

Preparing for a Federal Grant Application

- Sign up for the e-mail list serv for [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) to stay aware of general federal funding opportunities typically referred to as Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Sign up for the e-mail list serv for the agency that is offering the funding opportunity
- Determine Eligibility for Opportunity and alignment with mission and goals of organization
- Ensure that your organization signs up for the necessary accounts (ex. will the submission be on grants.gov or an agency portal?)
 - Authorized representative for the organization will likely have to set up 2-factor authentication for logging in
- Collect basic organizational information
 - Ensure NICRA or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate is up to date
 - NICRA refers to an agreed upon rate between a nonprofit and the federal government that establishes indirect costs.
 - UEI (check disbarment status on SAM.gov)
 - Unique Entity Identifier – formally known as a DUNS number. A 12-digit alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by [Sam.gov](https://sam.gov)
 - EIN – A 9-digit federal tax identification number assigned by the IRS
 - Obtain one at [EIN Status](https://www.irs.gov/ein)
 - Proof of status (501c3 letter)
 - Obtain a copy of your determination letter through the [IRS website](https://www.irs.gov/charities-nonprofits).
- Determine if you are planning to hire a federal grant writer
 - If yes, identify prospects & start conversations
 - Weigh Pros & Cons
 - Example: Expertise in navigating complex requirements related to federal grant application processes. Increased chances of success, technical knowledge and compliance. Cons - can be costly, lack of organizational knowledge, limited focus, etc.
- Identify key partnerships if planning to apply or subgrant
 - If yes, prepare template. Template included below.
- Once the opportunity is open:
 - Download application packet from the portal Review the guidance documents carefully
 - NOFO's describe the details of purpose of the grant, eligibility requirements, award estimates, relevant deadlines, time periods of grant, and methods of selections.
 - Create a work plan based on the application window (typically 4-6 weeks ??)
 - Host an internal strategy kickoff meeting to assign roles/responsibilities
 - Identify key goals, partners, resources needed
 - Schedule recurring/weekly meetings for the project team
 - Ongoing recruitment of partners, supporters and collaborators is still ongoing

- Develop a logic model/concept
 - Assign POC to develop evaluation methodology to progress, collect data and measure program's impact and review/create reporting schedule based on NOFO needs;
- Sign up for any technical assistance webinars offered by the agency
- If time permits, establish rapport with previous grantees for the opportunity that you are applying for, and seek guidance from them
- **Program plan**
 - 4-6 Weeks Out - Based on roles and team, tasks for writing, partners coordination, and budgeting
 - Assign POC to allocate budget and resources and justification; based on grant guidelines; leave enough time for review and adjustments
 - Writing of sections to include project descriptions that meet the need statement and methodology
 - Timeline, Evaluation, and Sustainability Plans
 - Collection of letters of support from partners
 - Any financial documentation, audits, letters of determination, organizational charts, resumes, etc.
 - 2-3 Weeks Out
 - Continue weekly check ins
 - Submit the proposal for internal review and feedback
 - Finalize grant components based on input
 - Double check adherence to submission guidelines
 - 1 Week Out
 - Ensure that all portal log ins are active and registrations are satisfactory
 - More than one contact has access to portals
 - Submit the proposal ahead of the deadline to avoid technical issues
 - **Do not wait until the last day to apply for a grant**
- Developing an evaluation plan for your proposal
 - Some agencies will give explicit instructions for outcome measurement. Always prioritize and follow the guidelines in the NOFA. If the agency doesn't provide a specific template for outcome measurement, but requests an evaluation plan, a competitive grant application evaluation plan will contain the following pieces of information (often through an Annex):
 1. A clean logic model or visual results framework that aligns with your project narrative and the agency's goals for the program/
 2. *Illustrative* Indicators that could be utilized that align with the outcomes and outputs described in your results framework (try to have at absolute minimum one per outcome or output).
 3. Methods, sources, frequency of, and disaggregation of the indicators you are proposing.
 4. Target projections for indicators where feasible.
 5. Any high-level data collection approaches you might take (pre/post testing, etc.) that might benefit from descriptions
 6. Plans for reviewing data that is being collected in a collaborative format. Including kinds of activities you will do, at what frequency, and who will be involved. Online resources for Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) will be helpful in developing this. Strong CLA plans include

7. Summary of data collection software, technology, and security protocols
- **The Logic model:** Utilize the exact language, goal numbers, etc. that the agency utilizes. You want to be able to draw an explicit, direct, line between what they are trying to accomplish, the work you plan to do, and what/how are doing to measure your work. Here are some ways to do this:
 - Look within the NOFA for any grant program specific theories of change, specific success indicators, or the logical framework from the perspective of the agency
 - Do research on the agency website or the grant opportunity website to find any agency-wide logical framework or theory of change. Sometimes agencies will have standard indicators that they utilize across all programs. It is often publicly available.
 - If you are unable to find either – look through the NOFA carefully looking for the agencies ultimate, society-level goals, specific program objectives/components, and activities that they suggest. They can be a guide for the language you use in a logical framework or in your planning.
 - **Indicators, data collection frequencies format:** UnidosUS utilizes the following format for items 2-4 listed above. The complete table will take up to an entire page of an annex document for very large grants– but you can adjust to your needs:

