

What to Expect During a Verification Site Visit

The heart of the Grants Monitoring, Reconciliation and Verification policy is the grants verification site visit. Because we perform grant verifications on ten percent of all BWSR grants annually, chances are you may be “verified” in the future—if you haven’t been already.

During a grant verification site visit, BWSR checks what you (the grant recipient) have received in grant funds from the state (your revenue) against what you have spent—and matched—on local programs, operations, and projects (your expenditures). **The central question in a verification visit is whether expenditures match revenue.** If they do, we say the grant is **reconciled**.

Grant verification, however, is a broader term. It encompasses not only financial reconciliation, but also checks whether the terms of grant payments— as stated in the grant agreement, the BWSR *Grant Administration Manual*, and all applicable state rules and regulations—have been complied with. It also includes an assessment of the grant recipient’s internal control environment.

Because it includes an assessment of internal controls, grant verification begins on site, in the LGU’s office.

At present, we select one past fiscal year of grants to verify, and look at all your grants within that fiscal year.

Other Things to Know

Time-frame:

Verification site visits generally take up to a day to complete, depending upon the accessibility of the data and information provided above. On occasion, a visit may extend into two days, if the information is not readily available or the recipient has received numerous grants during the period being verified. Because each grant recipient in the county will be visited, usually starting with the county government, the visit to your individual office will take only part of the time.

BWSR Staff Present:

Two to three (sometimes more) BWSR staff will be present and conducting the grant verification in your office. Typically, they will include: a Grants Compliance Specialist, the Fiscal Compliance Director, and your regional Board Conservationist.

What we bring to a verification visit:

- Executed grant agreements, approved work plans, and any amendments to either.
- Program Allocation and Contribution statements
- eLINK reports (see “eLINK Reporting”).
- Interim and Final Financial Reports.
- Communications with BWSR related to the grant and grant amendments.

What you bring (besides access to your grant and program files):

- Meeting Room: a meeting room to accommodate your local staff and BWSR staff should be made available for the duration of the verification visit. Please indicate to BWSR staff if local internet access is available.
- Local Staff Present: Your organization will be required to at a minimum have at least one representative of the following:
 - Staff person with knowledge and access to your financial accounting system, and
 - Staff person responsible for overseeing the implementation of BWSR programs.

What we take away:

Verification visits will go most smoothly if you are able to **scan** .pdf versions of the financial records listed in this guidance document, for us to take and keep for our files. The documentation should be grouped by grant, with those records that pertain to your organization as a whole—like payroll records and a calculation of your billing rates per employee, and a budget to actual report of your administrative costs—grouped separately.

What is Expected for Future Follow-up?

Additional Data Requests:

BWSR may ask for additional data to be submitted to fully verify financial expenditures.

Verification Results Form and Letter from BWSR:

The results of the verification will be sent to you via a Verification Results Form and a letter, which will be copied to your LGU's administration and Board. If we have recommendations or corrections, the results will be of two types:

- Observations, which will be accompanied by Recommendations. Observations do not require corrective action or a formal response, but may be revisited in a future grant reconciliation or verification.
- Findings, which will be accompanied by a Corrective Action Plan. Findings require a formal response to the Corrective Action Plan, and may result in the suspension of future grant payments until they are resolved.

We aim to submit the letter within 90 days of the verification visit.

For information about the levels of grant noncompliance, see "Grant Noncompliance."