



Registration and Pre-Application Narrative Guidance

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Registration

Follow these instructions to [Register Your Organization's Account](#).

Information collected at registration for the Applicant organization:

- Applicant Organization
- Organization Type (eligible applicant type)
- Address including the County where your entity is organized to do business
- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Unique Entity ID (UEI) - Applicant must enter a UEI to complete registration. Go to Sam.gov to receive your UEI. This process can take 1-3 business days.
- SAM.gov account

After you submit your registration, NBRC will review it for completeness and eligibility. This process may take 1 to 2 business days. NBRC will either Approve or Reject the registration. If approved, the organization's Authorized Official will get an email about the approval and another email to set up their account's username and password. If rejected, the organization's Authorized Official will receive an explanation.

This information will be requested as part of the registration process and transferred to the pre-application. If you're invited to apply, all of this information will be carried over into your application.

Links and Resources

A pre-application is **required** for all NBRC grant programs. **Pre-applications must be submitted before 5:00pm EST on due date.**

- **The NBRC Grants Management System.** Pre-applications must be submitted using the [NBRC Grants Management System](#) (GMS). **GMS Technical Resources**, including instructions to [Register Your Organization's Account](#) and instructions for [Creating and Submitting a Pre-application](#) are available on the NBRC's [Resources](#) page. Scroll down to "Grant Administration Information and Grants Management System (GMS) Guidance Documents" to find a library of helpful resources and forms.
- **Registration.** Applicants must register for an account with the NBRC Grants Management System **before** submitting a pre-application. See Section [Registration](#) above for details.
- **Pre-Application Support.** Many resources are available on the [Pre-Application Support page](#) of the NBRC website to help you with your pre-application.
- **Waivers.** All applicable waiver requests **must** be submitted with the pre-application. See the [Forms and Files Tab](#) section for details, or the [Grant Programs User Manual](#) for more information.
 - The pre-application will be marked as ineligible if a **75% Expenditure Waiver** and/or a **Significant Benefit Waiver** is required and **NOT** submitted.
 - An LDD Waiver **must** be requested and submitted with the pre-application. If the waiver is not submitted with the pre-application and the project is invited to the application phase, LDD grant administration services will be required, and the costs must be included in the project budget submitted with the application.

Pre-Application Development

Before starting your pre-application review the above resources, with special attention to the [GMS Technical Resources](#) and the [Grant Programs User Manual](#). The information provided in this document is intended to supplement those materials. After reviewing all support materials, you may want to write your narrative responses in a word processing document to then copy and paste into the GMS pre-application text boxes.

Before submitting your pre-application, it's highly recommended to review your responses against Program Scoring Criteria in Part 3 of the Grant Programs User Manual.

Here are some recommendations to ensure your pre-application is complete and competitive:

- **Project title** – Please give your project a unique title that provides a brief description of your project. Example: Smithville Wastewater Expansion Project

- **Co-applicant** – If applicable, list a co-applicant when the entity owns real property receiving the benefit of an NBRC investment. Co-applicants **must** meet all the same eligibility requirements as an applicant (including applicable waiver requirements). Project partners that are part of project activities should not be listed as co-applicants.

Overview Tab

Responses in this section should be concise but give enough information so that someone who is not familiar with your community, region, and organization will understand your project.

Competitive projects will show how they support program priorities, what specific activities will be completed with NBRC funding, and the expected outcomes.

Each narrative text box has limited formatting, so keep your responses simple. Do not paste tables, bullets or text with extensive formatting into the text box. Do not attach lengthy reports to your pre-application, instead provide weblinks to studies and reports that support the need for your project. Please provide weblinks to studies and reports that support your project.

PROJECT ABSTRACT narrative guidance: The Project Abstract should explain the basic idea of the project and how it fits with the applicable NBRC grant program. It should be no more than 2-3 paragraphs long and include the following information:

- **Primary purpose:** State the main goal, project location, beneficiaries, and expected economic impacts.
- **Funding Category:** List applicable NBRC Program Funding Category(ies) your project fits into and briefly explain why.
- **Higher Maximum Award Request (if applicable):** Describe how your project meets the criteria for the Higher Maximum Award size.
 - For the **Catalyst Program**, list the multiple project categories or multiple locations that satisfy the NBRC criteria. Describe if you have discussed the higher maximum award request with the State Program Manager.
 - For the **Timber for Transit Program**, either 1) list and describe how your project meets two or more investment priorities, 2) explain if you have discussed the higher maximum request with your SPM or NBRC, and whether they agree the project addresses a time sensitive issue of magnitude or severity, or 3) list the multiple eligible locations where the project will take place.
 - The **Forest Economy Program** does not allow for higher maximum requests (>\$1,000,000). Higher maximum requirements do not apply.
- **Project Status:** Describe the status of the project – ready for implementation, planning tasks ongoing, early stages.
- **Project Scope:** Describe what planning has been done, if parts of the project are already underway, what will be done with NBRC funding, and the project’s timeline.

