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FIRE GRANTS HELP



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A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE GRANTS PROCESS

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Grants are a great way for your department or agency to receive funding beyond the limits of your operational budget and bridge the gap between resources and needs. Grants can help pay for equipment like radios, vehicles, training, or even provide funding for additional personnel.

But to be successful in winning grants, agencies need to identify the right grants to pursue, write strong applications that state their case for needing grants funding, offer a transparent budget that reflects those needs and follow best practices in writing and administering grants.

This eBook will walk you through the process of creating a strong application and give concrete examples of mistakes to avoid and best practices for a successful application.

Best of luck!
Stay safe,

Sarah Wilson, vice president of the Grant Division at Lexipol

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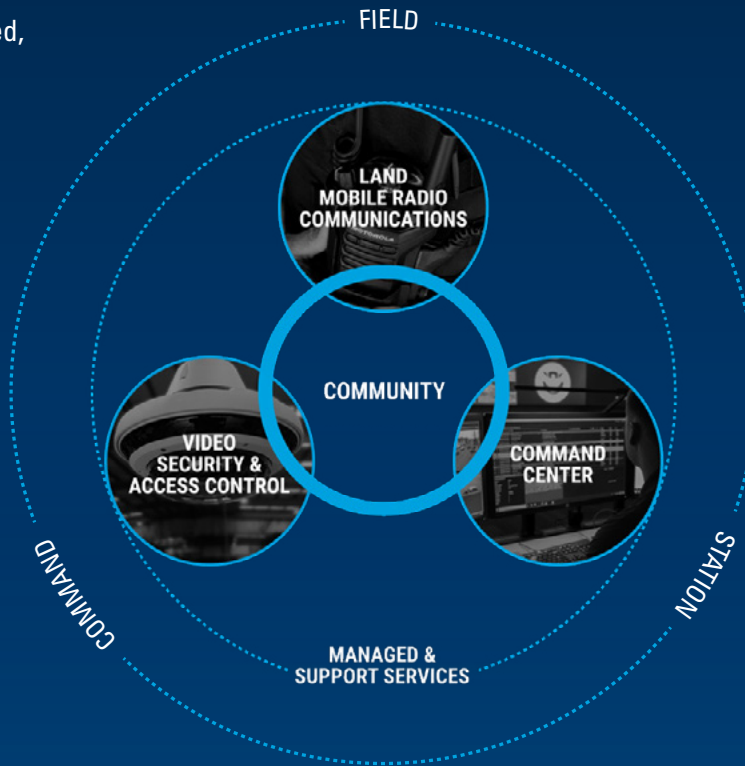
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BEST PRACTICES IN RESEARCHING GRANTS



WHO ARE THE GRANT MAKERS?

Grant funding comes from the following sources: Federal government, State governments, community foundations, private foundations, and corporate foundations (i.e., tech companies, pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, airlines, etc.).

To determine which funders and grant opportunities to pursue, consider your location and the mission of your organization as well as the objective and size of your grant request. Federal grants require the most preregistrations, typically have more involved grant applications and the highest threshold of funding. State applications can vary but most follow federal grant guidelines. Private grants are typically much more straightforward but also have lower thresholds of funding.

WHERE TO START

RESEARCH FOR RURAL AREAS - There are resources for organizations in the less populated, more rural areas of the country just as there are in metropolitan areas. Community foundations are a great place to begin the search and local banks are great supporters of rural priorities. United Way is a national organization with regional affiliates and there is likely one close to you. Through local fundraising efforts, United Way re-allocates funding to their partnering agencies. Check with your United Way agency for local deadlines and their online partner application process.

Another great resource for rural funding is ruralhealthinfo.org. This is a free database of grants specifically for rural regions throughout the U.S.



FEDERAL FUNDING RESEARCH - Most federal funding opportunities can be found at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Police, fire, health departments, school districts, colleges/universities and municipalities will find this website extremely helpful. Grants.gov is free and has opportunities from federal agencies like USDA, FEMA, Department of Health & Human Services, HUD, Department of Transportation, the EPA, etc. The site allows for keyword searching, open, closed and forecasted opportunities, or search by agency. Grants.gov is relatively easy to navigate and has links for applying to as well.

