

Guidance for the Description of Services (Attachment A)

The Description of Services (DOS) is Attachment A to your application. The DOS is a document that describes an organization's services in at least 15 states or 1 foreign country over the prior three years. For the 2015 CFC, the relevant years are 2012, 2013, and 2014.

The document must make a clear showing of national and/or international service. Simply providing a list of states or countries where an organization conducted or provided services, benefits or program activities is not sufficient.

For a DOS to meet the tests of the CFC, an organization must:

- Explain how the services contributed to the health and welfare of the benefiting people or organizations
- Describe the services that were delivered
- List the locations where the services were provided
- State when the services in each location were offered
- List or describe the individuals or organizations that benefited from the services

A successful DOS will show services in at least 15 states or one or more foreign countries.

Note: If you are a returning member, we recommend you continue using the format previously submitted with your CFC application unless otherwise advised by our staff.

We offer guidance below in four areas:

1. Organizing the DOS
2. Using evidence that works (and avoiding evidence that doesn't)
3. Knowing what to do if you have chapters or if you are an advocacy group
4. Understanding the government's "de minimis" test

1. Organizing the Description of Services

We recommend that most organizations prepare their DOS in two parts: an introductory narrative and a "schedule," or detailed table of services.

The narrative should be relatively brief. In these paragraphs, the organization should explain its mission and tell the reader how it helped contribute to human health and welfare. An organization does not need to provide many pages of text; we seek only enough to know what sort of work the organization does and to understand the schedule that will follow the narrative.

The second part of the DOS is the schedule. It gives detailed information that allows the government to confirm that an organization provided qualifying services in the prior three years. The information is usually best presented in the form of a table or spreadsheet. ."

If you are describing services within the U.S., list all the states in which you were active even if the number goes over fifteen. If the government disqualifies one state, the "extra" states will prevent you from falling below the threshold for admission to the CFC.

Similarly, if your organization seeks to qualify on the basis of overseas services, we recommend that you describe services in more than one country if you can. Ultimately, it will be the services in a *single* country that will qualify

the organization; the “extra” countries will only serve as insurance in case the services described in the first country are declared insufficient.

Please make sure that you provide the following key information for each qualifying event:

- **The location of the service or activity**
If the service or activity occurred within the U.S., tell us the city and state. If the service or activity was overseas, tell us the country and, if possible, provide the name of the city as well.
- **The nature of the service or activity**
Was it a speech? If so, what was the topic? Was it advice? If so, what was the technical matter? Was it a grant? If so, tell us how much was given, what activity it supported, and the location of the recipient.
- **The timing of the event**
Tell us when the service occurred. Tell us the year and month; if you have more specific dates, please include them. If the activity occurred over a period of time, give us the start and end dates. If the service continues, you may note that it is “ongoing,” but *you must also note the start date and that it continued through December of 2014*. For grants and scholarships, give dates (month and year) when funds were disbursed.
- **The beneficiaries**
Tell us whom you served. If it was a speech, tell us the number of people in the audience. If you provided advice, tell us the number of people who received it. If you gave a grant, tell us who received it. You may use initials or in other ways “disguise” individual identities if you believe this information is sensitive.

Whether you use a table or present information in some other manner, here are **three pitfalls to avoid in your schedule**:

- Long narrative paragraphs. The government is looking for simple statements of the work you did. Focus on providing the Who/What/Where/When data as described above.
- Vague phrases or long periods. Do not use a phrase like “technical assistance” without explanatory detail. Do not say "over the past three years," or "during 2012-2014." State what you did (e.g., gave a speech, provided legal advice on a certain issue, staged a performance) and include specific dates, places, occasions, services and beneficiaries.
- Passive participation. We have all attended conferences and sat in the audience. That activity does not count, however. Please don’t use the phrase “participated in” when describing your staff’s level of involvement in a conference or other event. We can’t tell whether you mean you were up on the podium or dozing in the back row.

