GIFTS User Guide – GPD Grant Applicants

OVERVIEW OF GIFTS

GIFTS (also called Blackbaud Grantmaking) is an online grants management system. It does not require any software installation or specific hardware. Grant applicants just need access to the internet. GIFTS helps organizations manage their grants, complete operational tasks and requirements, submit applications, and will enhance communication with the GPD National Program Office.

The GPD National Program Office utilizes a grants management database called GIFTS to track, send, and receive grantee information including contact information. This guide contains step-by-step instructions for establishing a GIFTS account and utilizing the grantee applicant portal.

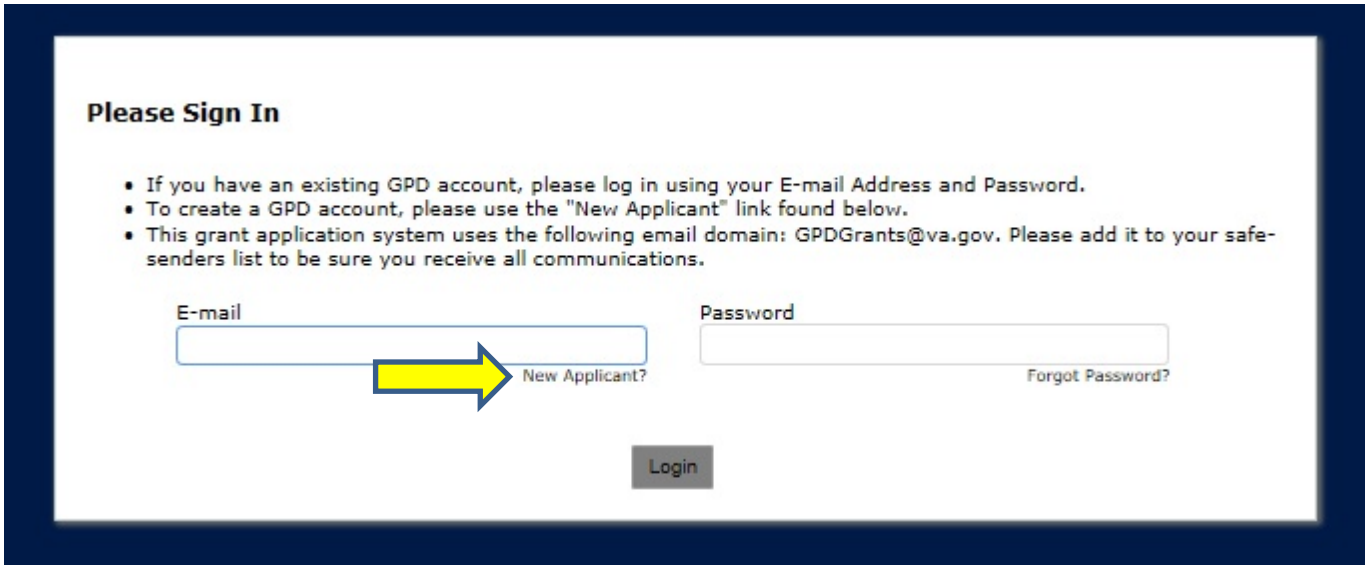
Every GPD organization will have a designated grantee portal account that is assigned based upon information submitted during the application process. This account will be used to receive and complete program requirements that are published to the account.

CREATING A GPD GIFTS ACCOUNT – NEW APPLICANTS

1. During an open grant round, the GPD National Program office will post a link to access the grant application(s) on the main GPD Webpage: https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD.asp.

The individual your agency would like to identify as the *GIFTS Account Holder* will need to create an account by clicking the *New Applicant* link.

NOTE: GPD Grantees that also have an SSVF grant award must create a separate GPD GIFTS account by navigating to the web address listed on the GPD website. Grantees with both SSVF and GPD GIFTS accounts can use the same email address for both GIFTS accounts.



