Rural CAC Capacity Building
Program-Specific Budget Considerations

This guidance provides budget development considerations specific to Rural CAC Capacity Building awards. Unlike NCA's Allowable and Unallowable Costs document which lists specific cost items, this program-specific guidance focuses on strategic budget planning principles and best practices for this award type.

Use this guidance alongside NCA's [Allowable and Unallowable Costs](#) list when developing your budget. While the Allowable and Unallowable Costs list tells you **what** costs are permissible, this document helps you determine **how** to structure your budget effectively for program success and compliance with award requirements.

Consider these guidelines as you make budget decisions to ensure your proposed costs align with program objectives and funding priorities.

Personnel and Fringe

Rural CAC Capacity Personnel

Personnel costs should directly support the Focus Area identified in your application.

Position Alignment

Budgeted personnel should correspond to your selected Focus Area. For example, if focusing on expanding geographic reach through the development of telemental health services, an ideal budget would include two partially funded positions: a Mental Health Provider to provide direct services, and a CAC Coordinator (or similar role) to assist with developing the Telemental Health program.

Supervisory and Administrative Positions

Supervisory roles are generally not allowable unless the position directly supports program activities. When including supervisory positions, budget allocation must reflect only the portion of time spent providing direct program activities, not general administrative or supervisory functions.

Budget Efficiency

Applicants should avoid including numerous personnel positions budgeted at minimal funding levels (typically less than 10% of a position). Such fragmented funding creates an administrative burden for both the CAC and NCA while failing to provide meaningful support for program implementation. Instead, focus on fewer positions with more substantial funding allocations that enable effective service and program delivery.

Fringe Expenses

Applicants should thoroughly review documentation requirements and carefully consider which fringe benefits to assign to this grant. This is especially important for larger CACs or those who work under the umbrella of large organizations such as hospitals, universities, or municipalities, where obtaining detailed invoices and proof of payment for fringe expenses may be challenging. All requested benefits must be identified in the applicant's written policies.

Cost Calculation

Personnel costs should be calculated based on the actual percentage of time each position will dedicate to grant-funded activities, ensuring accurate reflection of effort and appropriate use of federal funds. Approved reimbursement is calculated using actual hours worked on the project, as documented on timesheets, and applied to the corresponding pay period and employer-paid benefits for each pay period.

Travel

Grant-Funded Personnel

In most cases, travel costs should be limited to personnel funded through this grant award.

Allowable Travel Types

Common travel expenses include local mileage for providing direct services to CAC clients and travel expenses for training activities. Training travel must be for grant-funded positions only and relate directly to the Focus Area identified in your application.

Training Requirements

Carefully review the accreditation standards associated with your selected service type(s) for specific training requirements. Training travel should support only those educational activities necessary for effective delivery of your funded direct services.

Service-Specific Focus

All travel costs must align with and support the Focus Area identified in your grant application. Carefully review your proposed training courses to ensure they adhere to this requirement and please be prepared to provide additional information about the trainings to your NCA Program Associate if awarded.

Equipment – Limited Budget

General Restriction

Equipment costs under Rural Capacity should be limited and are typically only allowable under 'Focus Area 1: Establish a Satellite Center' and 'Focus Area 2: Expanding geographic reach through the development of mobile teleservices', and only with prior approval from your NCA Program Associate if awarded.

Alternative Funding

If the Focus Area of your application is not one of those listed above and your CAC is in need of equipment, please review the Equipment and Technology Support RFP for appropriate funding opportunities that specifically address equipment needs.

Supplies – Limited Budget

Budget Allocation

Limit supply requests in Rural CAC Capacity budgets to only those supplies necessary for the success of the project.

Office Supplies

General office supplies should not be included unless they are necessary for program delivery.

Computing Equipment

Computing equipment is allowable when necessary for grant-funded positions. Allocate costs based on the relative benefit to this program. For example, if an MDT Coordinator position is budgeted at 30% effort on this project and requires a computer, only 30% of the computer cost should be allocated to this grant.

Consultant

Service Alignment

Consultant costs must directly support the Focus Area identified in your application.

Direct Service Focus

All consultant activities should relate to and enhance the delivery of your selected focus area. Activities should align with the applicant's goals and objectives and be provided under a signed, written agreement detailing the work to be performed and outline all expenses the CAC may reimburse the contracted entity.

Other Costs – Limited Budget

Training Registration

Typically, the only allowable costs in this category are registration fees for training that directly relate to the core services identified in your application.

Accreditation Requirements

Training costs should support only those educational activities necessary to meet the accreditation standards associated with the selected training type(s).