



MERCED
COLLEGE

Grants Manual

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

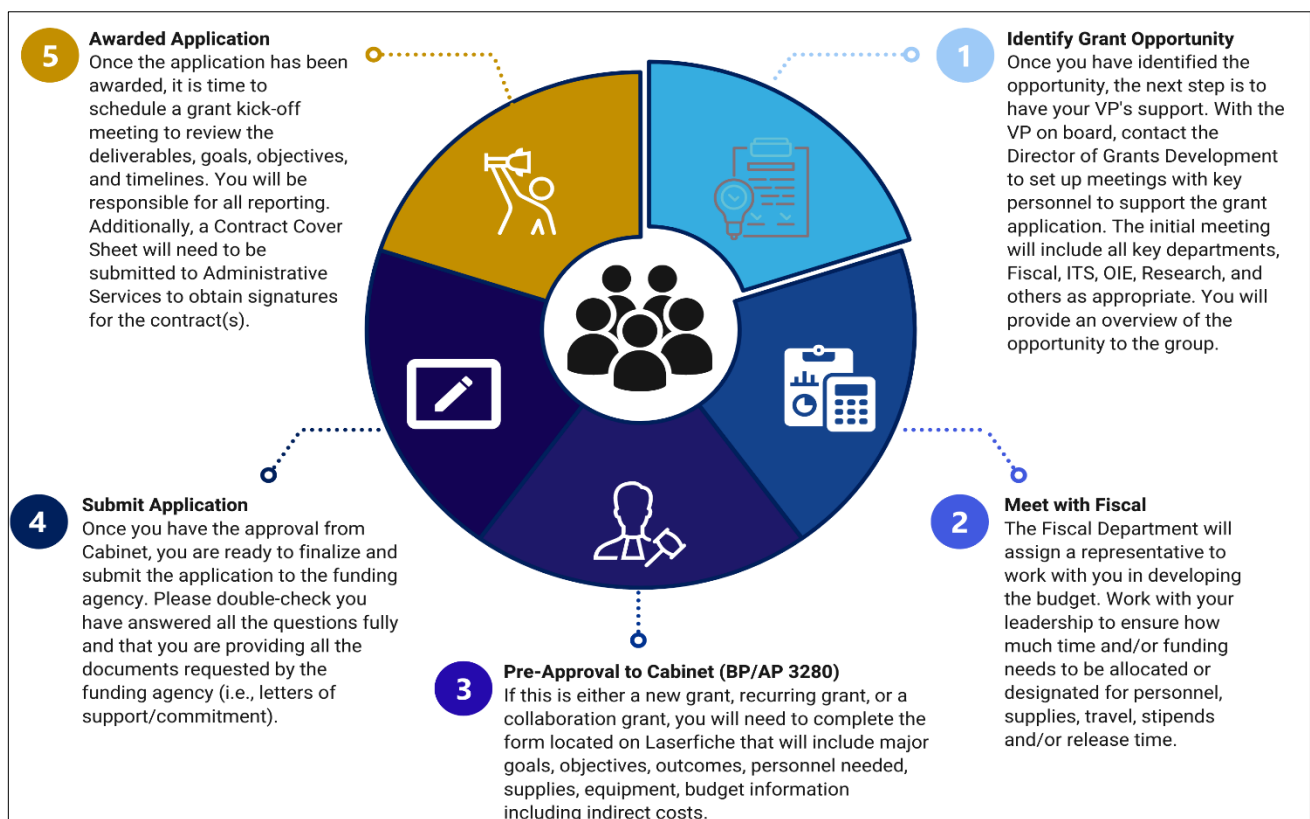
MAY 2026

Welcome

Welcome, and thank you for your interest in pursuing grant funding at Merced College. This manual outlines the roles, responsibilities, and required steps for developing, approving, submitting, managing, and closing grants at the College. Grants are intended to support innovative projects that advance the College's mission of transforming lives through education and workforce development.