If you still don't find the federal opportunities you're looking for, go directly to the department's website to continue the search (i.e.: [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov), [EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov), [HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov)). Remember to look for the .gov extension in the address before clicking on any search results.

STATE FUNDING RESEARCH - Most state government agencies offer grants just like their federal counterparts. Start by searching for your state agency website – homeland security, education, health, etc. These will vary by state and have different names and offer different opportunities. When searching, type in “your state” plus “Department of Education” or “Health & Human Services,” etc. Also try searching for “your state” plus “grants.” This search might send you down a rabbit hole of loan or lending websites so remember to avoid sites that don't have .gov extensions.

Most states agencies have individual websites but there are some states that offer one main umbrella site for all their funding (i.e.: [iowagrants.gov](https://www.iowagrants.gov); [grants.ca.gov](https://www.grants.ca.gov); [communityaffairs.dc.gov](https://www.communityaffairs.dc.gov); [grantsgateway.ny.gov](https://www.grantsgateway.ny.gov)). These sites have an abundance of information for applicants including contacts, funding allowances, and links for applying. If your state has an online grants database, be sure to bookmark it for reference because they are typically updated each time a new grant opportunity is announced. Once you have the chosen website open, look for a link to “grants,” “funding,” “RFPs” (request for proposal), “NOFO” s (notice of funding opportunity), or similar wording. Look through each section carefully because often the link to grant opportunities is not on the homepage. Eligibility for state grants varies - most are for municipal and/or county government agencies. Some state agencies do offer funding to schools and nonprofits so it's important to study the guidelines for each grant. Keep in mind, deadlines for state grants typically change each year. If an email subscription is available, sign up. This is a convenient way to always be in the know.

FOUNDATIONS - A community foundation is a public charity that focuses on supporting a geographical area, primarily by pooling and utilizing donations that are specifically for addressing community needs and supporting local nonprofit organizations. Community foundations give regionally – their titles are good



indicators of that as they are often called Area Foundation, County Foundation or Community Foundation.

Private foundations are typically endowed by an individual or family. They may or may not offer open grant opportunities, but it is worth researching if there are some in your area. If they don't have grant opportunities on their website, send a letter of introduction. You may receive an invitation or request for more information as a result.

Some foundations have a national or even worldwide reach. Competition for their grant awards may be greater but the grant awards may be greater too. If your nonprofit's focus has a state-wide or even wider focus, you may want to pursue both regional opportunities and national grant opportunities.

GRANTS VS SPONSORSHIPS - In your research, you may come across a company that supports nonprofits through sponsorships rather than grants, or maybe they offer both.

A grant is defined as a financial award given to an organization or individual for a specific purpose. Grants can be for program support, capital improvements, endowments, general operating and more. The grant may have many restrictions and are usually active for a year or more.

A sponsorship is an exchange of financial support of an event for marketing which might include logo placement or a promotion of some kind. The sponsorship may also have requirements associated with it such as tickets to an event, name recognition or event signage. Sponsorships are usually for a single event or series of events. Sponsorships are mostly made by for-profit businesses but can lead to worthwhile relationships with funders in your area.

FOCUS, ELIGIBILITY & DEADLINES - Finding grant funding has become increasingly competitive as more organizations vie for the pool of available philanthropic dollars. When choosing which grants to pursue, consider the source. A grantmaking foundation or government grant will usually outline its priority funding areas in their grant criteria, things like "health and wellness," "food insecurity," or "education." A tech company may want to focus on STEM or technology in schools while a pharmaceutical company's foundation may only want to hear from health-oriented organizations.

Most grant providers will state clearly in their guidelines who is eligible to apply. Most often, 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible. Many times, schools, government agencies and public colleges/universities are also eligible. While some funders do fund faith-based/church groups, sport teams, or clubs, many do not. These eligibility requirements should also be clearly stated in their guidelines.



To make it more efficient for you (and for the funder), apply for only those opportunities that are a good fit. This will improve your chances. Take the time to read their guidelines where requirements will be clearly identified. Funders do want to hear from nonprofits – especially when their priorities align.

