



## Application Narrative Guidance

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## Application General Information

**Applications are by invitation only.** An applicant must submit a pre-application and have been issued an invitation to apply to be eligible to apply for funding. Applications must be submitted using NBRC’s [Grants Management System](#).

**Applications must be submitted before 5:00pm EST on due date. See the [program timeline](#).**

Visit the [Application Support page](#) of the NBRC website for more details, including pre-recorded programmatic information sessions. Many resources, including step-by-step technical instructions on how to complete and submit an application in the Grants Management System, are available on the [Resources](#) page of the NBRC website. Click on “Grant Administration Information and Grants Management System (GMS) Guidance Documents” to find a library of helpful resources and forms.

## Locating Your Invitation to Apply and Feedback

A notification of invitation to apply and feedback is sent to the Organization’s Authorized Official and any other contacts listed in the “Overview” tab of the pre-application record (PR-NBRC-0000). The invitation and feedback are provided using the email feature of the “Collab” tab

located in the GMS pre-application record. Project contacts can view this email in the pre-application Collab tab, or in your email inbox (be sure to check spam/junk folders!)

## Early Application Development Steps

Applicants are strongly encouraged to:

- Visit the [Application Support Page](#) of the NBRC website for more details and resources.
- Review your Invitation to Apply for any feedback or requested revisions from the NBRC and State Program Manager. This is found by logging into the GMS and viewing the **Collab Tab** in your pre-application. The feedback is specific to each project to help fill information gaps and improve the application.
- Contact NBRC with questions regarding NBRC funding priorities. NBRC will consider a project's alignment with funding priorities when scoring applications.
- Discuss your project with a State Program Manager to strengthen alignment with the State's priorities. States will consider a project's alignment with their funding priorities when scoring and selecting finalists.
- Attend an application information session. Visit the NBRC's [Events Page](#) for more details. Application information sessions provide guidance and helpful hints for common challenges.
- When selecting projects for funding awards at the application phase NBRC and the States will consider:
  - Balanced geographic distribution of investments
  - Well-documented community or regionally supported need for the project
  - Projects deemed a priority by the State where the project is located

## Application Content and Guidance

Detailed technical instructions for using the online grants system to submit an application ([Creating and Submitting an Application – Guidance Document](#)) and recorded videos are available on the [Resources](#) page of the NBRC website. Please review these detailed instructions prior to beginning your application in the GMS.

Each narrative text box supports limited formatting – please keep your responses simple and do not paste tables, bullets or text with extensive formatting into the text box. Please provide weblinks to studies and reports that support the need for your project – please do not attach lengthy reports to your application.

Complete the application by entering the required information for each of the following tabs and remember to **save often!**

## Overview Tab

The applicant's registration and all applicant information entered at the pre-application stage will be carried over into the application stage.

### Overview Tab – Information

If the UEI field is not populated, please enter your organization's **Unique Entity ID (UEI)**. The UEI number is required to receive an award. If an applicant does not have a UEI, please visit [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). Registration with SAM.gov and getting the Unique Entity ID are FREE, however this process can take some time to complete with SAM.gov so **please plan ahead**. See the available guidance on [How to Update UEI](#) on the [NBRC Resources page](#).

### Overview Tab - Announcement Overview

No edits to this section are required.

### Overview Tab-Application Overview

No edits to this section are required. Changes will be automatically updated from other sections of your application.

### Overview Tab-Project Information

Responses provided at the time of pre-application will carry over to your application. At this time, you should edit your responses to include new information and/or revisions in response to NBRC and State feedback.

The information provided in this section should provide a robust overview of your project. Highly competitive projects will demonstrate how your project supports NBRC and your State's funding priorities, the specific activities to be undertaken with NBRC funding and the expected outcomes. Provide documentation supporting your responses whenever possible in the form of links to relevant studies, data and reports. You will have the opportunity to elaborate further on the details of your project in the [Proposal Tab](#).

### Overview Tab – Contacts

Your organization's Authorized Representative will be listed under Project Role as the "Project Director/Manager". This contact also needs to be designated as a key contact. **It is extremely important that the person designated in the GMS as your Authorized Representative matches the person identified as your Authorized Official in the Authorized Official Resolution uploaded to the [Forms and Files Tab](#)**. The Authorized Official Resolution is a document required as part of your application submission.

In this section you may add one other contact to your application and if applicable, you should associate your LDD Contact. See the available guidance for "Adding Users in the GMS" on the [NBRC Resources webpage](#).

