



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

Grants 101: Grant Writing Technical Assistance

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Today's Presenters



Molly Cook
*Workforce Research
Coordinator*

Illinois Center for Specialized
Professional Support

Grant Experience: Former
Development Director and Grant
Writing Consultant



Kenis Williams
Special Populations Manger

Illinois Department of
Commerce, Office of
Employment and Training

Grant Experience: 20 years
of experience with grant
application submissions and
reviewing in non-profits



Sarah Blalock
Grant Manager Intern

Illinois Department of
Commerce, Office of
Employment and Training

Grant Experience: Grant Review and
NOFO Development

Agenda

- Grant Lifecycle
- Key Terms
- Pre-Writing Phase
- Writing Phase
- Submitting Your Application
- Resources



Introductions

Take a moment to think of a way to describe your organization. This should be:

- No more than 15 seconds
- Incorporate your mission
- Should describe the population you serve and how you deliver services

After, please take a moment to:

1. Introduce yourself to us.
2. Share the introduction of your organization with us from above.

Grant Lifecycle

Pre-Award Phase

- Funding Opportunity
- Application Process
- Application Review

Award Phase

- Review and Recommendations
- Forms
- Program Risk Assessment
- NOSA and Grant Agreement

Post Award

- Reporting
- Audit
- Closeout

Key Terms



americanjobcenter

Sarah Blalock

- **Award-** Financial assistance that provides support or stimulation to accomplish a public purpose.
- **Budget-** The financial plan for the project or program
- **Close Date -** The deadline designated by the grant-making agency
- **Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number-** The nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify entities
- **Eligible Entities-** Any entity that qualifies to apply for the grant or to be helped by the grant
- **Funding Period-** The period of time when funding is available for obligation by the recipient.
- **Grant Agreement-** A legal instrument of financial assistance between the funder and the grantee
- **Non-Federal Entities-** A state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education (IHE), or nonprofit organization
- **Project Cost-** Total allowable costs incurred under an award
- **Project Period-** The period established in the award document during which awarding agency sponsorship begins and ends.
- **Target Population-** The population that the NOFO or Applicant has identified as being the target of programming
- **NOFO-** Notice of Funding Opportunity

Source: [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)



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Step 1: The Pre-Writing Phase

Why Grants?

Creating a stable funding and revenue plan is essential to organizational growth and sustainability.

Grants can serve multiple purposes:

- Provide seed money for new projects
- Support essential operations
- Allow for growth
- Meet agency and community needs
- Enhance program accountability and impacts
- Provide "credibility" to agency or project

..... If the "fit" is right.

Finding Grant Opportunities

Types of grant sources include:

- State and Federal government entities
- Foundation Grants: community, private, family; private grant makers

Funding can be "discretionary" or program-specific.

<https://donorbox.org/nonprofit-blog/nonprofit-funding-sources/>
www.grants.gov

Questions to Ask When Looking at Grant Opportunities

Molly Cook

How is your program filling a gap?

What are our gaps in funding that we're looking to fill?

Which of our programs need funding/could be improved with funding?

Does my program fit within the grant priorities?

Which programs have been funded in the past?

What is our capacity to utilize this funding within the timing requirements

Could my program be broken into phases of funding?

How will this program continue once grant funding ends?

Example NOFO

Molly Cook



Review the Following:



Program Description (pg. 1)



Eligibility Information (pg. 16)



Application and Submission Information (pg. 19)



Program Requirements (pg. 18)



Application Review Information (pg. 23/24)

