Application Guide

USDA Forest Service
Office of Grants & Agreements
Access Branch

FUNDING OPPORTUNTIES:
USDA-FS-2023-UCF-IRA-01
Applications will be submitted through the UCF Online Grant Portal

This guide addresses high level and routine components of a grant application. It does not replace requirements outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity or Detailed Instructions required for any funding opportunity. The guide targets new or infrequent applicants to the USDA Forest Service but is available to all applicants for use.

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Tip

You can press **Ctrl** key to display the clicking hand , then click at the content to jump to the relative page.

To find a keyword, go to "Home" tab, in the "Editing" group, select **Find**. Type the word you'd like to find, and it will be highlighted in your document.

Competitive Application

Terms

Cognizant - Having a legal awareness or jurisdiction over an award. This is usually a FS employee, such as, a Grants Management Specialist or Program Manager.

Grantee - means the organization or other entity that receives a grant and assumes legal and financial responsibility and accountability both for the awarded funds and for the performance of the grant-supported activity. Categories of eligible proposers may be found in GPG Chapter I.E.

Instrument - a means by which something is effected or done. A legal document or policy giving agency to a partner or grantee.

NICRA - means Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.

NOFO - means Notice of Funding Opportunity. It contains a description of the project and the entities that are eligible to apply.

Sub-Award - an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a Federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.

Subrecipient - an entity, usually but not limited to non-Federal entities, that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal award; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such award. A subrecipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency.

General Tips

Read the *entire* grant application guide and follow instructions carefully.

- Application requirements vary across programs, so look closely at the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for each specific grant program to ensure that you are addressing all the requirements and criteria for the grant program in question.

- Carefully review the scoring criteria and make sure to address each of those criteria in your proposal

- Submit a reasonable budget based on realistic costs. Always double check your budget math. Refer to the Code of Federal Regulations on cost principles when needed: 2 CRF 200 Subpart E.

- Be sure to include any additional forms or attachments that are required. Submit work samples that reflect your ability to carry out the grant project proposed.

- Pay attention to deadlines – these are usually inflexible and if you submit your application past the deadline date, it will not be considered. Try to submit early.

- When writing your proposal, be clear and concise, establish your major points, and avoid unnecessary complexity. These points are the primary items on which the application will be evaluated.

- If provided, use the checklists included in the application.

- Separate fact from opinion.

Sections of a Grant Application

Grant applications are typically comprised of several sections, as outlined below. Know what information you need to include for each section.

Project Introduction

This section is similar to an abstract and is often written after most, if not all, of the proposal is completed. It should clearly explain what you are using funds for and written in a way so that any reader can understand quickly and clearly what the project will deliver.

Project Justification

In this section, you should define and explain the problem that your project will attempt to address.

Some questions to answer:

- Why is it critical to address the problem now?

- What plans, studies, and data are available to identify or quantify the need?

- How will the defined population be impacted or different when the project is completed?

- What documented proof/evidence is available to support the need for your project?

- Who will your project serve?

- Are there any special circumstances to consider about your defined area/population?

- What are your organization's needs?

Project Objectives

The objectives of your project should mirror what you are using the grant funds for in your project. Note, there is a difference between goals and objectives – goals are not measurable, whereas objectives are performance-related, so make sure your project objectives are realistic. You will be evaluated on your objectives if you are selected for funding.

Project Timeline/Schedule

In this section, you should discuss:

- How the project will be managed by your organization;

- How project services will be delivered, and

- Who will be in charge.

Include the planned start date, activity, responsible party, completion date, milestones, and deliverables/products. You should only cover those steps/tasks that will be supported by grant funding. The schedule should be detailed and clear enough that it will give the reviewer a general understanding of what the project involves.

Project Budget

- Budget Narrative vs Budget Forms. Your budget narrative and budget provide similar information in two different, but important ways. One lists the expenses and income while the other is a narrative description that details what is found in the budget form. The Budget narrative gives context to the information found in the form.

- Costs and project elements must be well-defined—Explain what costs are associated with each element and what portion of the costs will be covered by each of the funding sources.

- Check the application directions or ask the grant coordinator to determine how the budget should be organized (usually in columnar form according to general accounting principles).

- Include all costs associated with capital and non-capital expenditures and all assumed in-kind services, volunteer efforts, and indirect costs.

- Only include items covered by the grant funds—Do not include a miscellaneous or contingency category.

- Don't forget that this project will take place in the future, so budget numbers should account for inflation at the time of expenditure.

- Like the project timeline, the project budget should provide enough detail that the reviewer will gain a general understanding of what the project entails.

The Importance of Additional Support

Engage Community Support

Community support is vital for a successful project. Many grant programs require a local funding match and/or community engagement in the project's design and execution. The stronger the local support for a project, the easier it will be to secure matching funds, letters of support, and in-kind donations. Once the proposal summary is developed, seek out academic, political, and professional individuals or organizations, as well as community members or groups that may be interested in your proposal. Obtain their support in writing, and involve these individuals and organizations in project input.