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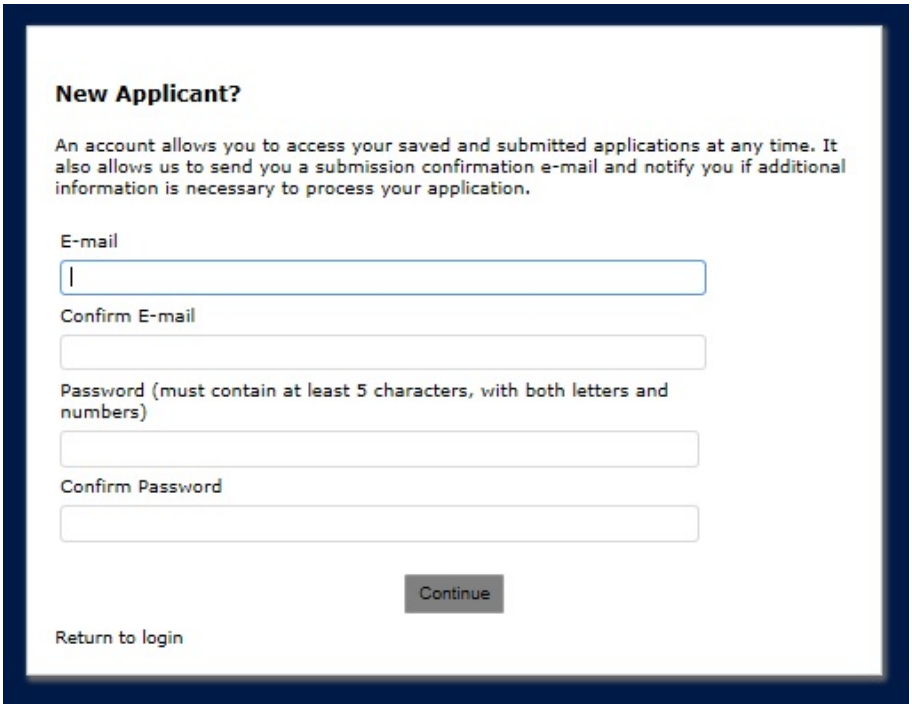
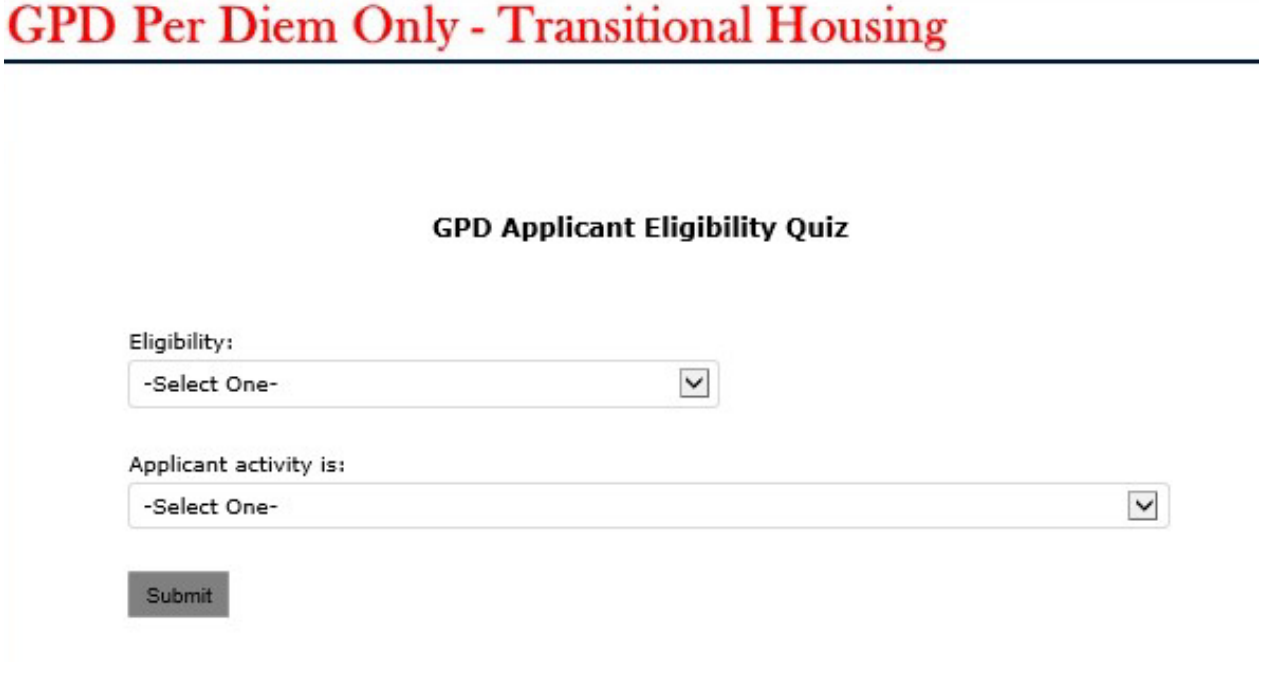
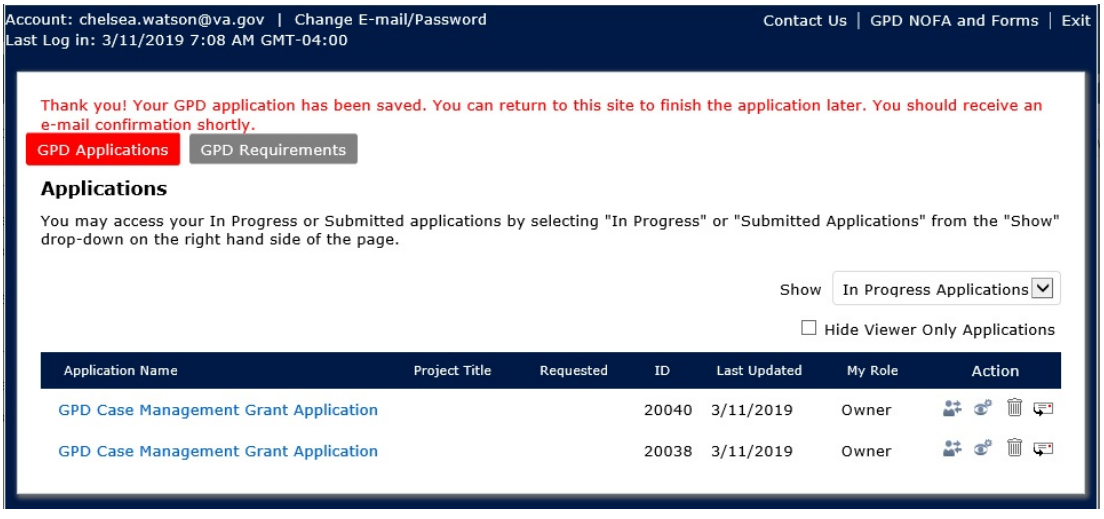
2. Register using the email and password you would like your GPD GIFTS account associated with. Be sure to save your login information.



