Catalyst, Forest Economy, and Timber for Transit
Application Information Sessions Q&A
April 7, 2026

General

Q: Can we make changes to our content from the pre-application?

A: Yes. Information entered into the pre-application will be carried into the application. All of the information entered at pre-application (overview narrative, budget, budget narrative) can be edited in the application record.

Q: How long does it take to get a Notice to Proceed?

A: Getting a Notice to Proceed is highly dependent on what level of environmental review your project might require, but for simple projects, you might expect to secure a NTP within two months of your notice of award.

Q: Some of the new questions seem a little repetitive compared to what we covered in the pre-app. Should we reiterate what we already covered?

A: It is recommended to use the Technical Proposal to expand on the information provided in the pre-application and address any feedback provided. This is also where you may want to specifically address the information outlined in the scoring criteria.

Q: I converted the pre-application to the application and can no longer make edits!

A: You likely need to click on the green edit button to resume editing. There is guidance in the Creating and Submitting Application document.

Q: If we don't submit a full application, does our invite to apply carry over to the next round of funding?

A: Invitations to apply do not carry over to future rounds. A new pre-application will be required. You will have access to previous pre-applications to copy into a new pre-application.

Q: Where should we send questions?

A: If you have questions that cannot be answered in today's session or other available resources, please submit them to admin@nbrc.gov.

Pre-Application Feedback

Q: We didn't receive much feedback on the preapplication collab section other than encouraging a full application. Is that normal or am I missing something here?

A: Pre-application feedback was provided to address issues or areas of improvement from the pre-application. It's possible your invitation to apply did not include feedback.

Q: For pre-application general feedback that asks to provide specific need in the NBRC region, should this be focused on quantitative data that supports the need within the region that our proposal aims to address? (i.e. unemployment rates)

A: Be sure your application makes a connection between the proposed work and the local, regional, and state priorities. In other words, how does your project address identified needs?

LDDs and Waivers

Q: Is the LDD notified when the application is created?

A: The LDD is not automatically updated when an application is created. You can associate the LDD in the LDD Support tab. You can then submit the application to the LDD for review. There is guidance for completing these steps in the Creating and Submitting an Application resource.

Q: Is a state agency applicant required to enter LDD info? There is currently no LDD in our area of work.

A: State agencies are not required to utilize LDD assistance.

Q: Can we negotiate a contract price with our LDD that is less than the 2% requirement?

A: No. The required LDD fee is based on the award amount. $8,000 flat fee for awards of $400,000 or less, or 2% of the NBRC request for awards above $400,000

Forms and Files

Q: NBRC notes in Collab Tab mentioned needing a Notice if Federal Interest form completed prior to award of federal funds. Where can I find this form?

A: This feedback is informational should you be awarded, and no specific actions are required at application. You can read more about the NFI requirement here: NFI Guidance Document and Sample Template

Q: How many letters from local businesses do we need that indicate utilizing our resources for job training?

A: There is no prescriptive number of letters that are required. Be sure the letters of support are from entities that will benefit from the workforce training your project intends to provide.

Q: If we did not receive a note about letters of support does that mean that you are not looking for any letters of support or that these are not helpful to our application?

A: You should still include letters of support if you feel they would strengthen your application.

Q: If my board has already passed a resolution authorizing me as the official empowered to act on behalf of my not-for-profit organization within the past year, do I need a newer resolution?

A: You may use an existing resolution approved within one year of the application deadline as long as there are no changes to the person authorized. Review the language of the resolution to be sure there is nothing specific to an earlier funding round.

Q: I am applying for the same project that I applied for previously. I am improving the KPIs and narrative sections. Can I use the same letters of support from the initial application, or do they need to be new ones?

A: The letters of support are optional and there are no requirements that they be updated for the current funding round. Reviewers do use letters of support to evaluate community and regional support for the project.

Q: Please explain the Supporting Documents Checklist table. Under "Required", it states "mandatory" or "optional" then under Grantee Documents it states "not applicable". Do I submit those documents or not?

A: In the Forms and Files tab, the Supporting Documents Checklist table includes a description, whether a form is mandatory or not, and includes any available templates for the associated document. Applicants will upload all mandatory documents under the "Grantee Document Link" column. The Indirect Cost Rate, Letters of Support, and RLF documentation are not required of all applicants, and are therefore marked as optional.

Supporting Documents Checklist

Description	Required	Template Link	Grantee Document Link
Authorized Official Resolution	Mandatory	View	Not Applicable
Debarment Suspension Cert - Form 1001	Mandatory	View	Not Applicable
Indirect Cost Rate	Optional	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Letters of Support	Optional	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
NEPA Intake Form	Mandatory	View	Not Applicable
Project Maps	Mandatory	View	Not Applicable
RLF Documentation	Optional	View	Not Applicable
SF424-cbw	Mandatory	View	Not Applicable

Q: Under files/forms at the bottom, if both assurance docs are not checked as mandatory should we still sign both of them?

