

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS for 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2

Applicants are strongly urged to use Grants.gov's Download Submitted Applications option for checking that their application's required attachments (see page 7 of this document, and Section D.2.a) of the Full Announcement/NOFO document) were contained in their submission.

After submitting the application, follow the directions found in the Grants.gov Online Users Guide (<http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh>). Click first on Applicants; then click on Applicant Actions; go then to the "Check My Application Status" option, and choose Download Submitted Applications.

If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found on page 7 of this document, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

This document consists of seven important sections:

1. Overview;
2. Required Application Forms and Documents;
3. Application Format;
4. Application Submission Process;
5. Attachment of Required Documents;
6. Verifying the Submission and Tracking the Application; and
7. Submission Date and Time.

1) Overview

We strongly recommend that applicants do not wait until the last minute to submit an application, in fact NTIA encourages applicants to submit SLIGP 2.0 applications as soon as possible in the application window once their respective Governor has made a decision regarding the FirstNet State Plan for deployment of the Radio Access Network. The earlier submission of applications will assist NTIA with workflow challenges during the abbreviated application review time period. To avoid any potential processing backlogs due to last minute Grants.gov registrations, applicants are highly encouraged to begin their Grants.gov registration process as early as possible.

When developing your submission timeline, please keep in mind that (1) all applicants are required to have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov); (2) the free annual registration process in the electronic System for Award Management (SAM.gov) may take between three and five business days or as long as more than two weeks; and (3) electronic applicants are required to have a current registration in Grants.gov; and (4) applicants

using Grants.gov will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency's electronic system has received its application.

Please note that a federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated recipient's registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is not current at the time of the award.

Applicants will find instructions on registering with SAM.gov as part of the Grants.gov process at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> .

All applicants should be aware that adequate time must be factored into an applicant's schedule for delivery of the application.

Submitters are advised that volume on Grants.gov may be extremely heavy leading up to the deadline date.

2) Required Application Forms and Documents

The following elements are required for a complete application package:

i. Letter of Designation

The Act states that the Assistant Secretary shall require each State to certify in its application for grant funds that the State has designated a single officer or governmental body to serve as the coordinator of implementation of the SLIGP grant funds. To implement this statutory requirement, NTIA requires applicants to provide a Letter of State Designation signed by the Governor or equivalent chief executive of the State, or his duly authorized designee, that reaffirms the existing, or identifies a new, State officer or governmental body designated as the coordinator of the implementation of the grant funds. This individual must be a current government employee, not a contractor or consultant. If the Governor designates a governmental body, NTIA requires a point of contact for that body.

ii. Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance

This form (and all additional forms requiring a signature) must be must be signed by the applicant's AOR. Electronic signatures submitted through www.grants.gov satisfy this requirement.

- o SF-424, Item 8.d. Zip/Postal Code field, should reflect the Zip code + 4 (#####-####) format.
- o SF-424, Item 12, should list the NOFO number as 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2.

SF-424, Item 18, should list the total Federal budget amount requested for the entire project. For SF-424, Item 21, the list of certifications and assurances is contained in the SF-424B.

iii. Standard Form 424A, Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs

Applicants must complete this form and provide an accompanying Budget Narrative and Detailed Budget Justification.

Please carefully follow the directions found at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html> when filling out this form.

- iv. **Standard Form 424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)**
- v. **CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying.** Enter “2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2” in the Award Number field. Enter the title of the application used in field 15 of the SF-424, or an abbreviation of that title, in the Project Name field.
- vi. **Standard Form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** (if applicable)
- vii. **Application Narrative**

The Application Narrative is a word-processed document of no more than ten (10) single or double-spaced pages responsive to the program description (see Full Announcement Text, section A. Program Description, of the 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2 NOFO), and the evaluation criteria (see Full Announcement Text, section E. Application Review Information, 1. Evaluation Criteria, of the 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2 NOFO). The Narrative must contain the following information:

- o a comprehensive explanation of the allowable activities that will be conducted using SLIGP 2.0 funds, how the applicant aims to resource and conduct these activities, the objectives and outcomes of these activities, and how conducting these activities will support the deployment of the NPSBN in their State. Note that applicants have the discretion to choose among the allowable activities described in section D.6.a, as it is not mandatory to perform all activities listed in that section;
- o a description of capacity to manage and conduct programmatic activities of the award and ability to adhere to NTIA grant reporting and compliance requirements described in section F.3.; and
- o a high-level staffing plan that clearly designates which individuals or positions will be responsible for fulfilling programmatic and grant management requirements.

