

Notice of Award Interpretation Guide

Understanding each section of your federal or state Notice of Award

What is a Notice of Award?

The Notice of Award (NOA) is the official document from your funding agency that confirms your grant award. It contains critical information about your award amount, project period, requirements, and conditions. Understanding every section is essential for successful project management.

Section-by-Section Breakdown

Section	What It Contains	Why It Matters
Award Identification	FAIN, CFDA number, award date, UEI	Required for all federal reporting and SAM.gov registration
Period of Performance	Start date, end date, budget periods	Defines when costs can be incurred; no spending outside this period
Award Amount	Federal share, recipient share, total project cost	Sets your budget ceiling; match requirements are binding
Terms & Conditions	Standard terms, agency-specific requirements, 2 CFR 200	Legal obligations; non-compliance can result in disallowed costs
Special Conditions	Project-specific requirements, restrictions, approvals needed	Often contains critical restrictions like environmental clearance requirements
Reporting Requirements	Report types, frequency, due dates, submission methods	Missing reports can delay payments or result in award suspension
Approved Budget	Budget categories, line items, indirect cost rate	Spending must follow approved categories; changes may need approval
Contacts	Program officer, grants specialist, technical contacts	Know who to call for different types of questions

Key Terms Explained

Term	Definition
FAIN	Federal Award Identification Number - unique identifier for your award
CFDA/ALN	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance/Assistance Listing Number - identifies the program
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier - replaced DUNS number for federal awards
Period of Performance	The time during which you can incur costs and complete project activities
Budget Period	A subdivision of the project period; may have separate funding allocations
Cost Share/Match	Your organization's required contribution (cash or in-kind)
Indirect Costs	Administrative overhead costs not directly tied to project activities
De Minimis Rate	15% indirect cost rate available if you don't have a negotiated rate
Prior Approval	Written permission from funding agency required before certain actions

Common Special Conditions

Condition Type	What to Watch For
Environmental Review	Cannot start construction or commit funds until NEPA/SEPA clearance received
High-Risk Designation	Additional reporting, shorter reimbursement periods, technical assistance required
Pre-Award Costs	Specifies if costs before award date are reimbursable (usually 90 days)
Davis-Bacon	Prevailing wage requirements for construction; certified payrolls required
Buy America/BABA	Domestic sourcing requirements for iron, steel, manufactured products
Procurement Standards	Must follow 2 CFR 200.318-327 for all purchases over micro-purchase threshold



Action Items After Receiving Your NOA

- ☐ Read entire document including all attachments and exhibits
- ☐ Calendar all reporting deadlines
- ☐ Identify special conditions that require action before spending
- ☐ Verify budget matches your application
- ☐ Set up project accounting codes
- ☐ Brief project team on requirements
- ☐ Contact program officer with any questions

Questions to Ask Your Program Officer

- Can I get clarification on [specific special condition]?
- What is the process for requesting budget modifications?
- Are there any upcoming changes to reporting requirements?
- What resources are available for technical assistance?

