

Glossary of Grant-Related Terms and Acronyms

Adapted from: <https://www.grants.gov/learn-grants/grant-terminology>

Abstract: A brief summary of a grant project, usually one page in length, required in most grant applications.

Administrative Costs: A subset of indirect costs that is related to the management and administration of a project, such as clerical support or accounting services. *See also: Indirect Costs.*

Allowability review: The process of determining whether proposed costs align with allowable costs under 2 CFR 200.403.

Allowable Costs: Expenses eligible for funding under 2 CFR 200 guidelines. They must meet three key criteria:

- Necessary: Directly supports the project's objectives.
- Reasonable: Costs are consistent with what a prudent person would pay under similar circumstances.
- Allocable: Can be assigned proportionally to the grant and follow federal, state, and institutional regulations.

Allowable Use of Funds: Specific rules for how grant funds can be spent, typically outlined in the grant agreement. Common categories include personnel, supplies, travel, and equipment. These uses must align with the funder's guidelines and federal regulations, such as 2 CFR 200.403.

Annual Project Reports (APR): Reports submitted yearly during the grant period to document activities, outcomes, and progress.

Appropriation: Legislative authorization that allows government agencies to commit and spend funds within a specific timeframe, such as a fiscal year. Appropriations provide legal authority for spending but require prior authorization by law (authorization bill).

Assistance Listing Numbers (ALN): Unique numbers assigned to federal programs and services that offer public assistance, replacing the former Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA).

Assurances: Formal statements confirming compliance with regulations, such as Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), and restrictions on lobbying.

Audit: A systematic examination of financial records, procedures, and operations to ensure compliance with grant requirements, including adherence to 2 CFR 200 Subpart F (Audit Requirements). *See also: Audit Trail.*

Audit Trail: Records and documentation that allow for verifying grant-related expenses and activities, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Authorization: A law that creates a program or agency, defining its scope and funding levels but not guaranteeing funds.

Authorized Signature (or Authorized Signatory Designee): The legally responsible person whose signature is required to make agreements on behalf of an organization in grant applications and contracts.

Award: The formal agreement issued by a funding agency that specifies the amount of funds provided, the terms and conditions of use, and any restrictions.

Award closeout: The process of finalizing all grant activities, submitting final reports, and reconciling expenditures in compliance with 2 CFR 200.344.

Baseline Data: Information collected before the start of a project to establish initial conditions and measure subsequent progress against project objectives. Typically used as part of the evaluation process. *See also: Evaluation Metrics.*

Budget: A detailed financial plan for a project, outlining costs related to achieving the grant's objectives.

Budget Detail: An itemized breakdown of project expenses required in the grant proposal. This includes costs directly attributable to the project and, where applicable, matching contributions. *See also: Allowable Costs, Budget Justification.*

Budget Justification (Budget Narrative): An explanation of each budget item and how the cost was calculated. Often required in applications for federal grants like those from NSF. *See also: allowable costs.*

Budget Modification: A formal request to move funds between budget categories. Some modifications require prior approval, especially for significant categories like salaries or travel.

Budget Reconciliation: A periodic review to ensure expenditures align with the approved budget and grant terms.

Capacity Building: Activities designed to strengthen an organization's ability to manage grants, deliver services, or implement projects effectively.

Carryover Funds: Unspent funds from one budget period that may be transferred to the next period, subject to approval by the funding agency.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): Previously used to identify federal assistance programs, now replaced by Assistance Listing Numbers (ALN). *See Assistance Listing Numbers (ALN).*

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): A collection of rules published by U.S. government agencies. *See also Uniform guidance.*

Cognizant agency: The federal agency responsible for negotiating and approving indirect cost rates for a grant recipient, as defined in 2 CFR 200 Appendix IV.

Compliance: Adherence to the rules and conditions of a grant, including federal, state, and institutional regulations. Compliance ensures funds are used appropriately and within the grant's scope.

Compliance Supplement: Detailed guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for auditing federal grants, specifying requirements under 2 CFR 200 Subpart F. *See also: Audit.*

Conflict of Interest: A situation in which personal, financial, or professional interests may compromise objectivity in grant-related decisions. Requires disclosure under 2 CFR 200.112.