Contact the grant coordinator as well as your district/state/regional representative (depending on the funding source). They can help you determine how well the grant program will work for your project and can provide you with technical assistance and additional guidance in the application process. Some competitions provide pre-proposal/application assistance. This is also specified in the announcement. Subscribe to stay updated on the status of your application.

Assemble a Grant Writing Team

While this is not always possible, it can be helpful to assemble a team to assist with grant writing. Examples of possible team members include:

- Senior-level management (support and sign grant applications)

- The project manager (who is the primary source of project-related information)

- A grant writer

- An editor (otherwise unaffiliated with the project so that they can provide an independent assessment of how well the application presents the required information); and

- Finance expert(s) (to help develop a good budget).

Depending on the size, capacity, and structure of your organization, it may not be feasible to assemble a team dedicated to grant application writing. It is not a requirement for a successful grant application but can help ease the process of the grant application preparation, content, submission and the like.

Grant Application Checklist

Use the checklist below to make sure your application is well written, contains all the necessary supporting documents, and meets the grant criteria. See if you answer 'YES' to everything above. However, if you have answered 'NO' to any items, you should follow up on these missing items before submitting your application.

1.**Guidelines and documents:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I have read all documents and know the aim of the grant program, eligibility criteria, and closing date and time.
2. **Application form:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I have used the correct application form and followed the process outlined in the grant guidelines.
3.**Checked my idea:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – My proposal is strong and aligns with the aim of the grant.
4. **Considered my audience:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I have written my grant application assuming the assessor knows nothing about my business/organization or the project.
5. **Language and tone:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I have used simple, positive business language (and included no jargon, vague, speculative, or negative wording).
6. **Concise:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – My answers are concise and within the required word count.
7. **Targeted answers:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I have not duplicated my answers and all sections have been completed.
8. **Budget:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I have outlined my project budget as required in the guidelines.
9. **Headings:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I've included useful headings so readers can skim the content.
10. **Keywords:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I've included the same keywords used as in the grant guidelines and assessment criteria.
11. **Formatting:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – Consistent formatting is applied and answers are in the same sequence as the application form (if applicable).
12. **Reviewed:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I have had my application thoroughly reviewed by 2 or more people.
13. **Proofread:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – I have had my application proofread by 2 or more people.
14. **Final check:**
☐ YES ☐ NO – All information has been provided to support the application as outlined in the guidelines.

System for Award Management (SAM)

General

Sam.gov is an official website for U.S government. All entities must register with SAM in order to conduct business with the federal government. On April 4, 2022, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (UEI). Once you go to this website for the first time, you will see a window :

SAM.GOV®

You have reached SAM.gov, an official website of the U.S. government. There is no cost to use this site.

The unique entity identifier used in SAM.gov has changed.

On **April 4, 2022**, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (generated by SAM.gov).

- The Unique Entity ID is a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.gov.
- As part of this transition, the DUNS Number has been removed from SAM.gov.
- Entity registration, searching, and data entry in SAM.gov now require use of the new Unique Entity ID.
- Existing registered entities can find their Unique Entity ID by following the steps here.
- New entities can get their Unique Entity ID at SAM.gov and, if required, complete an entity registration.

(?) I manage an entity. What do I need to do?

For more information about this transition, visit SAM.gov or the Federal Service Desk, FSD.gov. You can search for help at FSD any time or request help from an FSD agent Monday–Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

Additionally, you will see all announcements and alerts posted on its homepage. It is important to review them. For example, the latest alert below addresses the delay of validation applicants' information. Therefore, it is recommended that you **register very early on to avoid delays**. This link provides FAQ to validating your entity.

⚠️ **Entity Validation Delays Hide Details**
Jul 5, 2022
Due to high demand, entity legal business name and address validation tickets are taking longer than expected to process.

We are working on tickets in the order received. You can find resources related to this process here. Please do not create multiple incidents for the same request. ⊗

Registration and Validation

- Register/Renew your registration early. You will need to register SAM to do business with the U.S federal government. Every year you will need to update and renew your registration. If your SAM registration expires, there will be a delay in receiving funding or adding new funding through a modification.

- Gather Up Your Basic Information. Before you get started with SAM registration, you will need to know some important information. For instance, you will need your company tax ID number, which should be listed on tax forms. You also will need the routin and account numbers for your business bank account. Payments to you will be made through SAM so this info must be stored in your SAM account. You also might need to know your North American Industry Classification System Codes if you will be applying for Contracting. These codes identify the specific goods or services (or both) that your company provides.

- Tax ID and Physical Address. Make sure to use the Tax ID number that you have with the federal government. Use the same name as you register with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). After you registered, you can add another name as "doing business as" inside of SAM. Use the physical addresses to register for your UEI and have address proof ready to show (i.e., lease) if being requested by SAM.gov for validation.

- Entity Registration Checklist: See checklist link to help you prepare your registration. If you are applying for Financial Assistance award only, click on the 2nd link which will get you straight to the checklist.