### Overview Tab-Acknowledgement

Check "I Agree"

## Locations Tab

### Locations Tab - Application Match

List only the County(ies), Community(ies) and State(s) where project activities will occur. Do not include geographies that may be impacted because of the project.

### GEOID Justification

Enter the GEOID(s) for your project location separated by semicolons and without spaces. Example: 5002507900;5002570750. Please refer to the NBRC's [Project Eligibility and Match Determination page](#) for more information about determining your Match % and instructions for inputting the Match Justification. This section should include GEOID(s) only. **DO NOT ENTER TEXT.** Review your pre-application feedback for any required changes.

### Locations Tab-Investment Locations

Enter the street, city, state and zip code of the location(s) where the project will have investments. The locations chosen should represent where work funded by NBRC will occur. There is a validation function associated with investment locations. Enter all locations associated with the investment of project funds and attempt to validate using the [Census Geocoder](#) tool. Leave in all locations, including those determined "invalid" by Census, as we also need to associate locations with key performance indicators in the next section. If the investment location returns an "Invalid" Status, we encourage applicants to enter the latitude/longitude coordinates in the address bar.

### Locations Tab-Key Performance Indicators

Edit and enter the Target value for each Key Performance Indicator (KPI). If the KPI does not apply to your project, enter 0. Competitive projects will provide detailed justification and support for the KPIs selected in the [Proposal Tab](#) of the application. Scoring is based on the quality of information provided, rather than the quantity of KPIs selected. Navigate to the [2026 NBRC Grant Programs User Manual](#) Appendix E to review KPI guidance and additional information.

## Budget Tab

NBRC has prepared a variety of supplemental resources to assist you with budget development and common budget related errors in the GMS, which are located on the [Application Support page](#). **Please revise each section of the budget based on new estimates, more detailed data, or corrections requested by NBRC or State Program Managers in your [Invitation to Apply](#).**

### Budget Tab - Budget Periods table

Budget information will be carried over from your pre-application. Revise based on new estimates, more detailed information, and/or as needed in response to feedback.

**It is critical that the totals from your SF-424cbw detailed budget (found in the Forms and Files Tab), Budget table and Funding Sources and Commitments table are in alignment. Confirm there are no discrepancies prior to submitting your application.**

Helpful Tips:

- The totals in this table must align with the SF-424cbw detailed budget, required as an attached document under the “Forms and Files” tab. The budget categories are not in the same order but do correspond with the high-level categories 1-10 on the 424cbw.
- 80% Federal Funding Ceiling – this is calculated on total project costs. NBRC Share + Other Federal Share must be less than or equal to 80% of the amount under Total Project Costs. NBRC funds can however be used to satisfy the non-federal cost sharing or match requirements for a project under another federal grant program for which NBRC is not the sole or primary funding source as outlined in 40 USC 15507. In these instances, NBRC funds would not count towards the federal share of the total project cost.
- Applicant match is calculated based on the total project costs. The GMS includes a validation process that will verify that the Other Federal Share + Applicant Match + Other is greater than or equal to the required minimum match based on your project location.

### **Budget Tab-Budget Narrative**

Update the Budget Narrative to reflect any changes in your budget. 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. The budget narrative should provide sufficient information for reviewers to understand how NBRC funds will be spent.

### **Budget-Tab-Funding Sources and Commitments**

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 and the SF-424cbw.

Helpful Tips:

- Do not enter funds requested from NBRC in this table. Only include non-NBRC funding sources. 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.
- NBRC funds may be used to match other federally funded projects (when both federal agencies allow).
- ARPA is considered a federal source.

- CDBG and federal loans *are not* considered a federal source

## Proposal Tab

This section should be used to build and expand on information provided in the Overview Tab.

**Do not copy and paste from the project narrative you developed in the Overview Tab.**

Responses in this section should be concise but provide enough information so that someone unfamiliar with your community, region and organization will understand your project.

### **Proposal Tab-Technical Proposal.**

Highly competitive projects will demonstrate how your project supports the NBRC and your State's funding priorities, how and when your project will be implemented, the expected economic impacts of your project, and who will be responsible for implementing each part of the project and their qualifications. Additional guidance for each section is provided below.

Prepare the Technical Proposal in a word document, then copy and paste your responses into the GMS. Keep the formatting simple, e.g. bullet points rather than tables and cells to avoid potential errors when saving complicated formatting. **Save Often!**

**APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY narrative guidance:** Provide a clear and detailed description of the approach and methodology that will be used to implement your project including the steps to complete the project and achieve desired results within the project period. Proposals that include a detailed milestone schedule or work plan will receive a higher score. Include an explanation and documentation of how the project's relevance to regional, state, or local planning efforts including State priorities. Include an explanation and documentation of the sustainability of the project. See relevant **Scoring Criteria in Appendices I-L of the [NBRC Grant Programs User Manual](#)**.

