

## **A Primer for Fitting Charges within Budget Categories**

**If a grant is awarded, reimbursement of costs will only be for project costs incurred within the grant period of performance. Above and beyond the following, grant recipients have to follow all requirements as listed in the grant agreement.**

### **1. Salaries and Benefits – This category is for grantee staff only.**

Salaries and benefits itemized by name and tasks of grantee staff members, for those contributing to the direct work of the project, not including administrative functions. With the exception of benefits, this category cannot include any mark-up above the salary actually paid to employees for direct labor hours worked on the project, documented by timesheets. Benefits commonly include, among other items, health insurance, retirement, FICA withholding, workers' compensation, vacation, and sick leave. Vacation and sick leave cannot be logged on time sheets as contributing to the work of the project but can be included pro rated as part of this category. Other items of overhead are covered under "Administrative Costs" below.

Students/graduate assistants, etc., - If proposing the use of students/graduate assistants, etc., and requesting reimbursement of tuition/course credits in addition to an hourly rate, justify how it is in the best interest of DEP to do so. Otherwise, reimbursement for students/graduate assistants, etc., will only be on an hourly basis for actual work performed on the project. Tuition should be identified in the "Other" category.

### **2. Travel and Lodging**

These costs must be directly associated with implementation of the project and in accordance with current Commonwealth travel policies.

Allowable items include:

- Hotel/motel rooms (limited to current state rate)
- Food (only for overnight trips and limited to current state rate)
- Car expenses (limited to current state rate), taxi, bus, train, rental car, gas for rental car, tolls, parking

Current state rates can be found on the Office of Budget's [webpage](#) in the Resources section.

### **3. Equipment**

Reimbursement for any single item cannot exceed \$5,000. Amounts in excess of \$5,000 for any single item may be credited toward match for the project.

Some typical examples of allowable items include:

- Field equipment dedicated to the project (owned by the Commonwealth following grant close-out). Field equipment needed for the project but not used exclusively for the project must be appropriately prorated in the budget.
- Office equipment dedicated to the project (owned by the Commonwealth until grant close-out).
- Small tools dedicated to the project.

## Supplies

Supplies not dedicated to the project are to be charged as administrative expenses. Materials and supplies that are incorporated into the construction site and remain an integral part of the construction should be listed under construction rather than under this category. Items of clothing (t-shirts, caps, etc.) are not authorized grant expenditures but can count as match if offered for volunteer services and/or advertisement for the organization.

Some typical examples of allowable items include:

- Office supplies dedicated to the project
- Educational materials used solely for the project, e.g.:
  - Brochures
  - Printing and copying costs
- Postage for project mailings
- Phone charges directly attributable to the project
- Other office costs dedicated to the project
- Materials that can travel from site to site that are used for the project (see construction category)
- Clothing and other items necessary for the safe performance of work on the project, e.g.:
  - Hard hats
  - Safety glasses
  - Protective chain saw chaps
  - Vaccinations related to work
- Project signs

## 4. Administrative Costs

These costs must be itemized with corresponding estimated dollar amounts (i.e., rent @ \$1,000/month with the total dollar amount identified in the Grant Request and/or Match Amount columns as applicable; utilities @ 400/month with the total dollar amount identified in the Grant Request and/or Match Amount columns as applicable, etc.). The total of all administrative items charged to the grant cannot exceed 5% of the grant for Growing Greener Watershed Restoration and Protection grants.

In order to direct the maximum amount of funding toward the project, preference will be given to applications requesting low administrative costs (i.e., less than 5%).

Some typical examples of allowable items include:

- Salaries and benefits for personnel managers, legal counsel, accountants, secretaries, administrative assistants, bookkeepers, trainers, professional staff for time spent in training to manage the grant and other time related to the grant in only a general managerial way
- Contractual services for any of the above categories
- Fees for professional certification
- Organizational filing fees, e.g., to the Bureau of Charitable Organizations
- Office equipment not dedicated to the project
- General office equipment maintenance costs unless equipment is dedicated to the project
- Office supplies not dedicated to the project (paper, pencils, pens)