Consortium Grant: A grant awarded to one lead organization on behalf of multiple partners under a consortium agreement.

Consultant: An individual or organization with specialized expertise hired to support specific grant activities, such as program evaluation.

Cost Sharing (Matching Contributions): Financial or in-kind contributions required by some grants to supplement the funding provided by the granting agency. These contributions must comply with 2 CFR 200.306.

Cover letter: A letter accompanying a grant proposal summarizing the funding request and signed by the Superintendent/President.

Data Management Plan: A document required by many funders that explains how data will be collected, stored, protected, and shared, ensuring compliance with ethical standards.

Deadline (Due Date): The date and time by which a grant application must be submitted. Pay attention to time zone requirements and whether the deadline specifies the time of receipt or postmark.

Debarment and Suspension: Actions that prevent individuals or organizations from participating in federal programs due to noncompliance or unethical behavior.

Direct Costs: Expenses directly attributable to grant project activities, such as personnel salaries, equipment, and materials.

Disallowed Costs: Expenses that do not comply with the grant's terms and conditions and must be reimbursed to the funder.

Effective Date (Start Date): The official date when grant-funded activities may begin. Costs incurred before this date are usually not allowed unless explicitly approved.

Employee Benefits (Fringe Benefits): Additional costs covered by the employer, such as health insurance, retirement contributions, and payroll taxes. These are typically calculated as a percentage of salaries.

Evaluation Plan: A structured approach to assessing the project's effectiveness. Includes formative evaluation (ongoing assessment during the project) and summative evaluation (assessment at project completion). Evaluation metrics should align with project objectives. See also: evaluation metrics.

Expiration Date (End Date): The final date when grant-funded activities and expenditures are allowed. No costs can be charged to the grant after this date.

Expenditure Report: A financial document detailing how grant funds were spent during a specific period, compared to the approved budget.

Face Page: The first page of a grant application, often a standard form that includes the project title, applicant information, and signatures of authorized individuals.

Federal Award: Financial assistance provided by a federal agency, such as grants or cooperative agreements, subject to terms outlined in 2 CFR 200 Subpart C.

Fiscal Agent: The organization responsible for managing and overseeing grant funds, especially in a partnership or consortium.

Fiscal Year (FY): A 12-month period for which funds are appropriated and during which expenditures must be made; the federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30 and is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; the fiscal year for Palomar College, as well as state and local governments, runs from July 1 to June 30; many corporations use the calendar year as their fiscal year.

Foundation: A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that distributes funds for charitable purposes. Examples include private, corporate, or community-based foundations.

Fringe Benefits: *See Employee Benefits.*

Goals: Broad, general statements of what the grant project intends to achieve. Goals are supported by specific, measurable objectives.

Grant Period: The time during which grant-funded activities and expenditures must occur, starting on the effective date and ending on the expiration date.

Grantee: The entity that receives the grant award and assumes financial responsibility for executing the grant project, as well as accountability for managing the grant budget, supervising grant-supported activities, and submitting progress reports and final reports as required by the funder.

Grantor: The funding source or agency providing financial assistance.

Guidelines: Directions provided by the funding source detailing how to prepare and submit a grant proposal according to any regulations governing the funder and including any priorities specific to the current grant competition.

Human Subjects: Individuals participating in research studies. Projects involving human subjects must comply with ethical standards, including 45 CFR 46 (Protection of Human Subjects). *See also: institutional review board (IRB).*

Indirect Cost Rate (IDC): The percentage applied to a project's direct costs to determine the amount of indirect costs that can be charged to the grant. *See also Indirect Costs (Overhead), Modified Total Directs Costs (MCTD).*

Indirect Costs (Overhead): General expenses that support project administration but are not directly tied to specific activities, such as utilities, facilities, or administrative support. Indirect costs are typically calculated as a percentage of the Modified Total Direct Costs (MCTD) base, which excludes certain expenses like equipment and subawards. *See also: Administrative Costs, Modified Total Directs Costs (MCTD).*

Indirect Cost Rate (IDC): The percentage applied to a project's direct costs to determine the amount of indirect costs that can be charged to the grant. *See also Indirect Costs (Overhead), Modified Total Directs Costs (MCTD).*

Institutional Review Board (IRB): A committee that reviews and approves research involving human subjects to ensure compliance with ethical standards.

