



Northern Border Regional Commission



**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/
Build America Buy America Act (BABAA)**

&

“New to NBRC” Staff Training

LDD PP Quarter 2 Training: May 2026

www.nbrc.gov



Northern Border Regional Commission

Agenda

Welcome!

- LDD Partnership Program Updates
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Build America Buy America Act (BABAA)
- “New to NBRC” Staff Training



LDD Partnership Program Updates



LDD Partnership Program Updates

Reporting Schedule Change Reminder: Please check in with your grantees to **make sure they've completed the Terms and Conditions Amendment** initiated by NBRC.

- 2023 Projects and older (outside of the GMS): Started the new semi-annual reporting schedule in January 2026. The LAST quarterly report covered Oct-Dec 2025. The next report will cover January-June 2026, due in July 2026.
- 2024 Projects and forward (in the GMS): Starts the new semi-annual reporting schedule in July 2026, with the July-December 2026 report due in January 2027. The LAST quarterly report will cover April-June 2026.

NBRC Processing Response Time: As we continue to experience a high volume of requests, we ask that you help reinforce the grantee's expectations on when they can expect to receive a reimbursement of funds or amendment approval. **It typically takes up to 30 days from submission to receive funds or an amendment approval.**

LDD Partnership Program Updates

Found in the [LDD Resource Library](#).

- [AO Change Guidance Document](#): AO changes can get complicated quick! Use this guidance document to help grantees navigate a planned OR unplanned AO change in our GMS.
- [Review Checklist Guidance Document](#): NBRC has compiled a high level checklist for our LDDs when reviewing forms and requests for the grantees. Keep this checklist close at hand!

Found on the [NBRC NEPA page](#).

- [NEPA Consultant RFQ template](#): This template is a great place to start when a grantee needs to put together a NEPA consultant RFQ.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)



Overview - Andrea Smith, Director of Programs and Partnerships

- Recent NEPA developments at NBRC
 - Hiring of an internal advisor
 - Creation of an Internal NEPA Team
 - Enactment of NBRC's Procedures & CATEX
 - Development/Refinement of Resources
 - Revised NEPA Intake Form (NIF)
 - More comprehensive to increase determination efficiencies
 - Budgeting for NEPA
 - Guidance for preparing preapp/application

NBRC and NEPA – Shannon Kelly, NEPA Advisor

- Review of revised NEPA Intake Form
 - Walk-through of the form
 - How a more comprehensive NIF helps the determination process
- Aligning project activities with NEPA requirements
 - CATEX or EA
 - Additional consultations (Section 106, Section 7)
 - How adoptions work

Questions?

RESOURCES

- [NBRC Website – NEPA Tab](#)
 - NBRC NEPA Procedures and CATEX List and CATEX Admin Record (Enacted February 2026)
 - NEPA Process Flowchart
 - Budgeting for NEPA Review (Revised February 2026)
 - NEPA Intake Form (Revised April 2026)
 - Environmental Assessment (EA) Template & Guidance Overview
 - NEPA Consultant RFQ Template *****NEW*****
 - Can be used if publishing an RFQ or to build a scope of work to support a PNTP request

What is NEPA?

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – 1970
 - Promote the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the environment.
 - Growing concerns about the environmental impacts of large-scale development projects
- Purpose:
 - Requires federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of their actions and decisions before they act.

What triggers NEPA?

- Federal agencies must consider the potential impacts of **major federal actions** and reasonable alternatives on the human environment
- **Major Federal Actions** – Activities that are undertaken, funded, authorized, or approved by a federal agency.
- NEPA applies to NBRC-funded projects

Levels of NEPA analysis

Level 1: Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) The project is pre-determined by the federal agency not to have a significant impact on the human environment.

Level 2: Environmental Assessment (EA): The project impact is unknown or does not have a reasonably foreseeable significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

Level 3: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): The project has a reasonably foreseeable significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

Understanding NEPA Implementation Across Federal Agencies

1. Varied Implementation:

Each federal agency implements the NEPA differently.

2. Agency-Specific Procedures:

Agencies are required to adhere to their own NEPA procedures and guidelines.