Here is a sample table that shows how applicants can describe their work:

Location	Date(s) of Service	Description of Service, Benefit, Assistance, or Program Activity	Beneficiaries
San Diego, CA	June 1-3, 2012	ABC Charity conducted a national conference on cancer research and treatment. ABC Charity staff made presentations on new research, provided advocacy training to attendees, and facilitated a discussion between policymakers and medical researchers.	120 healthcare industry professionals attended the three-day conference.
Florida	Calendar Year 2014 – funds	Charity International awarded scholarships to the following Florida high school students pursuing a degree in computer technology to	5 Florida high school students

	disbursed monthly	attend the college or university of their choice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Smith, Pensacola (\$3,800) • J. Doe, Ft. Lauderdale (\$5,000) • B. Callahan, Jacksonville (\$1,200) • D. Johnson, Tampa (\$800) • C. Jones, Ft. Myers (\$900) 	
Erie, PA	July 9, 2012	ABC Environmental Trust provided a two-hour training to volunteers of the conservation of Erie County beaches. Training also included the distribution of garbage bags, plastic gloves, and orange vests. The one-day conservation effort resulted in the collection of 250 pounds of garbage.	23 volunteers were trained and 10 miles of beaches were cleaned.

2. Using evidence that works (and avoiding evidence that doesn't)

Applicants can describe their services in a variety of ways. Below, we suggest the kind of activity most likely to be seen by the government as qualifying:

A. Your organization travels to another state or country to deliver a service

If your staff travelled to another state or country to provide a service, that activity likely will count as a qualifying service. Travel alone is not enough, of course. Attending a conference or handing out literature at a booth is not enough. The key is that a representative of the organization gave a speech or provided detailed advice or in some other way helped people in person in another location.

We should add that if your organization had an office in more than one state or overseas during the three-year period, you can count those states or countries if you describe the work of the other office(s).

A performing arts organization can qualify if its company travelled to other states and/or another country to perform. We will need to know where and when the performances occurred, and you will need to tell us about the people who benefited (the audiences).

B. Financial transfers

If your organization sent money to individuals or organizations in another state or country (excepting payment of vendors, of course) that will likely count as a qualifying service. Typical examples of such financial transfers are scholarships, fellowships, internships and grants. In the case of scholarships, etc., count the student's home state or country, not the state where the student went to college.

If your organization paid for individuals to travel to your main office to attend a conference or receive training or participate in a fellowship or internship, describe those costs and list the beneficiaries including their place of origin. If your organization covered travel-related costs such as food and lodging, mention the amounts of these expenses.

If your organization seeks to qualify on the basis of having offered fellowships or internships, make sure to explain how the fellows or interns benefited. If these posts simply saved your organization money, the government may disregard them.

C. Technical advice

Even if an organization's staff did not travel, provided professional advice by phone or email may contribute to a successful DOS. For service of this kind to qualify:

- The advice must have been specific to the situation of the individual client

- The advice must have involved real professional expertise (not just the routine information provided by your helpful receptionist)
- The conversation went both ways: You gave the client help, but the client also communicated with you, either through direct conversation, by asking questions, or providing feedback through a survey, etc. Merely placing an order for a publication would not be sufficient.

When detailing “technical advice,” be sure to describe the help you offered, whom you helped, and when you provided the help. Include detail and specificity on the type of assistance.

D. Services through the Web

Web-based services can qualify if you submit to us logs or other records indicating the geographic distribution of users and the scope of services received AND you can meet two of the following three tests:

1. You show that recipients of the service registered for use of the website (provide examples of the registration process)
2. You show that customers or clients or the people being served provided feedback through surveys or other methods
3. You show that people paid a fee for the service.

E. Traveling exhibitions or productions; lending valuable objects

If a museum creates an exhibition that travels to another state or country, that is excellent evidence for the DOS (but please include attendance figures). If the organization sent or lent valuable objects to people or organizations in others states or countries, that may count as a qualifying service. The same is true of a theatre company that sends a production to another state or overseas. There can be subtleties in these cases. We recommend you consult our staff if you intend to use this kind of evidence.

The most effective way for such “transfers” to qualify is if they involved expert conversation between your staff and the organization receiving the item. Indeed, if your staff travelled to the other location, such travel immediately qualifies, as noted earlier.

AVOIDING EVIDENCE THAT MAY NOT WORK...

Weak Activity 1: Publications

The government gives little weight to anything it views as a “publication.” The government explains that making something available – publishing it – does not mean that anyone has read it. Examples of such “weak” activity include:

Books, pamphlets	Teaching kits
Research reports	Websites
Position papers	List-serves
Amicus curiae briefs	Toll free number

Any of the above activity can be a qualifying activity if you can show that the recipient requested the item, used the item, and/or benefited from the item. If, for example, someone asked for a research paper to be prepared, the government would be more likely to accept the service. If you can show that teaching kits were requested and used, such activity would likely be fine. If a court or a legislative committee requested a brief, that would likely work. Even a toll free number could be fine – if you can show in detail how your organization supported callers with professional service.

