



Grant Engagement & Contracting Policy Packet

Document Purpose and Use

This Grant Engagement & Contracting Policy Packet establishes The Luak Group's client engagement standards for grant development services. It explains how engagements are initiated, how priority is determined, when work may begin, and what responsibilities must be met to support timely and competitive grant submissions.

This document integrates two operating policies: (1) the Pre-NOFO Engagement & Contracting Policy and (2) the Roles and Responsibilities Policy for grant development engagements. It is intended to be used with proposals, contracts, onboarding materials, and project kickoff communications.

This packet does not replace the executed contract. Where a contract contains more specific terms, the executed contract controls. Where this packet is incorporated by reference or attached to a contract, these standards provide the operating expectations for the engagement.

Core Operating Standard

The Luak Group does not begin substantive grant development work until the client has executed the applicable agreement and paid the required retainer in full. Engagement priority is determined by retainer receipt date, client responsiveness, grant complexity, and capacity within the applicable NOFO cycle.

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1. Policy Overview

The purpose of this policy is to establish a standardized, evergreen framework for engaging clients in advance of federal Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) releases. The framework is designed to be repeatable across funding years and adaptable to forecasted grant release dates without requiring the policy itself to be rewritten annually.

This policy is intended to:

- Ensure high-quality, competitive grant applications.
- Protect consultant capacity and workload across overlapping federal funding cycles.
- Improve client accountability, responsiveness, and readiness.
- Reduce financial risk, delayed payments, and uncompensated pre-award labor.
- Create a repeatable system for contracting, retainer collection, and project activation.
- Clarify the roles, responsibilities, and consequences associated with grant development engagements.

2. Client-Facing Pre-NOFO Engagement Policy

2.1 Contract Requirement Prior to NOFO Release

Due to the time-sensitive and competitive nature of federal funding opportunities, all clients must be under a fully executed agreement within the defined pre-NOFO engagement window in order to secure availability. The applicable window is determined by grant complexity, anticipated NOFO release timing, consultant capacity, and the level of pre-award planning required.

Clients who are not under contract within the appropriate pre-NOFO window may be subject to:

- Limited availability.
- Adjusted timelines.
- Reduced scope.
- Deferred engagement to a future funding cycle.
- Deprioritization relative to clients who have executed contracts and paid retainers.

2.2 Pre-Award Planning and Readiness

Early engagement allows The Luak Group to perform the strategic and technical work necessary to position the application for competitiveness before the NOFO timeline compresses. Pre-award planning may include project concept refinement, eligibility review, threshold planning, data collection, project narrative development, partner identification, leverage planning, and preliminary budget strategy.

Early engagement supports:

- Strategic project design aligned with funding criteria.
- Data collection and alignment with scoring factors.
- Partner identification and coordination.
- Development of competitive narratives, budgets, and implementation strategies.
- Timely identification of threshold requirements, authorizing resolutions, financial documentation, and other supporting materials.

Clients who engage within the appropriate pre-NOFO window receive priority in work planning, draft development timelines, and submission readiness.

2.3 Client Responsibilities During Pre-NOFO Engagement

To ensure successful application development, clients are expected to:

- Designate a primary point of contact with authority to coordinate information internally.
- Provide requested documentation in a timely, accurate, and complete manner.
- Participate in scheduled planning meetings and respond to follow-up requests.
- Adhere to internal deadlines established by The Luak Group.
- Notify The Luak Group of tribal holidays, office closures, board meeting dates, procurement requirements, and approval timelines that may affect application development.

Failure to meet these responsibilities may result in adjusted timelines, reduced scope of services, deprioritization of work, or inability to submit within the funding cycle.

2.4 Timeline and Availability Constraints

Grant development services are managed across multiple clients, agencies, programs, and deadlines. Availability is limited and is scheduled based on commitment, readiness, and capacity. Engagements are not reserved based solely on verbal interest or informal communications.

As a matter of policy:

- Engagements are scheduled based on retainer receipt date.
- Priority is given to clients who meet pre-award engagement benchmarks.
- Late engagement may result in compressed timelines or limited scope.
- The Luak Group may decline work when the timeline, client readiness, or available capacity creates unacceptable risk to quality or compliance.

2.5 Payment, Retainer, and Work Initiation

A retainer is required for all engagements and serves as a condition precedent to the initiation of services.