3. Upon initial registration, you will be forwarded to the *GPD Applicant Eligibility Quiz*. After responding, eligible applicants will then be forwarded to the application template to complete.



4. Applicants may *Save & Finish Later* at any point. A view like the following will be shown where applications that have started their application, but not submitted will be viewable. This is the default view for the GIFTS portal.

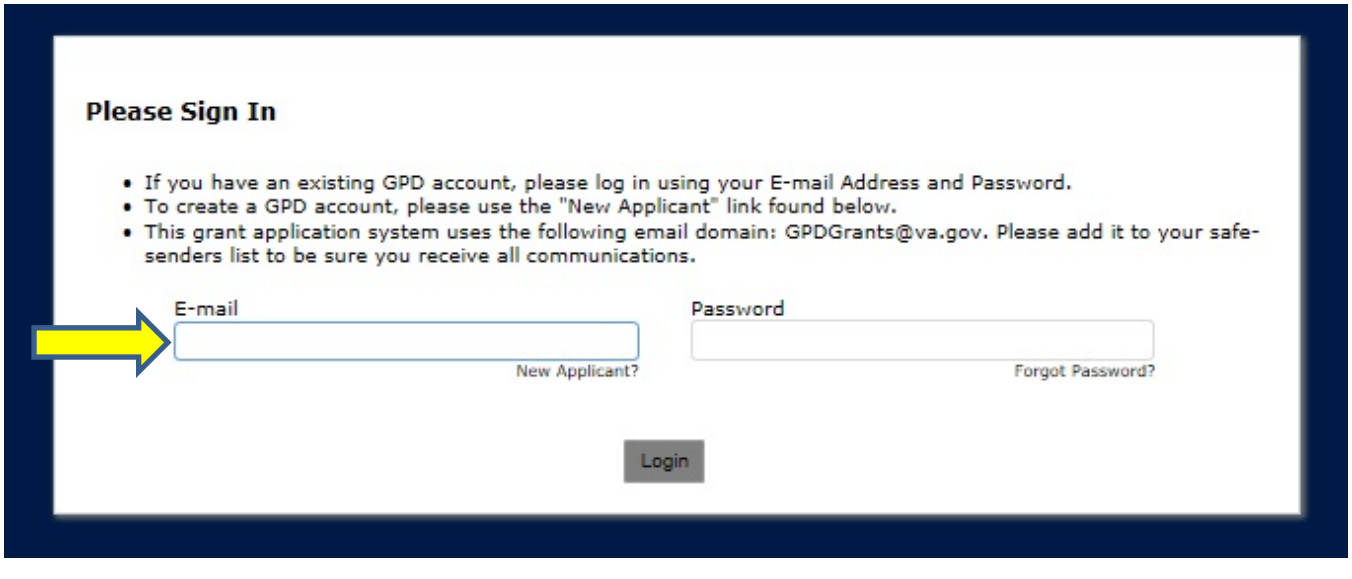


CURRENT GPD GRANTEES – ACCESSING GIFTS APPLICATONS

Current GPD grantees are encouraged to log into the GIFTS application using your existing GIFTS account because the GIFTS system will support the population of pre-existing fields in the application such as your agency name, tax ID, DUNS, and more.

During an open grant round, the GPD National Program office will post a link to access the grant application(s) on the main GPD Webpage: https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD.asp. Upon