

**SPONSORED PROGRAMS AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT POLICY****Policy Statement**

In accordance with VCCS Policies 11.0, which indicates that colleges are authorized to submit applications directly to funding agencies, and the SACSCOC Principle 5.3.c, which calls for fundraising activities to be defined in a formal, written manner to assure they further the mission of the institution, Laurel Ridge Community College (Laurel Ridge) has developed this Grants Management Policy:

Funding from grants is an integral part of the Laurel Ridge and the Laurel Ridge Community College Educational Foundation (Laurel Ridge Foundation) budgets that support the faculty, staff, and students in pursuing goals that are consistent with and advance the college mission, vision, goals, and strategic planning. The purpose of this policy is to inform the Laurel Ridge community of the guidelines and procedures regarding grant applications and management.

Laurel Ridge encourages faculty, staff, and administrators to be aware of and seek out external grant funding opportunities to support institutional goals and objectives as outlined by the most current mission and strategic plan. Prior to submission, grant applications must receive the approval of Laurel Ridge administration. To ensure that applications are developed as expected and do not create a conflict with other initiatives, all grant applications must be centralized through the Grants Office and receive preliminary review and approval through the Grants Steering Group and Laurel Ridge administration prior to submission as described herein. Grants Management is to be considered a collaborative process engaging the Grants Office, the Project Director, the Business Office, and other departments that are integral to effective grant implementation, evaluation, and reporting. All grant-related processes should be employed in compliance with all relevant laws and grantor expectations.

**1. Definitions**

*Grant:* A grant is type of financial assistance awarded to an organization to conduct a program or other programs as specified in an approved proposal. In this policy, a grant is a set amount of cash or in-kind funds given to Laurel Ridge or the Laurel Ridge Foundation for an agreed upon purpose by an external group such as a governmental agency, foundation, business, or club/civic organization (hereinafter referred to as “grantor”). As distinguished from a donation request letter, a grant typically requires some level of grantor-established process guidelines to be met for successful submission and consideration of funding. In addition, a grant award usually requires some level of unique administrative accountability. The grants process may be competitive, which means that more than one group may be applying for the same set of funds. In other cases, the grants process may not be competitive, with the grantor allocating funds based on formula or entitlement.

A grant, as opposed to a cooperative agreement, is used whenever the sponsor anticipates no substantial programmatic involvement with the recipient during the performance of the activities. Most grants are made to fund a specific project and require some level of compliance and reporting.

**Federal Grant:** An award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Federal Government or federally funded agency. This does not include technical assistance which provides services instead of money, or other assistance in the form of revenue sharing, loan guarantees, loan insurance, interest subsidies, or insurance.

**Local Grant:** An award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Commonwealth of Virginia, state funded entity or local governing body, or non-governmental agency.

**VCCS Grant:** An award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Virginia Community College System directly, or as a pass-through from another funding agency whether it be state, federal, or non-governmental in origin.

**Grant Application:** For purposes of this policy and the associated grants management system, the term grant “application” can refer to different formats ranging from one-page proposal letters or fillable forms to elaborately prepared documents with detailed written sections and multiple forms and attachments. Grant applications may be prepared for hard-copy or online submission as directed by grant guidelines. Grant proposals typically outline the project activities and outcomes that will be provided in exchange for, or resulting from, the funds provided by the grantor.

**Grant Award Agreement:** A grant award agreement is established between the grantor and Laurel Ridge as a college (and not the grant-involved project staff or unit within the college). Therefore, approval by Laurel Ridge leadership is required. Laurel Ridge will not be obligated to accept awards for grants which have not been developed consistent with this policy. Laurel Ridge has an approved process regarding individuals who have administrative signature authority; this process will be followed to execute grant agreements. The grantor establishes the format of the agreement. Typical grant agreement formats include (but are not limited to) contracts and cooperative agreements. A contract is a legally binding document outlining obligations for the grantor and Laurel Ridge. A cooperative agreement may call for more active involvement of the grantor in proposal preparation and activities with the college. A grant agreement may be distributed, confirmed, and finalized prior to or following the actual grant funding award.

**Grants Steering Group:** This group will typically consist of faculty and staff leadership representing cross-functional areas of Laurel Ridge and including the Grants Office. Members will be invited by the vice president of communications and planning or designee.