viii. Budget Narrative and Detailed Budget Justification

In addition to the Standard Form 424A Budget Information form, applicants must include a Detailed Budget Justification in the form of a spreadsheet as well as a Detailed Budget Narrative in the form of a word document. All budget information submitted with the application must match the dollar amounts on required Standard Form 424 and Standard Form 424A. The Budget Narrative must be accompanied by a Budget Justification spreadsheet listing itemized costs by category (*e.g.*, salary, fringe, supplies, contractual, etc.) and supporting how the budget request

was calculated. The spreadsheet must be formatted to fit letter-sized paper (8.5" x 11"). The Budget Narrative must explain and justify all project costs, including contractual costs. This narrative must be organized to clearly correspond to the information provided in the Budget Justification spreadsheet. Detail provided in the spreadsheet and/or the narrative must also be sufficient so that reviewers can determine how costs were estimated or calculated, especially for costs over \$5,000 (including any contractual costs). The Budget Narrative (and the Standard Form 424A form) and Budget Justification spreadsheet must clearly distinguish those costs proposed to be supported with Federal funds. *(Budget Narrative not to exceed 5 pages. The Budget Narrative is in addition to and separate from the Application Narrative. The Budget Detail must be in the form of a spreadsheet.)*

ix. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (as applicable)

If indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, provide a copy of the approved negotiated indirect cost agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant Federal audit agency. If the rate was not established by a cognizant Federal audit agency, provide a statement to this effect. If the successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal audit agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.¹ This does not count toward the page limit.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f), applicants that have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge indirect costs to an NTIA award pursuant to a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs, in which case a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement is not required. In order to request indirect costs under a de minimus rate, the applicant agency must not receive more than \$35 million a year in direct Federal funding. As described in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. Once chosen, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. Applicants proposing a 10 percent de minimis rate pursuant to 2 CFR 200.414(f) must note this election as part of the budget portion of the application.

x. Opt-Out letter from Governor (as applicable)

The applicant must submit a copy of the official opt-out notification from the Governor if that applicant has chosen to opt-out.

xi. Cost Match Waiver Letter (as applicable)

If the applicant is requesting a full or partial waiver of the cost matching requirement, a letter that addresses the necessary elements must be provided.

¹ See U.S. Department of Commerce, Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (Mar. 31, 2017), *available at* http://osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/Department%20of%20Commerce%20Standard%20Terms%20&%20Conditions%2031%20March%202017.pdf (Standard Terms and Conditions).

Please pay close attention to the guidance in Section 5 of this document, “Attachment of Required Documents”.

3) Application Format

- i. **E-mailed and facsimile (fax) submissions** - Will not be accepted.
- ii. **Figures, graphs, images, and pictures** - Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be landscape orientation.
- iii. **Font** - Easy to read font (10-point minimum). Smaller type may be used in figures and tables but must be clearly legible.
- iv. **Line spacing** - Applicants may use single spacing or double spacing.
- v. **Margins** - One (1) inch top, bottom, left, and right.
- vi. **Page layout** - Portrait orientation except for figures, graphs, images, and pictures. Paragraphs are to be clearly separated from each other by double spacing, paragraph formatting or equivalent.
- vii. **Page limit** - The Application Narrative is limited to 10 pages.

Page limit includes: The text of the Application Narrative, as described in section D.2.a).vii of the 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2 NOFO. A separate 5-page limit exists for the Budget Narrative.

Page limit excludes: Designation Letter, SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance; SF-424B, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs; CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying; SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities; Detailed Budget Justification, Indirect Cost Rate Agreement; Opt-out letter from Governor; and Request to Waive the Matching Requirement.

- viii. **Page numbering** - Number pages sequentially.
- ix. **Page size** - 21.6 centimeters by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ inches by 11 inches).
- x. **Application Language** - English.
- xi. **Pre-Applications, white papers and letters of intent** - Pre-Applications, white papers and letters of intent are not required and nor will they be accepted for this program.
- xii. **Typed document** - All applications, including forms, must be typed.

4) Application Submission Process

Electronic applications must be submitted via Grants.gov at www.grants.gov, under announcement 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2.

Grants.gov has two submission avenues available to applicants: Option 1, called Workspace; and Option 2, called Legacy Application Package. These options are found under the Package tab on the View Grant Opportunity screen, and are described via links on the Grants.gov home page. The Legacy option will be discontinued after December 30, 2017.