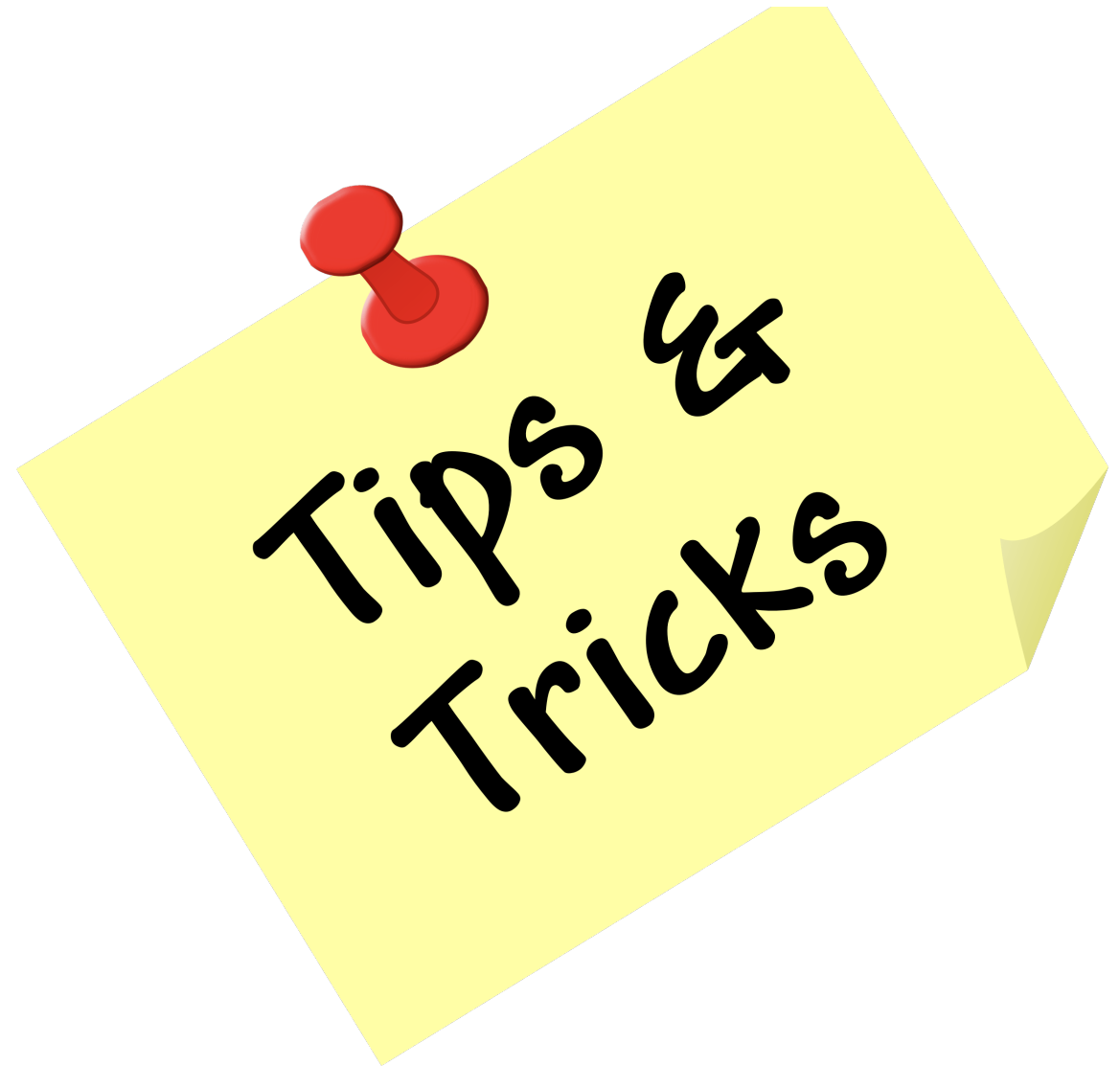


[Click here](#) for the NOFO Example (JTED NOFO)

Tips and Tricks for Reading Funding Opportunities

Molly Cook

- Read the application and then read it again.
- Pay attention to deadlines
- Look for requirements, such as needing to submit a letter of intent
- Look at target population requirements
- Note all eligibility requirements
- Look for a rubric



Creating an Application Timeline/Workplan

Molly Cook

Narrative Section	Staff Lead	Draft Date	Reviewers	Final Draft Date	Final Approval
Executive Summary					
Project Description					
Analysis of Need					
Timeline					
Budget					
Conclusion					
Attachments					

Date of Discussion with Implementation Team:

Final Submission Date (At least 24 hours before due date):

Staff Responsible for Submission:

Timeline/Application Management Tools

Molly Cook

- Google Drive using 'suggesting'
- [Padlet](#): Online post-it notes of links and resources
- [Slack](#)
- [Canva](#)





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Step 2: The Writing Phase

Getting Started

Helpful tips to make your grant application stand out:

1. Provide simple budgets that balance.

Simply stated, if your budget does not add up or match the programs/expenses your application describes, your application will not move forward in the funding process. Provide a simple budget in Excel that describes and includes adequate funding sources.

