How To:

Write a Successful Microgrant Application

SUMMARY

The Nevada County Office of Emergency Services provides a Microgrant program on a funds-available basis. This program is restricted to recognized Firewise Communities for projects "aimed at supporting hazardous vegetation removal, improving evacuation route safety and advancing defensible space objectives."

STEPS

1. Understand the Grant Application Requirements:

There are several cardinal rules about applying for a grant:

a) Read the grant requirements carefully; and then read them again.
b) Ensure that you meet the application admission criteria.
c) Understand the scoring criteria.
d) Ensure you provide support for each scoring criteria.
e) Ensure you provide all required attachments.
f) Have an objective person read your application before submittal.

2. Understand the Purpose of the Grant Application Questions:

a) Each word of your justification must have objective value. No fluff. No pleas to emotions.
b) The greater the impact of the project (number of citizens served) the more likely the award.
c) Justification should focus on measurable outcomes; not guesses. (Google "measurable outcomes".) Consider the weight of each scored objective within the criteria table.
d) Only suggest projects that fall within the listed "How Funds Can Be Spent" description.
e) Carefully consider what is requested within the "Budget" Excel document. It is scored and each category is there for a reason!
f) You may or may not qualify for the 15-point preference given to "underserved" locations. So, your goal is to gain all points available for the Project Plan (25) and 3-year action plan relevance (15).

3. Ensure Your Project is in Alignment with How Funds Can Be Spent

Grants are intended to fund collaborative projects that provide community-wide benefits, such as renting a chipper for community use, contracting for transportation of vegetation to processing sites, or hiring a contractor to clear or improve evacuation routes on private roadways. (The county maintains its own roads with existing tax dollars so these roads are excluded from the community microgrant program.)

Proposed projects should fit within the following focus area categories:

a) Increased defensible space around multiple homes.
b) Removal of hazardous vegetation from multiple private properties.
c) Clearing or improving evacuation routes on private roadways.
d) Acquisition of wildfire preparation equipment or materials.

4. Write Your Application In Response to the Scoring Criteria

The County of Nevada has contracted with Sierra Business Council (SBC) to administer the application process and provide technical assistance for 26 micro-grants of $3,600 each. Applications will be collected by SBC and scored by the County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services. Once scoring is complete SBC will be authorized to disperse microgrants to awardees.

Eligible applications will be scored using the following criteria.

	Maximum Points Possible
Project Plan's potential for community-wide benefit.	25
Project Plan's relevance to the attached 3-Year Action Plan	10
Underserved Community Score *Note: Proposed project locations within underserved communities will receive a higher score in this section. Underserved communities are identified using geographical data provided by the County of Nevada Department of Social Services.*	15
Total Possible Points:	**50**

5. Attach All Required Documents Or You'll Lose Points/Disqualify

Required Attachments (Scored)

1. Most recent Firewise Community Risk Assessment
2. Most recent Firewise Community Action Plan
3. Upload three (3) "before" pictures of the project site
4. Upload the micro-grant budget using the provided excel spreadsheet

6. Submit an Accurate Budget Plan

In order to write an accurate Budget Plan you should first write out a project task list and timeline. This will call out all the different resources (people, tools, time) needed to complete your project.

The microgrant process encourages community cooperation. Applicants should consider any opportunities to apply donated services and/or equipment to "match" the microgrant funding. For example, if a neighbor owns a chipper, or a utility trailer, and donates it use to your project you can

use the saved rental expense as a donated "match." Or, if neighbors donated funds to pay for equipment fuel, you may insert that as a match as well.

The volunteer hours are also important. You want to show that this microgrant has had a community impact. Gathering neighborhood volunteers to support your project is in the spirit of this community microgrant process. While a minimum of 10 volunteer hours is required many applications far exceed this minimum. For example, a neighborhood work party consisting of eight (8) neighbors working on Saturday morning for four (4) hours quickly results in 32 volunteer hours!

Budget

1	**County of Nevada Firewise Community Microgrant Project Budget**		
2	Project Budget Form		
3	**SECTION ONE - PROJECT EXPENSES**		
4			
5	**Expense Items** - List expenses for this project.	Amount (Match)	Amount to be funded by Micro-Grant request
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12	Total Project Expense	$0.00	$0.00
13			**Should = $3,600**
14			
15	**SECTION TWO - VOLUNTEER HOURS (10 Hours Required)**		
16			
17	**Volunteer Hours** - Enter the amount of estimated volunteer hours provided by community members toward the proposed project (hours valued at $31.80 per hour)	Hours	Value
18			$0.00

7. Submit Clear and Concise Project Information (Scored)

These are the scored items – make your answers "count"!

a) Project Description. As few, impactful, words as possible.
b) Project Location. Adding a map, highlighting your project area is good.
c) Project Timeline. Your project must complete by the date deadline.

8. Certification Videos- It's Required Viewing So Watch Them!

(Consider using a few "buzz words" in your project description from the required certification videos so the scorers know you watched them.)

I certify that I have watched and absorbed the content of the following Office of Emergency Services(OES) Virtual Office Hours instructional videos and attended or watched the OES Micro-Grant workshop on February 28th at 3pm before submitting this application (recording linked here). I certify that I am dedicated to familiarizing myself with the essential aspects of grant applications that are discussed in the following videos:

	Nevada County OES Virtual Office Hours: Project Design (youtube.com) Nevada County OES Virtual Office Hours: Project Types (youtube.com) Nevada County OES Virtual Office Hours: Match Funding (youtube.com) Nevada County OES Virtual Office Hours: Mapping Projects (youtube.com)
TIPS	The Nevada County Microgrant webpage lists the former awardees. Phone a fellow FWC Leader and ask them about their "Lessons Learned." Take the time to review available information about this program: Visit the Nevada County (NC) Microgrant webpage Visit the NC Microgrant FAQ webpage Nevada County OES Virtual Office Hours: Project Design (youtube.com) Nevada County OES Virtual Office Hours: Project Types (youtube.com) Nevada County OES Virtual Office Hours: Match Funding (youtube.com) Nevada County OES Virtual Office Hours: Mapping Projects (youtube.com)