Foundations offer grants once per year, quarterly, and sometimes year-round or “rolling.” Each foundation and funder you discover will be different from the previous. Some require an LOI (letter of intent) before you can move forward with an application. Guidelines for an LOI should be posted on their website along with application guidelines. LOI deadlines are typically one or two months before the application deadline.

After carefully examining the focus, deadlines, eligibility, and available opportunities, if you are still in doubt about the suitability of your request, send an email or give them a call to discuss. The time spent researching beforehand will be advantageous before beginning the application process.

ONLINE DIRECTORIES VS INTERNET

SEARCHES - Another way to search for funding online is to use a foundation directory site (i.e.: Foundation Directory or The Grantsmanship Center). Here you will find background information about foundations and funders in your area. Sites like these will provide grant histories of each foundation as well as focus areas and geographic

restrictions. You won't find specific grants and deadlines on these sites, but they should include links to the funder's websites. Online directory sites do have subscription fees.

Grant database sites (i.e.: Grantfinder.com; instrumentl.com; Grantwatch.com; etc.) will allow you to search for grants as well as funders in your region. These sites also have fees.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX - What are the busiest, most thriving businesses in your area? What events draw the largest crowds? Who has the resources to give back? Take note of those businesses that are sponsoring events in your area. Professional teams, airlines, universities, hospitals, manufacturers, etc. are invested in the well-being of the people in their communities. These types of businesses and organizations will support the nonprofits in their area when they have the resources. Check their websites for grant information, call for details on their community support guidelines, or send a letter of introduction. Be sure to follow up.

REMEMBER - To avoid missing deadlines, keep a calendar of the best-suited grants you find along the way. When available, sign up for email reminders from funders. Send funders with similar values and priorities a letter of introduction. Check your bookmarked sites each month for updates and new grant opportunities. Best of luck in your funding search!



WHAT'S IN A BUDGET?

While budget creation can seem like a daunting task, with proper planning and attention to detail, you can create a comprehensive budget that not only meets the requirements of the grant, but, more importantly, effectively lays the case for the necessity of fiscally supporting your project.

The guidance below outlines necessary steps in the budget creation process:

1. UNDERSTAND THE GRANT REQUIREMENTS:

The first step in creating a grant budget is to understand the requirements of the grant. Read the guidelines carefully and make note of any specific instructions or restrictions on how the funds can be used. This will help you to tailor your budget to the grant's objectives and ensure that you are not requesting funding for any ineligible expenses.

2. DETERMINE THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDING AVAILABLE: Once you have a clear understanding of the grant requirements, determine the total amount of funding available. This will help you to establish a

baseline for your budget and identify any limitations on the scope of your project. While you are free to ask for the full funding amount offered, it is most important to think through your proposed project and backwards plan expenses that align to the scope of work.

3. CREATE A DETAILED PROJECT PLAN: Work with your program design team to better understand the scope of your project and the various activities they hope to implement. From here, you can collaboratively create a detailed project plan. This will help you to identify the resources required for each activity and estimate the associated costs. As you develop the project plan, it is important to keep a keen eye out for any overlooked elements that may require additional funding such as marketing costs, software solutions, materials and supplies, etc.

4. IDENTIFY THE DIRECT COSTS: Identify the direct costs associated with each activity in your project plan. Direct costs are expenses that can be associated to a specific activity or



function of the proposed project or program. Be sure to work with vendors to assess overall costs including space rental, shipping and receiving. Examples of direct costs might include salaries, wages, project-specific software, equipment, marketing materials, as well as contractual services.

- 5. IDENTIFY THE INDIRECT COSTS:** Identify the indirect costs associated with your project. Indirect costs are expenses that are necessary for the project but cannot be fully attributed to a specific activity or function. Indirect costs support both the project and the overall organizational expenses necessary to keep you afloat. It's important to note any restrictions the funder may outline in this regard as some organizations have explicit policies regarding reasonable overhead they will and will not support. Examples of indirect costs include rent, utilities, insurance, organizational software solutions and administrative expenses.
- 6. CREATE A SPREADSHEET:** Create a spreadsheet that lists each expense in your budget, including the total amount. Organize your line item expenses by category, such as personnel, supplies, and travel and separate the expenses into direct and indirect cost categories.
- 7. DEVELOP A BUDGET NARRATIVE:** Develop a budget narrative that explains the rationale behind each expense in your budget and creates a compelling case of need. A budget narrative typically outlines each expense

category and offers you an opportunity to describe how you will allocate the funding to support the specific activities of your proposal. Typically, larger grant opportunities, such as those provided by the federal government, provide a template for you to complete this portion of the grant, so keep an eye out for any required forms. The budget narrative is critical as it helps justify your line item expenses to the grant reviewers and demonstrates that you have carefully considered the resources required for your proposal.

