



How to Write a Successful Application

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Topics



- Federal Grant Making Life-cycle
- Federal Funding Opportunity
- Project Narrative
- Budget Guidance
- Standard Forms & Budget Justifications
- Reminders

Grant-making Lifecycle



Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO)

- Grants.gov
- Pre-application conference
- Letters of Intent/pre-applications
- Frequently Asked Questions

Application Submission

- Mandatory forms SF-424 family
- Certifications (e.g. CD-511)
- Project Narrative
- Budget pages/budget narrative
- Other (e.g. Bios, Letters of Commitment)

Compliance Review

- Requirements of the FFO (e.g. deadline, page limits, proper forms, etc.)
- “Responsive” to FFO (e.g. appropriate field)
- **Applications may be rejected at this stage**

Grant-making Lifecycle cont.



Technical Review

- Independent reviews based on criteria published in FFO

Selecting Official

- Determines which applications to recommend for funding
- May skip high-scoring applications based on Selection Criteria published in FFO

Administrative Review/Award

- Risk Assessment of applicants (Suspension/Debarment, etc.)
- Budget reviews
- Issue Notice of Award

The FFO is Your Guide



Grant Application Checklist (example)



SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance



SF-424A – Budget Information



SF-424B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs



SF-LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities



CD-511 – Certification Regarding Lobbying



Project Narrative



Budget Narrative

Project Narrative Checklist (example)



Organizational Capacity

- Who are the key personnel and what are their qualifications?
- What prior experience does the organization have in this subject area and how successful was the project?

Resources

- What internal resources can be leveraged for this project?
- What relationships and outside resources are available?

Project Plan

- How will work be executed?
- What is a realistic timeline for accomplishing goals?
- How will performance goals be measured?

Project Narrative – To Do's



- Adhere to the content and form requirements Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO)
- Demonstrate understanding of the requirements
- Be clear and precise
- Be specific about outcomes
- Be specific about the duration of the project(s) and anticipated milestones

*Write to your audience!

Project Narrative - Common Problems



Writer's Block

Focus more on writing ideas

Refine format and language later

Logical Flow

Revisit to ensure proper flow

Introduce topic in first sentence of each paragraph

Excessive Long Sentences

Use clear and concise language to ensure properly understood

Passive Voice

Passive voice is a misuse of words; use active voice

Ex. Use "shall" or "will" (not "should" or "may")

Consistent

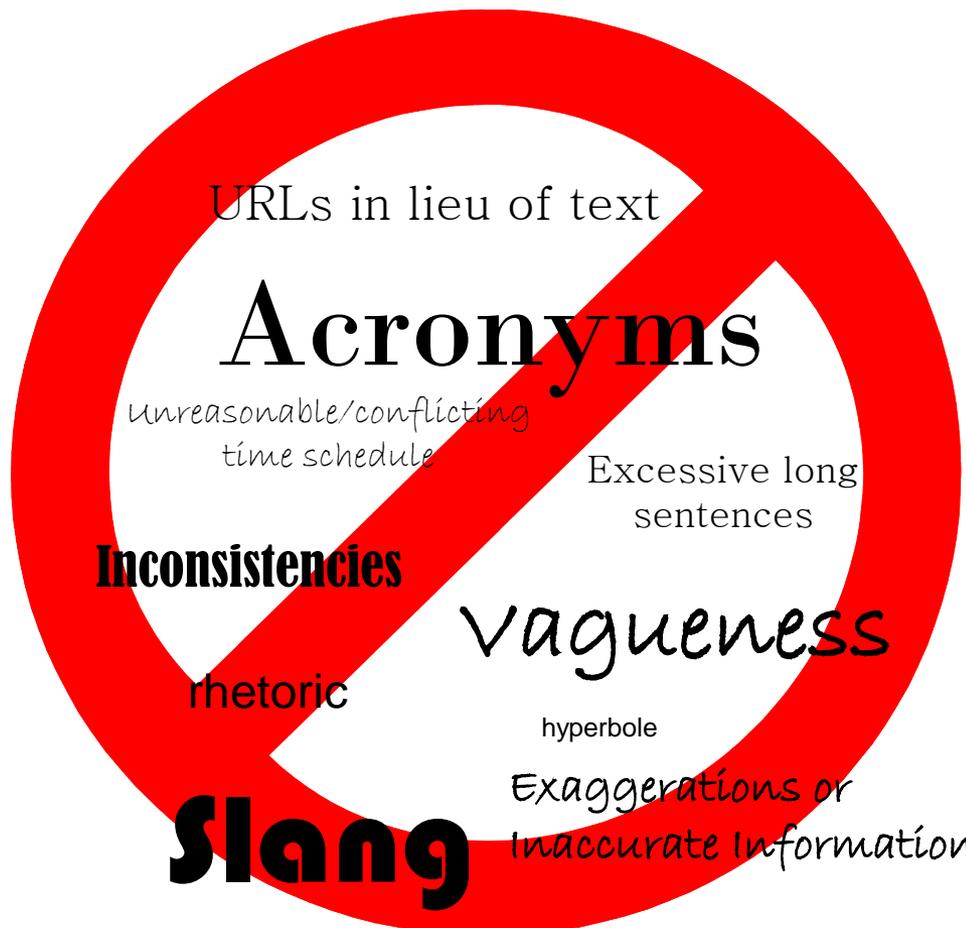
Ensure your stated goals, approach, and outputs/ outcomes are consistent