2. No need to reinvent the wheel.

We don't just fund new initiatives or programs. In fact, we prefer to fund programs that have a track record of success.

3. Share your work.

While we would love to see your work first-hand, sometimes we are only able to connect via phone. Sharing your most recent newsletter or client successes with us can be helpful in building a relationship with you and your organization—before, during, and after the grant-request process.

4. Program impact matches funding priorities.

Our number one goal is to fund programs that strengthen families and/or increase economic opportunities in the communities our associates call home. In your grant application, be clear on how the work you do and are seeking funding for accomplishes this shared goal. It is helpful to include an equation such as: your tactics + impact created = long-term effect, and add any data you have as proof points.

5. Adhere to deadlines.

Jackson has two grant applications each year. Nonprofits that submit their applications in advance of these deadlines demonstrate the ability to plan well and get things accomplished. Submitting an application ahead of the deadline also allows us to reach out to ask clarifying questions about your application.

6. Need more info?

Application Components

Kenis Williams



EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY



PROGRAM
INFORMATION



TIMELINE AND
WORKPLAN



SUSTAINABILITY
PLAN



FORMS



BUDGET

Executive Summary

Kenis Williams

- Snapshot of your agency, the need, and how the proposed program will address the need.
- Can be considered a "cover letter" to generate the funder's interest... or weed out weak applications.
- Make sure to follow the guidance set forth in the Notice of Funding
 - Should you include specifics on the funding request and outcomes?
- Use the Executive Summary as a tool to make sure your proposal is clear and meaningful.
- Consider it and review it throughout the process.
 - Writing it *first* can help you stay on track and be clear as you complete your proposal
 - Writing it *last* can help you summarize the project and highlight why you should receive the funding.



Program Information

Kenis Williams

- Applicant Capacity
- Documentation of Need
- Operational Plan/Scope of Work
- Outcomes



Applicant Capacity

Molly Cook

- Who are you?
- What is your relationship to the target population?
- What are your qualifications?
- What other projects have you accomplished?
- Who are your partners?
- What are their qualifications?
- Describe the organization.
- Describe any similar projects undertaken.
- Describe the qualifications of individuals responsible to carry out the project activities.
- List any facilities, equipment, or resources available to the project and their sources.



Documentation of Need

Molly Cook

- What is the target population?
 - Who will be served both demographically and geographically
- What are the needs or problems of the target population?
- What are the causes of the identified needs or problems?
- What documentation exists to support the identified need or problem?
 - How do you know there is a need?
 - Share both qualitative and quantitative data
- Why is it important that you receive this funding?
 - Is this need already being addressed somewhere locally?
- Only include the need or problem you intend to address.