3. Example: USDA vs. NBRC:

- **USDA Experience:** A project categorized as a CATEX under USDA regulations.
- **NBRC Regulations:** The same project may not be considered a CATEX under NBRC regulations.

4. Takeaway:

Experience with NEPA procedures in one agency does not guarantee the same outcomes in another agency.

BABAA



Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA)

- “None of the funds made available for a Federal financial assistance program for **infrastructure**...may be obligated for a project unless all of the **iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials** used in the project are produced in the United States.”
- Applies to all federal financial assistance projects for infrastructure.
- Applies to an entire infrastructure project, even if it is funded by both Federal and non-Federal funds under one or more awards.
 - Cognizant agency leads the waiver process

What Products Are Covered?

- *Iron and Steel*
 - All manufacturing processes from initial melting through application of coating occurred in the U.S.
- *Construction Materials*
 - All manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the U.S.
- *Manufactured Products*
 - Product manufactured in the U.S.
 - The cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the U.S. is greater than 55% of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product

BABAA

How do projects comply?

Certification letter

- Letter asserting that all manufacturing processes for the purchased product occurred in the U.S.

Waiver

- Waivers may be granted to waive the BABAA requirement for certain categories of cases

How is product compliance be demonstrated?

Required: Contractor certification

1. Contract provision explaining BABAA requirements
2. Contractor self-certification
3. Suggested language at [NBRC.gov/content/BABAA](https://www.nbrc.gov/content/BABAA)

Suggested: Manufacturer certifications

1. A project identifier (name, location, grant number)
2. The identity of the products being supplied to the project
3. Locations of manufacturing being certified i.e. final point of manufacturing
4. Signature of company representative making the certification (on company letterhead, signature can be electronic)
5. Statement asserting the products supplied are compliant with BABA requirements (include which category of products they are certifying)

BABAA

Project/ product specific waivers

- Nonavailability (most common)
 - Requires market research from grantee. Can not rely on research from another waiver/ agency
- Public interest
- Unreasonable cost

General applicability waivers

- De Minimis
 - All projects may use up to 5% of project costs for non-domestic products
- Small Award
 - Is the total cost of the project from all sources equal to or less than \$350k
- Minor components
 - Allows up to 5% non-domestic in BABAA-compliant product

BABAA

Who may apply for a waiver and how?

- Grantees (LDD not expected to assist but may)
- NBRC does not process waiver requests from suppliers, distributors or manufacturers
- Submit waiver request to NBRC. Form available at [NBRC.gov/content/BABAA](https://www.nbrc.gov/content/BABAA)
 - It is crucial to include a detailed written justification for the use of a non-domestic product. Grantees should show specific evidence of a good-faith effort to procure a domestically produced product.
- Approved general applicability waivers do not require a separate waiver request
 - De Minimis waiver
 - Minor Components
 - Small Award

Waiver Timeline

1. Recipient puts together waiver request
2. Recipient emails request to program manager
3. Waiver is reviewed for completeness
4. NBRC may be have to then conduct market research
5. MIAO reviews before public comment period
6. NBRC posts request on website for 15 days
7. NBRC evaluates research and comments
8. NBRC approves/ disapproves waiver request
9. NBRC sends draft final for MIAO final decision
10. NBRC announces decision and posts waiver online

Questions?

“New to NBRC” Staff Training



"New to NBRC" Staff Training- LDD Expectations

- Familiarity and comfort **explaining and sharing** with grantees NBRC's Compliance Manual, policies, and procedures.
- Familiarity with NBRC's Grants Management System, specifically related to **roles for grants administration and processing and troubleshooting**.
- **General assistance** related to federal funding structure and operating procedures (for example, reimbursement structures, BABAA, NEPA, etc.).
- Hosting a **Project Kickoff Meeting** for each new NBRC grantee in a timely manner.
- Ensuring the following key NBRC **grant milestones are met**:
 - Notice to Proceed (Partial and/or Full) Documentation (assisting in the **accurate and timely** filing of NBRC Form 1002 Match Commitment and LDD Contract).
 - Quarterly and Annual Reporting (assisting in the **accurate and timely** filing of common forms SF-425 and SF-PPR).
 - Reimbursement Requests (assisting in the **accurate and timely** filing of SF-270 and guiding grantees in **establishing organized systems** to maintain invoices and documentation related to project expenditures).
 - Closeout Reporting (assisting in the **accurate and timely** filing of all required closeout documents, including the GPRA Form).
 - Contract or Grant Amendments (assisting in the **accurate and timely** filing of amendment documentation and support material).

