

Grant Budget Guidelines

NetVUE Vocation across the Academy Grants

This document provides important information about the development of proposals and the preparation of budgets for NetVUE Vocation across the Academy grants. A sample budget (along with notes on specific categories) can be found at the end of this document; it is also available as an Excel spreadsheet upon request. Please use Microsoft Excel or a similar spreadsheet program to format your budget. Please also provide a separate document with concise budget notes that explain the basis of the calculation for each item.

In general, grant funds are intended to offset one-time costs of development and implementation of a robust program of vocational exploration across the academy, possibly including the development of partnerships with local businesses, nonprofits, or other community organizations. Grant funds may be used for a range of purposes, but not to substitute for faculty and staff costs that the institution is presently providing for its vocational exploration activities. Grant proposals may, however, include additional stipends or buyouts of faculty and staff time in pursuit of the aims of the project. In addition, please note the following important budget requirements:

- Capital expenditures (including the purchase of durable goods or equipment in any amount), the hiring of additional personnel (including graduate assistants), direct fundraising expenses, and indirect or overhead costs must be borne by the institution and are not eligible for support by the grant.
- In the case of stipends for current employees, only the employer's share of FICA (currently 7.65%) may be included. Grant funds may not be used to support other personnel benefits, whether as a fixed sum or on a "fringe percentage" basis.
- Any speaker honoraria included in the grant proposal may not exceed \$1,500 per speaker per day.
- Travel expenses for participation in NetVUE conferences and gatherings are the responsibility of the institution and cannot be covered by grant funds. Please do not include these expenses in the grant budget.
- The NetVUE Consultant and Campus Visit programs are funded separately and should not be included in the grant budget.

If any unallowable items are included in the grant proposal, they will be removed from the budget and the total amount requested will be reduced accordingly. Please note that any reduction in the grant's year-one budget will be followed by a corresponding reduction in the bonus award available for use in grant years two and three. Applicants will not have the opportunity to revise the project to substitute other expenses for excluded items.

The remainder of this document is devoted to frequently asked questions concerning grant proposal budgets. Applicants will increase their chance of success by carefully following this guidance.

What are the guidelines for gifts from third parties to qualify for the matching funds?

The matching requirement is meant to assist the institution to attract new donors, to deepen existing donors' investments in the institution's vocational exploration initiatives, and to increase

the likelihood that the grant-funded activities will be sustained beyond the grant period. Donations must come from outside the institution, rather than from related entities that are governed by the institution (such as a center or institute, even if externally funded).

Grant recipients should begin work immediately to develop prospective donors, since donated funds must be in-hand and properly documented before the start of the second year of the grant period. Pledges are not sufficient. Donations that were received before the grant was awarded may qualify, but only if they were given specifically to meet the grant's matching requirement for the project being proposed. Neither institutions nor donors may reallocate previously given donations, and a statement that the gift is for the institution's "highest need" is not sufficient. All gifts must be accompanied by documentation received from donors that indicates they understand their gifts will support activities described in the approved grant proposal and that their gifts are to be applied toward the grant's matching requirement. More detailed instructions regarding deadlines, fundraising requirements, and required documentation will be sent to grant recipients along with the grant agreement form.

What are the requirements to qualify for the NetVUE bonus award?

Matching funds in an amount equal to or greater than the initial award must be in hand by the end of the grant's first year in order to qualify for the bonus award. As noted above, pledges are not sufficient. The bonus award cannot be pro-rated and is available only at the end of the grant's first year to those institutions that have collected sufficient matching funds by that time. The deadline for collecting these funds cannot be extended beyond the end of the grant's first year.

What categories should appear in the budget?

Please provide budget line items that match the expenditures proposed. The budget should separate expenditures coming from the three funding sources—grant, donor matching, and institutional funds—and should provide a separate column for each funding source (see below for additional information). Specific categories of expenditures will depend on the project described in the proposal. *Note: If a single line item is expected to be covered by some combination of grant funds, donor funds, and institutional support, each of these must be budgeted separately and must be treated as separate expenditures. Grant funds may not be used to pay for items budgeted to donor funds or institutional funds, unless a budget reallocation is approved in advance.* Typical budget categories are listed below and in the budget sample at the end of this document. On a separate page at the end of the application document, please provide budget notes that explain the basis of the calculation for each item. For example:

- If the grant will provide released time for current employees to support development of new programs (an allowable grant expense), the budget should include the number of project leaders and/or administrative assistants, the cost per person (by dollar stipend or proportion of salary related to released time), and a subtotal. A stipend may be treated as extra compensation for the individual when the time commitment is not substantial, and when the work can be carried out while the individual continues with normal duties. Compensation in the form of released time from teaching should be calculated based only

on the amount that the institution will spend to replace those duties (i.e., *not* as a percentage of the salary of the person being granted released time).

- When stipends are to be paid to employees of the institution, the budget may include a separate line item for the employer’s share of Social Security and Medicare tax (commonly known as FICA, currently 7.65%), which is paid by the institution on employee wages. Beyond this 7.65% allowance, any additional fringe benefits—whether paid as a lump sum or a percentage of salary—are the responsibility of the institution. Note: If this line item is not included, the institution will be responsible for covering this expense. Grant funds may not be reallocated at a later date to cover these costs.
- Budget items for lodging, meals, and transportation for retreats (and similar events) should include the number of participants projected, the number of lodging nights, the cost per night, and a subtotal. Similarly, budgets for meals should provide the projected number of participants, amount per meal per participant, and a subtotal. Any transportation expenses should indicate a cost estimate per person (or vehicle, if carpooling), number of persons or vehicles, and a subtotal.
- Speaker honoraria should indicate the number of speakers, amount per speaker, and a subtotal. See below for more information regarding NetVUE policy on honoraria.
- If refreshments and meals are to be provided, a budget line should appear for each event, providing the projected number of participants, amount per meal per participant, and a subtotal.
- Expenditures listed for books or supplies should indicate the number of copies of the texts, documents, or other items, and a subtotal.