Retainer Requirements

- A retainer invoice will be issued upon contract delivery.
- The retainer must be received within seven (7) calendar days of invoice date unless otherwise stated in the executed agreement.
- The retainer secures the client's position within The Luak Group's workload schedule.
- Engagement priority is based on retainer receipt date, not inquiry date, verbal commitment date, or contract circulation date.

Work Commencement

Work will commence only upon execution of the contract agreement and receipt of the required retainer payment in full. No full narrative development, budget preparation, partner coordination, application assembly, or substantive grant development work will begin until both conditions are satisfied.

Capacity Reservation and Non-Refundability

- The retainer is non-refundable once received.
- The retainer secures dedicated capacity, reserves planning time, and compensates The Luak Group for opportunity cost associated with reserving availability within a funding cycle.
- If a client elects not to proceed after capacity has been reserved, the retainer is forfeited unless the executed agreement states otherwise.

Timing, Priority, Lapse, and Reactivation

- Failure to remit the retainer within the required timeframe may result in loss of priority, delayed project start, or reallocation of capacity to another client.
- Projects with no substantive client engagement within fourteen (14) days of retainer receipt may be placed in pending status.
- Reactivation may require a revised schedule, additional fees, or a supplemental retainer when delay creates timeline compression or additional workload.

2.6 Right to Decline, Deprioritize, or Adjust Engagement

The Luak Group reserves the right to decline last-minute requests, deprioritize unresponsive clients, adjust scope based on client participation and readiness, and refuse to proceed where the quality, compliance, or timeliness of the application would be compromised.

3. Grant Complexity Matrix

The grant complexity matrix determines required lead time for contracting, retainer collection, pre-award planning, and engagement activation. The matrix is evergreen and should be applied to forecasted release dates for each funding cycle.

Tier	Grant Type	Characteristics	Required Lead Time
Tier 1: High Complexity	IHBG Competitive, ICDBG, PRICE	Extensive narratives; high documentation requirements; competitive scoring structures; multiple stakeholders, approvals, resolutions, budgets, and supporting materials.	45-60 days prior to anticipated NOFO release
Tier 2: Moderate Complexity	ROSS, FHLBank Native American programs	Moderate narrative requirements; some partnership coordination; programmatic design required; may require board or internal approvals.	30-45 days prior to anticipated NOFO release
Tier 3: Lower Complexity / Repeat Engagements	Repeat clients or limited-scope applications	Limited new development required; faster turnaround; known client systems and existing source material available.	15-30 days prior to anticipated NOFO release

The Luak Group may assign a higher complexity tier when a grant requires extensive coordination, late-stage project design, significant budget development, unresolved eligibility questions, or substantial client capacity support.

4. Contracting Framework and Operating Boundaries

4.1 Contracting Trigger Checklist

The Luak Group may initiate contracting when at least two (2) of the following conditions are met:

- The client has verbally or via email committed to pursuing the opportunity with The Luak Group.
- A specific grant program has been identified.
- The anticipated NOFO release is within the required lead time window for the grant complexity tier.
- The client requests that pre-award work begin.
- Timeline compression is anticipated based on forecasted release dates or client internal approval processes.
- There is a strategic need to secure the client and reserve capacity before the funding cycle becomes active.

4.2 Operational Boundary: Non-Negotiable

The Luak Group will not begin the following without a signed contract and paid retainer:

- Full narrative development.
- Budget preparation or budget justification drafting.
- Partner coordination, commitment letters, or third-party outreach.
- Application assembly or portal preparation.
- Substantive strategy memoranda or project planning deliverables beyond preliminary consultation.

4.3 Capacity Protection

Contracts control access to consultant capacity. Retainers secure commitment and scheduling. Lead time determines engagement eligibility. The grant tracker, contracting deadlines, and risk assessment tools are used to support data-driven decisions regarding priority, capacity, and risk.

5. Alignment with Grant Tracking System

This policy is designed to function in alignment with The Luak Group's grant tracking system. The tracker serves as the operational tool that converts the evergreen policy into client-specific dates, deadlines, and risk indicators.

5.1 Required Tracking Fields

Each client engagement should include, at minimum:

- Client name and primary contact.
- Grant program and fiscal year.
- Estimated NOFO release date.
- Grant complexity tier.
- Contract deadline calculated from the required lead time.
- Contract status.
- Retainer status and retainer receipt date.
- Probability percentage reflecting likelihood of conversion to paid work.
- Priority level.
- Notes regarding responsiveness, risk, governance considerations, holidays, or approval constraints.