PROJECT GOALS AND OUTCOMES narrative guidance: The Goals and Outcomes should explain the expected economic outcomes (e.g. impacts on jobs, employment and wage growth) of this project as well as the scale of expected economic impacts on the community, county, or region. The project goals and outcomes should clearly describe how the project meets an economic need or opportunity in the region, alleviates economic distress, and contributes to economic growth. The goals and outcomes narrative should be 1-2 paragraphs long and include the following information:

- Provide a robust but realistic description of the expected direct economic outcomes (e.g. impacts on jobs, employment, business opportunity, wage growth) of this project. Appendix G lists examples of Economic Outcomes and Outputs. Choose those that best apply to your project. Competitive proposals will include supporting documentation such as letters of support, relevant studies or plans that back up your claims.
- Describe how the project aligns with your State's economic development strategies and other community economic development plans.
- Describe the scale of expected *direct* economic impacts on the community, county, or region.
- Describe project sustainability including if and how the proposed work/program/infrastructure will be sustained beyond the life of the grant.

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT narrative guidance: The Project Beneficiaries and Community Context should describe who will benefit from the project and why it matters to the community, county or region. The project beneficiaries and community context narrative should be 1-2 paragraphs long and include the following information:

- Describe who will benefit from your project
- Why this project matters to the community, region and/or State.
- If applicable, how does this project serve or benefit rural communities with populations of less than 5,000 or underrepresented communities?
- Describe benefits to underrepresented and/or underserved communities. Projects that articulate strategies to reach these communities, including making project activities fully accessible will receive a higher score. Letters of support or other documentation of community support that directly cites benefits to underrepresented communities will receive a higher score.

STATEMENT OF NEED narrative guidance: The statement of need should make a clear case for why this project is timely, requires NBRC funding to happen, and addresses a critical challenge or problem. The statement of need narrative should be 1-2 paragraphs and include the following information:

- What is the challenge or problem the project seeks to address?
- What is the proposed solution?
- Why is this project important?
- Describe the opportunity gained by funding this project now.
- Why is NBRC funding important for this project?

PROGRAM INVESTMENT PRIORITIES narrative guidance: The Program Investment Priorities should identify and demonstrate how the project addresses program priorities, including relevant state priorities. The program investment priorities narrative should be 2-3 paragraphs long and include the following information:

- Describe how your project will address NBRC program priorities.
 - For **Catalyst Program**, see Alignment with Investment and Program Priorities in the NBRC Scoring Criteria and state scoring criteria. Describe and document how your project will address state priorities. If you're unsure about alignment with state priorities, consider connecting with your State Program Manager. NBRC recommends interested applicants in Maine, New York and Vermont complete the [Project Interest Form](#) before meeting with their State Program Manager. Interested applicants in New Hampshire are encouraged to sign up for the [technical assistance program](#) that is available in eligible New Hampshire counties and communities. NBRC priorities include:
 - Directly benefit rural communities with populations of less than 5,000 people.
 - Directly benefit underserved communities. NBRC has statutory authority to define areas within the region as distressed, according to 40 U.S.C. §15702, including high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration. Communities that suffer from a combination of socioeconomic and environmental burdens, including high unemployment and poverty, basic resources.
 - Contribute to community resilience such as how project helps communities prevent, reduce, withstand, and/or improve recovery from extreme weather or strengthens physical, behavioral and social health of community to withstand and adapt to current and projected public health emergencies.
 - For the **Forest Economy Program**, NBRC and states evaluate projects based on their ability to address at least one of the five program investment priorities. These are the priorities for making investments through the Forest Economy program and should be closely considered when developing a proposal. Review the Grant Programs User Manual and FEP Information Session on the [Pre-Application Support](#) page for more information.
 - For the **Timber for Transit Program**, NBRC and states evaluate projects based on their ability to address six program investment priorities. These are the priorities for making investments through the Timber for Transit program and should be closely considered when developing a proposal. Review the Grant Programs User Manual and T4T Information Session on the [Pre-Application Support](#) page for more information.

Have you previously received NBRC funds? If yes, please provide NBRC grant number. If you believe you have received an NBRC grant in the past, but are not sure of the NBRC grant number, please email admin@nbrc.gov and we will provide you with that information.

Does this project serve a rural community with a population of less than 5,000? Please include a simple yes or no response. If yes, provide documentation (census data, municipal or planning reports, etc.) that your project is located within a community of <5,000 people. Proposals that do not include documentation will not receive points for this scoring category.

Does this project benefit an underserved community? NBRC has statutory authority to define areas within the region as distressed, according to 40 USC 15702, including high rates of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration. Communities that suffer from a combination of socioeconomic and environmental burdens, including high unemployment and poverty, basic resources or conditions, such as sub-standard housing, medical and educational facilities, and civil rights concerns are communities which may be most applicable.