Five Grant Phases

As the lead grant writer, you will have access to several resources to support your application. Once you have initial support from your VP, you will then contact the Director of Grants Development to coordinate the process and the resources necessary. Always keep your supervisor and VP engaged through the process to minimize any unanticipated delays.



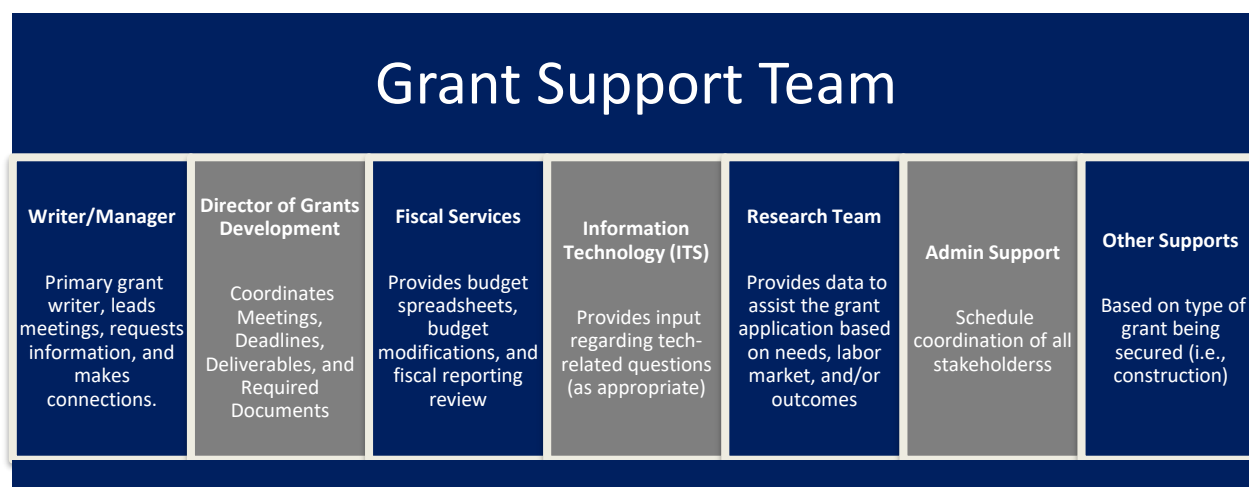
Role of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE)

The OIE is here to support you through all the grant phases, from pre-project planning through project completion (closeout). The OIE is monitoring multiple

funding sources to support faculty and staff who are in search of specific grant funding opportunities.

OIE, through the Director of Grants Development, will put together a Grant Support Team that will include Information Technology Services (ITS), Office of Institutional Effectiveness (researchers), Fiscal Services (Grants & Categorical), and administrative support to assist you in applying for a grant. The chart below provides additional information on the team (see Fig.1 below).

Fig. 1 – Grant Support Team



Through this Grant Support Team, you will be able to discuss the grant guidelines, ideas, options, deliverables, and deadlines to ensure you will have all of the information and support necessary to successfully apply for funding.

Five (5) Pre-Approval forms accommodate the various funding opportunities. One form is required to inform and obtain approval from Cabinet before completing and submitting a grant application. These forms can be found on the Merced College website at the following location: [Grants Website](#)

The five forms are the following:

1. Grant Pre-Approval Form (see Appendix for an example of this form).
2. Recurring Grant Form for all continuing grants or grants that have been secured in the past five years.

3. Collaboration Grant Form for projects where Merced College is collaborating with other organizations, such as non-profits, UC Merced, CSU-Stanislaus, or another community college.
4. The Grant Change Form is used to inform Cabinet of a change in a funded grant condition, including, but not limited to funding increase/decrease, grant duration, change in number of students served, etc.).
5. The Funding Opportunity Notification Form is used to gather information about a (non-competitive) funding opportunity that may be available to Merced College.

The Grant Completion Form is designed to capture all the work you've accomplished through the grant, and the district thanks you for your time. This information will be used to gather and report the outcomes. Your information will be used to create an infographic to share what was accomplished with the campus community.