selecting the applicant link, applicants currently logged into the GIFTS portal will be forwarded directly to the grant application. Otherwise the GIFTS system will prompt you to sign in to your existing account.

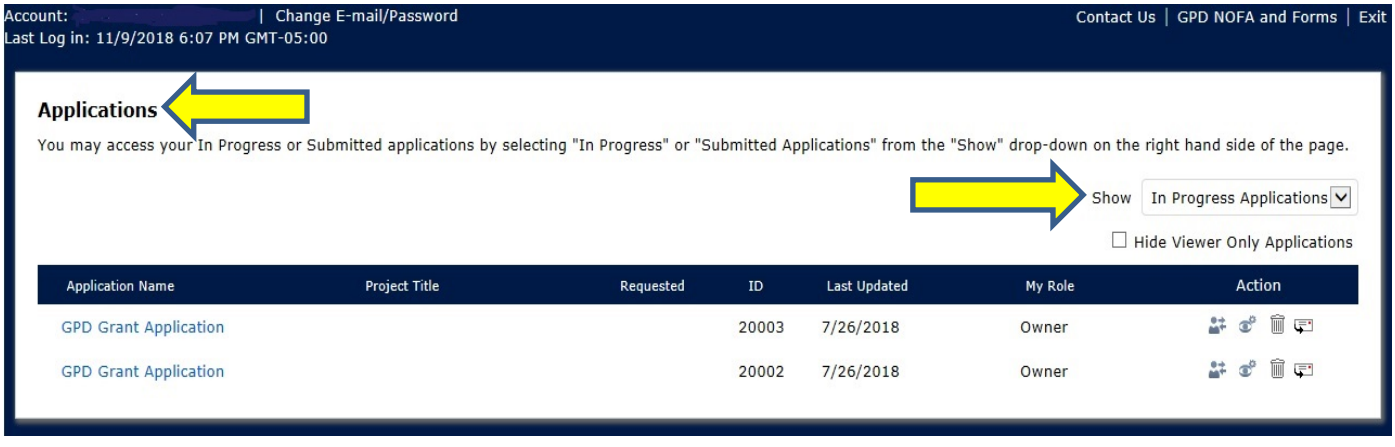
NOTE: GPD Grantees that also have an SSVF grant award must create a separate GPD GIFTS account by navigating to the web address listed on the GPD website. Grantees with both SSVF and GPD GIFTS accounts can use the same email address for both GIFTS accounts.



ACCESSING YOUR IN-PROGRESS APPLICATON

1. "In-Progress" applications if closed out before submission should be visible under the Applications tab in the grantee portal account that opened the application when logging back in.

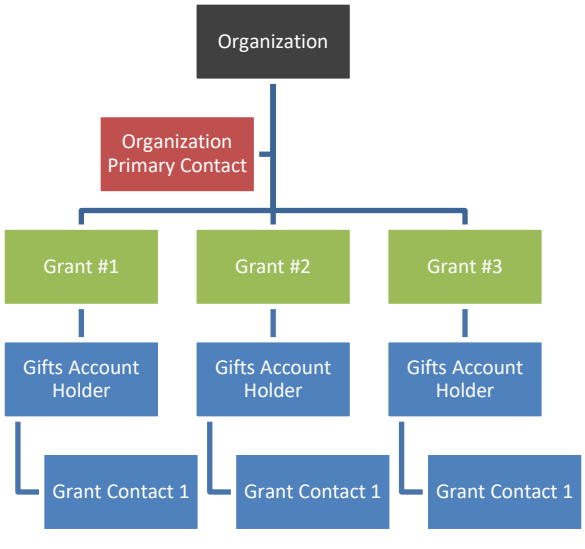
2. If the account has previously submitted applications on behalf of the program, they can be viewed by changing the view on the applications page to show "Submitted Applications".