Indicator	Disaggregation	Method/Data Source	Frequency	4 Year Goals
[Output or Outcome Description Used in Your Logic Model]				
Number of people to be placed in new job	Gender, Race	Participant records	Monthly updates	1,000
Percent of people to increase knowledge	Gender, Race	Pre/Post surveys	Ongoing – as training completes	80%

- **Learning Plan Format:**
 - Bullet point list of 4-8 “learning questions”. We encourage looking at CLA online resources to help identify what strong learning questions look like.
 - A table that details the proposed format & frequency of “Learning Activities”:

Activity	Description	Frequency	Stakeholders Involved
Pause and Reflect Sessions	Session reviewing key performance metrics from program to date & facilitated discussion to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities	Quarterly	Internal program team, Names of specific external partners

- The format and level of detail of your evaluation plan will need to be right-sized based on proposal size and agency expectations
- **Working on a federal proposal budget.**

- Review NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) and guidance from the respective agency to understand allowable and unallowable costs, indirect costs, and matching requirements.
- Examine the application packet and ensure that you use the agency's provided template when developing the budget.
- Plan how the organization will implement the project, drafting an outline of the costs associated with the efforts, including:
 - Personnel
 - Travel
 - Meetings
 - Consultants
 - Subgrantees
 - Other direct costs
- Prepare a strong budget justification explaining why each cost is necessary and how it was calculated.
- Conduct multiple budget reviews to ensure compliance with federal guidelines and that the budget is reasonable.
- Account for potential cost overruns, ensuring the budget provides coverage for unexpected expenses.
- Coordinate with subgrantees or partners, if applicable, to make sure their budgets align with the proposal's goals and federal regulations.

Supplemental Information

Letter of Commitment Template

Organizational Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Org Applicant Name,

Re: Letter of Commitment for Grant Program Name

On behalf of Partner Organization Name, I am pleased to submit this Letter of Commitment as part of the grant proposal being submitted by Lead Applicant Organization Name to Federal Funding Agency Name for the Grant Program Name.

As a committed partner in this project, Partner Organization Name fully supports the goals and objectives of the proposed initiative, which aims to Briefly describe the project's objectives and relevance to the partner organization. We recognize the importance of this work and are enthusiastic about the positive impact it will have on the community, sector, or beneficiaries.

Commitment and Roles:

Partner Organization Name will contribute to the project by:

1. Specific Contributions/Responsibilities
 - [Example: Provide expertise in workforce development by offering technical assistance to participants]
 - [Example: Host workshops and training sessions for project participants]
 - [Example: Share data and resources needed for the project's research and evaluation]
2. In-Kind/Financial Contributions
 - [Example: In-kind contributions such as office space, training materials, or staff time valued at \$XXX]
 - [Example: Financial contributions of \$XXX to support project activities]
3. Collaborative Efforts
 - [Example: Participate in regular planning and evaluation meetings to ensure project success and alignment with goals]
4. Timeline and Deliverables
 - [Example: Commit to delivering specific outcomes, such as 10 training sessions by the end of Year 1]

We look forward to working collaboratively with Lead Applicant Organization Name and other partners to ensure the success of this project. Our organization is fully prepared to dedicate the necessary resources to fulfill our role in this initiative and achieve the outlined objectives. We understand the importance of accountability and will adhere to all reporting and evaluation requirements.

Contact Information:

For any additional questions or further clarification, please feel free to contact me directly at Phone Number or Email Address.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this important effort. We are confident that together we will make a significant impact.

Sincerely,

Signed Representative

NICRA Template

Obtaining your NICRA

If you need a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) and EDA is your cognizant agency, you must prepare your full indirect cost rate proposal (ICRP) in accordance with [2 CFR part 200](#), and it is recommended that you use the templates available on DOI's website (links provided below).

- General Information: <https://ibc.doi.gov/ICS/indirect-cost/nonprofit>
- Templates: <https://ibc.doi.gov/ICS/indirect-cost/nonprofit/templates>

Once a complete ICRP is developed, you must send an email to DOI at EDA_Indirect@ibc.doi.gov with the following:

Subject line: [Name of Org] – FY[Insert year you are requesting a rate for] – ICRP

Body of text:

Hello,

Attached is our indirect cost rate proposal for your review. The proposal requests a [insert type of rate] FY xxxx (add additional rates and years as needed).