- 8. REVIEW AND REFINE YOUR BUDGET:** Review your budget carefully to ensure that it aligns with the grant requirements and accurately reflects the resources required for your project. As a team, get together to review the narrative and sift through each element of the proposal to think through any programmatic direct and organizational indirect costs needed to support the work. Refine your budget as necessary to ensure that it is both realistic and feasible.
- 9. SUBMIT YOUR BUDGET:** Submit your budget along with your grant proposal. Be sure to follow all grant submission guidelines.

In conclusion, creating a grant budget requires careful planning, attention to detail, and a thorough understanding of the grant requirements. By following these key steps, you can create a comprehensive budget that effectively supports your project and meets the requirements of the grant.



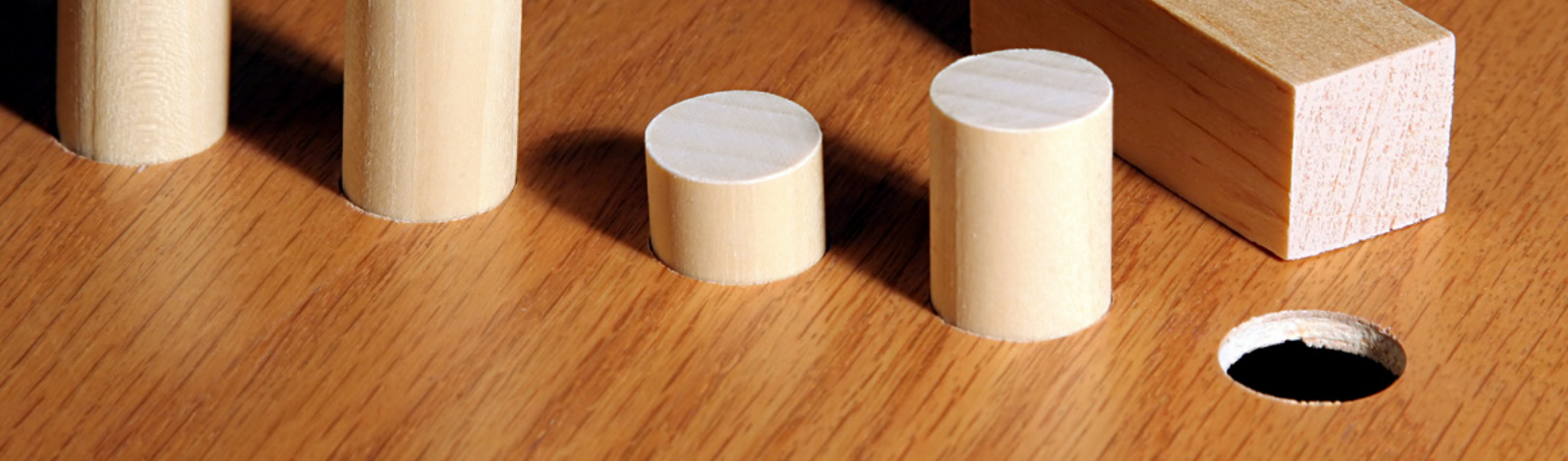
COMMON MISTAKES WHEN APPLYING FOR GRANTS

Drafting a grant application is a time-consuming and important process. It can also be intimidating, depending on the applicant's experience, as even seasoned grant writers can become overwhelmed when tackling more complex federal applications. This article will discuss the most common mistakes agencies make when writing needs assessments and creating budgets – and how to avoid them.

