

Grant Basics: Grant Management

09/24/24

Q&A Report

Q. I looked for the other two trainings as I will watch them tomorrow and wanted to pass them to our energy committee who are writing grants. Can you help me find them or drop the direct link in chat?

A. The recorded trainings are posted in the VLCT Resource Library at <https://www.vlct.org/resource-library>. Anyone can view them.

Q. Have the materials on these slides been turned into a convenient checklist for reviewing our town's grant management capabilities?

A. Not yet.... thank you for the great idea!

Q. Do you have recommendations for grant management software?

A. Your town's financial software should be able to track grant funds.

Q. On the Attachment B, is the budget detail coming from the application or is this where these distinctions are spelled out?

A. If your grant award is the same amount as that which was requested in your application, then the budget shown in Attachment B should be the same. If it is different and you don't understand why, ask your funder. They will be delighted that you have taken the time to read your grant agreement so thoroughly!

Q. This isn't a question, but just a whine. We're a town of ~800, about to manage a \$1.4M grant with nothing but volunteers. Yikes.

A. We hear you and understand. If you have questions, please reach out to us for help and resources.

Q. Does the League have template language for grant purchasing or conflicts of interest for example?

A. Model policies are available on VLCT's website in the Resource Library (<https://www.vlct.org/resource-library>) for municipalities to modify and customize to make their own. The model purchasing policy is intended for purchases involving municipal funds only. It does not address federal and state requirements. Contact us if you'd like assistance crafting a policy that meets those requirements.

Q. What if there are errors in the Grant Agreement? What's the process for getting changes?

A. Contact the point of contact listed for the funder shown in Part 1, Section IV - Contact Information.

Q. Can you link to Bulletin 5 and Bulletin 3.5 here?

A. All State Administrative Bulletins, including 5 and 3.5, can be found at: <https://aoa.vermont.gov/bulletins>.

Q. How forgiving are state grants for municipalities? If there is a mistake is there a chance to correct it or is the town on the hook for it?

A. If the mistake is made within the performance period of the grant, contact your funder immediately. They understand that capacity is a major issue in towns, and local officials are overworked. They will work with you on a solution, if one is possible.

Q. Does VLCT have a model Grant Policy for towns?

A. A draft is in progress - it is taking much longer (because of me!) than we hoped. We will let you know through VLCT News when it is available on our website.... thanks for your patience!

Q. What was that website for volunteer rates?

A. You can use the Vermont rate from independentsector.org. Their website is: <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>. Download the report and save it in your grant file as backup documentation. The rate is updated annually in April, so you'll need to download and save the report annually as the value changes. These rates can be used for valuing volunteer time for grant applications too.

Q. Do benefit costs count as indirect if you're using labor as match?

A. Benefits can be charged as a direct cost to the grant or as an indirect cost. You need to make a choice and be consistent across all your grants about how they will be treated. Some State of Vermont grants do not allow benefit costs to be charged at all.

If you want to charge benefits as a direct cost to your grant, there are several methods you can use. All involve converting the cost of the employee's benefits to a dollar per hour value, just like you do for the employee's wage rate. Contact us if you'd like to learn more. You'll need to track the cost in your financial system and retain documentation in your grant file for how you arrived at the cost.

Q. Does it help a biz to have stacked DBE statuses? i.e., owned by a minority female veteran?

A. Yes and no. Agencies will certainly appreciate the help you provide in meeting their DBE goals and look favorably on you in the future. You'll also get to check all three of those boxes on your DBE report. The real reward is supporting DBE businesses.

Q. Thank you so much for this. I am a newbie, working on a small grant, and have recently started to sweat bullets concerning grant completion. This helped a lot.

A. Don't sweat - we are here to help! Please contact us if you have questions or use our Consult on Call service to self-book an appointment: <https://www.vlct.org/federal-funding-assistance/federal-funding-assistance-program-consults-call>.