*Cost Sharing:* A portion of total project costs that is not provided by the grantor and must be considered in any cost-benefit analysis of a grant-funded project.

*Contract:* A mechanism for procuring a product or service with specific obligations for both sponsor and recipient. Typically, a program objective and the methods for achieving the objective are specified in detail by the sponsor, although some sponsors award contracts in response to unsolicited proposals. A contract is a legally binding document.

*Cooperative Agreement:* An award similar to a grant, but in which the sponsor's staff may be actively involved in proposal preparation and anticipates having substantial involvement in program activities after the award has been made.

*Direct Costs:* Costs that are clearly identifiable and related to a specific grant project; typical examples include salaries, wages, benefits, equipment, supplies, communication, and travel.

*Direct Costs:* Clearly identifiable as being related to a specific project. General categories of direct costs may include but are not limited to communication and travel, contractual services, equipment and computer use, fringe benefits, salaries and wages, supplies

*Facilities and Administrative Costs:* Incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified readily and specifically with a particular sponsored project, an instructional activity or any other college activity. Facilities and administrative costs are synonymous with indirect costs.

*Facilities and Administrative Rate Agreement (Indirect Costs):* A negotiated agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services, aka Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). The rates shall be applied consistently to all applicable sponsored-program activity at the college, including all federal, nonfederal and industrial sponsors.

*Indirect Costs:* Costs that are less easy to identify but provide a foundation of services and support to a grant project. Examples include facility and administrative costs such as IT, administrative support, and percentages of supervisory salaries related to supervisor time in executing grant and project oversight. Laurel Ridge does have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with the federal government which is consistent across all programs. This rate should be included, when possible, in every grant budget; in some cases, grantors set limits below the negotiated rate. The Business Office maintains the current indirect rate information and guidelines. The Business Office should be consulted in any grant development process that provides allowance for indirect costs.

*In-Kind:* Contributions to a project in a form other than money. Examples include equipment, materials, and services of a defined value.

*Program Director (Project Director):* The individual with the responsibility for conducting the program or other activity described in a proposal for an award. The terms "Program Director" or Project Director" may be used interchangeably.

*Proposal:* A formal written description concerning the conduct of program, training or technical assistance with the support of an external sponsor. The proposal represents an offer by the college to perform the activities specified and contains all information necessary to describe project plans, staff capabilities and funds requested. The college's review and approval process assure compliance with both sponsor and college policies.

*Renewable funding:* A grant or contract for which payment of a second or subsequent installment of the funding requires approval by the sponsor whether an application for renewal of the funding is required.

*Sponsored Programs:* Projects or programs that are conducted by faculty member(s) and/or administrative staff member(s) and supported - fully or in part - by external restricted funding awarded to the college. Sponsored programs may be program, instructional or service in nature. In all sponsored programs, the college has obligations to the funding source in accordance with the terms of a proposal or agreement. In the case of a proposal, these obligations are based on the project description developed by the faculty member(s) and/or administrative staff member(s). In the case of a grant, these obligations are based on the project description developed jointly by the sponsor and the faculty member(s) and/or administrative staff member(s). Laurel Ridge Foundation non-grant sponsored programs are specifically excluded from this policy.

*Sponsor/Funding Agency:* Federal, state or private agencies external to the college who provide support for a program or project at the college.

*Total Direct Costs:* The total of all direct costs of a project.

*Total Project Costs:* The total allowable direct and indirect costs incurred by the institution to carry out an approved project or activity.

## **2. Procedures**

- i. A faculty or staff member who finds interest in a specific funding opportunity should review the opportunity with their department head and seek approval to request grant services. Laurel Ridge faculty or staff who wish to commit Laurel Ridge support, particularly support that takes the form of cost sharing, to an external grant application or program should receive Laurel Ridge administrative approval prior to offering such commitment. Such approval shall come from the vice president of financial and administrative services.
- ii. Requests for grant services are submitted via the Office of Communications and Planning - Submit a CAP Request section of the Laurel Ridge internet. The Form must be completed even if no specific writing services are anticipated; the Grants Office will use the submitted Forms to track all Laurel Ridge grant applications, prepare for Grants Steering Group review, and manage non-writing grant services (i.e., storing documents, monitoring report deadlines, etc.).
- iii. Faculty and/or staff leading the grant project are recommended to follow-up with correspondence to the Grants Office regarding the grant development process. The request for grant services should be completed 2 to 3 weeks in advance of the due date.