LDD General Assistance Examples

- **NEPA and BABAA:** Generally, understand the processes and requirements. Understand where resources are located to point your grantees towards.
- **Request for Proposals, Bid Processes, Procurement:** Generally, understand RFP processes and provide advice. LDDs are not responsible for putting together RFPs, conducting bid processes or assessing submitted documents.
- **Notice of Federal Interest:** Generally, understand when an NFI is triggered for a project. Direct grantee to resources, such as the NBRC document on the Grant Admin page.

LDD Assistance Spectrum

Low Capacity/Low
Experience Grantees

Higher Capacity/
Experienced Grantees



LDD Assistance could look like:

- Grantee sending LDD all the invoices, LDD filling out reimbursement request and sending to grantee to "sign" and submit
- LDD being actively kept in the loop about project activities and LDD filling out the progress reports, sending them to the grantee to "sign" and submit
- LDD helping the grantee compile information for an amendment request

LDD Assistance could look like:

- LDD sending grantee reminders to submit their progress reporting
- Grantee sending the LDD a reimbursement request or progress report for a second set of eyes, after the grantee has filled it out
- Grantee seeking LDD advice on a project scope change

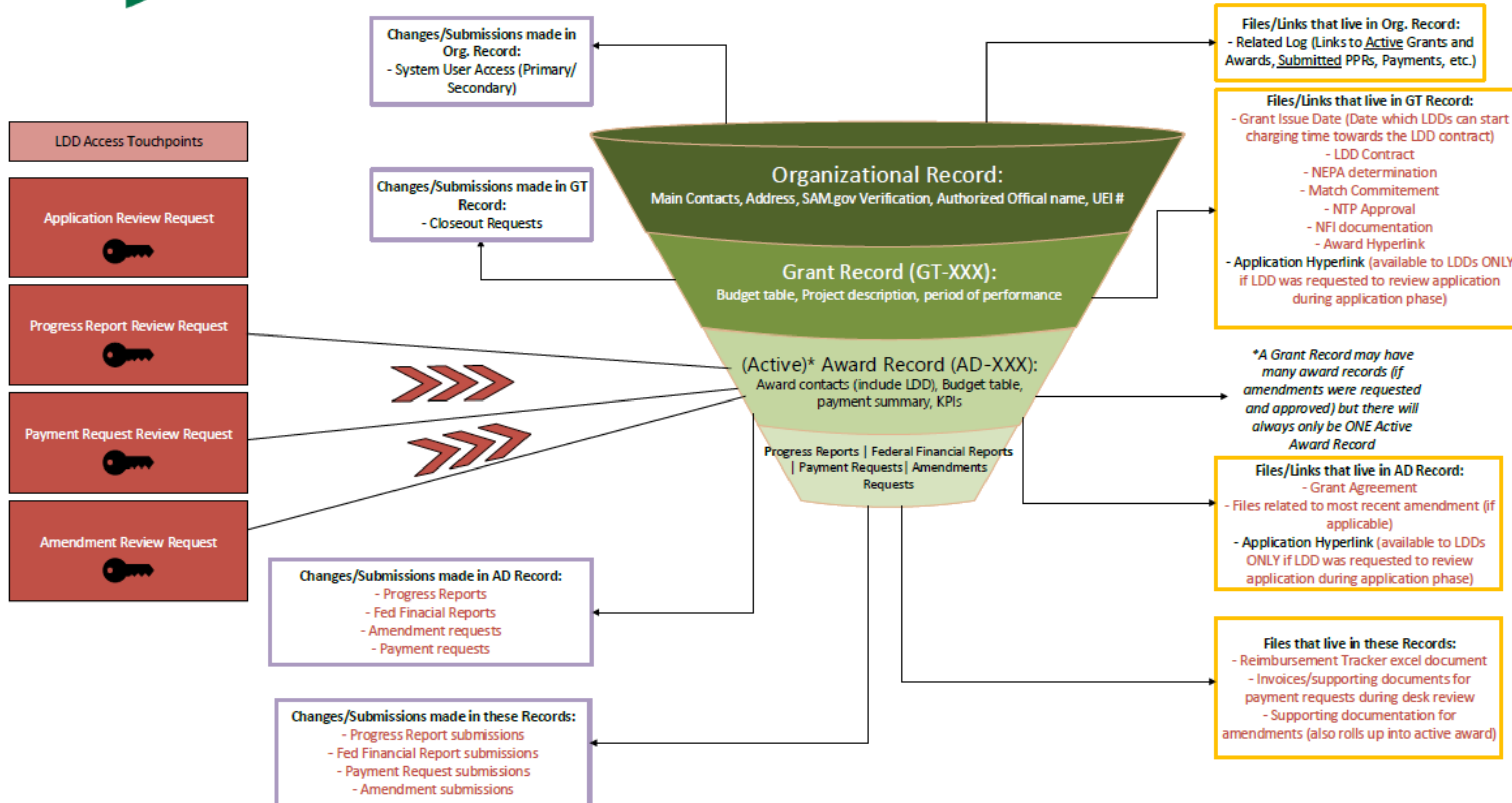


NBRC's GMS Record Funnel

This diagram shows how the GMS records are nested within each other and what information, files, changes, and submissions that occur in each record. Additionally, it shows how LDDs get access to what records. The Organizational Record is the largest bucket which holds all other nesting records. If an organization were to have more than one grant award, it would be an additional separate bucket with nesting records under the Organizational Record.

Key:

- Yellow Boxes** - indicates files and links that can be found in that record
- Purple Boxes** - indicates changes and submissions that occur in that record
- Red Boxes** - Touchpoints in the GMS where an LDD can access grantee records
- Red Text** - indicates files/records/information an LDD can see/access when entering through the LDD Access Touchpoints
- Key icon** - the actions within the GMS that give LDDs the "key" to get into grantee records.