Grant application requirements can often leave new writers overwhelmed. Sometimes there is so much to say, you don't know where to start. Other times you may struggle to fill the space. Some of the most common mistakes that cause applicants to not be funded are explained below:

1. NOT FULLY REVIEWING THE GRANT'S GUIDANCE.

Grant projects can take anywhere from several to over a hundred hours to compose a competitive application. Throughout the course of an application's development, there are a lot of details to keep straight. Prior to beginning an application, always review the grant's guidelines, or Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Federal program guidance can range from 25 to over 75 pages, so it is understandable that you may overlook a few details upon initial review. It is also not uncommon that after spending several hours or days working on a grant project, small, but important, elements can be forgotten. This can be as simple as not naming attachments in the



required format or something more detrimental, such as including an unallowable expense in the proposed budget. Even grant writers with years of experience can make these mistakes as they fall into a rhythm, particularly with programs that are released on an annual basis where they may leverage their knowledge based on previous years' guidance.

That said, inadvertent mistakes made by an applicant can have a major impact during an application's review. As more funders adopt phased review processes, including computer scoring methods as a preliminary verification, this has become more important than ever. Seemingly minor mistakes can cause an application to get thrown out before it even gets seen by a reviewer just by not meeting these benchmarks. To avoid these costly mistakes, some writers may find it helpful to print the guidance and highlight important elements to reference throughout the application development process. Others may prefer to take notes to use as a quick reference throughout the process. Some federal programs even include "application checklists" within the NOFO that can be used to verify that you have included everything. Whatever your style, never assume you know what this year's program may require, even if you have written it before, and always do a final check prior to submission.

2. TRYING TO FIT A SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE.

Typically, there are two methods agencies employ when identifying grant funding opportunities. The first involves strategic planning, internal

discussions with key stakeholders, and/or identifying which project(s) an agency needs to prioritize for funding in a reasonable amount of time – the preferred method. The second, which may arguably be more habitual, is receiving a notice or announcement from a funding agency, or having a leader within the organization, municipality, or outside community member pass along that a funding program is available for consideration. With the latter, it can often place added stress on the organization to apply regardless of whether the agency had a project in mind or not. If the grant program is programmatic or evidence-based, requesting a simple equipment purchase will not be competitive. Make mindful decisions when pursuing grant funding – projects should help support your entity's ongoing initiatives and priorities rather than just checking a box.

3. BEING TOO VAGUE IN YOUR RESPONSE OR NOT CLEARLY ADDRESSING THE QUESTION(S).

Frequently, grant applications are written by individuals within an agency or organization whose role is not exclusively that of a grant writer. An opportunity arises and you are tasked with writing a grant application because the topic or category falls within your expertise. Grant writers can be police officers, firefighters, city engineers, parks and recreation directors, administrators, teachers, etc. While writing a grant application may feel like an added item on your to-do list, it's worth the extra effort to be thorough in your response. You have a unique skill set in your area of expertise that likely aligns with the objectives



of the grant project, and this is your time to shine. Be mindful to clearly address each question in detail and explain how your proposed project directly ties into the grant program's objectives. Some questions may seem redundant but try to structure your responses to make good use of the space. In those situations, think of it as an extra opportunity to further explain your project. Try to avoid copying responses verbatim. If it is a topic that has already been addressed, use those opportunities to reiterate the important highlights and expand further.

4. ASSUMING REVIEWERS HAVE MORE INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR AGENCY, COMMUNITY, OR PROJECT.

One of the most common mistakes applicants make is assuming reviewers know more than they do. As the applicant, you have a deep understanding of your organization and grant project. This often means when writing the application, you might unintentionally leave out details that seem either irrelevant or obvious. However, whether applying to a foundation, state, or federal funder, most likely their reviewers are not familiar with you or your organization. In fact, they may not even be familiar with your industry. Therefore, always include background information on your agency or organization, the community you serve, and your project. Reviewers sometimes read thousands of applications in one cycle. To stand out from the crowd and create a more compelling application, think of the application as a way to tell your story.