**ECONOMIC IMPACTS narrative guidance:** Referencing the KPIs you selected earlier in your application, describe the expected economic impacts of the project including expected impacts on jobs and wages and the scale of impact on the community, county or region. Highly competitive projects will provide justification and documentation supporting the expected economic impacts in the form of letters of support, business commitments, relevant studies, data and other forms of supporting documentation. Proposals of greater immediacy, and that align with the spirit of the Program's intent and priorities will receive a higher score. See relevant **Scoring Criteria in Appendices I-L of the [NBRC Grant Programs User Manual](#)**.

**PROJECT READINESS narrative guidance:** Describe if the project is ready for implementation including the timelines that account for required environmental review and how far along the project is in the planning and design process. Proposals that demonstrate the proposed work can be completed within the 3-year performance period and begin to draw down NBRC funds within 12 months of the award date will receive a higher score. See relevant **Scoring Criteria in Appendices I-L of the [NBRC Grant Programs User Manual](#)**.

**CAPACITY & QUALIFICATIONS narrative guidance:** Provide an explanation of the capacity of the organization to meet the project objectives, including past performance for timely completion, collaboration, staff qualifications. Proposals that describe key partnerships in place to support project implementation and can demonstrate early engagement with Local Development Districts will receive a higher score. See relevant **Scoring Criteria in Appendices I-L of the [NBRC Grant Programs User Manual](#)**.

## Forms and Files Tab

Prior to beginning this section of your application, we strongly encourage you to review the [Application Support Document Checklist](#) which can be found on the [NBRC Resources page](#) under the Additional GMS Guidance Documents section.

### Forms and Files Tab - Application Files

The application files section is reserved for supplemental information that supports your application which does not have a space allotted under the Supporting Documents Checklist section. Application Files may include reports, commitments from other funders, a detailed workplan, spreadsheets, surveys, architectural or engineering plans, or other graphic information that cannot be uploaded to the text sections of your application.

### Forms and Files Tab - Supporting Documents Checklist

Mandatory documents for all applicants must be completed and uploaded to the GMS at the time you submit your application. Some documents are applicable only for specific grantees – these have been noted below. **Late documents will not be accepted and may result in your application being deemed ineligible. Documents that require a signature MUST be signed by the Authorized Official designated in your Authorized Official Resolution.**

- **Authorized Official Resolution (AOR)** – View the AOR Template Link in the GMS for additional guidance and resolution templates (also available on the [Resources page](#)). The NBRC template is not required, however your organization’s resolution must include all the information in the template. The completed file is uploaded to the GMS and must be submitted with your application. Please plan accordingly to ensure you have sufficient time to obtain your AOR.
- **Form 1001 Debarment Suspension Certification**
- **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)** – only applicable if your organization has a NICRA. For those without a NICRA, the de minimis rate of 15% should be applied.
- **Letters of Support** – Encouraged but not required. Form letters are acceptable but often do not have the same impact as individual letters. Support letters should be combined and uploaded as a single pdf.
- **NEPA Intake Form** - The NEPA Intake Form is required for all applications. Please review your form for completeness and be sure the form includes a point of contact for other federal funding sources that have been awarded for this project. Forms lacking a project

description have been flagged as incomplete. The information provided in this form is critical to determining the next steps for satisfying NEPA. The applicant is encouraged to review NBRC's [NEPA webpage](#).

- **Project Map** - Include a map of the project location. View the Project Map Template in the GMS for additional information and instructions for submitting a project map. Projects with proposed work in a floodplain should also include a FEMA flood map combined as a single document with the project map. A map can be found on the [FEMA Flood Map Service Center](#) website.
- **Revolving Loan Fund Documentation** - Applicants who are utilizing NBRC funds to create a new or supplement an existing Revolving Loan Fund are required to submit supplemental documentation. RLF Application documentation must be developed by the applicant and must be uploaded to the GMS. (see NBRC RLF Policy and required documentation in the Appendix I of the Program User Manual)
- **SF-424cbw** – Please complete the details tab only. Be sure this information exactly matches the information you entered in the GMS Budget Periods Table.
- **SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance**
- **SF-424B** (non-construction) or **SF-424D** (construction) - One or the other (not both) must be completed depending on the project type. Complete SF-424D if there are costs in the Construction category of the SF-424cbw.
- **SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** – The entire form must be completed. Enter NA in the fields that do not apply.