



BEST Grantee Guide

Cash Grant Projects



COLORADO
Department of Education

Congratulations on receiving a Building Excellent Schools Today cash grant!

Before you get started with your project, we ask that you review the information provided in the following pages. Your grant agreement requires several pieces of documentation throughout your project, as well as a certain amount of communication and collaboration with your Regional Program Manager (Division Staff). Staying on top of the necessary documentation will assist you and Division Staff in assuring a successful project and timely payment of vendors.

Please share this information with other staff and consultants assisting with the project and reach out to your RPM with any questions.

Table of Contents

- I. Getting Started
- II. Contracts
- III. Procurement
- IV. Budgets
 - a. Budget Milestones
 - b. Furniture Fixtures and Equipment, Technology
 - c. Add Alternate and Value Engineering Lists
 - d. Demolition and Abatement Costs
 - e. Contingencies and Allowances
 - f. Fund Requests
 - g. Non-qualifying Expenses
- V. Project Monitoring
- VI. Project Changes
- VII. Project Closeout
- VIII. References
- IX. Appendix

I. Getting Started

Before embarking on the hiring of consultants and vendors, be sure to fully understand the scope of work identified in your awarded grant, the budget submitted, and the content of your grant agreement, including required submittals, BEST Construction Guidelines and Rules.

The awarded grant amount is specifically and exclusively available for the scope of work identified in your grant application, up to the amount awarded. The scope of work may not be expanded due to cost savings, and cost overruns will be the responsibility of the grantee. If your project has the potential to be enhanced by other grants, additional funds outside of those identified in the BEST grant, or by additional stakeholder participation, the scope and agreements associated with the BEST grant should be isolated

from those enhancements. Use separate vendor agreements for work that expands the project beyond the BEST grant agreed upon scope.

II. Contracts

Your project will involve several contracts with vendors and consultants. The Division does not provide contract templates for consultant and vendor contracts. Instead, we recommend grantees utilize one of the standard format contracts regularly used by the industry (AIA, ConsensusDocs, DBIA, etc.) as the basis of construction contracts. Grantees should utilize the services of their legal counsel in drafting or modifying contract language agreeable to the grantee and in compliance with the provisions required by the grant agreements. We recommend that contracts incorporate by reference the grant agreement and RFQs used in the procurement of vendors in order to ensure these requirements are passed through to the vendors executing the work.

If you intend to use your own contracts, it is advisable to include them in your procurement documents. Your grant agreement requires certain specific minimum insurance coverages for worker's compensation, general liability, and automobile liability, and must include several provisions required by statute in regard to Colorado labor, etc. Construction contracts exceeding \$50,000 must require performance and payment bonds of each contractor.

On the [Contracting for BEST Projects](#) page on our website, we have provided a checklist for review of vendor contracts, as well as a BEST Service Provider Contract Exhibit that may be referenced in your vendor contracts to assist with meeting those requirements. **Be sure also to provide a copy of your contracts to Division staff for review and record.**

III. Procurement

Selecting consultants and vendors is a critical component to the success of any construction project. It is in everyone's best interest that the most qualified design professionals are procured in a transparent manner in order to give every project its highest opportunity for success and to demonstrate the appropriate stewardship of public resources.

The [BEST Consultant/Contractor Selection Guidelines](#) in the appendix offers a recommended procedure for the procurement of professional services. In the application for a BEST grant, applicants agree to strive toward a fair, transparent, competitive, and documented bid/selection process for all vendors. Alternative procurement methods are to be agreed upon prior to grant award.

In support of the recommended process described in the guidelines, Division Staff can provide additional tools, resources, and templates for procurement, including RFQ templates, scoring worksheets, sample decision memoranda, and sample interview invitations and questions.

Since procurement documents are unique to each vendor type and each project's parameters, we ask that you please work with Division staff for assistance with the preparation and distribution of procurement documents well in advance of their release. Division staff can assist the procurement

process by posting notice of project solicitations via ListServe, an email list that does include numerous vendors providing an array of services to school projects in Colorado.

IV. Finalized Project Budget

You provided a detailed budget in your grant application as a means to identify all included costs. As you begin a project, that information will need to be reformatted for use as a finalized project budget to track through the project for the required budget updates. Finalized Project budgets must include the following:

- 1) A column displaying the final Grant Application project budget with line items matching those submitted in the grant application.
- 2) A column displaying the budget as revised during the design stage.
- 3) A column displaying the final approved budget at the time of Guaranteed Maximum Price or Bid, following review with Division Staff.
- 4) An adjustment column displaying any changes from the final approved budget
- 5) All contingencies and allowances, identified separately, with all changes approved by Division staff in advance of cost commitment.

A project budget template may be provided on request. You may also utilize your own format or that of a consulting Owner’s Representative if it includes the above items. A sample of an acceptable Finalized Project Budget is provided in the Appendix, and reproduced below.

