Grant Writing – How to Get Started

Presentation Outline – September 28, 2023

1. Determine Your Need
    a. Have a clear plan for what you will spend the funds on
        i. Have quotes for equipment / project estimates / details
        ii. Show objectivity in the information – obtain quotes from various sources
    b. Have a clear plan for delivering the project
    c. Know how you will measure success
    d. Know up-front how on-going costs (if any) will be covered without further grant funding
2. Gather general pieces of information ahead of time and have them ready to go
    a. Agency or organization overview
    b. Board of directors or table of organization
    c. IRS non-profit determination letter
    d. Information on previously completed projects of the same size or scope to demonstrate competency
3. Look for Grants which Address your need
    a. Round peg – Round hole / Square peg – Square hole
        i. Are they just funding government agencies? Or non-profits?
        ii. What types of needs does their funding address?
        iii. Don't try to 'talk' your way into making your need fit their grant parameters
        iv. Don't submit to just have 'one in the mix'
        v. Look at their measure of success for funding a project and see if that matches how you would measure success
4. Review the grant requirements in detail
    a. What is the time frame to apply?
    b. What needs to be submitted?
    c. Are there reporting requirements?
    d. Are there short- or long-term impacts from accepting the funding? Is your organization able to comply with the requirements?
    e. Is there a scoring matrix?
5. Plan your grant completion strategy
    a. Detail out each item to be completed
        i. Questions
            1. Subject matter experts are key to good answers
        ii. Financial plan
            1. Triple check the numbers!!!
            2. Be realistic – get actual figures whenever possible

        iii. Information to be gathered
            1. Reports / maps
            2. General info previously discussed
        iv. Letters of support
            1. Financial
            2. In-kind contributions

    b. Decide who will complete each item/task and make the assignment
    c. Make a time schedule for completing the pieces
        i. If this is a long process, have periodic update meetings to ensure you are on track
    d. Decide who will be responsible for coordinating all the information and submitting it ahead of the deadline
        i. Have a way to submit information that works for everyone

6. What to request
    a. Rarely will a grant pay 100%
    b. Grants typically do not cover ordinary operating expenses, unless is it funding to get a program started
    c. Need to decide what your agency can contribute to the project
        i. Financial
        ii. In-kind
    d. Leveraging other funding sources
        i. Local non-profits
        ii. Fund raising
        iii. Other grant funds

7. Answer the questions asked
    a. Just the facts
    b. Plain language
    c. Explain your technical terms, acronyms – don't assume they know what they mean
    d. Give details when asked, but don't go overboard
    e. Have one author if possible so the language, terms and flow all work together

8. Relationships
    a. If you are invited to present on your application, DO IT!!
    b. Don't be afraid to follow-up on an application, but don't become a pest.
    c. Look at how much they have awarded in the past and for what projects
        i. Is this a good fit for what you want to request?
        ii. What is their funding pattern?
    d. Don't be afraid to ask for feedback if your grant request isn't selected