

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

## COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE PROJECT NARRATIVE / WORKPLAN

The PROJECT NARRATIVE/WORKPLAN STATEMENT should include the following:

- I. Project Title
- II. Applicant Information. Include applicant (organization) name, address, contact person, phone number, fax and e-mail address
- III. Funding Requested. Specify the amount you are requesting from EPA
- IV. Project period. Funds are available now, but the beginning date would be pending the date of final official approval (award) from the EPA Regional office. Provide project period beginning and ending dates based on a relative “date of approval”.
- V. Narrative Elements:
  - A. Overview of the project (one-two paragraphs, similar to an executive summary)
  - B. Statement of the problem that the proposal seeks to address
  - C. Technical approach to address problem:
    1. Goals & Objectives of the project (accompanying by narrative explaining these)
    2. Logic Model (indicating links from goals to outcomes, also accompanied by narrative explaining these)
    3. Table and narrative describing key activities and milestones including submission of a QA plan & quarterly progress reports. Narrative should include discussion of the following:
      - a. **CURRENT SITUATION AND NEED** -- Describe the current situation and need for the project/program. Include a problem statement that explains what the issue is that needs to be solved or improved.
      - b. **OBJECTIVES AND PUBLIC BENEFITS** -- Must have clear project objectives and methods to reach these objectives. Include a clear statement of project goals and expected outcomes focusing on environmental change (e.g., what are the specific goals for environmental improvement) but also describe improvements in management and regulatory processes. In the end, what do you want the world to look like as a result of this project? Identify what are the public benefits.

Explain how the activities will be accomplished. From a technical approach, identify the key elements and key staff for implementing your project.

Identify target dates and milestones. Identify the key process and outcome milestones (not all of them, just the key ones) and when they will be accomplished in the implementation of the project. (This not only helps us track projects and document what's been done, but also provides a roadmap to help other states interested in developing programs.)

Display a schedule or timetable for the proposed activities.

Identify deliverables and outputs for quarterly reporting and final case study report.

- c. **INDICATES COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS** -- It must justify proposed financial, facility, equipment, and resource needs. It must also provide technical and other information required by program-specific regulations/requirements.
- d. **REFLECT ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES** -- Identify expected environmental outcomes. Outcomes must reflect what are the benefits, impacts, or changes in environmental conditions for individuals and populations.

Must have measurable environmental outcomes. Identify the performance goals and how they will be measured against a baseline. Performance goals can relate to change in process, or an output (e.g., completion of key steps in the project; measure of the numbers of participants, etc.) but the narrative should focus more on outcomes (e.g., change in environmental conditions; reductions in pollutant releases). Environmental outcomes may be influenced by outputs. It is absolutely essential that some measures, either direct or through surrogates, be devised to measure the performance outcomes to see if the goals have been met.

Link outcomes to funding. Performance measurement for grant programs requires that grant recipients report the results and outcomes of their grants to demonstrate performance and accountability. An important step in performance-based budgeting is understanding and clarifying the budget process and the relationship between costs and desired results. Indicate the overall expected time frame across multiple years and tell what progress has been made in a specific year. Provide an overall estimate of the time needed to affect the outcome. Use this as an opportunity to communicate program substance and context. Consider factors relating to strategy (some accounts or all), timing (now or later), potential barriers (organizational, management, cultural, political), likely costs (systems development, installation, operation), and possible benefits (better, cheaper, more accountable service). Think in terms of explaining and making clear what it takes to deliver the end outcome.

Use performance indicators that provide significant milestones along the way. Use available data to comply with the reporting schedule. Account for the expenditure of funds in the same structure used for the budget request.

- e. **TRANSFERABILITY** -- assuming success, describe how you might transfer the innovation to other programs within the State and/or to other States.

Does the communication strategy identify a commitment to mentoring others? Does it demonstrate a clear commitment to document the project in such a way that it can be described sufficiently for someone else who wants to try it?

- f. **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT** -- Identify the participants. Who are the stakeholders? What is the plan for the appropriate involvement of each of these groups? EPA's public participation policy and other resources may be found at EPA's Public Involvement website: <http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/>

What is the communication strategy? Does it demonstrate a clear commitment to provide for evaluation; and to describe for stakeholders and the public the rationale, process and measures of success?

#### 4. Proposed or illustrative performance measures

- VI. Reporting Requirements. Discuss quarterly progress report updates (schedule to be established by EPA) and a detailed follow-up case-study report to be prepared at the end of the grant period. See handout for Progress Report contents in training handbook Tab 10. The case study report should include: summary of the project, reductions achieved if applicable, cost analysis, problems, successes, and lessons learned.
- VII. Total Project Cost. Specify total cost of the project. Identify funding from other sources including any in-kind resources
- VIII. Detailed Itemized Budget. Clearly explain how EPA funds will be used as well as any matching contributions - both financial and in-kind services that will be used. Provide a budget for the following categories:
- A. Personnel
  - B. Fringe Benefits
  - C. Contractual Cost
  - D. Travel
  - E. Equipment
  - F. Supplies
  - G. Other
  - H. Total Direct Costs
  - I. Total Indirect Costs: must include documentation of accepted indirect rate
  - J. Total Cost

- IX. Key Personnel. A one paragraph description of qualifications and experience should be included for the project manager and all other key personnel. Resumes or Curricula Vitae should be attached at the end of the narrative (not included in the 10 page limit). In the narrative, demonstrate that key project staff support is appropriate and the right mix to meet project objectives.