In order to ensure progress is being made before the application deadline, OIE will schedule ongoing weekly meetings with the Grant Support Team to ensure that sufficient time is dedicated to writing the grant. There are two important deadlines that all parties must be made aware of from the beginning:

- 1st - The deadline that the Pre-Approval, Collaboration, or Recurring Grant form listed above must be submitted to Cabinet, and
- 2nd - The deadline for grant submission to the respective funding agencies.

Cabinet Approval

Merced College has an internal process for applying for all grants, which requires Cabinet approval. The Pre-Approval forms are used to gather information such as the purpose of the grant and population served, length of the grant, the proposed budget, in-kind or matching requirements, and personnel needed to implement the grant. This information helps Cabinet make a data-informed decision on how well the grant aligns with the mission of Merced College. The Vice President (VP) from your corresponding area will introduce and advocate for the grant approval at Cabinet; therefore, it is imperative that your manager and VP support the grant opportunity from the beginning. Cabinet meets weekly and will require lead time

(before the submission deadline) for review and approval. Without Cabinet approval, you cannot submit for the grant.

Letters of Support may be requested if a college partner requires one (i.e., when partnering with UC Merced, Stanislaus State, or other entities) for their grant application. Letters of Support must be approved by the President before providing them to college partners.

The Director of Grants Development at OIE will guide you through the appropriate process and help you choose the right form to use based on the grant application and/or request by college partners.

Important Considerations

The preparation of a competitive grant application will require a substantial amount of time. This intense process requires detail-oriented, technical writing skills. Not all grants are the same, and many factors determine the amount of time required to complete the grant application. Because of the uncertainty of time for each application, a grant application must begin several weeks, or when possible, months before the application is due.

Grant applications that are planned in advance have a much higher success rate than those that are written at the last minute. Last-minute writing will lead to high stress that will be reflected in the writing and should be avoided. In fact, the most successful grant writers often refuse to work on eleventh-hour grant projects because they know that the chances of winning an award written in a rushed manner are slim. In addition, a last-minute request runs the risk of not being approved by the Cabinet.

The Grant Approval Journey, posted online on the Merced College website, shares helpful tips and provides information regarding the Cabinet-Approved process for grant applications to earn the seal of approval.

Grant Approval Journey

You cannot submit a grant in a vacuum! Follow the steps below to ensure your grant will get the approval and support it needs to be submitted.

1. Plan Ahead

Submissions must be made to Cabinet at least 8 weeks prior to grant submission

deadline. Contact the Director of Grants Development to let them know you are considering pursuing a grant. If you have less than 8 weeks, the Director of Grants Development will help you determine if it's feasible to apply.

2. Talk with your direct supervisor and VP

Talk with your direct supervisor and VP to make sure they support pursuing the grant support before beginning the process and sending the pre-approval form to Cabinet.

3. Meet with the Director of Grants Development

Meet with the Director of Grants Development to get guidance and discuss any data and grant evaluation needs for the grant narrative and budget. The Grant Director will put together a team that you will work with throughout the grant process.

4. Work with Fiscal Services to develop a proposed budget

The Fiscal Services department has extensive knowledge and experience with grant budgets. They will play a critical role in grant implementation, so it is necessary to get their involvement from the beginning. Meeting with Fiscal Services to develop a proposed budget from the grant narrative or budget narrative is a required component of the pre-approval process.

5. Complete the Preapproval Form

You cannot apply for a grant without getting Cabinet approval first. You must complete the Grant Preapproval form that will be submitted to Cabinet for their consideration. The form will go through an approval process, first reviewed and approved by your supervisor, then will be forwarded to Fiscal Services, the Dean of OIE, your VP, ITS, who will take the request to Cabinet. Working with the grant team from the beginning will make the process easier.