Prepare for Entity Registration in SAM.gov

(i) SAM.gov is an official website of the United States government. SAM.gov is FREE to use. There is no charge to get a Unique Entity ID, register your entity, and maintain your entity registration at SAM.gov.

What can you do with this guide?
The questionnaires and checklists here will help you gather the information you need and prepare to answer the questions in your entity registration.

All Awards registration allows you to bid on contracts and other procurements, as well as apply for financial assistance. Look for the icon on the left to submit an All Awards registration.

Jump to All Awards entity registration questionnaires and checklists

Financial Assistance Awards Only registration allows you to apply for financial assistance, or grants and loans, only. Look for the icon on the left to submit a Financial Assistance Only registration.

Jump to Financial Assistance Awards Only entity registration questionnaires and checklists

- Socio-Economic Entity: Under General information, make sure that you click all that applies to your organization, especially if you qualify under socio-economic categories, Native-

American entity, or Disadvantaged business category.

General Information

- ☐ Country of Incorporation
- ☐ State of Incorporation (U.S. entities only)
- ☐ Company Security Clearance (optional)
- ☐ Highest Employee Security Clearance Level (optional)
- ☐ Institution Type (e.g., foundation, hospital, educational, if applicable)
- ☐ Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (must be certified by a federal agency)
- ☐ Native American Entity Type (if applicable)
- ☐ Organization Factors (e.g., S corporation, LLC, foreign-owned)
- ☐ Entity Structure (e.g., Corporate Entity-Not Tax Exempt, Corporate Entity-Tax Exempt Proprietorship)
- ☐ Profit Structure (e.g., for-profit, non-profit)
- ☐ Socio-economic Categories (e.g., veteran-owned, minority-owned)

- <u>Two or more administrators for your organization</u>. It is recommended to have multiple people who can renew and update your SAM registration. If you lose access to the email that has the access to SAM, you will have to create a new account and submit a notarized letter to SAM granting you access again. If you leave the organization, the new person will have to go through the same process of submitting a notarized letter and gaining access to the organization's SAM. This can lead to delays in receiving your funding related to a grant or agreement. A backup person from your organization can go into SAM and give that access immediately removing the delay.

- <u>Review twice</u>! Double check everything and make sure it matches your documentation exactly when setting your SAM account up for the first time or for SAM recertification process. Any information entered incorrectly will create a delay in the process. During times of high volume, it may add several weeks to the time it takes to register your entity.

APPLICATION PORTAL

The first page of the application portal gives you a summary of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) along with a link to a pdf version of the Full NOFO. Please download and read the entire NOFO.

You can then start your application process by clicking the "Apply Online" link at the top of the page or in the Notice of Funding opportunity, Summary section.

Application/Proposal Information

Before you apply, please ensure you have carefully reviewed all resource aids (the NOFO announcement, Frequently Asked Questions, Help Videos, and Resources). During the online application process, you'll want to refer to the Forms and Resources section to access required forms, the Help section for details about each workflow step within the application, and the NOFO announcement for details about the funding opportunity requirements.

After Selecting "New Application", you will be prompted to fill out the initial proposal information. Please take note of your unique application tracking ID at the bottom of the page. This ID along with your contact email will be used to access or continue a paused application.

Application/Proposal Information

Project Title (short title): *

Grant Category: *
Select the grant category that applies to this application.

-- select a category --

Contact Email: *   **Confirm Email:** *

Secret Question: *
Select your secret question that you will be asked each time you access your online application. NOTE: Your secret question is not accessable by the grant team and can not be retrieved if you forget the answer. However for security purposes, Do NOT use personally identifiable information such as your social secuity number or date of birth.

Secret Answer (case sensitive): *
You will be asked for the answer to your secret question each time you access your online application.

Application Tracking ID:
This is your unique application tracking ID, please write it down as you will be required to enter this tracking ID each time you access your application.
ira-36323

CANCEL   SAVE/NEXT >>

Application Dashboard

The Application Dashboard page contains a link to Forms, Templates and Resources you may need for your application as well a workflow steps to walk you through all needed information for your grant proposal.

Workflow Steps

Application workflow displays each step and your current completion status.

- A green complete status means you have completed that step.
- A red incomplete status indicates the step is not done and you **_must_** complete that step to submit the application.
- An orange incomplete indicates the step is not done and is optional to complete before application submission. Please take note of the conditions for each optional step.
  For Example:

Uploading of documentation

The document uploaded *must* be an Adobe PDF file. If your document to be uploaded is not a PDF file, you'll need to first 'save it as a PDF', 'export to PDF', 'save as a reduced size PDF', or otherwise convert it to an Adobe PDF file. Documents requiring physical signatures or other non-standard PDF files will need to be scanned and saved as a PDF file before upload. If you experience issues with uploading your PDF document or need help converting your document to a standard PDF file, please contact our technical support group at **contact@sref.info** and we will be happy to assist. You can also visit the **Frequently Asked Questions** under the Help section of the website for additional information.

Submittal Step 14

After completing steps 1-12 you must complete Step 13 including reviewing your package before you are able to complete step 14 and submit your proposal.

After you generate and review your application you can then submit your application.

