

## **Grant Budget Guidelines**

### **NetVUE Grants to Individuals for Vocational Exploration**

This document provides important information about the development of proposals and the preparation of budgets for NetVUE Grants to Individuals for Vocational Exploration. Two sample budgets (along with notes on specific categories) can be found at the end of this document; they are also available as Excel spreadsheets upon request. Please use Microsoft Excel or a similar spreadsheet program to format your budget. Please also provide concise budget notes that explain the basis of the calculation for each item; again, an example is provided at the end of this document.

In general, grant funds are intended to support research, scholarship, pedagogical projects, leadership strategies, or the development of vocational practices by individual staff and faculty members. 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. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to include stipends or buyouts of staff or faculty member time to assure success of the project.

In addition, please note the following important budget requirements:

- The following are **not** eligible for grant support: capital expenditures (including the purchase of durable goods or equipment in any amount); salaries or stipends for additional personnel (including graduate assistants) hired specifically for grant-related purposes; direct fundraising expenses, and indirect or overhead costs, such as utilities, office space, and the use of office equipment. All these expenses must be borne by the institution.
- 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.
- Travel expenses for participation in NetVUE conferences and gatherings are the responsibility of the institution and will not be covered by grant funds. Please do not include these expenses in the grant budget.
- The NetVUE Consultant and Campus Visit programs, as well as all other NetVUE professional development 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. 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 chances of success by carefully following the following advice.

#### **What categories should appear in the budget?**

Please provide budget line items that match the expenditures proposed. Specific categories of expenditures will depend on the project described in the proposal. Typical budget categories are listed below and in the budget samples at the end of this document. Please provide a separate document with budget notes explaining the calculation of each budget item. Note the following specific details:

- Released time for the applicant to focus on their grant project is very strongly recommended for inclusion in the budget. This expense may consist of course release(s) funded at the institution's rate for adjunct instruction, or, if the applicant does not teach, a buy-out of time to fund other institutional employees to perform some fraction of the grant recipient's contracted duties to ensure that they have adequate time and space to bring grant-funded projects to success. Budgets should not allocate fractional time of any employee's work without a clear description of who will take up that percentage of duties and how that person will be compensated. Compensation in the form of released time must be limited to amounts 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).
- In some cases, a stipend may be the most fitting support for grant recipients, given the specifics of the proposed project and the contours of their institutional context. If a stipend, rather than a buy-out, is requested as a means of supporting grant recipients, reasons that justify that choice should be included in the proposal narrative and the budget notes.
- 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.
- The costs of lodging, meals, and transportation for non-NetVUE conferences directly related to the grant project are allowable grant expenditures. Budgets for lodging should include the number of lodging nights, the cost per night, and a subtotal. Similarly, budgets for meals should provide the amount per meal and a subtotal.
- Expenditures listed for books or similar research supplies should indicate an estimated number of titles proposed for purchase, a partial list of titles planned for purchase (understanding that important resources might emerge through the research process), and a subtotal.

#### **What rows/columns should be included in the budget?**

Please create separate lines for distinct categories of expenses (such as those described above), and separate columns for requested grant funds and for any additional institutional support. Please also include a row at the end of the budget listing the total allocated funds. The grant fund total should match the amount requested in the grant proposal, up to \$25,000. See the budget sample for further details. **Please round all amounts to whole dollars;** i.e., do not include cents.

#### **May grant funds be used for participation in a third-party program or event?**

Please do not propose a project in which significant grant funds are allocated to a third party for a tool or program that has already been developed. NetVUE Grants to Individuals for Vocational Exploration are intended to support the individual efforts of faculty members and staff in their vocation-related projects. Third-party programs covered by this requirement include, but are not limited to, per-student fees for assessment instruments, attendance at professional conferences not related directly to the

grant, or costs for certifying staff to administer a particular program or assessment instrument. Participation in external programs or events that would be considered part of the institution's ongoing operations are not eligible to receive grant funding.

### **What types of expenses are not allowed?**

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

- Ongoing faculty and staff costs that the institution presently provides;
- Capital expenses 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.