6. Post Cabinet Review

- If Cabinet approves moving forward with the grant, continue to work with OIE through the grant submission process (this will continue through the life of the grant).
- If Cabinet does not approve moving forward with the grant, talk with the Director of Grants Development to find out the reasons and if it is feasible to consider other grant projects that will better fit the expectations/guidance from the Cabinet.

Budget Preparation

The financial component of a proposal usually consists of a Budget Summary and a Budget Narrative/Justification. **You will work with Fiscal Services**, as they are experts and can provide you with a budget spreadsheet that incorporates all of the grant guidelines. Fiscal will also help you calculate Indirect Cost Rates and adjust budgets for multi-year requests (that may need to incorporate yearly increases in salaries and/or benefits). Working with Fiscal from the beginning will also make completing the pre-approval forms easier.

Role of Fiscal Services

It is important to note that the role of fiscal representatives is primarily that of Approver/Filer. Fiscal representatives are listed in competitive grants as the responsible fiscal entity that will be reporting fiscal-related information and follow the Financial Management rules as per Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §200.302. It is the responsibility of the Grant Manager to have a thorough understanding of the reporting and oversight process as these pertain to the grant they have secured. Fiscal will approve and submit standard grant reporting forms (e.g., SF-270, SF-425, SF-425a).

Fiscal staff should not be expected to complete fiscal reports; they are available to provide guidance and review of information being submitted to the funding agency. Oftentimes, Fiscal representatives are listed in NOVA as either the Fiscal Report Approver or the Institutional Project Fiscal Reporter and sign off on fiscal-related reports and plans. However, to reiterate, the completion of fiscal reports is the responsibility of the Grant Manager. Meeting regularly with your fiscal representative will make the process more efficient and will ensure that you will always know where you stand in terms of overall grant expenditure.

The fiscal department's goal is to provide effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets. Fiscal must adequately safeguard all assets and ensure that they are used solely for authorized purposes as per Internal Controls found in [CFR § 200.303](#).

Human Resources (HR)

Most grants will require personnel, and all new positions will need to be discussed with HR to fully understand the implications and job descriptions tied to the different positions on campus for all positions (including student workers).

Oftentimes, a meeting with HR should include the individual assigned to your grant by Fiscal to ensure that costs are accurate, as these costs tend to increase over time, and all individuals have different rates for salaries and fringe benefits. During your initial conversation with the Director of Grants Development, you will be asked if you plan to hire staff for the grant. If you will, HR will be invited to the meetings until the grant has been submitted, and then back again for the kickoff meeting upon the successful awarding of the grant.

Grant Submission

For grant submission, it is required that you share your budget and other materials with your supervisor, Dean, and VP throughout the entire process to ensure you have their full support and to minimize budget changes. Oftentimes, key individuals from the support team may be out of the office and may not be available to provide you with the changes requested in time to submit the application. Give yourself as much time as possible to have all of the required documents with at least a couple of days lead time to apply to thwart any last-minute delays (internal or external).

Post Award

Once awarded, the Director of Grants Development will work with you to assist you in securing a Contract Cover Sheet, obtain final documents approved by the Board of Trustees as needed, and assist with quarterly, semi-annual, and/or yearly reporting that will come due throughout the course of the grant.

You will also work with the Director of Grants Development to notify everyone who worked on the grant, and a grant kickoff meeting will be scheduled to ensure all aspects of the grant are discussed, including:

- a. Access to reporting systems,
- b. Reporting timelines (program and fiscal),
- c. Capturing and documenting Time & Effort (T&E) for Federal Grants,
- d. Distribution of duties, and
- e. Next steps working with HR if hiring staff is necessary.

The Director of Grants Development will also notify everyone who worked on the grant if the grant was not awarded.

Grant Reporting and Data Impacts

- Quarterly, Semi-annual, Final Reporting
 - You will be required to submit regular reports (e.g., Performance

Progress Reports) documenting the project throughout its lifespan. OIE will work with you to track the reporting cycle and if necessary, set up meetings to secure as much information as possible for the reports.