NOTE: Once you complete the final review and submit your application, you will receive an email confirmation of your timely submittal. Submission will not be allowed beyond the application deadline. Once your application has been reviewed, you will be notified of its eligibility to more forward through the evaluation process.

To make corrections to your application AFTER it has been submitted, contact Administrative Staff via email at doutlaw@sref.info .

For help with technical issues or with uploading PDF documents, please contact Technical Support.

Budget

As you begin to develop a budget for your grant application and input the relevant costs down on paper, many questions may arise. Your best resources for answering these questions are the grants or sponsored programs office within your own institution, your administrative officials, and/or your peers.

There are online resources to guide you while you are developing your budget. If you have cost-related questions (i.e., what is allowable), Uniform Guidance is a "government-wide framework for grants management". It is an authoritative set of regulations for Federal awards. Visit Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – Chapter II, Part 200 covers Grants and Agreements. You will see Subpart A-F; Subpart E addresses cost principles that might be beneficial to review while drafting your budget proposal.

Matching/Cost-share

There are two kinds of matching/cost-share: cash and third-party in-kind.

1. Cash: includes cash spent for project-related costs. The allowable cash match must include costs that are necessary, reasonable, and allowable under the federal program.

    Matching and cost share funds have the same restrictions as federal funds. These funds must follow the same allowable and unallowable guidelines in their federal award. If, for example, a conference is unallowable under the grant award that has matching requirements, then grantees would not be able to use the conference expenses as match. The expense must be allowable with federal funds for it to be allowable with matching or cost share funds.

2. Third Party In-Kind: this includes, but is not limited to, the valuation of non-cash contributions provided by a third party. An in-kind match may be in the form of services, supplies, real property, and equipment. The value of the service may be used for the matching requirements, if the services are necessary, reasonable, and allowable under that federal program. Grantees are allowed to use unrecovered indirect costs for matching or cost sharing requirements; however, this requires prior approval of the federal awarding agency.

    For third-party in-kind matching—such as supplies, equipment, or space—the value must not exceed the fair market value at the time of the donation.

    For volunteer services, the rates must be consistent with the rates normally paid for similar work in the organization. If an employee from another organization conducts services free of charge, the services should be valued at that employee's regular rate of pay, in addition to their fringe benefits and allowable indirect costs. There are online resources to help you determine the value of volunteer time, such as: https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/. It is important to maintain a record for tracking and reporting volunteer time and services.

    Grantees are required to maintain records, which clearly show the source, amount, and timing for all matched contributions. While grantees are not required to submit their supporting documentation, their records must be available in the event of an audit or site visit.

Direct vs. Indirect Cost

Understanding direct costs and indirect costs is important for properly tracking your organization's expenses. Knowing the difference between the types of costs will help you to prepare a competitive budget proposal and have a better grasp on your accounting, thus better equipped to plan.

In cases of government grants or other forms of external funding, identifying direct and indirect costs becomes extra important. Grant rules are often strict about what constitutes a direct or an indirect cost and may allocate a specific amount of funding to each classification.

Direct Costs	Indirect Costs
If the cost can be identified specifically with a particular cost objective such as a grant, contract, project, function, or activity, then it is a direct cost	Costs of an organization that cannot readily be assigned to a particular project but are necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the project
Examples: raw material, direct labor, fuel	Examples: operating and maintaining facilities, depreciation, and administrative salaries
Highly variable mainly due to market factors	Relatively stable
Direct costs affect the products/services prices, and are thus calculated per project or per item	Indirect costs affect the whole business and are thus calculated monthly or annually

Indirect Costs: NICRA and De Minimis

There are two methods for assessing indirect costs, either with the de minimis rate or through a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).

The term "de minimis rate" refers to the rate that is available to recipients (and certain subrecipients) that do not have a current NICRA. The de minimis rate is 10% of "modified total direct costs" (MTDC defined in 2 CFR 200.68 as. "All direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award)".

To be reimbursed for indirect costs over the 10% de minimis rate, you must first establish NICRA. To do this, prepare an indirect cost rate proposal and submit it to the cognizant federal agency. The cognizant federal agency is generally determined based on the preponderance of federal dollars you receive.

If the Forest Service (FS) is your cognizant Agency and you need to obtain a NICRA, please visit FS Resource Audit branch (RAB) Audit and Assurance Staff | US Forest Service (usda.gov). Refer to the Appendix for the FS NICRA application that you may be required to submit. Please contact the RAB before filling out the form below.

Financial Capability

This document does not address all possible circumstances that need to be considered when establishing internal controls or assessing risk. Each applicant is responsible for reviewing their practices and processes to determine where risks exist and where and how controls can be established to mitigate them, and also complying with possible audits.

Grantees need adequate financial management systems to ensure that grants are used for intended purposes and in accordance with regulations. A capability assessment ensures that an applicant has adequate financial systems and enables awarding agencies to decide whether to award the grant, and whether conditions should be added. Assessments of grant applicant capability provide management with confidence that grantees have, or will have, the required financial systems and allow management to plan the level of grantee oversight.