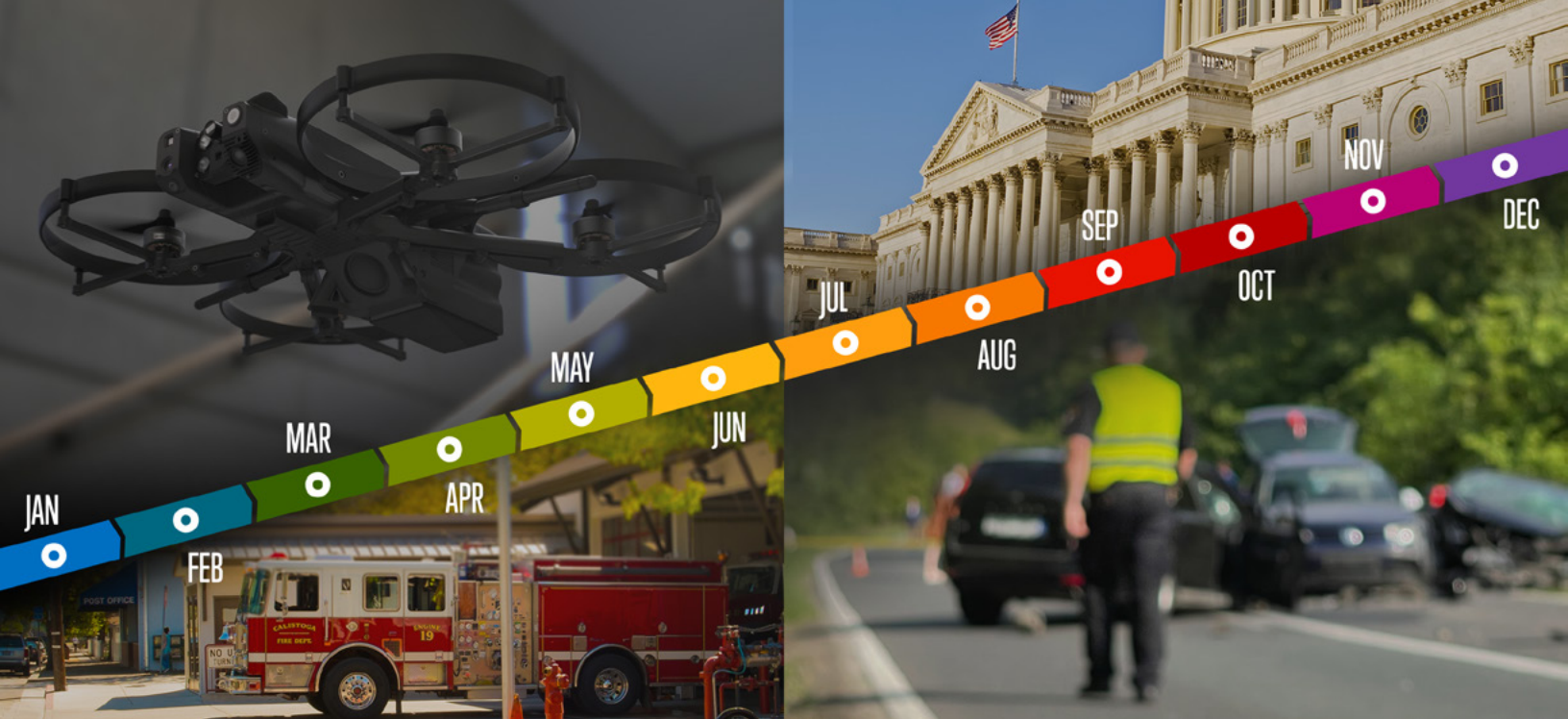
5. LACK OF JUSTIFICATION.

An ideal, well-rounded grant proposal includes a problem statement, background on the organization and/or community, summary of the proposed objectives, identification of any collaboration/stakeholders/community support, who/what the proposed project will impact, outline of financial need, measurable results/deliverables, timeline of activities, and how the project will be sustained after grant funding. If the project has minimal impact, lacks a sense of priority, or does not contain a compelling rationale for why funding is necessary, it will not meet the necessary standards of a competitive grant application.

6. BUDGETS.

Financial details are a vital component of a grant proposal, both in terms of detailing an organization's financial need as well as the proposed grant budget. There are often several budget-related requirements for grant programs, including an initial SF-424 (federal programs), budget detail worksheet, budget narrative, and potentially organizational audits or budgets. Make sure to include all the necessary attachments with the application package. Also verify budget calculations prior to submission as it is quite common for them to be incorrect.

