

Helpful Hints for Writing a PLHD Project Abstract

To streamline the process of making grant announcements, FHWA uses a Grants Notification System (GNS) that allows us to quickly release grant announcement information to members of Congress. As such, data from your grant application gets pulled into the GNS, and your project abstract frequently serves as talking points and the basis of Congressional press releases. It is important that your project abstract succinctly describes how PLHD funds will be used to complete your project. Please follow these guidelines when writing your project abstract. Please also examine the project abstract examples we have highlighted, along with a more succinct revised version. Remember, brevity is a good thing, but your abstract should tell your whole story.

Tips for Writing Your Project Abstract

Your abstract should clearly express how PLHD funds will be used to complete your funding request. Your abstract should say everything of central importance in a way that gives a grant reviewer a clear overview of what is contained in the application.

- A well-written abstract can help you develop a well-written application. If you can lay out your argument for funding clearly in a few sentences – and in such a way that someone who doesn't know the subject will still be able to understand your request – you will have a good idea as to how to lay out your application in detail. With very little revision, your project abstract can often make a good first paragraph or a summary paragraph in your introduction.
- Write well developed sentences that are unified, coherent, concise and able to stand alone.
- There should be no information in the abstract that doesn't appear in your application; it simply summarizes what you've provided in the application.
- Provide a background; a simple opening sentence that places your funding request in proper context, such as work already performed for a larger scale project for which this funding request will contribute or complete, and the name of the Tribe or Federal Land that will benefit.
- One sentence that states the purpose of the funding request.
- One or two sentences that explain how it will be done.
- One or two sentences that indicate your intended outcome once the project is complete.
- Conclusion that states the consequence of your funding request, such as benefit to the Tribal or Federal land and how it will address project selection criteria such as livability, safety, etc. and policy considerations such as job creation.

Examples of Existing Project Abstracts and Suggested FHWA Revisions

Good example (51 words in 2 sentences): The California Humboldt Road Safety Improvement Project is a \$2.4 million dollar safety improvement, designed to eliminate existing routing deficiencies resulting in vehicle collisions and pedestrian safety concerns. PLHD funds will be used to reconstruct the route's structural pavement, construct a roundabout, sidewalks, paved shoulders, a bicycle/pedestrian trail, street lighting, and add appropriate signage.

Sample (bricks and mortar) 1 sentence (sometimes too little information is not good either): The funding will be for preliminary engineering, NEPA and ROW acquisition, and construction of a bridge crossing a major wash on N1234.

Revised (105 words in 3 sentences): PLHD funds will be used to develop preliminary engineering, NEPA, ROW acquisition and construction of a bridge crossing a major wash on N1234 in a well known State. The bridge will improve safety and provide all-weather access along this 20 mile road. This route is critical to providing access to school students, daily commuters, and tribal community members including senior citizens, law enforcement officials and health care providers to schools, necessary services and employment centers. This project is part of the well known Tribe's Long Range Transportation Plan and will be managed by the well known Tribe's Division of Transportation and the BIA Regional office.

Sample (Planning) 120 words in 2 sentences (*try not to put everything into one sentence*): The well known State Office of Tourism requests Public Lands Highways funding to produce a Livability Plan for the State's Scenic Byways and Backways Program that will offer a comprehensive statewide planning process, and comprehensive document, for local communities, public land agencies including the Office of Indian Affairs, Planning Organizations, Health and Community-Culture agencies, County Association of Governments, and Cities and Towns to combine their efforts toward planning and implementing a "Livability" concept for the State's Scenic Byways and Backways. The Livability Plan for the State's Scenic Byways and Backways Program will answer the need for a statewide program plan and serve as a foundation and guiding structure throughout the state for the benefit of the traveler and planning entities.

Revised (143 words in 4 sentences): PLHD funds will be used to develop a Livability Plan for the State's Scenic Byways and Backways Program (SSBBP) to integrate livability principles into the SSBBP's development strategies. Managed by the State's Office of Tourism, this project will take a collaborative planning approach and include a broad range of participants including gateway communities, Federal land management agencies, Tribes, and health organizations. The plan will identify recommendations and strategies to enhance user mobility through the State's system of Byways and Backways; enhance existing transportation choices for economically disadvantaged populations, non-drivers, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities; and identify economic development opportunities to enhance job creation; and to promote a healthy lifestyle. The intended outcome of this project is to strengthen, promote and integrate the State's public lands and byway system for the benefit of the State's local communities in addition to the traveling public.