5.2 Workflow Integration

1. Identify the grant opportunity and estimate the anticipated NOFO release date.
2. Assign the appropriate grant complexity tier.
3. Calculate the contracting window and internal contract deadline.
4. Track client engagement, communication, and probability of conversion.
5. Issue the contract within the appropriate engagement window.
6. Require retainer payment before activating work.
7. Use priority, risk, and responsiveness indicators to determine workload sequencing.

This alignment ensures controlled workload during peak cycles, prioritized engagement of committed clients, and reduced financial and operational risk.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of The Luak Group

The Luak Group may serve in multiple roles during a grant development engagement, including grant writer, strategic advisor, subject matter expert, planner, development director, pre-project manager, development strategic planner, editor, compliance reviewer, and administrative support lead as required by the scope and complexity of the opportunity.

6.1 Initial Consultation and Contracting

- Conduct an initial consultation to understand the client's needs, goals, project concept, organizational capacity, and funding priorities.
- Provide a contract or agreement outlining services, payment structure, timelines, and engagement requirements.
- Issue a retainer invoice upon contract delivery or as otherwise stated in the agreement.

6.2 Threshold Requirements and Eligibility

- Review threshold requirements, eligibility criteria, financial documentation expectations, and submission prerequisites.
- Identify required documents, forms, certifications, resolutions, narratives, budgets, and supporting materials.
- Apply detailed knowledge of federal funding agencies, program requirements, application systems, and scoring criteria.
- Notify the client of threshold risks or documentation gaps that may affect submission or competitiveness.

6.3 Provision of Checklist

- Upon contract execution and retainer receipt, provide a comprehensive checklist of required documents and information.
- The checklist may include financial statements, project details, community impact data, authorizing resolutions, procurement materials, organizational policies, program designs, budgets, and any other relevant information required by the NOFO.

6.4 Grant Writing and Application Preparation

- Develop a structured timeline for the grant application process.
- Draft, edit, and prepare all necessary sections of the application.
- Ensure the application is aligned with NOFO guidelines, threshold requirements, formatting rules, and submission instructions.
- Translate ambitious ideas into actionable and fundable programs.
- Collaborate with tribal stakeholders to design initiatives that align with the client's mission, needs, and long-term priorities.
- Edit for accuracy, consistency, completeness, compliance, and narrative strength.

6.5 Communication and Updates

- Maintain regular communication with the client regarding progress, deadlines, outstanding items, and risks.
- Notify the client promptly of potential issues, delays, or missing information.
- Document significant delays or risks where client responsiveness affects submission feasibility.

6.6 Managing Changes and Challenges

- Adapt to last-minute changes or unexpected challenges where feasible and where client cooperation allows.
- Work extended hours, including weekends or holidays, as necessary and reasonable near submission deadlines, provided the client has met required deadlines and supplied information timely.
- Dive deeply into community needs, identify gaps, and formulate strategies to address them within the application.

6.7 Submission and Follow-Up

- Submit the completed application by the deadline, provided all necessary information, approvals, documents, and access credentials are received on time.
- Follow up with the funding agency as needed to track application status, where such follow-up is included in the scope of services.

7. Roles and Responsibilities of the Tribal Client

The client is responsible for active participation in the grant development process. Grant writing is not a passive service. Competitive applications require timely decisions, accurate information, internal coordination, and client responsiveness.

7.1 Provision of Information

- Provide all required documents and information outlined in the checklist promptly upon receipt.
- Ensure that all information is accurate, complete, current, and approved for use in the application.
- Identify any internal limitations, missing records, unresolved approvals, or legal constraints that may affect the application.

7.2 Timely Communication

- Maintain open lines of communication with The Luak Group.
- Respond to inquiries and requests for additional information within three (3) business days unless a shorter turnaround is required by the application timeline.
- Inform The Luak Group immediately of any changes in project details, timelines, leadership decisions, staffing, funding strategy, or other relevant factors.
- Remain available over weekends or holidays when the grant deadline falls within two (2) to three (3) days of such period or when the client delay creates the need for after-hours work.

7.3 Adherence to Deadlines

- Strictly adhere to timelines and deadlines established by The Luak Group and by the NOFO.
- Provide all additional, supplemental, or last-minute checklist items no later than two (2) weeks before the grant application deadline unless otherwise agreed in writing.
- Notify The Luak Group of all upcoming tribal holidays, office closures, board meetings, council meetings, procurement requirements, and internal approval processes.
- Plan for approvals, signatures, resolutions, and financial documents in advance of internal and federal deadlines.