### **Can grant funding be used to provide gift cards or vouchers as incentives or rewards for participation?**

No. Gift cards and other "cash equivalent" instruments (such as gift certificates, vouchers, or "tabs" at certain businesses) are not acceptable uses of grant funds, largely because they are rather complex from a tax standpoint. These "cash equivalents" (whether for campus vendors or off-campus entities) are understood by the IRS as a form of compensation, and therefore may be subject to taxation—the responsibility for which can fall on both the giver and the receiver. Fortunately, there are acceptable alternatives for encouraging participation, for which grant funds may be used. Small stipends are often the most manageable approach; these are obviously taxable, but all parties should be aware of this, and recordkeeping is typically automatic. Other alternatives might include prioritization for some opportunity or service, badges and other microcredentials, and small, one-time gifts (such as specialty food items, books, magazine subscriptions, or tickets for events).

### **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, as well as all of its other professional development programs; see the NetVUE website for details. For questions beyond the website description, please contact Rachael Baker, associate director of NetVUE, at [rbaker@cic.edu](mailto:rbaker@cic.edu) or (616) 632-1060.

### **May grant 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 funds.

### **What happens 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 six weeks prior to the end of the grant spending period. Please send requests to Kari Kloos at [kkloos@cic.edu](mailto:kkloos@cic.edu). 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. Requests submitted without a revised budget cannot be considered. The request will be reviewed and, if approved, the revised budget will become the basis for subsequent spending reports.

#### **Can the grant spending deadline be extended?**

Funds should be expended during the grant period. In some instances, NetVUE has considered an extension of the spending deadline; typically, such extensions are limited to 60 days. Requests for extensions should be made at least six weeks before the end of the grant period to Kari Kloos, NetVUE grant program officer, at [kkloos@cic.edu](mailto:kkloos@cic.edu).

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

At the end of the grant period, residual funds of more than \$500 must be returned to the Council of Independent Colleges and will be used to support future NetVUE grant programs.

#### **What if I have additional questions?**

Please contact Kari Kloos, NetVUE grant program officer, at [kkloos@cic.edu](mailto:kkloos@cic.edu) or (303) 964-5733.

**Please see the following pages for two sample budgets and budget notes.** The proposal's budget and budget notes should be formatted in a fashion similar to these examples, using an Excel spreadsheet or equivalent for the budget and a Word document or equivalent for the notes. **Please do not use pre-existing institutional forms** that include categories not relevant to this grant proposal. While such forms may be required for the institution's internal accounting processes, they should not be submitted to CIC.

### Sample Budget 1

#### NetVUE Grants to Individuals for Vocational Exploration

(Amounts are rounded to whole dollar amounts)

	<u>NetVUE Grant</u>	<u>Institutional Support</u>
Grant recipient		
Two course replacements @ 3,250	\$ 6,500	
Replacement FICA @ 7.65%	\$ 497	
Books		
15 titles @ \$40/title	\$ 600	
Travel		
Conference registration	\$ 320	
Airfare	\$ 400	
Lodging for 3 nights @ \$208/night	\$ 624	
Meals for 4 days @ \$75/day (\$15 breakfast, \$25 lunch, and \$35 dinner)	\$ 300	
Ground transportation	\$ 50	
Research assistant		
75 hours @ \$20/hour		\$ 1,500
FICA @ 7.65%		\$ 115
Total	\$ 9,291	\$ 1,615

### Sample Budget 2

#### NetVUE Grants to Individuals for Vocational Exploration

	<u>NetVUE Grant</u>	<u>Institutional Support</u>
Grant recipient		
Sabbatical stipend	\$ 12,000	
FICA @ 7.65%	\$ 918	

Research partner at a different institution			
Stipend	\$	4,500	
Institutional Research (IR) support			
5% time of university IR staff member		\$	4,000
FICA @ 7.65%		\$	306
Books			
20 titles @ \$40/title	\$	800	
Software			
one-year subscription for qualitative research software	\$	192	
Travel to non-NetVUE conference			
Airfare: 2 people @ \$400/each	\$	800	
Lodging: 2 people @ 150/night each for 3 nights	\$	900	
Meals: 2 people for 4 days @ \$75/day (\$15 breakfast, \$25 lunch, and \$35 dinner)	\$	600	
Ground Transportation	\$	200	
Conference registration: 2 people @ \$180/each	\$	360	
Small gifts for research study participants			
100 people @ \$20/each	\$	2,000	
Meals for focus groups			
10 people @ \$20/each x 6 focus groups	\$	1,200	
	\$	24,470	\$ 4,306

## NetVUE Grants to Individuals for Vocational Exploration: Sample Budget Notes

### Sample Budget 1

#### Grant Recipient

- I will receive two course releases to be used in the fall and spring semesters to dedicate time to the grant project.
- Two replacements at \$3250 each, which is the fixed amount for university adjunct instruction, plus FICA amounts to \$6997.