Submitters of electronic applications should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. A receipt from Grants.gov indicating an application is received does not provide information about whether attachments have been received. For further information or questions regarding applying electronically for the 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2 announcement, contact Christopher Hunton by phone at 301-975-5718 or by e-mail at grants@nist.gov.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to start early and not wait until the approaching due date before logging on and reviewing the instructions for submitting an application through Grants.gov. The Grants.gov registration process must be completed before a new registrant can apply electronically. If all goes well, the registration process takes three (3) to five (5) business days. If problems are encountered, the registration process can take up to two (2) weeks or more. Applicants must have a valid unique entity identifier number and must maintain a current registration in the Federal government's primary registrant database, the System for Award Management (<https://www.sam.gov/>), as explained on the Grants.gov Web site. *See also* Section D.3.b of the 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2 NOFO document. After registering, it may take several days or longer from the initial log-on before a new Grants.gov system user can submit an application. Only authorized individual(s) will be able to submit the application, and the system may need time to process a submitted application. Applicants should save and print the proof of submission they receive from Grants.gov. If problems occur while using Grants.gov, the applicant is advised to (a) print any error message received and (b) call Grants.gov directly for immediate assistance. If calling from within the United States or from a U.S. territory, please call 800-518-4726. If calling from a place other than the United States or a U.S. territory, please call 606-545-5035. Assistance from the Grants.gov Help Desk will be available around the clock every day, with the exception of Federal holidays. Help Desk service will resume at 7:00 a.m. Eastern Time the day after Federal holidays. For assistance using Grants.gov, you may also contact support@grants.gov.

To find instructions on submitting an application on Grants.gov, Applicants should refer to the "Applicants" tab in the banner just below the top of the www.grants.gov home page. Clicking on the "Applicants" tab produces two exceptionally useful sources of information, Applicant Actions and Applicant Resources, which applicants are advised to review.

Applicants will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether NTIA's electronic system has received its application. Closely following the detailed information in these subcategories will increase the likelihood of acceptance of the application by NTIA's electronic system.

Applicants should pay close attention to the guidance under "Applicant FAQs," as it contains information important to successful submission on Grants.gov, including essential details on the naming conventions for attachments to Grants.gov applications.

The application must be both received and validated by Grants.gov. The application is “received” when Grants.gov provides the applicant a confirmation of receipt and an application tracking number. If an applicant does not see this confirmation and tracking number, the application has not been received. After the application has been received, it must still be validated. During this process, it may be “validated” or “rejected with errors.” To know whether the application was rejected with errors and the reasons why, the applicant must log in to Grants.gov, select “Applicants” from the top navigation, and select “Track my application” from the drop-down list. If the status is “rejected with errors,” the applicant may still seek to correct the errors and resubmit your application before the deadline. If the applicant does not correct the errors, the application will not be forwarded to NTIA by Grants.gov.

5) Attachment of Required Documents

Items ii. through vi. in section 2) of this document, Required Application Forms and Documents, are parts of the standard application package in Grants.gov and can be completed through the download application process.

Items i.; vii.; viii.; ix.; x.; and xi. in section 2) of this document, Required Application Forms and Documents, are documents which can be attached by clicking on “Add Attachments” found in item 15 of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This will create a zip file that allows for transmittal of the documents electronically via Grants.gov.

Applicants should carefully follow specific Grants.gov instructions at www.grants.gov to ensure the attachments will be accepted by the Grants.gov system. *A receipt from Grants.gov indicates only that an application was transferred to a system. It does not provide details concerning whether all attachments (or how many attachments) transferred **successfully**.* Applicants using Grants.gov will receive a series of e-mail messages over a period of up to two business days before learning whether a Federal agency’s electronic system has received its application.

6) Verifying the Submission and Tracking the Application

The Grants.gov Online Users Guide available at the Grants.gov site (<http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh>) provides vital information on application process. See especially the “Check My Application Status” option, found by clicking first on Applicants, and then by clicking on Applicant Actions. Use this feature to verify that all required attachments were present in the submission.

After submitting the application, follow the directions found in the Grants.gov Online Users Guide (<http://go.usa.gov/cjaEh>). Click first on Applicants; then click on Applicant Actions; go then to the “Check My Application Status” option, and choose Download Submitted Applications. Follow the directions found there. Remember, in order for this to work, don’t just visit Grants.gov. Log in. And remember to click on the record found on the Check My Application Status screen in order to see the List of Forms and Files Received screen.

If any, or all, of the required attachments are absent from the submission, follow the attachment directions found in the Full Announcement/NOFO document, resubmit the application, and check again for the presence of the required attachments.

Applicants can track their submission in the Grants.gov system by following the procedures at the Grants.gov site (<http://go.usa.gov/cjamz>). It can take up to two business days for an application to fully move through the Grants.gov system to NIST.

Agency Tracking Numbers will not be issued for applications received under the 2018-NTIA-SLIGP-2 program. The Tracking Numbers assigned by Grants.gov will be used.

7) Submission Date and Time

Electronic applications in response to the Full Announcement/NOFO document must be received by Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on December 28, 2017. Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered. The approximate start date for awards under the Full Announcement/NOFO document is expected to be March 1, 2018.

Applicants should be aware, and factor in their application submission planning, that the Grants.gov system is expected to be closed for routine maintenance at these times:

1) from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, October 21, 2017 until Monday, October 23, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and 2) from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, November 18, 2017 until Monday, November 20, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time; and again 3) from 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time, Saturday, December 16, 2017 until Monday, December 18, 2017 at 6:00 a.m. Eastern Time.

Applications cannot be submitted when Grants.gov is closed.