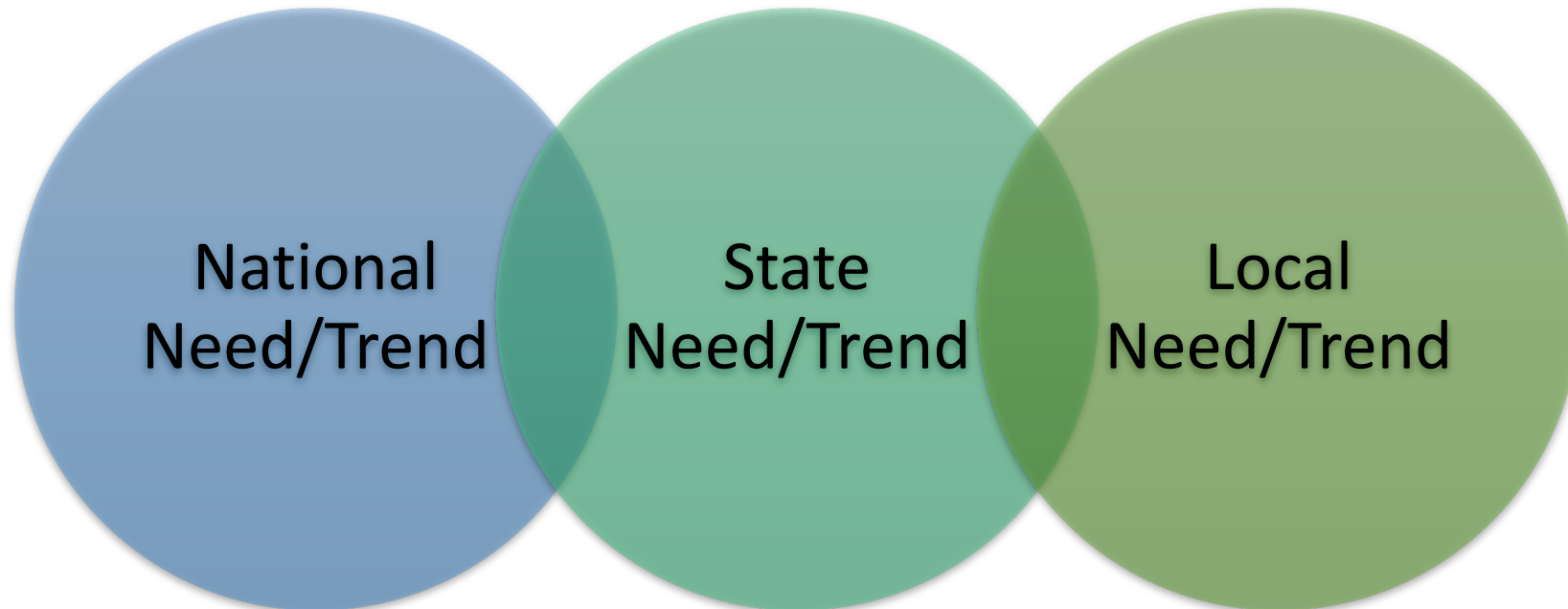


Consider This

Molly Cook

When documenting the need to your target population also explore this need locally, Statewide and Nationally

Include the trends and response to the need



Operational Plan/Scope of Work

- What is your **solution to the need/problem**? How will you approach the **solution**?
- What is your **plan of action** to address the identified need/problem?
- What are the **steps** you will take? Who will do what? How long will it take?
- **Explain the project goal** and how it would **meet the need or solve the problem** identified.
- List **specific, measurable objectives** that will allow the project to meet its goal.
- State **expected project outcomes** and how they would **benefit the target population**.
- State the **planned activities, methodology, and timetable** for accomplishing the planned activities.
- Explain how the project will be **managed**.
- Always **tie the objectives back** to the identified **need/problem**.



Outcomes/Performance Measures

Molly Cook

- Create SMART Goals
Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely
- Use SMART Goals to create a workplan and timeline
- Goals can be divided into smaller subgoals
- As you assign staff to timeline items, use titles, rather than names.
- Make sure workplan items can be related to the need statement.

Workplan Item	Deliverable Date	Staff

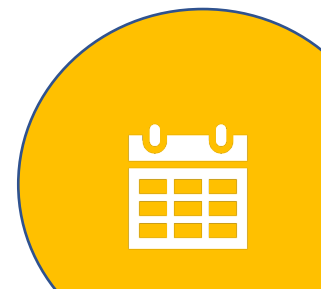


SMART Goals

Molly Cook

Tips for writing SMART Objectives

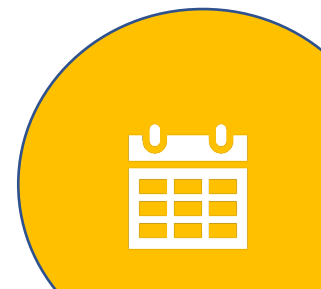
Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define what you expect • Determine who will do it • Detail accountability • Use action verbs, expressing physical or mental action, as much as possible • Provide enough detail - this depends on the objective but should be enough to be clear
Measurable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how you will know objective was accomplished – usually this means quantity but can also be quality (for instance, “80% of participants agree or strongly agree on the feedback form”)
Attainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you have the time, manpower, resources, and authority to accomplish the objective • Consider if there may be factors beyond your control
Relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective helps you meet the purpose of the grant • The objective is aligned with the Community Readiness Assessment scores
Time bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify when the objective should be completed • Include time-lined benchmarks for long-range goals and all objectives