School District Name
[Project Name]

Total Grant Amount: \$ -
Grant PO Number:

Category	Description	Initial Budget Per BEST Grant	Design Adjustments	Finalized Budget at GMP/ Bid	Adjustments to Finalized	Current Project Budget	Expenditures to Date	Balance Remaining
		A	B	C = (A+B)	D	E = (C+D)	F	G = (E-F)
Design/ Consulting Fees		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
City and Planning Fees		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Utility and Development Costs		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Site Survey and Soils Report		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Materials Testing, Inspections		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Environmental Building Systems Infrastructure (By Owner)		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Permits, Taxes, Fees		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Construction Hard Cost		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Owner Contingency		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grant Reserve	Use only if awarded	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

It is important to note that the grantee will be responsible for any project costs in excess of the Grant Amount. The state portion of any grant funds not expended will be forfeited.

a. Budget milestones

At the time of bid or Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP), the budget must be finalized with categories as described above. All deviations not identified in the finalized budget as “Add Alternates” will require advance approval from Division staff. At this point in the project, milestone project drawings and specifications should be provided electronically to Division staff for review of project scope.

b. Furniture Fixtures and Equipment, Technology

If applicable to, and included in the scope of your grant, all itemized furniture, fixture and equipment (FF&E) and technology lists must be approved **in advance of ordering**, with an accompanying budget, by your Division Staff. FF&E and technology budgets are typically finalized once construction has begun. Once the FF&E and technology lists have been established, the grantee must meet with division staff to review the lists prior to finalizing a budget. **Division approval is required for these budgets to ensure the items being requested are eligible for grant funding, align with the scope of the grant, and fit within the overall project budget.** Division staff will retain the FF&E and technology lists to validate invoiced goods against the approved budget during the fund request process. Our Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Guidelines are included in the appendix.

c. Add Alternate and Value Engineering Lists

Add alternate and value engineering (VE) lists are developed as a result of budget constraints during the budget review process. Add Alternates are those enhancements to the quality of the scope identified in the grant application that are contingent on the bid results and budget savings throughout the project. Add alternates may not include new scope not included in the application. A grantee is able to develop a list of goods or services within the grant scope they wish to incorporate into the project if funds are made available at a later date within the course of construction due to cost savings or the release of contingency dollars. Division staff must approve these lists as they are developed and prior to the commitment of funds. The incorporation of scope identified in add alternate and value engineering lists must be completed prior to occupancy. A grantee may only allocate additional funds to the project if the items identified were on their pre-approved lists. If the grantee did not develop an add alternate or VE list at the time of bidding or GMP and prior to occupancy and there are excess funds remaining at the end of the project, the grantee may not use those funds for additional project expenses.

Add alternates by nature are intended to allow for the project to be tailored to the budget. Work to address the core deficiencies identified in the original grant proposal should always be included in a project’s base scope, with alternates representing enhancements within that scope. Remember that the grant contract requires the Grantee to complete the scope identified in the grant, regardless of whether the eventual project exceeds the planned budget or grant amount requested. Reductions in scope relative to the awarded grant require written approval

from Division staff or director, and forfeiture of the associated line item cost as described in the grant application from the Grant Amount.

d. Demolition and Abatement Costs

When an awarded grant includes scope for demolition and abatement of existing structures, that demolition is considered base scope of the grant. Failure to complete demolition will be considered a deviation from the awarded grant scope, may be in breach of the contract, and therefore require written approval from Division staff or director.

In particular when demolition will occur after completion of a replacement facility, care must be taken to maintain the demolition and abatement budgets throughout construction, and perform investigations and diligence early in order to appropriately manage contingencies to ensure completion of the demolition scope. As noted above, if scope is not completed, the associated budgeted funds are forfeited, which means cost savings from omitting demolition is not a means to make up for budget shortfalls elsewhere.

e. Contingencies and Allowances

Contingencies are established in the initial stages of a construction project as reserves to mitigate risk. The two most common types of contingencies are construction contingencies and owner’s contingencies. The construction contingency is to cover changes identified throughout the construction that weren’t budgeted for when the bid or GMP was established. An owner’s contingency is to cover owner initiated changes identified throughout construction. These contingencies can also be used to fund add alternates or items that were value engineered out of the project due to budget concerns. Division staff will monitor any changes to contingency amounts during their fund request budget reviews. If contingency dollars are being utilized for change orders within the established project budget, the budget must reflect the movement of funds to the appropriate budget line item. If contingency dollars are being requested to fund add alternate or VE items, division staff will review the grantees supplied lists to verify the proposed expenditure’s prior approval by the Division. Unused grant contingency dollars at the end of the project will remain unspent.

