SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING

October 3, 2016

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Topics to be Discussed

1. Initial steps
   Developing Your Idea/Project Needs
   Sources of Funds

2. Grant Writing
   Project Partners
   Budget
   Match and Leveraged Funds
   Narrative

3. Tips and Tricks

4. After Awards are Announced

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Initial Steps: Developing Your Project Idea

❑ Create a winning strategy for your project

   -- What is the project and how does it benefit its target users?

   -- How does the project solve a problem and advance (measureable goals if possible) your community's objectives?

   --- How is your project unique?

❑ Consider <u>all</u> potential components of your project & think outside the box

Initial Steps: Your Project Needs

❑ Think through your needs:

-- Develop a matrix that includes all of the components of your project

-- What is already funded with restricted funds/matching funds?

--- Other items that are already funded?

--- All Project Needs that are not funded?

❑ Wages & fringe
❑ Travel & staff education expenses

❑ Equipment & supplies
❑ Hard & soft contractual expenses

Initial Steps: Sources of Funds

❑ Consider the types of funding that would work best for your project & you have the capacity to implement

❑ Grants

❑ Loans & loan guarantees

❑ Tax credits

❑ Technical assistance

Initial Steps: Sources of Funds

Search high & low!

- ❑ Get on funder email lists
- ❑ Routinely monitor funder websites for announcements
- ❑ Explore government websites like grants.gov & https://txapps.texas.gov/tolapp/egrants/search.htm
- ❑ Attend funding workshops + talk with the presenters, agencies and funders
- ❑ Consider paying for access to funding directories, such as Foundation Center
- ❑ Network so others will think of your project when they learn of new opportunities

Initial Steps: Determine Your Eligibility

Don't waste your time if your project is ineligible!

- ❑ Typical eligibility restrictions:
  - ❑ Types of activities to be funded
  - ❑ Project or applicant geographic location
  - ❑ Applicant organization type (be open to possibilities for partnerships!)

- ❑ Always contact the funder if you have any questions on eligibility <u>before</u> submitting an application!

Grant Writing: Beginning the Process
Timing is everything!

- [ ] Budget sufficient time!

- [ ] Gather data for the application in support of your project

- [ ] Identify every grant section/task that each team member is responsible for and assign completion deadlines

Grant Writing: Beginning the Process
Timing is everything!

- ❑ Complete community notification requirements

- ❑ Support/commitment letters

- ❑ If allowed, consider taking the time to speak or meet with the funder in advance

- ❑ Make sure you have credentials in place to submit the application.

Grant Writing: Community Support

❑ Funders want to ensure projects are not being done in a vacuum & are supported by the community

❑ Some applications have community notification requirements

❑ Letters of support or commitment are often required

    ❑ Not just about the number of letters received

    ❑ Quality letters are important!

    ❑ Take the time to tailor letters to the organization instead of just using a template

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Grant Writing: Project Budget

❑ Develop a realistic yet competitive budget

❑ Depending on the volume of applications received, some funders may choose to fund only a portion of the project, so consider submitting a phased project approach

❑ Determine if the grant funding is provided up front or if it is made available on a reimbursable basis

❑ Double check for math errors!

Grant Writing: Match & Leveraged Funds

- ❑ Many funders will require a cash or in-kind match, typically on a percentage basis

- ❑ Examine cash flow—does the timeframe work?

- ❑ Consider increasing your competiveness by providing a match even if it is not required

- ❑ Leverage! Attach evidence to the application of other funding sources that have gone into the project

Grant Writing: Narrative

For those applications that require narratives...

- ❑ Review the funder's criteria for selection and funding priorities and address all of these in the narrative and the budget

- ❑ Write as a journalist: a compelling story that sets your project apart in the reviewers' minds

- ❑ Clearly define your objectives for the project & weave them throughout the application

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Grant Writing: Narrative

For those applications that require narratives...

- ❑ Write as through the reviewer knows nothing about your community:
    - --- Demographics, Data
    - --- Area to be addressed through the grant
    - --- Link the project to sensitive populations, the issues of the community, health data, etc. –thinking broadly and of long term change.

- ❑ Pull at reviewers' heartstrings! Emphasize how the community will suffer until the project is addressed vs. talking about your community's strengths at length.

Grant Writing: Narrative

For those applications that require narratives...

- ❑ Instill confidence that you have the capacity to complete the project through excellence in project team, workplan and quality control

- ❑ Make sure your proposed grant funding activities are realistic

- ❑ If you have stumbled with prior grants from a funder, explain exactly how you have fixed the problem areas and why this time will be successful

Tips & Tricks

- ❑ Read the application guidance cover-to-cover & follow directions

- ❑ Have an outside editor review the grant

- ❑ Be kind to your reviewers & minimize use of acronyms & jargon

- ❑ Keep out extraneous information that will distract from your story

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Tips & Tricks

❑ Keep it realistic & ensure your assertions are backed up with data or examples

❑ Answer <u>all</u> questions. If a question doesn't apply to you, respond with an "N/A" or explain why it doesn't apply

❑ If a proposal checklist is provided by the funder, use it to ensure you haven't missed anything

❑ Ensure you can fulfill the timeframe required by the funder

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After Awards are Announced

Congratulations!

- ❑ Forms, forms, forms!

- ❑ Some funders require drafting of a separate grant work plan

- ❑ Execution of grant agreement

- ❑ Don't forget to thank your funder

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After Awards are Announced

What to do if your project was not selected

❑ Schedule a debriefing meeting to gain information and ask questions:

    ----- Not enough funds to give to everyone, i.e. can you position your project to be funded in next round?

    ------Budget? Should you proceed with a portion of the project and return to request funding for the next phase?

    ____Scope? Go prepared with a menu of other priority projects that may be of more interest to the funder

❑ Keep in touch with your funder and send them updates on your community

Thank You !

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