

CCCCFF Program

Tips for Putting Together a Successful Application

After reviewing the Application Guidelines and prior to beginning the application, if you are unsure whether your project is eligible, request a meeting with the Program Coordinator. A brief conference call or in-person meeting with the Program Coordinator can help address questions the applicant has and outline expectations of the review committee.

Project Description Summary should be brief, providing an overall description of the project. The review committee uses this narrative to determine the project's eligibility. Application preparers should keep the provided information succinct, e.g., *the City proposes to renovate and expand the existing Carnegie Library into the City Community Center. The proposed project is downtown and adjacent to the new library and City Park.* Additional project information can be included in the project narrative portion of the application where the applicant addresses the Review Criteria.

Community outreach/input and planning are key components of putting together a strong project. Even if your application is for planning, establishing a steering committee or similar is useful to ensure the project meets the needs of your community.

Applicants are encouraged to use their community and economic development peers for guidance, recruiting them to review an application before submitting it to the Department. The application portal allows users to download their submission materials prior to finalizing and submitting the application.

For tips specific to the criteria, review the Application Guidelines.

Context – Tell the Story

In responding to each criterion, clearly illustrate the story of the community, including describing known concerns/problems, ongoing community betterment efforts, and how the proposed project addresses specific, identified needs of the community. In addition to the narrative, you are encouraged to provide links or attachments to give examples as appropriate. Such attachments should be highlighted or other emphasis added calling attention to the particularly relevant information. Do not just address the Review Criteria with broad, nonspecific platitudes.

Do not assume the review committee members know your community, as most will not.

Content – Quality over Quantity

Do not copy and paste narrative from one section to another. If the information is already described in a prior or succeeding section, there is no benefit in repeating the information. Duplicative narrative is cumbersome to read and compromises coherence of content within the application. Keep all responses succinct.

Your application should be a reflection of the community. Do not copy another community's application. The review committee is familiar with previous applications and catches on very quickly when an application begins to look similar to another community's application, even those from prior program years.

Be clear and concise; an application does not need to be lengthy to be successful.

Where letters of support are included, the application preparer should review the letters for common themes and include a summary in the application narrative within the appropriate section. Quotes can be useful, but summarizing the common themes within the narrative is best practice. Choose quality over quantity, better to include a handful of letters of support specific to the project need/impact than dozens of nonspecific form letters.