The Forest Service policy requires a pre-award evaluation of the administrative and programmatic capabilities of applicants. Applicants are required to answer questions regarding financial management systems, property, and procurement standards, assigned personnel, and travel policies. Below are the three areas to be evaluated. Refer to the Appendix for the Forest Service Form 1500-22 Financial Capability Questionnaire.

Financial Management System Standards

Recipients are required to meet the standards and requirements for financial management systems set forth or referenced in 2 CFR Part 200.302, as applicable. The standards and requirements for a financial management system are essential to the grant relationship.

Recipients must have in place accounting and internal control systems that provide for appropriate monitoring of grant accounts to ensure that obligations and expenditures are reasonable, allocable, and allowable. **Internal controls** in accounting are procedures that are put in place within an organization to ensure business is carried out in an orderly, effective, and accurate manner. In addition, the systems must be able to identify large unobligated balances, accelerated expenditures, inappropriate cost transfers, and other inappropriate obligation and expenditure of funds.

Property Management System Standards

Generally, recipients may use their own property management policies and procedures for property purchased, constructed, or fabricated as a direct cost provided they observe the regulatory requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200.310 through 200.316, as applicable. State governments will use, manage, and dispose of equipment acquired under a grant in accordance with state laws and procedures as specified.

Procurement System Standards and Requirements

Recipients may acquire a variety of goods or services in connection with a grant-supported project, ranging from those that are routinely purchased goods or services to those that involve substantive programmatic work. States may follow the same policies and procedures they use for procurements from non-Federal funds and ensure that every purchase order or other contract includes any clauses required by 2 CFR Part 200.327. All other recipients must follow the requirements in 2 CFR Part 200.317 through 200.327 and the purchase of goods or services through contracts under grants, as applicable.

Equipment

Equipment can only be purchased with Federal funds with written approval of Federal Awarding agency (2 CFR 200.439). Instructions for how to handle equipment purchased can be found in 2 CFR 200.313. In addition, review the NOFO carefully to address any additional equipment requirements from the awarding agency. Below is a synopsis to give you a broad understanding. It is recommended that you carefully review the entire equipment section referenced in 2 CFR 200.

- Must get written prior approval to purchase
- The Title will Vest upon acquisition with the Non-Federal entity
- The equipment must be properly used and disposed of
- Equipment must be used in the program or project for which it was acquired.
- Very Detailed records must be kept of the Equipment and damage, or loss must be investigated
- Must be maintained
- When no longer needed the equipment must be disposed of according to awarding agency.

See Appendix for the Forest Service Equipment Justification & Certification Statement form.

Appendix

Financial Capability FS-1500-22

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE
FISCAL YEAR:

Adequate accounting systems should meet the following criteria as outlined in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Circular of Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements found in 2 CFR Part 200, as implemented by USDA regulations 2 CFR Part 400.
(1) Accounting records should provide information needed to adequately identify the receipt of funds under each grant awarded and the expenditure of funds for each grant.
(2) Entries in accounting records should refer to subsidiary records and/or documentation which support the entry and which can be readily located.
(3) The accounting system should provide accurate and current financial reporting information.
(4) The accounting system should be integrated with an adequate system of internal controls to safeguard the funds and assets covered, check the accuracy and reliability of accounting data, promote operational efficiency, and encourage adherence to prescribed management policies.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

1. Name of Organization and Address:

2. Authorized Representative's Name and Title:

3. Phone: -   -   ext. | 4. Fax: -   - | 5. Email:

6. Year Established: | 7. Employer Identification Number (EIN): | 8. DUNS Number:

9. Type of Organization:

10. Approximate Number of Employees:
Full Time (Paid):   Part Time (Paid):
Full Time (Volunteer):   Part Time (Volunteer):

FEDERAL AUDIT DATA

11. Have you been audited by a Federal agency?: ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please indicate the type:
☐ OMB A-133 Single Audit (required of institutions that annually expend over $750,000 in federal funds

☐ Incurred Cost ☐ Accounting System ☐ Timekeeping

12. Date of Last Federal Audit/Review *(m/d/yyyy)*: | Audit Agency/Firm:

If findings are reported, explain:

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AUDIT DATA

13. Date of Last Financial Statement Audit: | Fiscal Period Audited:

Audit Firm:

Auditor's Opinion on Financial Statement: | ☐ Unqualified Opinion | ☐ Qualified, Disclaimer or Adverse Opinions

If other than unqualified, state reason:

If you have not had an audit completed in the last two years, please submit a copy of your most recent tax forms (990 for non-profits). If you do not have a current tax form, please explain:

ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

14. Has any Government Agency rendered an official written opinion concerning the adequacy of the accounting system for the collection, identification and allocation of costs under Federal contracts/grants? ☐ Yes ☐ No	

15. If yes, provide name and address of Agency performing review:	**Attach a copy of the latest review and any subsequent correspondence, clearance documents, etc.**