A: All applicants must complete one of the assurances forms. The SF-424B is required for Non-Construction projects, and the SF-424C is required for Construction projects.

Q: Do you want the milestone schedule as separate .pdf or does it need to be within the character limit?

A: Please include the milestone schedule within the narrative.

Q: Will the significant benefit waiver we submitted with our pre-app be considered again during the review of our full application? We would like to ensure information within the waiver is considered in our proposal and want to avoid repetition of information we provide in our narratives

A: Any approved waiver requests will not be reviewed/considered again. No further action needed!

Q: How do I delete a form I have already uploaded into the supporting documents checklist?

A: You can't delete a form from that Supporting Documents Checklist, but you can overwrite whatever version is there with a newer version uploaded for that item.

Q: In the All Forms section of the Forms and Files tab there are check marks and Xs in the mandatory column. Please explain the difference.

A: The SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities are mandatory for all applicants, and are therefore checked as mandatory. Applicants are also required to EITHER complete the Assurances for Construction (SF-424D), or the Assurances for Non-Construction (SF-424B), but not both. Assurances are not checked as mandatory because the requirement is dependent on project type. Construction projects MUST complete the SF-424D, and Non-Construction projects must complete the SF-424B. The percentage column indicates whether or not the form has been completed. Before submitting the application, the SF-424, SF-LLL, and ONE of the Assurances forms must be 100% complete.

▲ All Forms

Showing 1 to 4 of 4 records

Form Name ↑	Mandatory	Percentage
Application for ...	✔	0.00%
Assurances for ...	✖	0.00%
Assurances for ...	✖	0.00%
Disclosure of L...	✔	0.00%

NEPA

Q: If our project doesn't have any bearing on NEPA, do we still have to account for NEPA costs in the budget? This wasn't flagged in our pre-app.

A: All NBRC projects require NEPA review. If you anticipate a Categorical Exclusion or that NBRC can adopt another federal NEPA review finding, please acknowledge the NEPA requirement in your budget by allocating $0 in a NEPA line item and describing why in the Budget Narrative.

Q: If budget feedback included NEPA costs, which were not included at pre-application, can we increase the $ ask that was in PreApp?

A: Yes, the costs can be changed for the full application to satisfy the NEPA budget requirements.

Q: Is it possible to start the NEPA review prior to the NBRC award? This would obviously be at our expense. We are on a tight timeline (Constuction to start November 15, 2026 and we would like to expedite the NEPA process).

A: NBRC is required to conduct our own NEPA review for all projects. If a NEPA review is complete at time of application, the determination should be submitted with application materials. If NEPA review is underway at time of application, the applicant should mention this in the narrative. Contracts in place and costs expended for NEPA prior to NBRC issuance of a Notice to Proceed are not eligible to be counted as match, and are not eligible for NBRC reimbursement.

Q: If NEPA has already been performed/completed, do we still need to budget for it?

A: Please describe in the budget narrative that no NEPA costs have been included because you do not expect additional NEPA to be required. NBRC must complete NEPA for all projects, even if another agency has completed NEPA. In that case, NBRC will need to review the findings to be sure the project scope is the same and that the findings will apply to the NBRC project.

Q: If another federal agency is providing a majority of the funding of our project, will NBRC accept the other agency's NEPA determination?

A: We may be able to adopt the other agency's determination. If you have the determination, include it in your application files. If the determination is not yet complete, please let us know in your application that another federal agency is conducting NEPA review so that we are aware if your project is selected for funding.

Q: Where did you say the NEPA from is located in resources page

A: Please DO NOT utilize the template link for the NEPA form provided in the GMS> Instead, navigate to https://www.nbrc.gov/content/administration and download the NEPA Intake Form from there. Once complete, upload your completed NEPA intake form to the GMS application. There are two upcoming NEPA Intake Form Information Sessions we recommend attending. Register for them on our Events page or the Application Support Page.

Budgets

Q: In the budget should salaries be broken out per year or should we use an average salary for personnel?

A: You would list the full personnel cost anticipated across the 3-year performance period

Q: Can the project increase from the original budget and pre-application description?

A: We understand the budget may change slightly between pre-application and application to reflect more accurate quotes, etc, but we do not allow requests to increase significantly.

Q: Can budget details change from pre-application as long as total budget amount does not change? It looks as though I overbudgeted for NEPA and would like to adjust.

A: Yes, budget information can change between pre-application and application.

Q: If we have a multi-phase project for which we have already contracted with consultants for, but we are applying for construction funds, may we use the consultant construction oversight fees as a match even through the contract happened earlier than the notice to proceed?

A: Generally, these costs are not eligible as match as they have already been committed. If you can send a note with your application number to admin@nbrc.gov, we can review for any instance where these costs may be eligible.

Q: Once project begins can budget line items be changed?

A: Yes. Awarded project may make changes to their budget over the life of the grant through an amendment process with NBRC.