- Data Impacts for Reporting
 - The Grant Manager will identify initial and ongoing data for their grant needs, including the type and frequency of data needed for ongoing reporting. The Grant Manager will submit a request for the researchers to add the ongoing request to their calendar to ensure sufficient time is provided to gather the information requested.

- Fiscal Management
 - Fiscal Reporting will be driven by the type of grant you've been awarded, and is detailed in the compliance and reporting section of the Grants Handbook provided by the funding agency. The handbook will contain the Reporting Period and the Performance Report Due Dates. The Grant Manager is responsible for working with the appointed fiscal representative to ensure that the information reported is accurate.

 - Drawing down funds is how Merced College is reimbursed and paid for services on an ongoing basis, with the frequency depending on the type of grant and based upon activities listed in the workplan and reported. Merced College submits programmatic and fiscal reporting, requesting reimbursement from the funding agency. The Grant Manager is responsible for uploading/submitted the information into the corresponding system. The information is verified by a Fiscal Manager who reviews and approves the information entered by the Grant Manager.

- Modifications
 - Fiscal Modifications (budget changes) are sometimes necessary to get back on track in the event of program delays. The Grant Manager will review the requirements needed to secure a fiscal modification as referenced in the grant handbook and/or in the original signed grant agreement. It is advisable to ensure the designated Project Monitor is made aware of any changes to budget categories to ensure quick approval. In the event that budget categories need to be added or deleted, express prior written consent is required by the grant's Project

Monitor.

- Timelines that need to be extended due to program delays must be documented and are considered amendments to the grant.
- Amendments are often required to extend the completion date, materially change the work to be performed, and/or alter the budget. Requests for an amendment must be submitted to the Project Monitor and made as soon as the need for an amendment arises.
- A compelling justification will be needed to secure an amendment.

Grant Reporting – Time and Effort (T&E) Federal Requirements

As a recipient of federal funding, the District is required to comply with the Office of Management and Budget Circular Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (“Uniform Guidance”) as well as requirements for certifying effort expended on sponsored awards, 2 CFR Part §200.430, Compensation-personal services. Time and Effort Certification confirms that the salaries and benefits charged to, or pledged as a cost share to, grant-funded projects are reasonable and reflect the actual work performed.

Section §200.430(i) states the standards for documentation of personnel expenses charged to Federal awards for salaries and wages must be based on records that accurately reflect the work performed, and that these records must:

- Be supported by a system of internal control which provides reasonable assurance that the charges are accurate, allowable, and properly allocated;
- Be incorporated into the official records of the non-Federal entity;
- Reasonably reflect the total activity for which the employee is compensated by the non-Federal entity, not exceeding 100% of compensation activities;
- Encompass both federally and all other activities compensated by the non-Federal entity on an integrated basis (i.e., teaching, research, administrative) but may include the use of subsidiary records as defined in the non-Federal entity’s written policy;
- Comply with the estimated accounting policy and practices of the non-Federal entity for Additional Compensation; and
- Support the distribution of the employee’s salary or wages among specific activity or cost objectives if the employee works on more than one Federal

award; a Federal award and non-Federal award; an indirect cost activity and a direct cost activity; two or more indirect activities which are allocated using different allocation bases; or an unallowable activity and a direct or indirect cost activity.

Budget estimates (i.e., estimates determined before the services are performed) alone do not qualify as support for charges to Federal awards.

During the grant kickoff meeting, you will discuss the Merced Community College District: Federal Grant Time and Effort Guidelines and the T&E process with Fiscal Staff to ensure that you are using the appropriate forms (see Appendix A-3).

Changes to the Grant

It is customary for grants to require an adjustment based on numerous factors such as delays in obtaining initial grant funding and/or delays in hiring appropriate staff to ensure the goals of the grant are on track and will be accomplished. The modification re-establishes and updates timelines and is worked in tandem with the grant program officer and Fiscal Services. Whatever the reason may be, you may need to modify the grant and request a no-cost time extension. Fiscal and Cabinet will need to be notified of any changes to the grant, either as they relate to time extensions, an increase or decrease in funding, or if any other changes are necessary. The Director of Grants Development will guide you through the process and work with you to successfully make changes to the grant.