7.4 Cooperation and Support

- Actively cooperate by facilitating access to necessary resources, personnel, historical information, and project documentation.
- Assign a dedicated point of contact to liaise with The Luak Group and ensure smooth information flow.
- Ensure the project team collaborates closely with The Luak Group by providing essential information, historical context, tribal narratives, community priorities, and other relevant materials.
- Ensure decision-makers are available when approvals or strategic direction are needed.

7.5 Payment of Fees

- Make all payments as specified in the contract, including the initial retainer and subsequent milestone payments.
- Understand that work will commence only after the required retainer is received in full.
- Understand that failure to provide necessary information on time does not exempt the client from payment obligations.
- Understand that payment is required for services rendered regardless of the application submission outcome, unless otherwise stated in the executed agreement.

7.6 Respect for Process and Professional Judgment

- Respect The Luak Group's process, sequencing, internal deadlines, and professional judgment.

- Acknowledge that last-minute submission of information may jeopardize application quality, compliance, or submission feasibility.
- Accept the risks associated with late information, incomplete documents, delayed approvals, or failure to follow the established process.

7.7 Understanding the Grant Development Process

- Recognize the extensive role of The Luak Group, including planning, project management, strategic development, narrative writing, budget strategy, editing, compliance alignment, and submission support.
- Understand that The Luak Group is often working on multiple applications with the same or similar deadlines and may already be assembling pieces of the application while awaiting final client materials.
- Understand that client delay may affect sequencing, priority, and final application quality.

8. Deadlines, Compliance, and Non-Compliance

8.1 Submission Deadline Standard

Federal funding agencies do not accept late submissions. The client acknowledges that federal portals, organizational registrations, authorizing resolutions, financial documents, and application attachments may require lead time beyond the final submission date. Failure to plan accordingly may affect submission feasibility.

8.2 Late Submission of Information

- If required information is not provided by the two-week internal deadline, The Luak Group may be unable to submit the application on time.
- In such cases, the application may be deprioritized, reduced in scope, submitted only if feasible, or postponed to the next funding cycle.
- The client accepts the risk that late information may compromise competitiveness, completeness, compliance, or submission feasibility.

8.3 Payment Obligations

- Payment is required for services rendered regardless of application submission outcome.
- Non-compliance with information deadlines does not exempt the client from payment obligations under the contract.
- Client delay, internal disorganization, missed approvals, or failure to provide documentation does not convert performed work into unpaid work.

8.4 Consequences of Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in one or more of the following actions:

- Adjusted timelines.
- Reduced scope of services.
- Deprioritization of the engagement.
- Suspension or pending status until required materials are received.
- Reactivation fees or supplemental retainer requirements.
- Inability to submit within the funding cycle.
- Declination of future last-minute engagements.

9. Review, Amendments, and Conflict Resolution

9.1 Policy Review

This policy may be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure it remains relevant and effective. The evergreen structure is intended to remain stable while allowing grant-specific lead times, forecasted release dates, and client-specific deadlines to be managed through The Luak Group's tracking system.

9.2 Amendments

Any amendments to this policy will be communicated in writing. Amendments may be necessary to address changing client needs, funding agency requirements, workload constraints, or unforeseen circumstances. Where this policy is attached to or incorporated into a contract, amendments should be documented in a manner consistent with the applicable contract terms.

9.3 Dispute Resolution

In the event of a dispute arising from this policy or the grant application process, both parties agree to seek resolution through good-faith negotiation and, where appropriate, mediation before pursuing legal action. Mediation will be conducted by a neutral third party agreed upon by both parties, unless the executed contract provides otherwise.

9.4 Good Faith Efforts

The Luak Group and the client commit to making good-faith efforts to resolve conflicts amicably and professionally. Nothing in this section waives payment obligations, retainer terms, deadlines, or the rights and remedies available under the executed agreement.

10. Client Acknowledgment

By proceeding with an engagement, the client acknowledges receipt of this Grant Engagement & Contracting Policy Packet and understands that timely communication, document submission, retainer payment, and adherence to internal deadlines are necessary to support successful grant development.

Client Organization: _____

Authorized Representative: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Prepared by The Luak Group - Bringing Solutions to Indian Country