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Dear NSF POSE Review Committee,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for PolicyEngine's proposal to establish an Open Source Ecosystem (OSE) for their economic policy analysis platform. As the Executive Director of MyFriendBen (MFB), I have had the pleasure of collaborating closely with PolicyEngine in our shared mission to advance open-source solutions in the benefits access space.

MyFriendBen has developed a benefit navigation app used by households and organizations across Colorado, including United Ways and its 211 network. We are currently expanding to North Carolina in partnership with Code the Dream. Our app, which is open source on GitHub, calculates benefit eligibility using the PolicyEngine API.

Our collaboration with PolicyEngine has been multifaceted and mutually beneficial:

1. We use PolicyEngine's API to power benefit eligibility calculations in our navigation app, enhancing our ability to serve users across Colorado and soon, North Carolina.
2. MFB developers have contributed directly to the PolicyEngine codebase, leveraging our Colorado expertise to add new program rules and refine existing models.
3. We recently received a grant from the Gates Foundation to expand our work to additional states, part of which we will subgrant to PolicyEngine for model maintenance and expansion.

As PolicyEngine plans its transition to an OSE, MyFriendBen is committed to deepening our collaboration:

- We will continue to contribute to PolicyEngine's codebase, sharing our expertise as we expand to new states.
- We plan to partner with PolicyEngine in growing the ecosystem in the benefits access world. For example, we are exploring the development of an Open Source Benefit Consortium to formalize, support, and expand the group of open-source projects in this space.
- We will collaborate on joint participation in convenings such as those organized by the Georgetown Beeck Center for Social Impact & Innovation's Digital Benefits Network, where we've identified significant demand for open shared rules engines.

- We will share insights from our own open-source development experience to inform PolicyEngine's OSE planning and governance structures.
- We commit to participating in ecosystem discovery activities, providing feedback on community engagement strategies, and helping to identify potential collaborators in the benefits access space.

The development of an OSE for PolicyEngine has the potential to significantly advance both policy analysis and benefits access tools. By fostering a collaborative, open-source environment, PolicyEngine can create a powerful ecosystem that serves researchers, policymakers, developers, and ultimately, the individuals who rely on accurate benefits information.

MyFriendBen is excited to be an active participant in shaping PolicyEngine's evolution into a robust OSE. We believe this initiative will not only enhance PolicyEngine's capabilities but also strengthen the entire open-source benefits access community.

Sincerely,

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