Q: Does all project match have to be secured upon submitting the application, or can some be pending?

A: No, match does not need to be secured at the time of application. You can use the status section of the table to let us know if a source is awarded/secured, pending or not yet applied for.

Q: Are EDA funds eligible for match?

A: Match requirements may be satisfied by private sources (such as donations or philanthropic grants) or public sources (such as state grants or other federal agency funding). NBRC's statute (40 U.S.C. Subtitle V §15506: Supplements to Federal grant programs) requires that projects receiving NBRC funds may not exceed 80% of total project costs from all federal funding sources combined. This is the 'federal funding ceiling' for NBRC. 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. It is equally important for applicants to check with other federal sources, as each federal agency may have its own restrictions. See 40 USC §15506(e).

Q: We received comments regarding the lack of a budget narrative. Do you have a sample budget narrative, and where does that get uploaded into the GMS system?

A: We recommend referencing the Budgets Workshop and the Application Narrative Guidance for help and examples for completing the budget narrative section.

Q: Are legal fees for writing and recording the NFI considered Consultant or Other Direct Costs?

A: Okay to include this under "Other Direct Costs".

Locations/KPIs

Q: If we are statewide do we have to enter every activity point? Every outreach location? Are we matching the map locations with the investment locations?

A: The map locations should align with identified investment locations in the Locations tab and reflect where the project physically occurs.

Q: Do you have any further guidance on the map we should include (should we include a few different layers? what is the most important information NBRC would like to see in a map?)

A: Please reference the project map template provided in the Forms and Files section. If you would like to include additional map information for context (such as a FEMA floodplain map or trail map), you can include them as part of the project map submission. A single pdf with all maps can be submitted in the Supporting Documents Checklist section.

Q: Do you have a map site we can use or just find an image and try to use that?

A: We don't recommend one particular map site but we have found sites like Google maps to be helpful. There are examples in the project map template provided in the Forms and Files tab.

Q: For Investment Locations, our project proposes serving new clients that will be located in various locations across multiple counties. Should we use a centralized location within each county for the address to ensure we account for an entire county?

A: If the project is physically taking place across an entire county, you can use proxy locations such as a county courthouse.

Q: We have 13 KPI available in the application record. Do I need to set goals for all 13?

A: No, you do not need to set goals for each available KPI. Only choose the KPIs that apply to your project. If a KPI does not apply to your project, enter 0.

Q: We are applying for a feasibility study. For the KPI's, should we only report on the impacts of the feasibility study (or also the impacts of the larger project phases that will occur as a result of the feasibility study)?

A: Please just report on the impacts of the feasibility study. See the Appendix E – KPIs in the Grant Programs User Manual and navigate to the larger KPI document linked therein. See KPI-0026, for example (Plans Created).

Q: If the project is several components but all within a small village area, should we just list one location?

A: Yes. Focus on where the project activities occur. You may use a proxy location for the village area, such as a town hall, etc.

Q: Can you include the GEOID for a county as well as multiple GEOIDs for communities in a second county?

A: Yes. Download and utilize the match estimator tool here: https://www.nbrc.gov/content/project-match

Q: Our application is for a county wide program. How do we identify this as a location?

A: If the project is physically taking place across an entire county, you can use a proxy location such as a county courthouse.

Q: Our project is statewide, including outreach to over 50 sites. Do you want the map to show that many investment locations? If we have a significant waiver form do we include sites outside of the main area?

A: If a project has work that is physically taking place in 50 locations, we do want a map that shows each location. It is really helpful to us.

Resources

Q: The last time we applied for a Catalyst grant, I remember there was a guide with detailed instructions for answering each question. I haven't been able to find those detailed instructions this time.

A: Yes, this is equivalent to our application narrative guidance on the application support page. https://www.nbrc.gov/content/nbrc-program-applications

Resources for submitting an application:

Application Support Page includes application workshops (budget, forms and files, and the technical proposal), NEPA intake form information sessions, application narrative guidance, creating and submitting an application guidance document, the supporting documents checklist and more.

Resources Page includes standard forms, GMS technical resources, application supporting documents PDFs, and more.

Contacts

NBRC Staff:

Contact NBRC at admin@nbrc.gov for questions related to the GMS, application requirements, NBRC administration and compliance, etc.

- Andrea Smith, NBRC Program Director: asmith@nbrc.gov
- Casey Haynes, Program Coordinator: chaynes@nbrc.gov
- Marina Caceres, Program Manager, Forest Economy and Timber for Transit: mcaceres@nbrc.gov
- Adrianne Harrison, Program Manager, Catalyst: aharrison@nbrc.gov

State Contacts:

Contact your state program manager with questions related to alignment with state priorities or state feedback.

- Maine: Sarah Demers, Sarah.Demers@maine.gov
- New Hampshire: Steve Fortier, Steven.j.Fortier@livefree.nh.gov
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