Key Personnel: Individuals with primary responsibility for overseeing and implementing the grant project. Examples include the Project Director, Principal Investigator (PI), or Supervising Administrator.

Letter of Commitment (LOC): A document signed by an official, such as a superintendent or president, indicating the organization's intent to contribute resources to the project if funded.

Letter of Intent (LOI): A preliminary submission providing an overview of a proposed project. Often required to screen applicants before full proposals are invited.

Letter of Support: A document signed by a VP expressing endorsement of the proposed project, its alignment with institutional goals, and the qualifications of the applicant.

Lifecycle of a Grant: A description of the key stages in grant management, including pre-award, award, post-award, and closeout.

Logic Model: A visual representation showing the relationship between project resources, activities, and intended outcomes. Logic models are often used in evaluation plans to demonstrate how goals will be achieved. *See also: Evaluation Plan.*

Matching Contributions (Cost Sharing): Financial or in-kind resources provided by the grantee or partners to supplement grant funding. Required matching contributions must comply with 2 CFR 200.306. Some grants require matching to demonstrate commitment. *See also: Cost Sharing.*

Metrics: A quantitative or qualitative measure used to track and assess a specific aspect of a grant project's performance or progress.

Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC): The portion of direct costs used to calculate indirect costs, excluding certain items like equipment, capital expenditures, tuition remission, rental costs, scholarships, participant support costs, and the portion of subawards exceeding \$25,000. Defined in 2 CFR 200.68. *See also Indirect Costs (Overhead), Modified Total Directs Costs (MCTD).*

Monitoring: The process of reviewing a project's progress and compliance with grant terms. This includes site visits, performance reports, and financial reviews by the funder or grantee.

Needs Assessment: A systematic process to identify and analyze the needs of the target population or community that the grant project aims to address.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA): The percentage established between a grantee and its cognizant federal agency to recover indirect costs associated with managing a grant project. This rate is based on actual cost data and reflects an agreement on the allowable indirect costs that can be charged to a grant. The negotiated rate applies only to the Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) base, as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. Grantees must use their approved rate unless otherwise restricted by the funding agency.

No-Cost Extension (NCE): A formal request to extend the grant period without additional funding, allowing more time to complete the project. Approval is typically required from the funding agency.

Notice of Award: The official document issued by the funder outlining the terms and conditions of the grant, the amount awarded, and other pertinent details.

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): A public announcement inviting grant applications. It specifies requirements, eligibility, and submission guidelines. Also referred to as a Request for Proposals (RFP) or Notice Inviting Applications (NIA).

Notice of Intent to Fund: A preliminary notification from the funding agency indicating that an application is likely to receive funding, pending final approval and negotiations.

Notice Inviting Applications (NIA): A formal announcement that outlines the purpose, priorities, and requirements for a specific grant opportunity. Also known as a Notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) or Request for Proposals (RFP).

Objectives: Specific, measurable outcomes the project is designed to achieve. Objectives must align with the overall goals of the grant. *See also: goals.*

Office of Management and Budget (OMB): The federal office overseeing regulations like 2 CFR 200, which governs grant management, cost principles, and audit requirements. *See also: uniform guidance.*

Overhead: Another term for indirect costs, representing general expenses that support project administration. *See also: Indirect Costs.*

Pass-Through Entity (PTE): An organization that receives a federal grant and subawards part of the funds to other organizations (subrecipients). The PTE ensures subrecipients comply with the terms of the award and applicable regulations.

Performance measures: A set of metrics specifically aligned with the project's objectives to evaluate its success and effectiveness. Performance measures often incorporate multiple metrics and include benchmarks or targets to assess whether the project is meeting its goals.

Planning Grant: Funding provided to develop a detailed plan for a larger, future grant project.

Post-award Administration: Activities conducted after a grant is awarded, such as managing funds, monitoring progress, and preparing required reports.