16. Which of the following best describes your accounting system:
☐ Manual   ☐ Automated   ☐ Combination

17. Does the accounting system identify the receipt and expenditure of program funds separately for each grant?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
18. Does the accounting system provide for the recording of expenditures for each grant/contract by budget cost categories shown in the approved budget?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
19. Does the accounting system provide for the recording of cost sharing or match for each grant? Can you ensure that documentation is available to support recorded match or cost share?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
20. Are time distribution records maintained for each employee that specifically identify effort charged to a particular grant or cost objective?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
21. Does the accounting/financial system include budgetary controls to preclude incurring obligations or costs in excess of total funds available for a grant?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
22. Does the accounting/financial system include budgetary controls to preclude incurring obligations or costs in excess of total funds available for a budget cost category (e.g. Personnel, Travel, etc.)?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
23. Is your organization generally familiar with the existing regulation and guidelines containing the Cost Principles and procedures for the determination and allowance of costs in connection with Federal grants?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

FUNDS MANAGEMENT

24. Is a separate bank account maintained for Federal grant funds?	☐ Yes	☐ No
25. If a separate bank account is not maintained, can the Federal grant funds and related expenses be readily identified?	☐ Yes	☐ No

PROPERTY STANDARDS, PROCUREMENT STANDARDS, AND TRAVEL POLICIES

PROPERTY STANDARDS

26. Does your property management system(s) provide for maintaining: (1) a description of the equipment; (2) an identification number; (3) source of the property, including the award number; (4) where title vests; (5) acquisition date; (6) federal share of property cost; (7) location and condition of the property; (8) acquisition cost; & (9) ultimate disposition information?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

27. Does your property management system(s) provide for a physical inventory and reconciliation of property at least every two years?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
28. Does your property management system(s) provide controls to insure safeguards against loss, damage or theft of the property?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
PROCUREMENT STANDARDS			
29. Does your organization maintain written procurement procedures which (1) avoid unnecessary purchases; (2) provide an analysis of lease and purchase alternatives; and (3) provide a process for soliciting goods and services?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
30. Does your procurement system provide for the conduct to ensure selection on a competitive basis and documentation of cost or price analysis for each procurement action?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
31. Does your procurement system include provisions for checking the "Excluded Parties List" system for suspended or debarred sub-grantees and contractors, prior to award? www.sam.gov	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
TRAVEL POLICY			
32. Does your organization maintain a standard travel policy or, if no policy exists, does your organization adhere to rates and amounts established under 5 U.S.C. 5701–11, ("Travel and Subsistence Expenses; Mileage Allowances"), and policies under the Federal Acquisition Regulations at 48 CFR 31.205– 46(a)?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
SUBRECIPIENT MANAGEMENT			
33. (For Pass-through entities only). Does your organization have controls in place to monitor activities of subrecipients, as necessary, to ensure that Federal awards are used for authorized purposes in compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of the award and that performance goals are achieved.	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
INDIRECT COSTS			
34. My organization has an established indirect cost rate	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
35. If my organization chooses to charge indirect costs to the Federal award or use indirect costs as a match, you understand that you must prepare an indirect cost rate proposal and submit it to your cognizant Federal agency for approval. Alternatively, you may use a de minimus rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC).	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

STANDARDS FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND APPLICANT CERTIFICATION
I certify that the above information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.
Signature:
Name:
Title:

U.S. Forest Service Albuquerque Service Center

Resource Audit Branch

Indirect Cost Proposal Guidance and Checklist For Non-profit Entities

Subject to 2 CFR Part 200 (Formerly 2 CFR Part 230)

Proposals may be based on prior year actual data, actual data with forward- adjustments or any combination of information.

All documentation requirements described below must be met.

Please E-mail the proposal, adjoining schedules, financial statements (or IRS Form 990) and General Ledger (GL) to rab@fs.fed.us. Since we review proposals electronically, Microsoft Excel is the preferred format for submitting proposal calculations and schedules.

If the GL files and other schedules are too large to submit electronically via e- mail, you may wish to send a CD ROM or other compressed file to:

U.S. Forest Service Albuquerque Service Center

Resource Audit Branch ATTN: Indirect Rates 101B Sun Avenue NE Albuquerque, NM 87109

Our fax number is: (866) 436-5939

Provide a cover letter stating the purpose of the proposal and the proposed rate or rates, as applicable.

Were the agency's books and records audited in accordance with OMB A-133 or AICPA standards? If so, please submit a copy of the auditor's report or the grantee internet site where it can be located. If no audit was performed, please provide copies of IRS Form 990 instead.

The proposed **indirect cost pool** and **allocation base** must reconcile to the financial statements (or IRS Form 990) and general ledger (G/L):

Provide detailed schedules to tie financial statement amounts (or IRS Form 990) and GL expense accounts to the proposed **indirect costs pool and base**.

The allocation base must be complete (i.e., does it include all activities that benefit from the indirect cost pool?)

The allocation base must be fully explained (e.g., direct labor with or without direct fringe

Explain any differences between proposed **indirect cost pool** and **allocation base** amounts, financial statements (or IRS Form 990), and the GL.

