

Grant File Management Best Practices

This Grant File Management Structure is designed to support the full grant lifecycle - from proposal development through award implementation and closeout - and aligns with institutional internal control practices and funder requirements to ensure grant records are organized, complete, and accessible throughout the life of the award¹.

By organizing records across the four phases of the grant lifecycle - pre-award, award, post-award implementation, and closeout (see Figure 1) - the structure provides a clear and methodical framework for documenting grant activities. Designated folders and subfolders support consistent record maintenance, ongoing monitoring, accurate reporting, and efficient closeout, while preserving institutional knowledge to inform future grant efforts. Table 1 summarizes the recommended folder structure and examples of documents to be retained within each category.

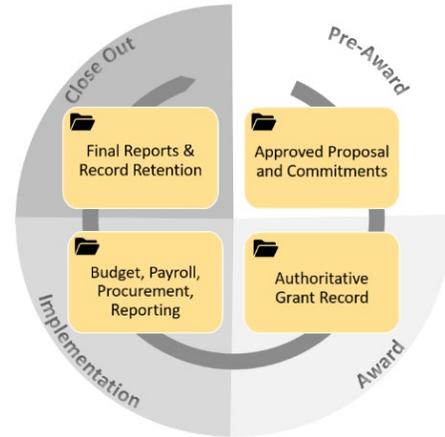


Figure 1 Record Organization by Grant Lifecycle

Table 1: Grant Documentation Organization

Folder	Recommended Subfolders/Documents to File
1. Pre Award - Reference Only (Materials are retained for historical context and continuity)	
1.a Approved Application	Final submitted narrative, attachments, required forms
1.b Pre-Award Budget	Pre-award budget and narrative if different from awarded version
1.c Pre-Award Correspondence	Negotiations or clarifications incorporated into the award
2. Award	
2.a Award Documents	Notice of Award, terms and conditions, grant agreement, Assurances & Certifications, amendments, Governing Board approval
2.b Approved Budget & Budget Narrative	Original approved budget, modifications, budget revision requests, funder approvals, internal approval chain
2.c Compliance Requirements	Project handbook, SOPs, BP/APs, award language governing allowable use, Uniform Guidance sections, EDGAR citations, agency guidance, record retention, data sharing, FERPA
2.d Correspondence Log	Award-related correspondence, funder clarifications, approval confirmations
3. Implementation – Grant Management	

¹ This guide is provided for informational purposes only and does not supersede applicable laws, regulations, or the specific terms and conditions of any grant award. In the event of a conflict, statutory, regulatory, and award requirements shall prevail.

Folder	Recommended Subfolders/Documents to File
3.a Project Management & Planning	Roles and responsibilities, kickoff materials, project workplan, meeting notes & communications
3.b Equipment & Property	Definitions and thresholds, prior approvals, inventory and tagging, maintenance/condition records, loss/theft reports, disposition requests & approvals
3.c Data, Evaluation & Human Subjects Compliance	Program Measurement & Evaluation: data collection tools, DMP, evaluation methods & logic models, evaluator contracts/reports, outcome data & analyses Human Subjects/IRB: determinations, approvals/renewals, protocols, consent/assent, data privacy & security
3.d Audit & Monitoring	Internal Monitoring Reviews, Corrective Action Plans/follow-up evidence. External monitoring/site visits, findings & follow-up
4. Implementation – Financial & Administrative (By Year/Budget Period)	
4.a Budget and Financials	Financial Transactions, drawdowns/reimbursements, cost sharing/in-kind match, program income (inc. allowable use), budget vs. actuals, monthly reconciliations, Fiscal meeting notes and monitoring materials, cost transfers/journal entries requests, (with written justifications, approval documentation, posting confirmation
4.b Payroll and Time & Effort	Time & Effort Reports, Payroll reconciliations, overtime/extra Duty/stipends, Payroll adjustments/corrections, fringe & benefit charges, payroll monitoring
4.c Personnel and HR	Hiring/assignment docs (NOHEs, MOUs, reassign time, stipends), position descriptions, effort allocation/funding splits, fringe & benefit rate documentation
4.d Procurement	Competitive expenditure requests, sole source justifications, quotes/bids, vendor contracts & amendments, invoices & payment approvals
4.e Travel	Pre-approvals/authorizations, conference agendas & justification, receipts/reimbursements, mileage
4.f Reporting	Performance/programmatic reports, financial reports, internal reports
4.g Subawards	Risk Assessments (pre-award), invoices & backup, performance reports, monitoring & site visits, final invoice certification, property disposition
5. Closeout	
5.a	Closeout checklist, final performance report, final financial report, final drawdown/invoice confirmation, Impact Report, equipment disposition, subrecipient closeout, record retention & archiving (start date memo)