Reasonable time schedule

Carefully consider proposed activities for the project period

Avoid requests for no-cost extensions at the end of the project period

Project Narrative – To Avoid



URLs in lieu of text

Acronyms

*unreasonable/conflicting
time schedule*

Excessive long
sentences

Inconsistencies

Vagueness

rhetoric

hyperbole

Slang

*Exaggerations or
Inaccurate Information**

*All information submitted to the Federal government in the application and any reports is subject to the False Claims Act

Personally Identifiable Information



- Take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information (PII)
 - Avoid home addresses and home/personal cell phone numbers on resumes
 - Do not provide Social Security Numbers
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests

CONFIDENTIAL

Budget Narrative – To Do's



- Demonstrate costs are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Ensure consistent with SF-424 (#18) and SF-424A, and the match adds up!
- Provide breakdown of budget that aligns with the SF-424A object class categories
- Provide breakdown of Federal vs. non-Federal
- Program Income (i.e., client fees, membership fees, success fees, and/or other acceptable fee structures proposed) must be adequately addressed and properly documented, including but not limited to how the proceeds will be billed, collected, waived and used by the applicant in furthering the program objectives.
- Include most recent negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), if applicable
- Adhere to the cost principles

SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance



OMB Number: 4310-0004
Expiration Date: 03/10/16

- Ensure name and address are correct
- Ensure EIN/TIN and DUNS are accurate
- Include Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number
- Include funding opportunity number and funding title
- Include a descriptive project title
- Ensure project start/end dates are accurate
- Ensure the federal and non-federal share in #18 – Estimated Funding is accurate!
- Signed/dated by Authorized Representative

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

***1. Type of Submission:**
 Preapplication
 Application
 Changed/Corrected Application

***2. Type of Application:**
 New
 Continuation
 Revision

*** If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):**

*** Other (Specify):**

***3. Date Received:** **4. Applicant Identifier:**

5a. Federal Entity Identifier: **5b. Federal Award Identifier:**

State Use Only:
6. Date Received by State: **7. State Application Identifier:**

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

*** a. Legal Name:**

*** b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):** *** c. Organizational DUNS:**

4. Address:

*** Street:**
Street2:
*** City:**
County/Parish:
*** State:**
Province:
*** Country:** USA, UNITED STATES
*** Zip / Postal Code:**

9. Organizational Unit:
Department Name: **Division Name:**

1. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix: *** First Name:**
Middle Name:
*** Last Name:**
Suffix:
Title:
Organizational Affiliation:
*** Telephone Number:** **Fax Number:**
*** Email:**