- Insurance coverage for regular operation of the organization (i.e. standard and general liability, errors and omissions, officers and directors) (only through completion of project)
- Audit fees
- Office cleaning costs
- Small tools not dedicated to the project
- Educational materials not unique to the project
- Registration fees for training purposes
- Office printing costs
- Postage for general purposes
- General liability insurance as part of a grant for watershed group organization or support.
- Other office costs not dedicated to the project:
  - Rent
  - Utilities
  - Monthly telephone charges including internet provider fees on pro-rated basis
  - Computer and copier maintenance
  - Filing fees for professional groups not related to a specific project

## 5. Contractual

If contractors are proposed, preference will be given to those projects that use a competitive selection process such as Requests for Proposals (RFP) or competitive bidding. The selection process utilized is up to the applicant; the intent is to encourage the most cost-effective and efficient use of funding without mandating unnecessary requirements to all applicants. Contractor involvement, contracting procedures, and construction inspection provisions should be identified. Applicants choosing not to use a competitive selection process for contractors must provide adequate justification for not using a competitive process. In general, for a construction grant, the contractual category should not exceed 25% of the construction costs.

If a contract is bid as time and materials, typical costs include:

- Salaries and benefits for direct work on the project when such services are not available from volunteers or regular sponsor's staff (itemized by names and duties of the consultant firm's staff members)
- Legal services (only for startup watershed associations)
- Expenses for materials directly attributable to the project i.e., substances that are incorporated into the project and left on site

Contractors are required to follow current Commonwealth travel regulations (limited to current state rate). For more information, visit the Office of Budget's [webpage](#) in the Resources section. In addition, contractor administrative charges shall not exceed those allowable for the grantee (i.e., 5%).

All contractors are required to be cleared for outstanding obligations to the Commonwealth, prior to their beginning work on the project. Grantees must refer the name, work function, address, and Employer Identification Number (EIN) information for any contractors planned to be used to complete the project, to their project advisor for the clearance that is needed before work commences.

## 6. Construction

If contractors are proposed to perform the construction, preference will be given to those projects that use a competitive selection process such as RFPs or competitive bidding. The selection process utilized is up to the applicant; but, the intent is to encourage the most cost-effective and efficient use of funding without mandating unnecessary requirements to all applicants. Contractor involvement, contracting procedures, and construction inspection provisions should be identified. Applicants choosing not to use a competitive selection process for contractors must provide adequate justification for not using a competitive process.

All contractors are required to be cleared for outstanding obligations to the state, prior to their beginning work on the project. Grantees must refer the name, work function, address, and EIN information for any contractors planned to be used to complete the project, to their project advisor for the clearance.

Restrictions on administrative expenses and state travel rates described under “Contractual” apply here as well.

If a contract is bid as time and materials, typical costs include:

- Salaries/benefits for construction work not available from volunteers or regular sponsor's staff (itemized by names and duties of construction firm's staff members)
- Rental charges for construction equipment
- Mobilization/demobilization of equipment/materials
- Materials that are expended, consumed, or integral to construction, that is, those that remain on a construction site, e.g.:
  - Trees
  - Grass seed
  - Mulch
  - Rocks
  - Concrete
  - Gasoline or diesel fuels for equipment used in construction
- Native plants and trees need to be used. If native plants and trees cannot be used, provide a justification

**Nutrient Reduction Credits:** If a grant is awarded, any nutrient reduction credits, from nutrient trading, realized from the Commonwealth-funded portion of the project, and recognized by DEP, are the property of the Commonwealth, which maintains full ownership thereof. The grantee recognizes and releases all rights, claims, title or ownership to the nutrient reduction credits that are generated as a result of the Commonwealth-funded portion of the work specified in the contract, for the time period covered by the contract.

**Aquatic Resource Compensation Credits:** If a grant is awarded, any aquatic resource compensation credits, including but not limited to wetland, waterway, aquatic habitat, floodplain or riparian credits, realized from the Commonwealth-funded portion of the project, and recognized by DEP, are the property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which maintains full ownership thereof. The grantee recognizes and releases all rights, claims, title, or ownership to the aquatic resource compensation credits, in perpetuity, that are generated as a result of the Commonwealth-funded portion of the work specified in the Grant Agreement.

**Prevailing Wage:** If the grant project includes construction work where the cost of the total project is greater than \$25,000, the Act of August 15, 1961 (P.L. 987), as amended, known as the Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act (43 P.S. 165-1 et seq.) may apply. Contact the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Labor Law Compliance at 1-800-932-0665 for guidance.