- iv. The Grants Office will communicate with faculty and staff to identify needs, priorities, and interests that may be fulfilled by grant funding.
- v. The Grants Office will prepare a synopsis of any potential and relevant grant opportunity and convene the Grants Steering Group for review of the synopsis and discussion of the opportunity and interest.
- vi. The Grants Steering Group reviews grant synopses and makes recommendations for the direction of a potential grant. The Group is encouraged to consider the extent to which the project proposed for funding demonstrates fiscal and operational feasibility from a cost-benefit perspective, and the extent to which the grantor will support indirect costs. Priorities will be given to projects that are based on real needs and are consistent with Laurel Ridge mission and goals. Priorities include:
  - a. Resources for programs or services to which Laurel Ridge has already committed.
  - b. New programs which will be self-sustaining for their duration and will meet current or emerging priorities and/or advance Laurel Ridge's strategic plan.
  - c. New initiatives that may not be self-sustaining but would address current priorities and/or enhance specific areas of Laurel Ridge's long-range plan. Such projects may be slated to conclude with the termination of a grant period or may be considered for alternative funding through other Laurel Ridge and/or grant resources.
  - d. Committee should in good faith consider potential indirect costs to the college which may include things such as monitoring costs, reporting, institutional data research for performance outcomes and reporting, grant fiscal management and draw down of funding, etc.
- vii. The Grants Office will inform the president, the vice president of communications and planning, and the vice president of financial and administrative services of the advisement provided by the Grants Steering Group - especially including any key financial obligations and costs to be incurred by the college - and obtain official approval for grant submissions.
- viii. The Grants Office will coordinate with the project director and other project and interdisciplinary staff and faculty as needed to determine and implement the most effective process for completing a competitive grant application.
- ix. The Grants Office will assist Laurel Ridge personnel and faculty with the preparation of grant proposals in consideration of the grant writing expertise, resources, workload, and desire of project staff and faculty.
- x. The Grants Office will help identify and obtain the necessary signatures for grant applications.
- xi. The Grants Office will help ensure compliance with grant guidelines, procedures, and timelines.
- xii. Project staff and faculty will coordinate with the Grants Office to ensure the Grants Office has copies of the Request for Proposals, amendments, forms, relevant correspondence and documents, the final completed submission package, and confirmation of submission for any proposal submitted in the name of Laurel Ridge or the Laurel Ridge Foundation. In addition, copies of grant MOUs, contracts, or letters of commitment that are developed for grant opportunities where Laurel Ridge is a partner should be forwarded to the Grants Office for retention.

- xiii. The Grants Office will disseminate completed applications and information to the Office of Finance and Administrative Services, as well as other departments that may be engaged in grant implementation and will retain such items in a centralized repository consistent with Laurel Ridge document retention guidelines.
- xiv. Grant implementation may begin after all grant-related contracts are received and fully executed.

### **3. Responsible Office**

The Office of Communications and Planning, through the Grants Office, provides the state-mandated central review process for all external funding requests, adhering to regulations set by the federal government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and the college. The Grants office serves as the administrative voice in the negotiation and acceptance of all grants and contracts. The Program Director and the Director of Budget and Finance are responsible for subsequent modifications.

### **Institutional Responsibilities**

#### *The Grants Office:*

- Identifies and researches prospective grant opportunities consistent with the college mission, vision, values, goals, and strategic plan.
- Maintains a database of Grant Activity, including reviews, reports, and submissions, which will be shared internally as appropriate.
- Prepares synopses for grant opportunities for review by the Grants Steering Group.
- Convenes the Grants Steering Group and facilitates review and discussion of grant opportunities.
- Communicates the advisement of the Grants Steering Group to Laurel Ridge leadership for official approval.
- Coordinates with the project director and other project and interdisciplinary staff and faculty as needed to determine and implement the most effective process for completing a competitive grant application. The Grants Office may be required to participate in the entire development process or only a part of the process, depending on the grant writing expertise, resources, workload, and desire of project staff and faculty.
- Operates in a primarily supportive role in grant project administration. The Grants Office can assist Project Directors, staff, and faculty with problem-solving, interpretation of funding guidelines, communication with funding agency representatives, and review and submission of reports.
- Serves as a point of contact for grant systems and proposals.
- Completes annual renewals and updates of the Systems for Award Management and grants.gov for Laurel Ridge.
- Monitors deadlines and communicates reminders related to proposal development, submissions, reports, and deadlines.
- Retains a centralized repository for all formal official grant-related documents.