The application section of GIFTS uses some general terminology for the application itself. Under the *My Role* column an owner is someone who starts the application and is completing the information. This designation helps if there are multiple staff looking at or reviewing an application and ensures that multiple people don't submit the same application or an incorrect version of the application. A Viewer is someone who can view or look at the application. For example, a program manager may be viewing the application and providing input, but the grant writer is the owner.

GRANTEE POINTS OF CONTACT IN GIFTS

The GPD National Program Office maintains specific records of contacts related to organizations and grant awards. Through GIFTS, the GPD National Program Office will be able to maintain these contacts for each grant record thus streamlining communication. Only the contacts identified in GIFTS will be used for correspondence. Three types of contacts are identified when submitting a GPD grant application: Organizational Primary Contact, Grant Contact 1, and a GIFTS Account Holder.



Organization Primary Contact

Grant agencies must have one *Organization Primary Contact*. This contact is assigned to the Organization, not a specific grant award, and is normally someone who signs grant agreements or makes all executive decisions for the organization. This is most often the CEO, the President, or Executive Director. Changes to this contact throughout the year are considered significant changes and require formal notification to the GPD National Program Office.

Organization is typically defined by the same Employer Identification Number (EIN) utilized for multiple grants. Grantees with multiple awards can only have ONE Organization Contact.

NOTE: The GPD and SSVF grant programs both utilize the same GIFTS system. Therefore, applicants/grantees must identify the same Organizational Primary Contact for all SSVF and GPD grants. Please keep this in mind when completing grant applications and contact requirement updates. Current grantees that submit a new organizational point of contact in their grant application will change that point of contact for their existing GPD and SSVF awards, as only one organizational point of contact is allowed.

Grant Contact # 1

Grant Contact 1 is associated with the primary contact for a specific FAIN (project number) for that Organization. This contact may be a Program Manager, Director, Coordinator, Grant Administrator, or other position overseeing the GPD project.

Applicants with multiple grant awards/applications may identify different individuals in their organization to serve as *Grant Contact 1* for each grant. Therefore, an organization with multiple grants may (but are not required to) have multiple staff identified as *Grant Contact 1.*

GPD Grants Management System Account Holder (GIFTS Account Holder)

The GIFTS system automatically identifies the *GIFTS Account Holder* based on the email address that submits your agency's grant application. There is only one allowable account holder per grant award/application.

The email address associated with this contact is used for accessing the GIFTS accounts and requirement forms related to the grant award/application. This account holder ensures that the online requirement "tasks" sent from the GPD National Program Office are complete and sent back by the deadline. This contact may be the same as *Grant Contact 1 or the Organizational Primary Contact* if either of these individuals' emails were used to establish the account that your agency's application was submitted from in the GIFTS system.

Please note that the *GIFTS Account Holder* has permissions to share the grant application(s) and/or transfer requirement(s) to staff within the agency and also to allow other staff members to review the form prior to submission to VA.

Contact Changes

This information can also be updated over time as staff transition or change. It is important to note that the GPD National Program Office does not have a separate list-serve database for releasing newsletters or other announcements. Grantees are responsible for ensuring that additional program staff receive applicable notifications. This may include forwarding emails as well as follow up discussion with your GPD direct service staff, administrative staff, and financial staff so that everyone has the information that they need with respect to their work and their roles.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GIFTS Account setup

1. **I am not an existing GPD grantee. How do I create a GIFTS account?**

   Please see the *GPD Grantee GIFTS User Guide* under section Creating a *GPD GIFTS Account-New Applicants.* The user guide can be found on the GPD website at www.va.gov/homeless/gpd.asp.

2. **Will GIFTS work with all internet browsers?**
   In general, GIFTS should work with most browsers. We strongly encourage applicants that are existing GPD grantees that are applying under the open NOFA to log on to their GIFTS account once the application is released to ensure that they are able to access it. For applicants that are not current grantees, it is also strongly recommended that they set up a GIFTS account shortly after the NOFA is released and to ensure access to the application.