Closing out the Grant

Depending on the type of grant secured, closeout means the process by which the awarding agency or pass-through entity determines that all applicable administrative actions and all required work of the award have been completed. Oftentimes, the closeout section may reference Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section [§200.344](#) entitled Closeout. The Grants Handbook, provided by the funding source, is the guide you should follow to ensure that the grant is properly closed out, which may include:

- Final Budget Report, and a
- Fiscal Program Closeout Report.

A College Report Out (see Burton infographic example in the Appendix) may be used to inform the College of the outcomes and impacts the grant produced.

Important Grant Contacts

Alfredo Mendoza

Director, Grants Development

(209) 381-6578

alfredo.mendoza@mccd.edu

Andre Urquidez

Director, Business & Fiscal Services

(209) 384-6209

andre.urquidez@mccd.edu

Kimberly Freitas

Associate Director, Business & Fiscal Services

(209) 384-6202

kimberly.freitas@mccd.edu

Physical Location

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is located in the Business & Economics (B&E) Building, 2nd Floor, Room 205, listed as “B&E” on the [map](#).

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A-1 Grant Pre-Approval Form

A-1 Grant Pre-Approval Form



Grant PreApproval Proposal Form

The purpose of this form is to gather information about a potential Grant opportunity for review by the President's Cabinet. The grant concept is reviewed by Cabinet to ensure that the grant proposal is directed to Student Success, aligns with the Mission of Merced College and ensures Sustainability of the College.

Once you complete this form it will be routed to your direct supervisor, the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, and the Business and Fiscal Office for approval. Once approved it will be submitted to the Cabinet.

Name of person submitting Preapproval Form

Your Name

Email of person submitting Preapproval Form

first.last@mccd.edu

Requestor Role

Faculty/Supervisor

Immediate Supervisor

Your Supervisor

Grant proposals must be submitted to Cabinet for approval at least eight weeks prior to grant submission deadline. Is it at least eight weeks prior to the grant submission deadline?

- Yes
- No

Since it is less then 8 weeks before the grant submission deadline please contact your direct supervisor and/or the Dean of Office of Institutional Effectiveness to discuss the submission of the Pre-Approval form.

Is there less than 3 weeks before grant submission deadline?

- Yes
- No

Date of proposal submission deadline?

Enter Date

What is the Funding Agency for this Grant?

Enter Funding Agency

Is the funding agency for this grant a federal agency, state agency, or a private company?

- State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Private Company
- Other

CFDA # (?)

Is this a new or continuing Grant?

- New
- Continuing
- Other

What is the term of the Grant? (How many years of funding are being requested?)

Enter number of years

What is the total amount being requested by Merced College?

\$ 0.00

Is fund matching required?

- Yes
- No

Matching Funds

Funds

Where will this funding come from?

Will Merced College be partnering with any other institutions for this Grant?

- Yes
- No
- Other

What is the working title for the project

Enter your working title

Please summarize the proposed project and explain how it benefits Merced College.

Enter a couple paragraphs to answer this question

Please attach any supporting documents that you feel are important in describing the project and its benefits to Merced College

(Multiple documents may be uploaded)

What are the major goals, objectives, and or outcomes of the project? What groups are likely to benefit from the project?

Bulleted list, or several paragraphs may suffice.

Please attach any supporting documents that you feel are important in describing the goals, objectives, and or outcomes.

What personnel do you need (including yourself) to carry out the work of this project?

Name	Time needed for project activities	Association with Merced College
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Personnel	Name of Individual	Enter time needed (per week)	Faculty/Staff
Personnel	Individual 2	Enter time needed (per week)	Faculty/Staff
Personnel	Individual 3	Enter time needed (per week)	Faculty
Personnel	Individual 4	Enter time needed (per week)	Staff

(Note: Personnel listed here may be participating as part of their normal job duties and not necessarily paid from the grant)

Will Merced College Faculty need release time from other responsibilities to work on this project?