Please provide documentation only for the town(s) where NBRC funds will be spent or target population(s) to be served. You may also discuss the scale of the impact to the region or population to be impacted. Proposals that do not include documentation will not receive points for this scoring criteria. If applicable, provide documentation (census data, municipal or planning reports, etc.) that your project benefits an underserved community.

Overview Tab - Project Contacts

There is a limit of 2 project contacts for each application. One must be the Authorized Official with designated signing authority in the GMS and you may add one other project contact who will be responsible for working on your NBRC grant submission. Please include their contact information and role with the project. Detailed instructions for [Adding Users in the GMS](#) is available on the [Resources Page](#).

In addition to the 2 project contacts, you may also associate the contact from your Local Development District (LDD) as your “LDD Contact”. Your LDD may be a resource for developing your proposal or able to connect you to technical assistance services.

Locations Tab

List only the County(ies) and State(s) where project activities will occur. Do not include County(ies) and State(s) that may be impacted as a result of your project.

Budget Tab

All information provided within the Budget section should be consistent and align with information provided in the Overview section of your pre-application.

If you are invited to apply, the information you provide in this section will carry to your application. Budget details provided in your pre-application may be preliminary and based on the information available at the time. If you are invited to apply, you will need to update any budget details that have changed.

Budget Tab – Budget Periods Table

Use the Budget Periods table to map out expected project costs by category and funding source. These budget categories align with the SF-424cbw budget form which will be required for those invited to submit a full application.

Helpful Tips:

- Your Budget Periods table must include costs for NEPA and LDD grant administration if you do not request an LDD waiver. These must be included in the budget line item for “Other Direct Costs”. Note: LDDs are compensated for their grant administration services through a reimbursement process with the grantee. The grant administration fee for all NBRC awards of \$400,000 or less is \$8,000. The grant administration fee for all NBRC awards above \$400,000 is based on the formula of 2% of the NBRC requested amount.
- The match must meet or exceed the minimum required match amount based on your project location. If you do not enter adequate match, you will receive an error message. [GMS Technical Resources](#) are available to navigate error messages when submitting the pre-application.
- Identify how project costs will be allocated between the NBRC share and matching funds.
- [Cost sharing or matching requirements](#) may be met by other Federal grants when authorized by those other agencies, but only up to 80% of the total project cost. An exception exists for projects where NBRC is neither the sole nor primary federal source of funding.
- Information in this section must be consistent with information provided in the **Budget Narrative** and **Funding Sources Table**.

Budget Tab - Budget Narrative

The Budget Narrative is used to describe and justify the costs listed in the Budget Periods table and should provide enough information to understand how NBRC funds will be spent. The budget narrative must summarize in detail all expenses covered by each budget category in the budget periods table. All expenses over \$5,000 must be listed with a description of the cost and an explanation of how the cost was determined. Please clarify which parts of your budget are estimates, based on quotes or fixed price.

Helpful Tips:

- For the Timber for Transit program, list and describe the advanced wood materials you intend to incorporate in the project. Be specific.

Budget Tab-Funding Sources Table

In the Funding Sources table you will list the source (name and federal or non-federal), type (loan, grant, other), amount, date of commitment or anticipated date of commitment, and

status (secured/committed, pending/anticipated). Total amounts in this table must align with total amounts in the Budget Periods Table.

Helpful Tips:

- Do not enter funds requested from NBRC in this table.
- Cost sharing or matching requirements may be met by other Federal grants when authorized by those other agencies, but only up to 80% of the total project cost. An exception exists for projects where NBRC is neither the sole nor primary federal source of funding. See Section D Part III. Federal Funding Ceiling.
- NBRC funds may be used to match other federally funded projects (when both federal agencies allow).
- NBRC funds may not be used to “supplant” existing federal programs.

Forms & Files Tab

At the time of pre-application, there are three waiver documents to consider in the Forms and Files section. **If you intend to submit a waiver, it must be done during the pre-application phase.**

- **75% Prior Award Expenditure Waiver:** This waiver is applicable for those organizations that have an open NBRC grant with a remaining balance of more than 25% of the original grant award. See **Appendix D** for more details.
- **Significant Benefit Waiver:** This waiver is applicable in two instances which are described below. See **Appendix E** for more details.
 1. An exception exists for **projects** located within an Attainment County but outside of one of the identified “Isolated Areas of Distress” that will bring significant economic benefits to NBRC Distressed or Transitional counties.
 2. An exception exists for **applicants or co-applicants** with established operations located outside of the NBRC service area but within a member state when the project that will bring significant economic benefits to NBRC Distressed or Transitional counties.
- **Local Development District Waiver:** The NBRC Federal-State partnership is aided by a group of regional organizations called **Local Development Districts (LDDs)** that assist the NBRC in its outreach activities and administer NBRC investments for grantees. Each NBRC Program award is required to use an LDD for grant administration assistance unless the applicant is an agency of State government, an LDD themselves, or has requested and received LDD waiver approval from NBRC prior to the submission of the application. See the [Grant Programs User Manual](#) for more information.