

Section 6.2.2: Program Narratives

PURPOSE AND POLICY

The Office of Grants and Federal Resources (GFR) requires grant applicants and recipients of assistance to provide program narratives for the projects they propose to enable grantors to select applicants for award and monitor the progress and results of project work.

As policy, grantor agencies should ensure that subgrants are awarded to eligible subgrantee that possess both the technical and programmatic competence to carry out work required under the subgrant, as well as the financial capability to administer public funds in a responsible manner. In the review and approval process, it is sometimes necessary for the grantor agency to require a subgrantee to meet special terms and conditions in order to make a subgrant. The Office of Grants and Federal Resources (GFR) strongly recommends that grantors use the eCivis Subrecipient Manager (SRM) for managing the grant lifecycle, from the notice of funding availability (NOFA) to subgrantee closeout.

PROCEDURE

1. Receive application packet from applicant

The program narrative is developed by the applicant. The narrative should include an outline and description of activities required to reach the project's goals with a schedule of the activities. Within the eCivis Subrecipient Manager (SRM) tool, this is addressed by the standardization of the application across nine sections:

- Application/Project Title;
- Program/Project Congressional District;
- Program/Project Legislative District;
- Scope of Work;
- Project Timeline;
- Collaborative Elements and Partners;
- Sustainability Plan;
- Evaluation Plan; and
- Project Goals and Objectives.

Additionally, there are three program-specific criteria fields that can be configured for users of the eCivis SRM tool. A definition of those sections are provided on the Arizona Standard Application Form document found on GFR's website at <https://grants.az.gov/grant-resources-1>.

2. Review the application for content

The submitted application must indicate who will do what, when, where, and how the project will be implemented to achieve the desired outcomes. The application must be consistent with

the project's budget and must be prepared in sufficient detail with respect to the projected work, timeline, products, expected accomplishments, and performance measures, to aid project monitoring by the grant program manager. Applications are prepared in a narrative fashion in order to present information relevant to the performance of a program or project. However, grant program managers may request a certain format other than narrative within those nine standardized application sections, such as requesting the *Project Timeline* presented in chart form.

Management and oversight of subgrantee implementation activities are covered under monitoring in Chapter 8.

3. **Receive and perform an initial review of the application**

Regardless of the method of application receipt (e.g. email), the grant program manager should acknowledge having received it. In the eCivis SRM, all applications that are submitted will provide an email verification to the applicant that it was received by the grantor agency via the automated SRM tool. It will appear in "Submitted" status for the grant program manager until further action is taken. It is standard that the grant program manager perform a cursory review of the application for completeness.

- a. **General** - For all subgrants, review of the application submitted compared to the grant program guidance document(s) developed by the grantor agency for that specific program. The grant program guidance document should provide the basic minimum requirements for an applicant. This review includes the applicants' adherence to stated application structure (such as page or character limits, font and/or font size); basic eligibility requirements (such as eligible organization type or location); and finally answering all of the questions and/or providing any required additional documents.
- b. **Formulaic (rare)**: If the subgrant is awarded on a formulaic basis, grant program managers must check that the funds requested match the correct available or allocated amount. If match is required, grant program managers must make sure that the correct amount is reflected.
- c. **Federal Pass-through**: If the subgrant is being made as a result of a federal pass-through program, the grant program managers must check that any and all federal flow-down requirements are being met.

4. **Deny, request change, or approve application**

After this review, the grant program manager has three options:

- a. **Deny**: If after this initial review, the application is determined to be incomplete, the grant program manager can recommend the application for denial and not proceed forward in the peer review process.
- b. **Change Request**: If the grant program manager determines some information is missing or incomplete, the grant program manager can allow the applicant to re-submit its application. However, if this is allowed, the grantor agency will need to have a policy

regarding the permissibility and circumstances for it. The policy must be universally applied to all applicants: if a grantor agency allows one applicant to change its application, then all applicants must be provided that same opportunity given the parameters of the grantor agency's policy. If using the eCivis SRM tool, the grant program manager will need to move the application from the "Submitted" status back to "Draft." The grant program manager will need to notify the applicant regarding its application being returned to draft status due to either missing information or being incomplete. When the applicant submits the application again, it will be back in the "Submitted" section.

c. Approve for Further Review:

i. **Peer Review** – Per Arizona Revised Statute [\(A.R.S.\) 41-2702](#), "Applications shall be evaluated by at least three evaluators who are peers or other qualified individuals." If the solicitation has been set up for Peer Review in eCivis, the grant program manager will provide reviewers with access to the review portal to score applications assigned to them. Applications will remain in the Under Review folder until all applications are reviewed. For further information regarding the Reviewer portion of the eCivis SRM tool, please visit <https://grants.az.gov/grant-resources-1> for various User documents.

ii. **Non-Peer Review** – Arizona Revised Statute [\(A.R.S.\) 41-2703 Waiver of solicitation and award procedures](#) provides a grant program manager with the appropriate guidance on seeking a waiver to the above-mentioned peer review standard.