Yes
 No
 Other

Who will oversee the administration of the Grant, including budget and reporting?

This is usually the individual completing the form.

Did you work with the Business and Fiscal Services Office on your proposed budget?

Yes **This is very important**
 No
 Other

Supplies

	Type	Cost to Purchase	Other costs	Total
Supplies	0	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Total Supply Costs				
\$ 0.00				

Equipment Needs

	Type of equipment	Cost to Purchase	Cost to Maintain	Cost of Installation	Additional Costs	Total
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The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is a valuable resource in grant submissions and management. Have you discussed this research project and your data needs with the Dean of Office of Institutional Effectiveness?

- Yes
 No
 Other

Have you contacted ITS about the planned software and technology needs for this grant?

- Yes
 No
 Other

Please contact the Associate Vice President of Information Technology Services, Arlis Bortner (arlis.bortner@mccd.edu), regarding the technology that is planned to be used and/or purchased with this grant so ITS can provide guidance.

Provide a brief description of your technology needs.

None.

Will you need to form an advisory group for this project?

- Yes
 No
 Other

Indicate any institutional commitments that will be required to maintain the project beyond the end of the grant.

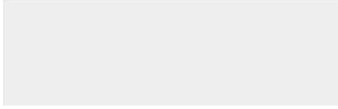
Indicate the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes that will be met with this Grant.

- Communication
 Computation
 Cognition
 Global & Community Consciousness and Responsibility
 Personal Development and Life-Long Learning
 NA

Select all of the Strategic Goals from the 2018-2023 Educational Master Plan that will be addressed by the Grant.

- Employ Enrollment Management Strategies to support Student Success, Progression, and Completion/Transfer
 Increase Student Access and Streamline Entry Processes
 Maximize Future Financial Stability Via Data Driven, Long Range, Integrated Fiscal Planning
 Strengthen Campus Safety and Align Facilities and Technology Planning with Educational Master Planning
 Strengthen Existing and Create New Partnerships with Educational Institutions, Employers, and Government and Community Agencies to Support EMP goals
 Design Streamlined, Integrated Technological and Human Systems that Work Effectively Towards Desired Outcomes

Signature of person applying for Preapproval



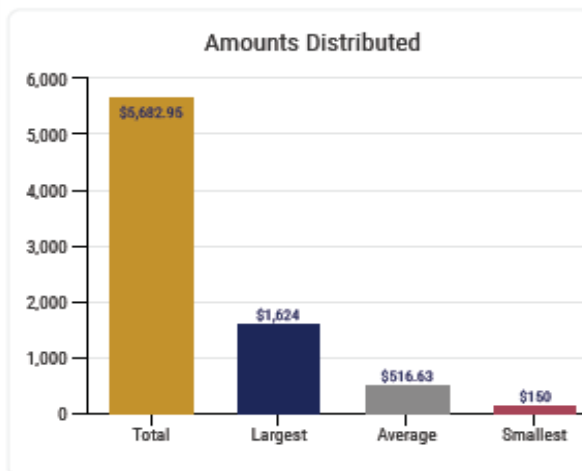
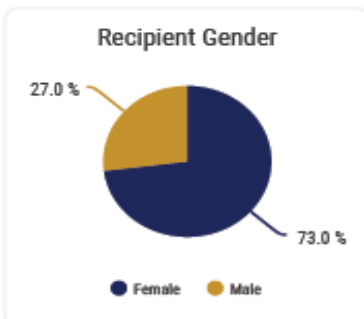
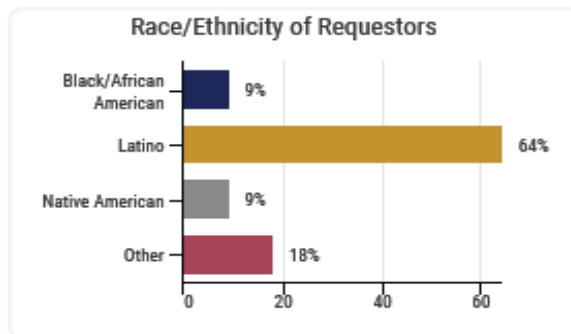
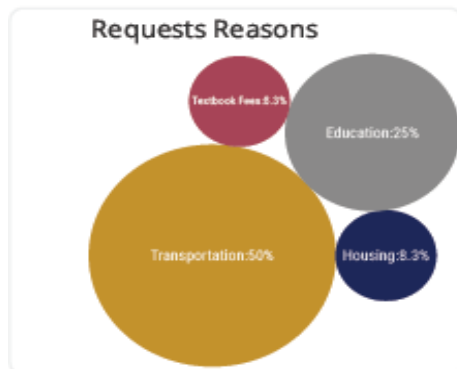
Thank you for submitting your Grant Preapproval proposal. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will keep you updated on its progress through the process.