SF-424A – Budget Information



BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

OMB Number: 4040-0005
Expiration Date: 06/30/2014

- Page 1:
 - Break down budget by Federal vs. non-Federal
 - Separate Federal vs. non-Federal each year (each row for each year)
- Page 1A:
 - Breakdown object class categories by Federal vs. non-Federal
 - Breakdown object class categories per year (each column for each year) – Submit a separate SF-424A for non-federal share, if needed
- Page 2 (Non-Federal share, forecasted cash needs, budget estimates of federal funds needed for balance of project, and other budget information)
- Ensure consistent with #18 of SF-424, and with the budget narrative

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		Total (g)
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	
1.		\$	\$	\$	\$	
2.						
3.						
4.						
5. Totals		\$	\$	\$	\$	

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SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
a. Personnel	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
b. Fringe Benefits					
c. Travel					
d. Equipment					
e. Supplies					
f. Contractual					
g. Construction					
h. Other					
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)					\$
j. Indirect Charges					\$
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
7. Program Income	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

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Are Proposed Costs Allowable?



- See the Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200
 - New awards on or after 12/26/2014
 - Funding increments on or after 12/26/2014

- Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200 Contents
 - Subpart A—Acronyms and Definitions
 - Subpart B—General Provisions
 - Subpart C—Pre-Federal Award Requirements and Contents of Federal Awards
 - Subpart D—Post Federal Award Requirements
 - Subpart E—Cost Principles
 - Subpart F—Audit Requirements

Budget Narrative: Personnel



— Personnel:

- Your staff (not contractors/vendors)
- Names, titles, salary, level of effort, amount charged for federal vs. non-federal (for vacant positions, include anticipated hire date)
- Provide justification and description of positions, and relate positions to program objectives
- Cannot exceed 100% on all active projects
- Building cost of living increases into the budget and justify reasonableness
- Be mindful of direct vs. indirect costs (i.e., administrative staff)

Budget Narrative: Fringe & Travel



— Fringe:

- Provide rate for each position
- If rate exceeds 35%, provide breakdown of what's included in the rate

— Travel:

- Provide detail (who is going, when are they going, for how long, where are they going (origin & destination), why are they going (explain how the travel directly relates to the project), how are they traveling
- Not sure? Base it on historical information.
- Domestic vs. foreign travel – Fly America Act
- Travel should be for your staff (travel for subawardees and contractors/vendors should fall under “other” or “contractual” respectively)

Budget Narrative: Equipment & Supplies



— Equipment:

- Equipment vs. supplies: Equipment – useful life of 1+ year and a per-unit acquisition cost of \$5k+
- Lease vs. purchase analysis
- Closeout – helpful to provide your equipment disposition requirements
- Equipment maintenance fee?
Equipment/Other.

— Supplies:

- List by supply item
- Provide quantity per unit
- Provide purpose/explanation for supply

Budget Narrative: Contractual & Other



— Contractual:

- Provide separate budgets for each contract or vendor
- Provide name of contractor/vendor, method of selection (provide justification if non-competitive), period of performance, scope of work, criteria for measuring accountability

— Other:

- Subawards – provide subaward budgets
- Include items not included in previous direct categories
- List by type with breakdown of cost, quantity, and necessity for project

Budget Narrative: Indirect Costs & Non-Federal Share



— Indirect costs:

- Provide most recent negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA)
- 10% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs (MTDC) for those who never had a NICRA
- Pass-through entities must honor subrecipient rate 
- MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental cost, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward and subcontract in excess of \$25k 

— Non-Federal share:

- Provide sources with adequate documentation
- Provide same level of detail as federal

Reminders



- Register for SAM.gov or update SAM.gov annually
- Sign up for Grants.gov updates
- Plan for internal review and submission
- Set internal deadlines and coordinate
- Proofread, Proofread, Proofread!

Contact Info



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