Video Walkthrough

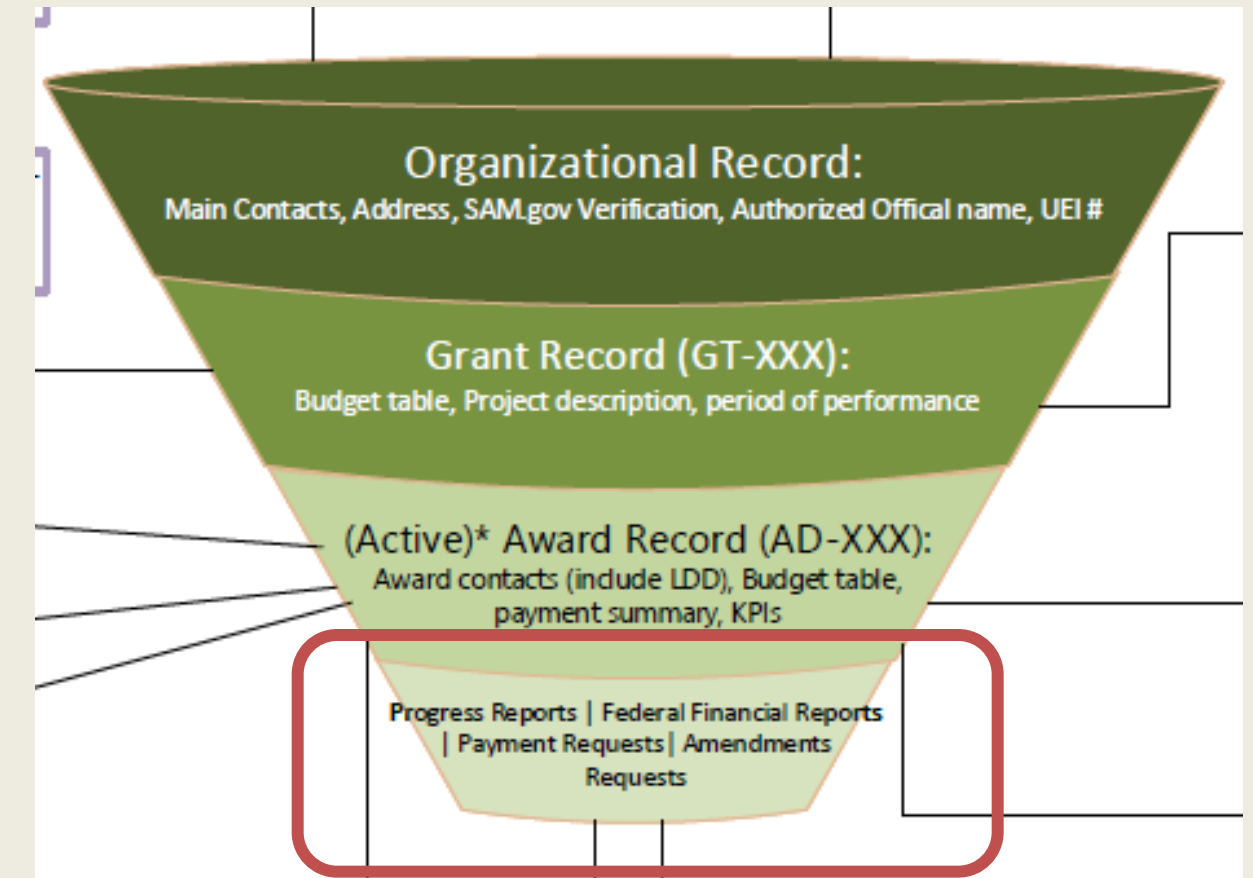
Understanding the GMS Quirks

Complete List of Awards

- Unfortunately, there is not an efficient "home screen" for LDDs that lists all the awards that your account is associated with to navigate to a specific award.
- Navigation to awards:
 - Pending/Complete Tasks > Open current or past review request > navigate up the funnel to award/grant record

Record Access

- As an LDD, you cannot see the following **UNTIL A GRANTEE REQUESTS YOUR REVIEW:**
 - Application**
 - Progress Report/Fed Financial Report**
 - Amendment**
 - Reimbursement**
- Record history: can only see records that they were requested to review in the past (example on next slide)













** You will receive an email notification when a grantee requests your review

▲ Progress Reports

Search... 

Showing 1 to 10 of 11 records

Page 1 of 2

EGMS ID	Reporting Period Start Date ↑	Reporting Period End Date	Due Date	Report Type	Status	Actions
PR--G	08/01/2024	09/30/2024	10/07/2024	Performance Progress Re...	Created	
PR--G	08/01/2024	09/30/2024	10/07/2024	Federal Financial Report	Approved	
PR--G	10/01/2024	09/30/2025	10/07/2025	Federal Financial Report	Created	
PR--G	10/01/2024	12/31/2024	01/07/2025	Performance Progress Re...	Created	
PR--G	01/01/2025	03/31/2025	04/07/2025	Performance Progress Re...	Approved	
PR--G	04/01/2025	06/30/2025	07/07/2025	Performance Progress Re...	Approved	
PR--G	07/01/2025	09/30/2025	10/07/2025	Performance Progress Re...	Approved	
PR--G	10/01/2025	09/30/2026	10/07/2026	Federal Financial Report	Created	
PR--G	10/01/2025	12/31/2025	01/07/2026	Performance Progress Re...	Approved	
PR--G	01/01/2026	03/31/2026	04/07/2026	Performance Progress Re...	Submitted for Approval	

Show 10 Entries

Total Records: 11







Page 1 of 2

▲ Progress Reports

Search... 