Pre-award Costs: Costs incurred before the grant's official start date. These may be reimbursed if preapproved by the funder.

Preliminary Proposal: A brief outline of the project submitted to determine eligibility or interest before submitting a full proposal. *See also: Notice of Funding Opportunity.*

Progress report: A periodic update submitted to the funder detailing the status of the project, including activities, expenditures, and challenges.

Prohibited Activities: Actions that cannot be funded by the grant, such as lobbying or political advocacy. Refer to 2 CFR 200.450 for more details.

Priorities: Key objectives or areas of focus identified by the funder in its annual program plan. Federal grant priorities are published in Notices Inviting Applications in the Federal Register. Includes Competitive Preference Priorities (which provide extra points) and Invitational Priorities (which do not but encourage specific projects).

Program Income: Revenue generated from grant-funded activities, which must be reported and used for project-related purposes.

Program Specialist/Officer/Monitor: The individual at the funding agency responsible for overseeing grant compliance, providing technical assistance, and ensuring the project meets its objectives.

Project Lead/Principal Investigator/Project Director: The individual responsible for managing the grant project and ensuring compliance with funder requirements.

Proposal: A formal application requesting funding for a specific project. It outlines objectives, activities, and the budget required.

Reallocation of Funds: A formal process to shift funds between budget categories, typically requiring funder approval for significant changes. *See also: Budget Modification.*

Renewal Grant: Additional funding provided to continue or expand a previously funded project. Often requires a new application or justification.

Request for Proposals (RFP): A solicitation issued by funders inviting applications for specific initiatives. Also referred to as a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) or Notice Inviting Applications (NIA). *See also: NOFO, NIA.*

Risk Assessment: An evaluation conducted by the funder to determine the likelihood of compliance issues or performance risks based on the applicant's history or capacity.

Scope of Work (SoW): A detailed outline of the tasks, objectives, timelines, and deliverables for a project, forming part of the binding agreement with the funder. *See also: Work Plan.*

Site Visit: An evaluation conducted by the funder at the grantee's location to assess facilities, meet personnel, and review project progress.

Subaward: A portion of grant funds provided by a pass-through entity to another organization (subrecipient) to conduct specific project activities.

Subrecipient: An entity that receives a subaward to carry out parts of the grant project, subject to compliance requirements under 2 CFR 200.332.

Supplement not Supplant: A requirement that grant funds be used to add to, not replace, existing resources. Violations of this rule can result in penalties or repayment of funds.

Supplemental Funding: Additional funding provided during the grant period to cover unforeseen costs or expand project activities. Requires formal approval from the funder.

Sustainability Plan: A strategy outlining how a project will continue its benefits after the grant ends. Examples include securing alternate funding, integrating into regular operations, or forming partnerships.

System for Award Management (SAM): The official U.S. government portal where entities must register to be eligible for federal grants. Active registration is required throughout the grant's duration.

Technical Assistance: Support provided by the funder or other organizations to help grantees manage projects, address challenges, or comply with regulations.

Termination: The premature ending of a grant agreement due to noncompliance, failure to meet deliverables, or mutual agreement between the funder and grantee. Refer to 2 CFR 200.340 for termination guidelines.

Third-party Contributions: Financial or in-kind resources provided by organizations other than the grantee or funder. These often count toward matching requirements

Time and Effort Reporting: Documentation of how employees funded by grants allocate their time among grant-related and other activities, ensuring compliance with 2 CFR 200.430.

Unallowable Costs: Expenses that are prohibited under grant agreements, federal regulations, or institutional policies. Examples include lobbying, entertainment, and alcohol, as outlined in 2 CFR 200.403.

Uniform Guidance (UG): A comprehensive set of rules (2 CFR 200) established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for managing federal awards. Includes guidelines on allowable costs, financial management, and audit requirements.

Unobligated Balance: Funds remaining at the end of a grant period that have not been assigned to specific expenses. Approval may be required for reallocation or carryover.

Work Plan: A detailed outline of the tasks, responsibilities, and timelines required to achieve project goals, often included in the scope of work. *See also: Scope of Work.*