Included in the proposal:

- *Signed Certificate of Indirect Costs*
- *Rate Information Narrative and Cost Policy Description*
- *Indirect Rate Calculation and supporting schedules*
- *Audited Financial Statements (or Profit & Loss Statement if no audited financials) for FY xxxx*

Thank you,

[Name]

Grant Checklist – Ex. Digital Equity Competitive Grant

Document Name:	Document Description:	Word Counts?	Person Responsible:	Status:	Access Link:
#1 Application packet summary					
#2 NOFO					
#3 Competitive Application Form	This Competitive Application Form (Reference Only) outlines all of the questions and prompts that will be asked of applicants via the formal application on the NTIA Grants Portal. <i>All applications must be submitted through the NTIA Grants Portal, which will open for Competitive applications in August. This document should be used for planning purposes,</i>				
	SAM.gov account				
	Applicant Entity Type				
	Evidence of Status				
	Partnerships Table				
For each subgrantee	Evidence of Partner's Status				
For each subgrantee	Letter of Commitment				
	Executive Summary				
	Total Funding Requested				
	Barriers to Digital Equity checkbox				
	Covered Populations Served				
	Geographic Regions Served				
	Activities and Interventions				
	Environmental and Historical Preservation				
	Project Plan				
	Description of Applicant Experience and Capability. Describe the organizational structure of the applicant				

	and evidence of the financial capability/stability of the organization to implement the proposed project.				
	Implementation team experience: Describe the implementation team and its experience with the programmatic/technical aspects of project management, including past successes and relevant experience managing similar large programmatic initiatives and a demonstrated ability to manage large federal grant awards effectively.	2500 characters (approx 500 words)			
	Experience providing services to covered populations: Describe the applicant's experience providing services to one or more of the Covered Populations and the extent to which the applicant has facilitated direct support, technical assistance, and capacity building across the Covered Populations.	2500 characters (approx 500 words)			
	Collaboration strategy and experience: Describe the applicant's strategy and experience in managing and fostering collaboration among subrecipients and subcontractors (e.g., conflict management plans, team agreements) (if applicable).	2500 characters (approx 500 words)			
	Upload one-page resumes of no more than 5 key personnel from applicant				
	Scenario Risk and Mitigation Plan				
	Data Stewardship Plan				
	Sustainability				
	Matching				
	Match Waiver (if sought/given by Asst Sec.)				
	Source of Matching Funds 6.1.3 Source of Matching Funds Please describe the source of the matching funds and the amount of matching funds to be provided in cash versus in-kind donations. (2500 character limit)	2500 characters (approx 500 words)			

	Description of other funding				
	Related Outside funding				
	Unjust Enrichment Certification				
	Benefit to Covered Populations Certification				
	Build America Buy America Act Certification				
	Assurances (list of acceptances)				
	Attest & Submit (checkbox)				
#4 Consolidated Budget Form	This Competitive Consolidated Budget Form Excel document is required for all applicants and is where the applicants will list all of their required budget information.				
	NICRA (upload)				
	Administrative Costs Cap Certification				
	Justification for Funding Amount Requested (if under \$5M or over \$12M)				
#5 Partnership Members Form	This Competitive Partnership Members Form Excel document is required only for applicants who are applying as a partnership and requests relevant information on each member entity applying as part of a partnership.				
For each subgrantee	Partnership Member Legal Name				
For each subgrantee	Legal Identifiers (UEI and EIN)				
For each subgrantee	Entity Type				
For each subgrantee	Role in Partnership				
For each subgrantee	Involvement in Other Applications				
For each subgrantee	Allocation of Funding				

For each subgrantee	Contribution to Match (cash or in kind)				
For each subgrantee	POC Name, Phone #, Email Address, Address				
#6 Project Application Form	This Competitive Project(s) Description Form Excel document is required for all applicants and requests information related to each specific implementation activity and/or intervention.				
	Project Name				
	Project Summary				
	Barriers to Digital Equity				
	Estimated Population to be Served / Covered Populations Served %				
	Societal and Economic Goals of the DE Act				
	Evaluation Strategy				
	Implemented directly or via subgrant?				
	Subgrantee Legal Name & Identifiers (UEI and EIN)				
	Relationship to Digital Equity Plans				
	Geographies Served				
	Covered Households				
	Estimated Outputs				
	Environmental and Historical Preservation				
#7 SF424	This Standard Form-424 Application for Federal Assistance must be completed and submitted by all applicants.				
#8 SF-LLL	This Standard Form-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities must be completed and submitted for those applicants that need to disclose lobbying activities that have been secured to influence the outcome of a Federal action.				
#9 CD-511	This Form CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying must be completed to certify that Federal funds have not been used and will not be used for lobbying in				

	connection with this request for Federal financial assistance.				
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