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A2: Burton Critical Needs Closeout Example

Burton Critical Needs Grant Recipients

The Burton Critical Needs Grant was awarded to Merced College in July of 22. This was a 1 year, \$6000 grant whose purpose was to pay expenses related to a youth's critical need or opportunity. The eligibility requirements were that the student must be between 16 and 26 years of age and have been in foster care or experienced homelessness at some point. This grant aided 20 students with their needs associated with housing, transportation, utilities, textbook fees, and the cost of education.



A3: Merced Community College District: Federal Grant Time and Effort Guidelines



Merced Community College District: Federal Grant Time and Effort Guidelines

1. Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that the Merced Community College District (MCCD) complies with federal regulations regarding the documentation of personnel costs charged to federal grants. This system provides a method for verifying that the compensation charged to each federal award is accurate, allowable, and properly allocated based on the actual activity of the employee.

2. Authority and Scope

- **Regulatory Basis:** 2 CFR §200.430 (Compensation – Personal Services).
- **Applicability:** All MCCD employees (faculty, staff, and student workers) whose salaries are charged as a whole or in part to a federal award, or whose time is used to meet federal cost-sharing (match) requirement.

3. Reporting Requirements

MCCD utilizes an "After-the-Fact" activity reporting system. Reports must reflect **100% of the employee's total compensated activity**, not just the portion dedicated to the federal grant.

A. Semi-Annual Certification (Single Cost Objective)

Employees who work **100%** of their time on a single federal award or cost objective may complete a **Semi-Annual Certification** and submit it to the Fiscal Office.

- **Frequency:** Twice per year (typically aligned with the end of the Fall and Spring/Summer terms).
- **Content:** A statement signed by the employee or a supervisor with first-hand knowledge, certifying that the employee worked solely on that specific federal program for the period covered.

B. Time and Effort Reporting

Employees whose time is split between a federal grant and other District duties (e.g., teaching, general administration, or multiple grants) must maintain **Time and Effort Reports (T&Es)**.

- **Frequency:** As appropriate in accordance to grant guidelines.
- **Content:** A breakdown of percentages spent on each specific activity. Reports must be based on **actual effort**, not budget estimates.

4. Reconciliation of Budget to Actuals

Federal regulations allow payroll to be processed based on budget estimates, provided MCCD performs regular reconciliations:

- **Review:** The Fiscal Office will compare actual effort (in the signed reports) to the payroll amounts charged to the grant.
- **Adjustments:**
 - If there is a variance, MCCD will adjust the payroll charges in the accounting system to reflect actual effort and adjust future budget projections.

5. Records Retention

In accordance with **2 CFR §200.333**, all time and effort documentation (including digital logs and signed certifications) must be retained for **three (3) years** from the date of submission of the final expenditure report, or longer if there is an ongoing audit or litigation. The Fiscal Office will retain these documents within the grant reporting package support.

6. Non-Compliance

Failure to submit accurate and timely effort reports may result in:

1. Disallowed costs (repayment of salary/benefits to the federal agency).
2. Suspension of grant funding.