## 7. Other

This category should be used to a minimum extent.

Some typical examples of allowable items include:

- Conference registration fees necessary for the project
- Fishing license, if necessary, to the project for sample collection or education and not used except for the project
- Room rental for project-related meetings
- Membership costs for business/professional organizations, if necessary, for performance of grant
- Filing fees related to the project, e.g. permit fees
- Short-term, project-specific insurance needed for the work proposed under the grant
- Bank charges and fees directly related to the grant

## 8. Match

For Growing Greener Watershed Restoration and Protection Grant applications, a minimum 15% match of the grant request will be required. For SMCRA grant applications, the percentage of match identified in the application will be included in the grant agreement. For the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Grants Program, there is not a match requirement. Although documentation for match claimed in the grant application is not required when submitting the application, only match funding that is already fully secured is able to be included within the detailed line items in the budget and Task and Deliverable Budget Worksheet. All “Applied For” match dollars needed to meet the required 15% match obligation are to be noted in the “Budget Summary” section at the end of the Task and Deliverable Budget Worksheet and in the Section 4 and explained in detail in the “Project Description” section. All “Applied For” match will be evaluated for acceptance in the application budget by DEP based on the description and justification provided in the “Project Executive Summary”. Current letters of commitment are required for all accepted match identified in the Budget Summary when the grant agreement is executed. The letters of commitment must identify the dollar amount to be provided by the entity, the work that they are intending to do or what the funding is to go toward, and how they arrived at the dollar amount. Any match identified as “Applied For” in the application must be secured and a letter of commitment must be provided when the grant agreement is developed. If a grantee’s identified match is a grant award from another (non-DEP) entity that has not been finalized, the grant agreement may be fully executed but no reimbursements paid until appropriate documentation of that award is received if agreed by the Project Advisor.

Successful grantees will be required to identify and document all match contributions on Applications for Reimbursement. For Growing Greener Watershed Restoration and Protection Grant projects, eligible match contributions will be permitted for up to three years prior to the grant submittal deadline date through the life of the grant agreement. For SMCRA projects, all match must be expended during the grant period of performance. All eligible match expenditures must be directly related to the project.

Cash Match: Examples of documentation include but are not limited to:

- Copy of check from donor
- Federal grant award letter

Non-Cash Match: Charges allowed for match (rules for federal funds may differ):

- Value of volunteers' donated time, including time to travel to work sites. Dollar values may be obtained [here](#). Download the state table, State-by-State Data
- Rate related to nature of work, not to volunteer's usual charge rate, i.e.:
  - Manual labor would be calculated at prevailing rate for manual labor or donated professional engineer's time would be at prevailing engineer's rate
- Any single item of equipment, up to \$5,000, dedicated to the project, is eligible for Growing Greener Plus and Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management funding. If the total cost of equipment exceeds \$5,000, the difference can be claimed as in-kind match
- Any entertainment costs, whether associated with attracting volunteers to workdays, with travel, or with any other aspect of the project
- Food not associated with official travel
- Administrative costs
- Clothing not associated with safe performance of work, such as:
  - Hats
  - T-shirts
  - Other articles given as a reward for volunteering or as a means of advertising members of a work crew
- Costs of recognition, i.e., awards, plaques, specific to a single individual or a limited audience. Publicity charges, public relations costs, advertisement fees, unless specific to the project
- Indirect costs not otherwise listed under an eligible category
- Land acquisition to the extent it is associated with the project
- Travel associated with the project. Costs cannot exceed Commonwealth rates as identified in the [Commonwealth travel regulations](#)

Costs claimed as match can be paid for from the organization's normal operating budget, out of special fundraising specific to the project or from other sources of funding, including grants from the federal government, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, private foundations, and federally-funded DEP grant programs, such as 319 grants. DEP Grants utilizing state funds or DEP in-kind services, may not be used as match.

Charges not allowed for match or for reimbursement (rules for federal funds may differ):

- Any costs associated with lobbying, alcoholic beverages or allowance for bad debts
- Contract contingency costs and other rate factors that do not reflect actual expenses
- Costs associated with legal action against the Commonwealth
- Costs associated with illegal activities or substances
- Costs associated with goods or services for personal use of board members, officers or others