Are unallowable expenses eliminated from the indirect cost pool? The proposed cost pool must have **sufficient detail** to make an independent determination.

Provide a **calculation** of the indirect cost rate based on item 3. Above.

An *example* of this calculation, using total direct cost, is below. Allocation bases typically differ from one organization to another.

CALCULATION OF INDIRECT RATE

Pool	(a)	$	750,000
Base	(b)	$	3,225,000
Rate	(a)/(b)		23.26%

Note: Base is total direct cost, excluding capital expenditures. Unallowable costs are excluded from the calculation.

A schedule of unallowable cost is provided.

During the proposal fiscal year, were there any significant changes to the accounting system or to the definition or accounting treatment of any expense category (e.g., a change in building/equipment costing methodology, a change in charging an expense from direct to indirect or vice versa)?

Provide a narrative description of how **like** expenses are determined to be direct or indirect (i.e., labor, travel, materials and supplies, etc.)

Certifications.

Submit, as part of the proposal, a certification that the requirements and standards regarding lobbying have been complied with. See Appendix B to Part 230- Selected items of Cost (paragraph 25). A copy is attached.

Certificate of Indirect Cost. A copy is attached.

As appropriate, are previous understandings with the Forest Service or other federal agency incorporated into the proposal (for example, previous rate agreements).

Provide a schedule of expenditures on federal awards (SEFA).

Organizational Chart

Provide the following information:

Organization Name (if different from the non-profit agency submitting the proposal)

Point of Contact for the proposal: name, title, email, phone number, fax number

Name and title of official who is authorized to sign the rate agreement.

Note: All final negotiation agreements are e-mailed using Resource Audit Branch electronic issuance procedures. Please provide the name and e-mail address of the individual who is to receive the agreement

LOBBYING COST CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the _____ has complied with the requirements and standards on lobbying cost in 2 CFR Part 200 (formerly 2 CFR Part 230) for the period____20XX through _20XX.

Non-Profit Organization: _____

Signature: _____

Name of Official: (Printed)   _____

Title: _____

Date of Execution   _____

This is to certify that I have reviewed the indirect cost proposal submitted herewith and to the best of my knowledge and belief:

All costs included in this proposal based on actual cost incurred as of, and dated _____, to establish final or billing indirect costs rates for fiscal year ended _____ are allowable in accordance with the requirements of the Federal award(s) to which they apply and 2 CFR Part 200 (2 CFR Part 230). Unallowable costs have been adjusted for in allocating costs as indicated in the indirect cost proposal.

All costs included in this proposal are properly allocable to Federal awards on the basis of a beneficial or causal relationship between the expenses incurred and the agreements to which they are allocated in accordance with applicable requirements. Further, the same costs that have been treated as indirect costs have not been claimed as direct costs. Similar types of costs have been accounted for consistently.

Non-profit Organization   _____

Signature: _____

Name of Authorized Official: _____

Title: _____

Date of Execution: _____

Budget and Narrative Examples and Instructions

**Budget and Budget Narrative
Instructions with Examples**

Separate **Budget** and **Budget Narrative** documents should be created and uploaded to the appropriate workflow steps in your online application. An example **Budget** and **Budget Narrative** is included at the end of each set of instructions for your reference. Your Budget and Narrative documents should be sufficiently detailed to support and justify your proposed project cost.

NOTE: The budget amounts on your BUDGET and BUDGET NARRATIVE <u>MUST</u> match the funding requested in the 'Abstract/Funding' workflow step and the budget amounts on the Federal Financial forms, SF-424 and SF424A.

BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

A separate **Budget** document must be created that clearly defines your project costs over the project period. The project costs must be categorized using the following Budget categories:

- Personnel (salary costs)

- Fringe benefits

- Travel

- Equipment (cost of purchase, not rental. NOTE: The definition of equipment is tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of at least $5000. Equipment purchase is heavily discouraged. Consider equipment rental instead.)

- Supplies (tangible personal property other than equipment, this includes tree purchase not completed under a contract for service)

- Contractual (e.g., contract for service, equipment rental)

- Other (sub-grants only)

- Indirect costs (NICRA, de minimis, or none—see below)

De minimis rate: Any non-Federal entity (except State and local governments that receive more than $35 million per year in Federal funding. See 2 CFR part 200 Appendix VII D 1 b) that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect rate (NICRA) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a

non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) may be used, if established.

Your completed Budget document must be <u>saved as a PDF file and uploaded to the 'Budget' workflow step</u> in your online application.

The example Budget shown below is for reference only. Your Budget must detail your project costs using the budget categories listed above.