Showing 1 to 6 of 6 records

Same Award, Two Different Views

EGMS ID	Reporting Period Start Date	Reporting Period End Date	Due Date ↑	Report Type	Status	Actions
PR--	08/01/2024	09/30/2024	10/07/2024	Federal Financial Re...	Approved	
PR--	01/01/2025	03/31/2025	04/07/2025	Performance Progre...	Approved	
PR--	04/01/2025	06/30/2025	07/07/2025	Performance Progre...	Approved	
PR--	07/01/2025	09/30/2025	10/07/2025	Performance Progre...	Approved	
PR--	10/01/2025	12/31/2025	01/07/2026	Performance Progre...	Approved	
PR--	01/01/2026	03/31/2026	04/07/2026	Performance Progre...	Submitted for Approval	

Total Records: 6

Grantee View

LDD View

Reminder (for you and your grantees): The LDD view and the Grantee view are **DIFFERENT**

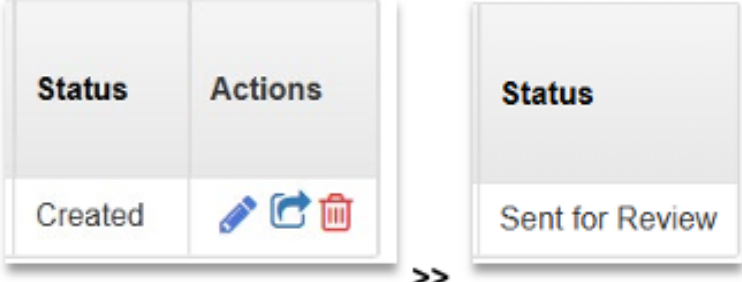
Understanding the GMS Quirks

Grantee Review Requests

- No matter what LDD Contact is associated under the Award Contact section, a **grantee can request ANY LDD contact (SME user)** to review a report.
- An LDD can only see an Application Record **IF they were originally requested to review** the application during the application phase:
 - If not, the grantee will need to “Download as PDF” in order to get them the details from their application.
- **MOST MISSED STEP-** When requesting a review, the grantee needs to take **TWO** steps:
 - Create the request THEN Send the request

2. Send the request

a. When the page refreshes, be sure to click the arrow icon (↗). The Status will change from “Created” to “Sent for Review”



The diagram illustrates the process of sending a request. It shows two side-by-side panels. The left panel has a 'Status' column with 'Created' and an 'Actions' column with three icons: a pencil, a right-pointing arrow, and a trash can. The right panel has a 'Status' column with 'Sent for Review'. A double right-pointing arrow (>>) is positioned between the two panels. A red rounded rectangle highlights the right-pointing arrow icon in the 'Actions' column of the first panel.

“New to NBRC” Staff Training

Resources to Consult First:

- [Grant Administration](#) webpage- where all the toolkits, forms, samples, instructions live
- [Compliance Manual](#)- Updated at least yearly
- [GMS Grantee Toolkit](#)- Step by step instructions on how to complete actions in the GMS from a grantee log in
- [LDD GMS Support Toolkit](#)- A walk through on LDD actions in the GMS
- [LDD Resource Library](#)- guidance documents and training recordings for reference
 - If there is a guidance document that you think would be useful to have, let me know!!

*If you cannot find the answer in these documents, then please reach out to admin@nbrc.gov and **MENTION** that you looked in the resources already.

Review Checklist

Partial Notice to Proceed (PNTP)

- **DOCUMENTATION:** Confirm grantee has uploaded all the appropriate documents under the Files tab of the Grant (GT-) Record (review the [PNTP Checklist](#) for more detail).
 - Match Confirmation Form 1002: Confirm form is correctly filled out based on the [sample](#) on website and all support documentation is included.
 - LDD Contract: Make sure the Project Kickoff Meeting date is included, the LDD fee is correct, the Grant Issue Date is the date listed under the Term section, and you are using the most up to date contract template found in the [LDD Resource Library](#).
- **COMMUNICATION:** Confirm/remind grantee to email admin@nbrc.gov with Grant ID in subject line, notifying us that all PNTP documents are uploaded to the Files tab of the Grant Record and are ready for review.

