions that address multiple goals. There must be a rationale for each strategy.

A preferred approach is to use the STAR Community Rating System's framework of goals, objectives and measures or the 21 Leading STAR Community Indicators to assist in identifying sustainability goals and strategies. The STAR framework integrates economic, environmental, and social aspects of sustainability and provides communities with a menu-based system to customize their approach based on local conditions and priorities. The Technical Guide to the STAR Community Rating System includes over 300 pages of best practices, definitions, methodologies, and case studies. STAR's planning guide (http://www.starcommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/STAR-Communities_Planning-Guide_May2016.pdf) provides examples for how other communities have used the STAR Community Rating Systems framework to shape their plans.

Source: ICLEI, STAR Communities, Chicago Climate Action Plan