



## GCAA Application Tips

### Before Writing an Application

Read the application questions and gather what you need to answer them.

Talk to previous winners (call 512-478-8813 for contact information) and explore the resources KTB has on its website for GCAA, including winner blogs, recorded webinars, etc.

### Dates

The application tracks what a community has done in a twelve-month period (*January 1 – December 31, 2019*). However, the application may reference past projects when they are connected to something that was accomplished this year. Example: In 2018, KTB received a grant to build an outdoor learning center, and in September 2019 the PTA added new plants.

### Program vs. Community Definition

Community – A community is defined as a region or regions with shared or adjoining boundaries whose beautification and litter abatement programs are administered by common groups within that community's geographic boundaries (i.e. local affiliates, city departments, garden clubs, schools, organizations etc.).

Programs – Programs are defined as any projects, activities, and/or initiatives within a community's geographic boundaries that address goals stated in the seven topic areas of the GCAA.

### Start in Microsoft Word

Although our software allows you to save and return whenever you wish, it might be easier to write your information using Microsoft Word. Word allows you to check your **word count** and you can easily see your entire submission and alter it. Once you are happy with your submission in the Word document, you simply open the online application and use cut and paste to move your text.

### Word Count Restrictions

The online application has a word count limit for each question. This ranges from 75-200 words and was decided by taking the average words used on former applications. We tried to be generous and know that some will need far less and others will need more.

This limit is a maximum amount of words and not the required or expected amount. If you have far less than the limit, but a good answer, you will be fine. When reviewing we look for the question being answered and the legitimacy of the information. You will not be graded on style or creativity so focus on getting your point across. Words such as- I, a, it, the, is - will be counted as a word.

**The software will not stop you from going over the word count.** A count of your words will show up beneath the text box, so be sure you stay under the maximum amount for words. However, at the end

of your application, the software will not allow you to submit if any of your word counts are over the limit. It will prompt you to go back and shorten those sections.

### **Using Word Count in Microsoft Word**

Microsoft Word automatically counts the number of words in a document while you are typing. You can view this information at the bottom left of your screen. To count the number of words in only a section of your document, i.e. each question, highlight the text you wish to count, go to the “Review” tab at the top and click on “Word Count” at the top left. If your version of Word is different or you are using another word processing software, consult the “Help” section to learn how to count your words.

### **Supplemental Material**

When including pictures, make sure the captions are 15 words or less. The software will not automatically count the words in your caption for you, nor will it stop you from going over 15 words.

You do not have to include a date in the caption, but the photo must be from 2019. Your photo file name should be named Promo Ex. 1, Media Ex. 2, etc.

### **Miscellaneous Tips**

Answer every question and leave no questions blank or unanswered. Do not put n/a or other dismissive text showing you cannot answer. It is better to have something you hope to do in the future or that you are working on than to say you did nothing last year or leave a blank. Answer all questions and if you do not have an answer, explain why.

Word count limits your writing space so make sure to be direct and get your point across. We are interested in the creativity of your program, not your writing. That being said, your answers should be clear.

For those of you working with both a city and county, they may both apply but using separate data. There can be no crossover or duplication. County applications should focus on the area as a whole, not one specific community. If the work is focused on just one community, apply as a city, not as a county.

Do not wait until the last minute to submit your application, as things have gone wrong in the past (internet goes down, etc.) that has caused an application to be late. We will not accept late applications under any circumstances. We highly suggest submitting at least a day before the deadline.

**All applications due online by Thursday, February 20, 2020 by 5 p.m. CST. No exceptions.**

### **More questions?**

Visit [www.ktb.org](http://www.ktb.org)

Email us at [programs@ktb.org](mailto:programs@ktb.org)

Phone: 512-478-8813

