



CDBG NOFA: Preparing Narrative & Milestones

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What is a Narrative?

- The **Narrative** is a detailed description of the Activity/Project/Service to be performed to show HCD that the applicant has a clear understanding and plan of what is going to be done and why.
- The Narrative should answer the following questions:
 - Who?
 - What?
 - When?
 - Where?
 - Why?
 - How?



Purpose & Importance of the Narrative

Preparing a detailed narrative will help HCD staff determine if the application is for an **eligible applicant** with an **eligible activity**.

- **Eligible Applicant:** Non-Entitlement unit of general local governments.
- **Eligible Activity:** Activity must meet the criteria for the selected Matrix Code and National Objective.
 - For a list of eligible activities under this NOFA, go to: List of activities can be found at [IDIS CDBG Matrix Code/National Objective Table \(ca.gov\)](#).
 - For a complete list of eligible activities allowed under the HCDA, go to [42 U.S.C. §5305](#) and/ or [Chapter 2](#) of the CDBG Grants Management Manual on the CDBG page of the Department's website.



Purpose & Importance of the Narrative

(continued)

- By ensuring that your narrative is as detailed as possible at the time of application, the applicant can:
 - ❖ Prevent delays in standard agreement packaging
 - ❖ Scope of work revisions or amendments once the contract has been executed.
- Providing meaningful information in the narrative, creates a stronger application for HCD staff to review.



Narrative Requirements

- Starting with the Why and What; state the problem and then the proposed solution to that problem.
 - Example: County Water Well Project
 - **Problem:** The County's current Water Wells, serving 5,000 *LMI* people, is in desperate need of repairs on the existing wells. There are two wells needing repairs. The County has secured funding from another funding source but due to cost overrun and inflation, needs an additional \$250,000 to complete the project.
 - **Solution:** Apply to the State CDBG program for gap funding to cover the difference in cost to complete the repairs on the wells.



Narrative Requirements

(continued)

- For construction projects, the narrative should explain to HCD staff that the project is bid ready.
 - Describe *how* the project has documented project readiness:
 - Were the requested documents uploaded?
 - Cost estimates, bid plans and specs, timeline.
 - Certification of readiness from the engineer and the city.
 - Have the required documents been signed and dated within 90 days of application submission



Proofreading

- Proofreading is not just checking spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Good rule of thumb is also making sure that your narrative has the answers to these questions:
 - Is the need and activity clearly identified? **(What)**
 - Is there data to support that need? **(Why)**
 - Are there any partners or collaborators? If so, what are their roles?
 - Are the beneficiaries clearly defined? **(Who)**
 - Is the activity implementation clearly defined? **(How)**
 - Is the service location defined? **(Where)**
 - Is the timeline defined? **(When)**



Examples of Brainstorming Questions

Questions to ask, relating to the Activity/Project/Service:

- What is it and Why?
- When will this start and end?
- Where will this be taking place?

Questions to ask, relating to the Beneficiaries:

- Who will this benefit/help?
- How are we going to find those that need help? (Marketing)
- What is the current number of people being assisted? Describe those being helped.
- If this is a new program, describe those people who are in need of assistance. How did you find out about the people needing assistance?



Examples of Brainstorming Questions

(continued)

Questions to ask, related to the Funding:

- How can this be solved with CDBG funding?
- What can be done with CDBG funding?
- What is the cost of the project? If gap funding, how much is still needed? Give details.
- What is the CDBG money going to be spent on?
- Who can help us, outside of CDBG?
- If this project is not funded, what will happen?

Questions to ask, relating to the Solution:

- What is the solution to the problem?
- How can CDBG funding be used to carry out the solution to the problem?
- How will you implement the solution?
- If everything goes as planned, what will the outcome be?



Milestones

- **Milestones are points along a project timeline that show any significant progress or achievement.**
- **Milestones should be project/program specific** and a reflection of significant progress.
 - Example: Completion of the pre-design and design stages, procurement, and construction



Milestones

(continued)

Per the CDBG NOFA:

- All CDBG program-funded activities **must be timely implemented** in accordance with the milestones defined in the Standard Agreement.
- Applicants must include at least five (5) milestones per Activity application.
- **The first and last milestone and the Expenditure Deadline will be prepopulated and cannot be edited by Applicants.**
- **Failure to meet the first milestone identified, is a material breach of the Standard Agreement and will result in a for-cause termination of this Agreement.**

CDBG TIP: The Department recognizes that Applicants' proposed milestone dates are estimates. Instead of using an actual date for all optional milestones, please utilize time frames. (Examples on next slide)



Examples of Milestones

- **Milestone One (required)**: Activity Initiation. Must be completed no later than 60 days from the Effective date of the Standard Agreement.
- **Milestone Two**: Release Invitation for Bid (IFB) within 90 days of Standard Agreement execution by HCD
- **Milestone Three**: Execute contract with a General Contractor within 120 days of Standard Agreement execution by HCD
- **Milestone Four** (optional): Begin construction within 9 months of Standard Agreement execution by HCD
- **Milestone Five**: Record Notice of Completion within 2 months of project completion
- **Milestone Six (required)**: Activity closeout (must be completed no later than 90 days after the Expenditure Deadline)



Additional Milestone Information

- Additional milestones are optional, though encouraged for best practice of Activity implementation.
- Milestones may be adjusted for delays in application review and Standard Agreement execution.
 - If necessary, prior to Standard Agreement execution, your CDBG representative may update milestones if changes need to be made.
- Applicants are encouraged to evaluate feasibility of meeting milestones and build time for unexpected delays into the milestone schedules.
- Milestones may not extend beyond the term of the Standard Agreement.
- All milestones proposed by Applicants are subject to the review and approval of the Department in its discretion.



IMPORTANT

Applicants are strongly encouraged to give plenty of time for submission prior to the application cutoff date and at least several hours prior to the cutoff time.

PLEASE PROOFREAD YOUR WORK PRIOR TO SUBMISSION!



RESOURCES

- **CDBG NOFA:**
 - 2024 NOFA Website & eCivis solicitation : [eCivis - Grants Network](#)
- **HCD's CDBG Website:** [California Department of Housing and Community Development | California Department of Housing and Community Development](#)
 - Select the drop down "Grants & Funding"
 - Select "Programs: Active"
 - Click on "CDBG" (3rd line down)



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