Workplan Example 2

Molly Cook

Key Activity & Responsible Staff	Year 1 (in Months)												Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13-18 mo	19-24 mo	25-30 mo	31-36 mo	37-42 mo	43-48 mo
START-UP																		
Recruit new staff (PD)	X																	
Hire staff (PD)		X																
Organize Steering Committee (PD)	X																	
Finalize MOUs with partner organizations (PD)			X															
Train staff on EBPs (PC)			X					X				X						
Develop policies and procedures (PD)		X																
IMPLEMENTATION																		
Conduct community outreach (PC)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Screen referrals and conduct psychosocial assessments (PC)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
EVALUATION/REPORTS																		
Develop data collection plan (E)		X	X															
Collect project data (DM)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Develop Disparities Impact Statement (SC)					X													



Sustainability Plan

Molly Cook

- How will you continue or grow your program once the funding is complete?
- Are you collaborating with other organizations?
- Does this grant fund the entire project, or will you be using other grant/donor funds?
- Is this a one-time project or long-term?



Consider This

Additional Funding Streams

Molly Cook

- Additional grants
- Major Donors
- Pledge Program
- Partnership with local foundations/employers



Forms: Standard Application & Grant Award Documents

- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- *Catalog of State Financial Assistance*
<https://www.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Grants/SitePages/CSFA.aspx>
- Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance
- Uniform Budget Template
- Notice of State Award



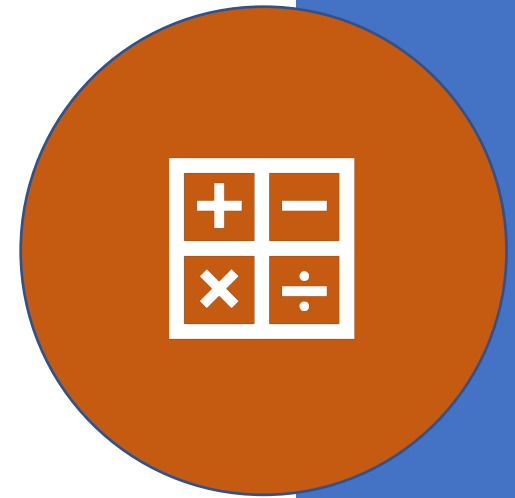
Budget

Kenis Williams

The BUDGET is often the *weakest* part of an application.

A well-planned and well-written budget tells the story of your project in dollar terms and is an opportunity to demonstrate your impact on the community need.

The budget and the program **DRIVE EACH OTHER.**

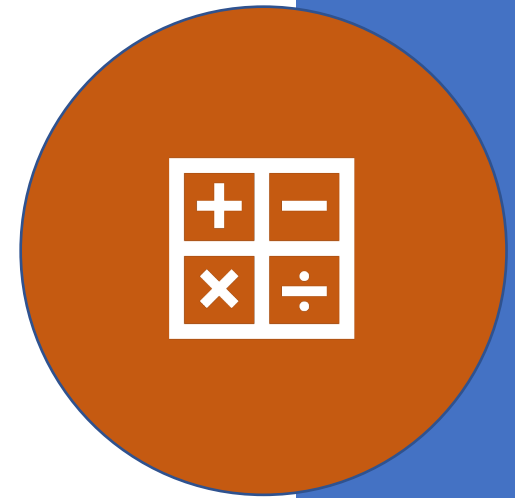


Budget

Kenis Williams

Submitting a strong budget in your proposal benefits both you and the funder:

- Demonstrate that a program is feasible
- Demonstrate that a program is meaningful
- Demonstrate "bang for the buck"
- Demonstrate responsibility



Budget Expectations

• Allowable

- Does the expense conform to the description in the guidelines.
- Be consistent with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both federally-financed and other activities of the non-Federal entity
- Be accorded consistent treatment: same expectations for grant funds as for general funds.
- Be determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- Not be included as a cost or used to meet cost sharing or matching requirements of any other federally financed program in either the current or a prior period.
- Be adequately documented.