3. **A staff member had been our lead in completing the application. However, they resigned during the application process. We aren't able to access GIFTS and get to the application. What do we do?**

   It is important for applicants to have contingency and back up plans. At the start of the application, it may be helpful to name your lead person and your back up person with the application submission. Maintaining log in information is an applicant's responsibility. Please plan accordingly.

Using the GIFTS system

4. **I logged into GIFTS to work on my application. However, I am not able to see all of the questions on the screen. What should I do?**
   We recommend scrolling down to see if you can then see the questions on the screen first. If this does not work, we suggest changing the resolution on your screen.

5. **Why do sessions timeout?**
   If you have been inactive for a certain period of time, the application stops talking to the server. This causes the session to timeout.

6. **I made a mistake on the eligibility screening quiz in GIFTS. How can I go back and fix it?**
   Reset the eligibility quiz by clearing the browser history or by clearing cookies. Another option is to access the quiz from a different browser or from a different computer.

7. **I was in the middle of my application and then had to take a call. I forgot that I was still in the application. It looks like my session timed out. What should I do?**
   Timeouts will occur if a session has been inactive for a certain period of time. We strongly suggest that you frequently save your work. If you can, please save and then log out if you need to transition to another task. If you are not able to do this, you would just need to refresh your browser and log in again. However, if you did not save, you may have to redo work. Again, we strongly suggest saving often.

8. **I started an application, but I don't see my work. What do I do?**
   When you are on the *Applications* screen, you will see a drop down on the right-hand side that says *Show*. Go to the drop down and select *In Progress Applications*. Your application should appear.

9. **I tried to upload an attachment in the application, but it didn't upload. What should I do?**
   Depending on the number of users currently working on their applications as well as your internet speed, some areas in the application may be slower than others. You should continue to try to upload your attachment. If it is not working, you may want to log out and log back in at a later time.

10. **I started an application. I didn't see it so I started another application. Now, it looks like I have 2 applications. What do I do?**
    When you are on the *Applications* screen. You will see a drop down on the right-hand side that says *Show*. Go to the drop down and select *In Progress Applications*. Your application should appear. Determine which application is the one that you want to use. Then, continue your work. Please note that you should only submit the application that is your master with all of your complete information.

Support

11. **I accidentally submitted two applications. Only one was our final. The other one is incomplete. What should I do?**
    Please go to the *Applications* screen. You will see a drop down on the right-hand side that says *Show*. Go to the drop down and select *Submitted*. Your applications should appear. Determine which application is the one that you want to use. Take a screenshot and highlight the *Id Number* for the correct application. Then, please send an email to gpdgrants@va.gov with the screenshot and indicate which application (including ID Number) is correct and which one was submitted in error.

12. **I accidentally locked myself out of my GIFTS account. What should I do?**

    From the log on screen, you can click on *Forgot Password?* which is found directly under the box where you can type your password.

13. **Who should I contact if I reviewed all of the FAQs but am still encountering technical issues with GIFTS?**
    If you encounter an issue and have reviewed all of the FAQs, please email gpdgrants@va.gov *with GIFTS Support-Grant Application* in the subject of the email. Ideally, any requests for technical assistance with GIFTS should be sent at least 3 days prior to the submission date to help ensure that the issue can be resolved prior to the due date.

Tips

- On page 1 (Introduction) on the top right, there is the ability to *Email Draft*. This function may be helpful to share work with other collaborators or staff reviewing the application.

- Applicants may want to type their narrative sections in a Word document so that they can use features like Word Count and Spell Check which are not necessarily available within the application. It can also assist them if for some reason they forget to save and need to go back and copy and paste their narrative.

- Since the system is electronic (stated in NOFA), there is no flexibility for late submissions. Applicants are encouraged to reach out early if technical assistance with the application is needed. Additionally, GIFTS will close at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. This means that if an application has not been submitted by that time, it won't allow the user to submit.

- When applicants add attachments, they will want to hit *Browse First* to locate the document and then *Upload*. It is a two-step process.

- Applicants may want to copy and paste into a Word doc the *Review My Application Section* before they submit.

- Applicants may want to take a screen shot when they submit with the date and time the application was submitted.

- Applicants will want to plan ahead and submit prior to the deadline.