Weak Activity 2: General participation and indirect beneficiaries

You CANNOT count the home states of people merely on the grounds that:

- They were a member of your organization
- They belonged to an organization affiliated with you
- They attended a conference you sponsor (only the state where the conference was held counts)
- They travelled to your location and viewed your exhibition or attended your performance (unless you subsidized the visit through a scholarship or grant)
- They benefitted from the actions performed by organizations you have assisted
- They “hit” your website, signed up for your list-serve, or bought your books

3. What if you have chapters or if you are an advocacy group?

As noted above, you cannot claim credit for anyone beyond the direct beneficiaries of your work. So, while you can argue that you have benefited a chapter, affiliate or government agency by any of the acceptable means listed above, do not claim credit for the work carried out by that benefiting entity even if they clearly made use of your resources.

Chapters

To claim states in which you have chapters, you must describe the services you provided to the chapters, not the services the chapters provided to others. For example, the following would be qualifying services:

- You provided substantial materials, technical advice, programs, support and/or coordination for your chapters (more than just publications)
- You ran events available to and used by your chapters
- There was ongoing two-way conversation between you and the chapters that supported chapter operation
- You collected and disseminated information about other chapters’ activities, helping chapters communicate with each other

Advocacy groups

Advocacy groups providing expertise to government agencies or the courts must describe services that went beyond sending information such as research reports or amicus curiae briefs. Those who successfully use such activity in their DOS show that the recipients sought the advice. If they used the advice, that is all the better. Indeed, it is best if you can show that there was a genuine conversation with the government entity – a two-way conversation to support your claim that the agency benefited from your advice.

If you worked with a government entity, you must “count” that entity in the state where it was located. So, if you dealt with the headquarters of a federal agency, the personnel were likely based in Washington DC – and you should “count” DC. If you worked with federal personnel in Boston, you would “count” Massachusetts.

Even if you participated in a successful case before the U.S. Supreme Court, you only can “count” Washington DC – since, of course, that is where your service was rendered. It does not matter that the impact of your case rippled across the country. Similarly, if an executive agency used your advice and then changed how it delivered services across the country, you only are allowed to “count” the state (or DC) where you went to help that agency.

The same principle applies to groups that have an international focus but do most of their work by talking to people in Washington DC. It is much safer to try to qualify by showing that your staff has set foot on foreign soil.

4. Understanding the Government’s De Minimis Test

The federal government reserves the right to determine whether services or benefits are “de minimis” – that is, too small to have significant impact.

Factors that the government will consider in determining whether an organization's program activities are de minimis include, but are not limited to:

- nature and extent of the service, benefit, assistance or activity
- frequency, continuity, and duration
- impact on, or benefit to, beneficiaries
- number of beneficiaries.

While the government does not publish a definition of "de minimis," our experience indicates that the following cases would risk falling below the government's standard of what is sufficient.

Case 1: A small number of people served

The government has indicated that if the organization worked with only a few persons in a state or country, that service could be considered "de minimis." While the government has not published the number of beneficiaries that an organization must report that it served in a state or country, we suggest that applicants show at least 5 individuals per state or country.

Organizations can show that they served other organizations. We recommend showing that you served at least three organizations in a state or country.

Case 2: A small amount of transferred funds

Financial assistance (e.g. scholarships) in a state or country that totals less than \$10,000 may be seen as "de minimis." An organization can show that it provided numerous scholarships or similar financial transfers; the point is that they total \$5,000 or more in a state or country.

Case 3: Limited foreign activity

With regard to international activity, the government seeks evidence that the services were *ongoing*. So, if the organization provided a speaker to a conference in, say, London, that alone would not be sufficient to allow Britain to be "counted." You would need to show repeated visits to Britain during the three relevant years, or to show a mixture of qualifying activity in Britain such as two or three speeches, other travel by staff, technical assistance provided by phone and email, and/or financial transfers.

Note also that the government seeks evidence of ongoing activity in one country; activity scattered across several countries is not as compelling – to the government – as multiple events in a single country.

The "de minimis" test is subject to change by the government. We encourage groups to contact us if they have questions on whether their activity is sufficient.