(This area is intentionally left blank to allow for the table below)

BUDGET *(example only)*

Applicant: ABC University

Project: Develop and distribute tree care information in Spanish

| | Federal Funds (requested) | Non-Federal Match | | Total | Source of Non-Federal Matching In-Kind Funds |
		Cash	In-Kind		
Personnel	$50,000.00	$50000.00		$100,000.00	ABC University
Fringe Benefits	$20,000.00	$12,800.00	$7,200.00	$40,000.00	ABC University
Travel	$4,000.00	$4,000.00		$8,000.00	ABC University
Equipment				$0.00	
Supplies				$0.00	
Brochure Layout	$8,000.00	$7,000.00	$1,000.00	$16,000.00	XYZ Design
Printing Costs	$22,000.00	$20,000.00	$2,000.00	$44,000.00	EZ Printing Co.
Distribution Costs	$5,000.00		$9,000.00	$14,000.00	Green Foundation and local volunteers
Contractual	$5,000.00	$5,000.00		$10,000.00	Translation SVCS LLC
Other (sub-grants only)				$0.00	
Sub-Total	$114,000.00	$118,000.00		$232,000.00	
Indirect Cost:				$0.00	
Total Cost:	**$114,000.00**	**$118,000.00**		**$232,000.00**	

BUDGET NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

A separate **Budget Narrative** document must be created to explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. List in detail how the totals on the budget were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities.

Your **Budget** should be cited in your **Budget Narrative** document when the applicant is discussing the work to be performed and the cost to execute the specific work activity.

For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the agency's approval and estimate its cost.

Cost sharing/matching must be committed at the time of application submission. <u>The budget narrative must show the amounts and sources of match or cost share (including both cash and in-kind contributions)</u>.

NOTE: The Federal dollars requested **may not** be used to purchase food, (equipment, with a cost of $5,000 or greater) or capital improvements to property of any ownership. If one is unsure if the item they are proposing is eligible, please contact the administrative staff, SM.FS.UCF_IRA@usda.gov

Your completed Budget Narrative document must be <u>saved as a PDF file and uploaded to the 'Budget Narrative' workflow step</u> in your online application.

The example Budget Narrative below is for reference only. Your Budget Narrative must be detailed to explain your project costs.

(This area is intentionally left blank to allow for the table below)

BUDGET NARRATIVE *(example only)*

All non-federal matching cash funds to be provided by ABC University unless otherwise noted. All non-federal in-kind matching funds provided as noted in the budget table.

Personnel:

Personnel required to research and create publication content and design the publication deliverable.:

- Content creator: 1040 hours @ $20 per hour = $ 20,800

- Content creator and editor: 2200 hours @ $30 per hour = $66,000

- Publication design: 600 hours @ $22 per hour = $ 13,200

Fringe Benefits:

All benefits based on an expected benefit rate of 40%

Supplies:

Brochure Layout: Professional brochure design to be performed by ZYZ Design.

Printing Costs: Expected printing of 20,000 copies, eight-pages each, four colors performed by EZ Copy Co.

Distribution: Copies will be sent to federal and state urban forestry coordinators and will be available on request to all callers for at least one year from date of completion.

Travel: Travel for four people to present at four conferences.

Contractual: Direct contract with Translation SVCS LLC to translate brochure content from English to Spanish.

Equipment Justification Form FS-1500-34

<table>
<tr><td>USDA Forest Service</td><td>OMB 0596-0217
FS-1500-34</td></tr>
</table>

GRANT EQUIPMENT JUSTIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

<table>
<tr><td>1.</td><td colspan="2">Project Title:</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td colspan="2">Grant Program:</td><td></td><td>3.   Grant Number:</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">4.</td><td rowspan="3">Equipment Description</td><td>Type:
(i.e., Dozer, Engine, Pick up, Pump, Map Grade GPS, etc.)</td><td></td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Model:
(i.e., Ford F-350 4x4, John Deere 750J, Honda GX340, Trimble Juno, etc.)</td><td></td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Specialized/Custom/Technical Requirements:
(i.e., Briefly describe any special or customized modifications to the equipment required for use in project implementation. Include performance and/or safety items. For Example: screens, shields, manual fuel shut-off valves, etc. that is not standard.)</td><td></td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>5.</td><td colspan="2">Quantity:</td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>Cost</td><td>Cost Per Unit:</td><td></td><td>Total Cost:</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

7. Equipment Need and Added Value To Grant Declaration

A. Briefly describe how this equipment is necessary to accomplishment the grant project/program objectives.

B. Briefly describe how this equipment is unique (i.e., safety, efficiency, innovative, etc.) in its ability to accomplish the grant task(s) described above (6A) compared to other potential options (i.e., other equipment types, contracting, etc.):

<table>
<tr><td>C.</td><td>Time equipment will be used for this grant project/program:</td><td>Months :</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Days:</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>D.</td><td>Will equipment be used to support another federal grant?
(Note: Equipment cannot be included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing requirements of any other federal award.)</td><td colspan="2">YES: ☐   NO: ☐</td></tr>
</table>

8. Grantee Certification Statement

A. This equipment purchase adheres to State Statutes and approved State purchasing/acquisition guidelines.
B. State will maintain purchase and usage documentation to support grant accounting.

<table>
<tr><td>Certified by:</td><td></td><td>Title:</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

9. USDA Forest Service Grant Program Manager Review and Approval

<table>
<tr><td>Approved by:</td><td></td><td>Program Manager</td></tr>
</table>

Revised 11-25-2013