What rows/columns should be included in the budget?

Each grant year should have a separate set of line items. Please create separate lines for distinct categories of expenses within each year, and columns as noted below. Ideally, budgets should be provided in an Excel spreadsheet with separate tabs for each year of the grant; see the budget sample for further details.

- *NetVUE Request:* In a distinct column, the budget should clearly display the projected expenses to be supported by grant funds. The second and third-year budgets should be presented with the presumption that the NetVUE bonus will be received after the end of the first grant year.
- *Donor Support:* In a distinct column, the budget should indicate spending plans for gifts that are anticipated in support of this project. As noted in the Invitation for Applications, matching donor support is to be fully expended by the end of the project’s third year. These funds should be allocated to the appropriate budget categories and may be spent in conjunction with grant funds, institutional funds, or both. However, if a single line item is supported by any combination of grant funds, donor funds, and/or institutional support, these must be budgeted in separate columns. *Budget reports must track the spending from each funding source separately, even if they are included within a single line item.*
- *Institutional Support:* Institutional funds should be listed in a third column. Although institutional funds are not required as part of the three-year grant initiative, they may be allocated to grant-supported initiatives during the first three years as appropriate. In addition, a fourth year of project activity supported only by institutional funds must be

included in the proposed budget, in order to demonstrate how the institution will sustain the project beyond the grant period.

- *Total Budget*: A separate column provides the sum of each row of the budget for each of the four project years. In addition, please provide a row representing totals for each column for the entire four-year project period, either on a separate summary tab in an Excel spreadsheet or as the final row following the four separate years.

May grant funds or donor matching funds be used for student or staff participation in a third-party program or event?

Please do not propose a project in which a significant amount of the grant funds are allocated to a third party for a tool or program that has already been developed. NetVUE grants are intended to support institutions as they develop their own programming, specific to their own context. Expenditures for one-time costs related to third-party programs or events (such as per-student fees for assessment instruments or costs for certifying staff to administer a particular program or assessment instrument) will be considered only as a pilot project, or as a one-time expenditure to significantly expand an existing program that the institution will sustain at this expanded level. Hence, such expenditures may be included during *only one* of the project's three years, with the understanding that the institution will assume responsibility for any ongoing expenses if the pilot project (or expansion) is successful. Participation in external programs or events that would be considered part of the institution's ongoing operations, as well as those without a direct and specific tie to vocational reflection and discernment among undergraduate students, are not eligible for grant or donor match funding.

What is the NetVUE policy for honoraria for speakers and facilitators?

NetVUE limits the use of grant funds for honoraria to \$1,500 per speaker or facilitator per day. If a higher daily honorarium is offered, any amount beyond \$1,500 per day must come from institutional funds. Grant funds may also be used to pay for travel and accommodation for guest speakers.

What types of expenses are not allowed?

Grant funds and donor matching funds may be used for a range of purposes, but not for:

- Ongoing faculty and staff costs that the institution is presently providing;
- Capital or durable goods expenditures, including equipment purchases;
- Stipends or salaries for additional personnel or graduate students hired specifically to support the grant project;
- Fringe benefits beyond the 7.65% Social Security and Medicare tax allowance;
- Direct fundraising expenses; [or](#)
- Indirect or overhead costs.

May the grant proposal include funding requests for NetVUE consultants or campus visits?

No. NetVUE provides a separate process for applying for funding for campus consultants or campus visits; see the NetVUE website for details. For any questions about these programs beyond what is provided on the website, contact David S. Cunningham, director of NetVUE, at dcunningham@cic.edu or (616) 632-1060.

May grant funds or donor matching funds be used to attend NetVUE conferences and gatherings?

No. Travel expenses for participation in NetVUE conferences and gatherings are the responsibility of the institution and cannot be covered by NetVUE grant or donor matching funds.

What if changes in the approved grant budget are needed?

NetVUE grant recipients are expected to expend funds as outlined in the approved budget. However, changes in expenditures (compared with the proposed budget) are sometimes necessary. If a variance of more than 20 percent in a line item is expected, the grant recipient should request a reallocation of funds as early as possible, and in no case later than three months prior to the end of the grant spending period. Reallocation requests should provide a rationale for the change, as well as a revised budget; the latter should be formatted to show the original budget and the requested revision, so that these may be easily compared. Please send requests to Carter Aikin at caikin@cic.edu. The request will be reviewed and, if approved, the revised budget will become the basis for subsequent spending reports.

Can the grant spending or fundraising deadlines be extended?

Funds should be expended during the three-year grant period. In some instances, NetVUE has considered an extension of the spending deadline; typically, such extensions are granted for 60 days. Requests for extensions must be made at least three months before the end of the grant period and submitted to Carter Aikin at caikin@cic.edu. Please note: this option applies only to the *spending* deadline at the end of the three-year grant period. As noted above, matching funds must be in-hand and properly documented before the start of the second year of the grant period; this deadline cannot normally be extended.

What happens to unexpended funds at the end of the grant period?

At the end of the grant period, residual funds of more than \$250 must be returned to the Council of Independent Colleges and will be used to support future NetVUE grant programs.

Additional questions?

Please contact Carter Aikin, NetVUE grants director, at caikin@cic.edu or (217) 854-5619.