Allowances are established budget items set aside for a specific purpose for which the exact cost is unknown at the time of the grant application. For example, demolition or unusual site costs, such as the installation of a traffic light. Allowances stipulated in a grant application should be clearly identified in the finalized project budget. Amounts allocated to an allowance cannot be used for other items in the budget, fulfilling cost overruns, unforeseen issues, or additional scopes of work. If an allowance budget is not spent on the specific budget item, the allowance balance must be returned to the Division. Division staff will monitor any allowance item noted in a grantee budget.

f. Fund Requests

CC-06 Fund Request is to be submitted as costs are incurred, on a monthly basis. If no costs are incurred, or the amount due in a given month would be minimal (i.e. under \$1,000), fund requests may be submitted less frequently. The CC-06 form can be found on our website at the

link below, under “Forms”. Pertinent information for filling out the fund request can be found on the Exhibit A of the executed Grant Agreement, which identifies the PO number, the grant amounts, match amounts, and matching percentages. Each CC-06 submitted should include:

- CC-06 forms signed and submitted per instructions on the form.
- All associated invoices: Multiple invoices from a single vendor should be combined on a single line, with invoice numbers identified in parenthesis.
- All Contracts or PO’s associated with each invoice
- Provide an updated Project Budget each time a Fund Request is submitted.

A flow chart representing the fund request process for cash grants is provided in the appendix. Upon approval of a complete fund request, the district will receive reimbursement for the state matching portion of the total request. The grantee may make direct payments to vendors at any time for reimbursement by Colorado Department of Education (CDE). CDE will not be responsible for late fees.

g. Ineligible expenses

Some typical expenses that do not qualify for reimbursement from grant funds include:

- School or district employee time
- Sales Tax that should be exempt
- Late Fees for unpaid invoices
- Added scope not identified in the grant application
- Small, non-disposable tools used in the project
- Educational supplies, software, and other consumables identified in the FF&E Guidelines
- Extended warranties or service contracts
- Costs for temporary construction must be temporary (modular rentals, leased spaces). For a temporary construction cost, only the net cost is eligible if an asset is purchased to be sold after construction.

Please contact Division staff with questions regarding any unusual expenses prior to incurring them. Expenses not qualifying for grant reimbursement will be the responsibility of the grantee, so when in doubt, be in communication to avoid incurring unnecessary or unexpected costs.

h. Grant Reserve/Supplemental Grant Requests

In the past, additional funding was available in the event that significant circumstances were to arise during the execution of a grant project that could not have been foreseen at the time of grant award. This is no longer the case, and grant reserves are no longer maintained. Per the grant agreement, the grantee is responsible for any costs in excess of the grant amount. Additional funding due to unforeseen circumstances may be requested in the form of a supplemental grant request in the next regular grant cycle, however there are no guarantees of success, as supplemental grants compete against all other grants for limited funding.

V. Project Monitoring

The grant agreement requires written progress reports detailing project progress, as well as documentation demonstrating that key customary quality control processes such as design review, inspections, permitting, and quality testing have been completed. Exhibit C: Deliverables and Submittals in your grant agreement requests additional project specific deliverables as determined by Division staff, but does not negate any deliverables specified in your grant agreement or sublease.

As the project progresses, please include or copy Division staff on key project communications and documentation including:

- Updates to the school board
- Meeting minutes
- Field observation reports
- Testing and inspection reports
- Permit approvals
- Milestone drawings and specifications
- Project schedule updates
- All vendor contracts, and
- All change orders as they are generated.

Your representative may also schedule visits to observe project progress and sit in on key meetings. Your agreement requires that you maintain and retain a complete file of all documents pertaining to the project. However, key items will be requested electronically by staff for our own records.

VI. Project Changes

Changes to vendor contracts are inevitable on construction projects. Typically, these take the form of a Construction Change Order or Additional Services Request from a design consultant. **Prior to executing change orders or add-services, notify Division staff of the content of these documents and verify they are within the scope of your grant project.** Change Orders should be vetted by your Owner's Representative for pricing consistency in relation to the contract and industry standards. Backup documentation should be provided with Change Orders to Division staff for review and record. All Fund Requests which contain invoices with a Change Order or Additional Service (contract amount change) should include a copy of the change order and a description of the change.

VII. Project Closeout

As a reminder, after the building is occupied for its intended purpose, no additional change orders or purchases not previously added to an add alternate list will be eligible, with the exception of design errors or omissions required to be resolved. Refer to the add alternate and FF&E sections for more information.

Upon completion of the project, the final fund request must be accompanied by a Final Report CC-05 form. In addition, a copy of the Certificate of Occupancy, Project Monitoring Certification Form, and final project budget should be included if not already provided.

Upon closeout of the grant, no additional funds may be requested. Each of these forms is available on the 'Forms' page of the BEST website.

VIII. References

The following links can be found on the Resources page of our website, and are reproduced here. The appendix includes several documents referenced above.

[BEST Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[BEST Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment Guidelines](#)

[Capital Construction Procurement](#)

[Contracting for BEST Projects](#)

[BEST Forms](#)

[Construction Guidelines](#)

[CCAB Rules](#)

IX. Appendix Contents

[Sample Finalized Project Budget](#)

[Checklist for Review of Vendor Contracts](#)

[BEST Consultant/Contractor Selection Guidelines](#)

[BEST Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Guidelines](#)

[CC-06 Funding Request Process for BEST Cash Grant Projects](#)

[Sample CC-06: Cash Grant Funding Request](#)

[Sample CC-05: Project Final Report](#)