Review Checklist

Notice to Proceed

- **DOCUMENTATION:** Confirm grantee has uploaded all the appropriate documents under the Files tab of the Grant (GT-XX) Record (review the NTP Checklist in the Compliance Manual for more detail).
 - Match Commitment Form 1002: Confirm form is correctly filled out based on the [sample](#) on website and all support documentation is included.
 - LDD Contract: Make sure the Project Kickoff Meeting date is included, the LDD fee is correct, the Grant Issue Date is the date listed under the Term section, and you are using the most up to date contract template found in the [LDD Resource Library](#).
 - NEPA Determination: Confirm status. Note: NEPA documentation is available within the files tab of the Grant record (GT-XX).
- **COMMUNICATION:** Confirm/remind grantee to email admin@nbr.gov with Grant ID in subject line, notifying us that all NTP documents are uploaded to the Files tab of the Grant Record and are ready for review.

Review Checklist

SF-270: Payment Request

- Before First Request: If a Notice of Federal Interest is required, it must be on file prior to first reimbursement.
- First Request: The first request requires back up documentation to be uploaded to the Forms and Files tab in the request.
- Period Covered by this Request: The first request should always start on the NTP date or the 1st of the month thereafter. Thereafter, dates should always reflect the beginning of a month and go through the end of a month with no skipped periods. Make sure this period does not overlap with previous period or skip a chunk of time since the last request.
- Double check accounting in Box 11 (Review [SF270 Instructions](#) on our website for more details).
- Box 11 and Budget Table: Make sure payment budget table aligns with SF 270 box 11.
 - Net Spent this action in budget table = line i in SF270
 - Match can be split into Other Federal or Applicant Match, but not necessary
- Authorized Official: Make sure AO has filled in Box 13, including signature & "I Acknowledge" box.

Review Checklist

SF-425: Federal Financial Report

- Double check accounting in Box 10 (Review the [SF-425 Sample](#) on our website for more detail). Ensure only reimbursements that were fully processed by NBRC by the end of that fiscal year (9/30/XX) are included within the form.
- Authorized Official: Make sure AO has filled in Box 13, including signature & "I Acknowledge" box.

SF-PPR: Progress Report

- Correct Report Record: Check Reporting Period Start Date and Reporting Period End Date to ensure grantee is working within the correct report.
- Ensure all sections are completed and narrative provided reflects current project activity.
- Confirm with grantee that reporting is compliant and there are no past due reports.

Review Checklist

Amendment Requests*

*If there is more than one type of amendment request needed, grantees are encouraged to submit them all in one request. *More than one selection of amendment type can be made when creating a single request.*

Key Personnel Change (Authorized Official- known/planned transition)

- Initiator: AO should be the one to initiative/create this specific amendment request.
- Documents: Be sure the Authorized Official Resolution is attached under the Files tab in the Amendment Request.
- IF THERE IS AN **UNPLANNED AO TRANSITION**: See [AO Change guidance document](#).

Key Personnel Change (LDD Contact)

- Contacts: Be sure old LDD contact is completely removed/deleted in Amendment Request Contact section.
- Project Role: Be sure project role is correctly labeled as "LDD Contact".

Review Checklist

Budget Redirection / Scope of Work Change

- Budget: Confirm SF424cbw and budget table align with each other and the Grant Agreement.
- If a change in match amounts/sources: Ensure a Form 1002 is provided and completed so that the match amount aligns with SF424cbw and budget table. Ensure new source documents are provided as support.
- Expenses are still eligible and in line with project scope.
- AO is the personnel submitting.
- Note large shifts may require SPM review/approval so the grantee should provide a detailed narrative and justification.
- A large scope shift requires a revised NEPA Intake Form (NIF).
- Remind grantee that any additional NEPA review will adjust the project timeline.
- Ensure all documentation is attached to the Files tab of the Amendment Request record.
- Remind grantee that a new Grant Agreement will be drafted and must be accepted within the GMS as a next and final step to re-activate the award.

Budget Period Change

- Documentation: See checklist of items required in the Contract Amendment Form [here](#).
- Documentation: Confirm required documentation is uploaded to the Files tab of the Amendment Request.
- Justification: Confirm grantee is providing an accurate explanation within the request.
- Timeline: Confirm grantee is providing a realistic updated timeline.
- No Change: Confirm budget and scope are not changing; confirm all match is still in place.

Questions?



Northern Border Regional Commission

**Thank you
for all you
do!**



In memory of Lion Bob Weston and his wife, Sandy.
Together, their community involvement and service to
Fulton made it a better place for all of us.