• Reasonable

- Is the expense “normal” for the activity, setting, etc.
- Does the cost fit with sound business practices; terms and conditions of bargaining; market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area, etc.
- Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances considering their responsibilities to the entity, its employees, students or membership, the public at large, and the funder.
- Whether the cost or activity significantly deviates from its established practices and policies regarding the incurrence of costs, which may unjustifiably increase cost.

• Allocable

- Can the expense be charged appropriately:
 - Is incurred specifically for the award;
 - Benefits both the funded project and other work of the entity and can be distributed in proportions that may be approximated using reasonable methods; and
 - Is necessary to the overall operation of the project.
- All activities which benefit from the non-entity’s indirect (F&A) cost, including unallowable activities and donated services by the entity or third parties, will receive an appropriate allocation of indirect costs.



Key Terms

- Line Item
- Discretionary
- Matching
- Narrative
- Indirect
- Direct

Budget

DIRECT COSTS

- Costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective, such as a Federal award or other internally or externally funded activity, or that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy.

INDIRECT COSTS

- Facilities and Administration
- Costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. **RATIO** of total expenses that are supportive or administrative / those that are direct expenses.
- Indirect rates can be determined by funder; negotiated per grant; established through a federal negotiation process.



Sample Budget Template Overview

Kenis Williams

The State of Illinois' Uniform Budget Template is modeled after SF-524, the Federal Budget template.

- **Section A**
 - Summary
 - Indirect Cost Rate Information
- **Section B**
 - Cash
 - In-Kind
 - Leverage
- **Certification**
- **FFATA Data Collection**
- **Section C**
 - Budget Worksheet & Narrative



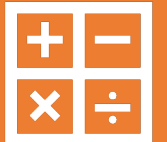
Kenis Williams

- Provide a high-level budget narrative, including an analysis of the cost efficiency in relationship to planned outcomes;
- Describe any leveraged and matching funds from workforce partners and participating businesses;
- Describe how will this project be sustained beyond the grant funding period; and
- Describe how this project could be scaled regionally, and what benefits will be derived across the region.

Budget

BUDGET SUMMARY STATE OF ILLINOIS FUNDS		
Budget Expenditure Categories	OMB Uniform Guidance Federal Awards Reference 2 CFR 200	TOTAL EXPENDITURES
1. Personnel (Salaries & Wages)	200.430	\$ -
2. Fringe Benefits	200.431	\$ -
3. Travel	200.474	\$ -
4. Equipment	200.439	\$ -
5. Supplies	200.94	\$ -
6. Contractual Services & Subawards	200.318 & 200.92	\$ -
7. Consultant (Professional Services)	200.459	\$ -
9. Occupancy (Rent & Utilities)	200.465	\$ -
11. Telecommunications		\$ -
12. Training & Education	200.472	\$ -
13. Direct Administrative costs	200.413 (c)	\$ -
14. Miscellaneous Costs		\$ -
16. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-15)	200.413	\$ -
17. Indirect Costs* (see below)	200.414	\$ -
Rate:		
Base:		
18. Total Costs State Grant Funds (16 & 17)		\$ -

Source: Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship NOFO, source [here](#)



Budget Narrative

Let your budget tell a story

Activity:

Think about items on your non-profits budget. How could you reframe those items to be more explicit about how they connect to your mission?





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Phase 3: Submitting Your Application

Submission Tips

Sarah Blalock

- **Turn it on time and complete**
- Do not scan your application, save and send as a PDF
- Make sure all signatures are in order
- Add page numbers
- Table of Contents are helpful!
- When in doubt, check on Grammarly
- Do not alter the requested formatting

Data Sources

Molly Cook

- [American Community Survey Data](#) (U.S. Census)
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics Data](#)
- [IDES Data Sources](#)
- Local data from Economic Development Organizations
- Data from your Annual Report
- Local United Way Data



Resources

Molly Cook

- [WIOA Grants 101](#)
- [Grants.gov Grants 101](#)
- [Introduction to Proposal Writing Course](#) - Candid
- [Illinois Grant Website - GATA](#)
- [Creating SMART Goals](#)