

Grant Readiness

PART 2: WRITING A STRONG PROJECT & BUDGET NARRATIVE

The project narrative isn't just paperwork, it's the opportunity to show reviewers that your vision is strategic, your goals are measurable, and your plan is realistic. Know the rubric the application will be scored on, and address all the elements of the rubric.

Project Narrative Key Strategies

- **First: Lead with the point.**
 - Start each section and paragraph with your most important information. Make your message clear by structuring your headings to match the scoring criteria so reviewers can follow easily.
 - Example: "We will improve student outcomes in math and ELA by 5% within 2 years."
- **Second: Use short, active sentences.**
 - Keep sentences concise -16-18 words- and use active voice to show ownership.
 - Examples: Instead of "The program will be implemented by our team" write "Our team will implement the program."
- **Third: Swap vague verbs for concrete actions.**
 - Example: It's vague to say, "We will support students throughout the year." Write concretely, "We will provide weekly tutoring sessions to 100 students from September through June."
- **Fourth: Show, don't just tell.**
 - Example: Instead of saying, "Our program helps students improve reading," include data and outcomes: ""After implementing our new ELA curriculum, third-grade reading comprehension scores increased from 62% to 89%."

Budget Narrative

Budget narrative should fully align with your project plan, every dollar should be clearly support the goals and activities described in your project narrative.

Build a detailed spreadsheet first so that your budget narrative explanations match your actual figures.

For example, For example, don't just write "Student Supplies: \$6,250."

Instead, explain how you came to the amount and tie it to a goal.

Example: "Student Supplies: \$25 per student x 250 students, to include items such as paper, pens, and notebooks. These supplies support our goal to improve academic achievement in Math and ELA."

Equipment vs. Supplies

Equipment: Tangible items with a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit cost of \$10,000 or more.

Supplies: Most classroom items, including laptops/consumable or low-cost.

ARNA

Every expense in your grant must fit this guideline:

- **Allowable:** The cost complies with all program and award terms.
- **Reasonable:** A prudent person would pay that amount.
- **Necessary:** The expense is essential to achieve the project outcomes.
- **Allocable:** The cost benefits the specific award in proportion to what's charged.