#### Books

- To develop my understanding of the scholarship of vocation related to my project, I will purchase about 15 titles, estimated at \$40/title, for a total of \$600. Books will include:
  - *Called Beyond Ourselves: Vocation and the Common Good*;
  - *The Good Life Method: Reasoning through the Big Questions of Happiness, Faith, and Meaning*;
  - *Life Worth Living: A Guide to What Matters Most*;
  - *Follow Your Bliss and Other Lies About Calling*;
  - *The Purpose Gap: Empowering Communities of Color to Find Meaning and Thrive*;
  - and others to be determined in the course of the grant project.

#### Travel

- I will present my research at the annual convention of the Society of Christian Ethics. Costs include:
  - \$320 for conference registration,
  - \$400 for airfare,
  - \$624 for 3 nights' lodging (at \$208/night, inclusive of taxes),
  - \$300 for meals for four days @ \$75/day (\$15 breakfast, \$25 lunch, and \$35 dinner), and
  - ground transportation at \$40 for airport parking plus \$10 for subway fares.

#### Research Assistant

- This is an institutional cost, not paid by the NetVUE grant. I will stipend an advanced undergraduate student to help with my research project, working approximately 5 hours per week for 15 weeks for a total of 75 hours at \$20/hour. The total cost to the university is \$1500.

## **Sample Budget 2**

### **Grant recipient**

- I will conduct my research and writing over a sabbatical year at my university, during which I will receive 50% of my usual salary from my institution.
- Because course replacements are not a possibility during a sabbatical year, I will receive a stipend of \$12,000 plus \$918 to cover the FICA costs paid by my institution, for a total of \$12,918.

### **Research partner at a different institution**

- I will collaborate with Elizabeth Turner, director of community-engaged learning at Ignatius College, a non-NetVUE university, to collect and analyze data from our two institutions. For her work over the course of academic year 2026-27, she will receive a stipend of \$4500. Because she is not an employee of my institution, no FICA is included.

### **Institutional Research (IR) support**

- To support data collection and analysis at my university, Anthony Ruiz from the Office of Institutional Research will dedicate 5% of his time to this project over academic year 2026-27.
- The institution, not the grant, will assume these costs (estimated at \$4,306) as part of his work portfolio.

### **Books**

- To develop my understanding of the scholarship of vocation related to my project, I will purchase about 20 titles, estimated at \$40/title, for a total of \$800. Books will include:
  - NetVUE volumes *At This Time and in This Place*, *Hearing Vocation Differently*, *Vocation Across the Academy*, and *Called Beyond Ourselves*;
  - *Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Students' Inner Lives*;
  - *The Purposeful Graduate: Why Colleges Must Talk to Students about Vocation*;
  - *The Purpose Gap: Empowering Communities of Color to Find Meaning and Thrive*;
  - *Living Vocationally: The Journey of the Called Life*;
  - *Spirituality in College Students' Lives*;
  - and others to be determined in the course of the grant project.

### **Software**

- This project involves mixed methods research. Purchasing a one-year subscription to the Dedoose software application, which is not owned by my university, will aid in coding and analyzing the qualitative data we collect. The cost is \$192 for a one-year subscription.



## **Travel**

- My research partner and I will attend a non-NetVUE conference on community-engaged learning as part of our project on the effectiveness of community-engaged learning practices for undergraduate vocational exploration programs.
- The costs include airfare at \$400/each for 2 people,
- conference registrations at \$180/each for two people,
- lodging at \$150/night each (including taxes) for three nights for two people,
- meals for four days for two people (\$15 breakfast, \$25 lunch, and \$35 dinner), and
- ground transportation for two people at \$100/each (\$40 airport parking; two Lyft rides at @30/each).

## **Small gifts for research study participants:**

- To incentivize participation in our research study, we will offer small gifts (school t-shirt or hat, food, or campus event tickets) for participants. The gifts will cost about \$20/person for 100 participants, for a total of \$2000.

## **Meals for focus groups**

- As part of our research, we will hold six focus group sessions over a light dinner (pizza or sandwiches, beverages, dessert). Each focus group will have 10 people attending, for a total of 60 meals at \$20 over the course of the project, totaling \$1200.