#### *The Grants Steering Group:*

- Meets as requested by the Grants Office.
- Reviews grant synopses and makes recommendations for the directions of potential grants.

### *Project Staff/Faculty:*

- Participate as agreed in the grant development process, including responding promptly and accurately to information requests; meeting deadlines; and satisfactorily completing all assigned tasks.
- Establish project management systems to ensure appropriate compliance with programmatic and budgetary implementation, evaluation, and reporting of each grant. This includes designating a Project Director who will serve as the key grant manager of programmatic and budgetary operations.
- Collaborate with the Grants Office, the Business Office, and other interdisciplinary Laurel Ridge staff and faculty to identify and promptly address any grant-related issues and report any changes to the disposition of any grant funded activities or inventory.
- Consult with the Laurel Ridge marketing team and the grantor to determine a plan for external publicity that will align contractual obligations with approved college messaging.

### *Office of Financial and Administrative Services:*

- Reviews all grant agreements to ensure contractual commitments are consistent with Laurel Ridge policy and protocol.
- Manages financial transactions and reporting with grantors.
- Reviews, approves and identifies available funding for grants that require a match of any kind.
- Receives and disburses funds in accordance with Laurel Ridge/VCCS policy, state and federal law, federal uniform guidance, grantor restrictions, and other regulations as applicable.
- Shares copies of notifications of all competitive grant awards and contract documents to the Grants Office and other departments as appropriate.
- All funds received for sponsored programs are under the fiscal control of the Director of Budget and Finance. These funds must be receipted and disbursed in accordance with college policy, state and federal law, and sponsored programs' restrictions (including 2 Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR,) (Grants and Agreements Part 200; Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards). 2 CFR is commonly referred to as Uniform Guidance, if applicable.
- Full-time faculty members and employees may be paid for additional services performed under sponsored program. However, authorization for compensation in excess of the regular salary must be in accordance with the procedure set forth in Laurel Ridge Policies and allowable under the terms of the sponsorship agreement.
- The Program Director will collaborate directly with Grant Fiscal Agent for the financial management of the project
- Upon receipt of the signed sponsorship agreement the Director of Budget and Finance will establish a post-award fiscal project file, create an account in the financial accounting system, provide periodic expenditure reports to be used by the Program Director for making financial decisions related to the sponsored project. The Grant Fiscal Agent will monitor financial activity of the sponsored project.
- All budget revisions must be coordinated with the Director of Budget and Finance through the Grant Fiscal Agent.
- The Director of Budget and Finance is responsible for drawing funds, invoices for payment, reimbursement requests, grantor-required fiscal reports, and other financially related

documents for review and distribution on a timely basis. Post-award non-fiscal reporting is the responsibility of the Program Director.

- At the close of a project, unexpended funds will be disposed of according to the provisions of the terms and conditions of the sponsoring agency.
- Specific Office of Human Resources requirements must be followed for Sponsored Program staff
- Tracks inventory of items purchased with grant funds.

#### **4. Compliance, Reporting and Review**

A copy of this policy is provided to the Office of Business Services, the Office of Communications and Planning and the Laurel Ridge Foundation.

The effectiveness of this policy and its procedures will be reviewed every three years by the Financial and Administrative Services Policy Committee.

Authority for interpretation of this policy rests with the vice president of financial and administrative services.

#### **5. Other Information**

The Communications and Planning Division developed this grants management policy based on multiple resources, and it was combined with the Sponsored Programs Policy.

Occasionally, the sponsoring office may elect to utilize outsourced or external resources for grant application or management services. In those instances, the sponsoring office will be responsible for coordinating with the Laurel Ridge Grants office and the grant writer to ensure adherence with the requirements of this policy.

#### ***Document History:***

*Sponsored Programs Policy Approved: President C. Thompson-Stacy, January 2017*

*Grants Management Policy Approved: President K. Blosser, May 2023*