It is also crucial to provide a strong budget justification. Separate costs by line items (e.g., equipment, conference, salary) and further drill down to unit cost, number of units, and



sub-total. This removes ambiguity for reviewers while showcasing the organization’s strong understanding of what will be needed, along with the fact that you have the capacity and expertise to execute if an award is secured. Avoid including specific manufacturers or vendor names within the budget. If for one reason or another that changes during procurement, it often requires a budget amendment through the funder, which creates additional headaches. Keeping items general, such as “body-worn cameras,” mitigates that issue.

Lastly, make sure to calculate any required match amount properly. If there is a cost share, the grant program’s maximum allowable cost is not the total project cost, but the total amount that can be requested for funding assistance. In simplest terms, typically if there is a \$75,000 program maximum and 25% cost share, your total project costs could total \$100,000. Some federal programs have a slightly different cost share formula. For example, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) uses the following formula: $\text{Total Project Cost}/1.15$ (when cost share is 15%) = Funding Assistance Maximum. AFG’s formula results in a lower cost share than a standard 15% calculation, which benefits the applicant.

7. OVERPROMISING/ OVERCOMMITMENT.

Applicants often have lofty ambitions when seeking grant funds. It is important to set realistic expectations when outlining proposed activities and results. Under promising and over delivering is always preferred. If the opposite is true, you risk compromising your grant award and potentially impacting future applications. Make sure your proposal includes attainable results that can be achieved within the grant’s period of performance.

8. UNDERSTANDING TIMELINES.

Often new applicants do not have a clear understanding of the grant process from submission to award, which can affect a proposal’s timeline of activities and subsequent deliverables. It can also impact an organization’s ability to move forward with the project upon award. Once a grant’s submission deadline has closed, funding agencies can take anywhere from several weeks to over a year to announce awards. Reviewing this information with internal project stakeholders and designing a reasonable schedule is a critical step to ensure the organization is positioned to execute a contract and initiate the project once an award has been made.



DEVELOPING A COMPETITIVE NEED STATEMENT

Each year, it is important to prepare for the onslaught of potential grant opportunities. About 90% of a grant application is completed before the grant even opens. This includes researching potential opportunities, building a team of stakeholders, collecting data, and completing administrative requirements. Since most notice of funding opportunities or solicitations do not significantly change from year to year, the next step is to begin developing your application narratives.

A typical grant application will request the major components below:

- **Project Summary/Abstract**
 - Typically, a 100- to 200-word application summary

- **Project Narratives**
 - Problem Statement
 - Program Implementation/Description
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Capabilities and Competencies
 - Sustainability
- **Budget Worksheet/Narratives**

Developing the narrative portion of any grant application is an opportunity to tell your community's story. However, one of the most important components of a grant application is completed after the grant cycle opens: the need statement or the problem statement. Whether the solicitation requests a traditional project narrative format or provides a series of questions to answer, every applicant is expected to demonstrate their community's need!



Below, we'll take a closer look at the need statement:

PURPOSE OF A NEED STATEMENT

A solid justification for any project begins with describing the need. A need statement should show that you have a solid understanding of your community's needs or any gaps in services a target population may be experiencing. It's the foundation for the budget request! It's your community's story!

In addition, a need statement demonstrates:

- What is the problem? Any real-life stories?
- Why is it a problem? Any data to show this?
- Who is the target population?
- A description of the gap in services. What is going on now? What should it be?
- Who else recognizes the problem?
- What will happen if the need is not addressed?

All-in-all, a competitive need statement will answer these questions and a peer reviewer, who is not a member of your community, should be able to clearly identify the problem and reason for your request.

WHAT'S IN A NEED STATEMENT

A major component of a competitive need statement includes data. Demonstrating the need through community data is one way to clearly demonstrate that you and your organization, the applicant, understands the need or any gaps in services. **Below are the two types of data to include:**

- Qualitative: Real-life stories, examples
- Quantitative: A focus on numbers

QUALITATIVE

Qualitative data is an opportunity for you to share your community's stories firsthand. When collecting stories, you will need to reach out to community members or community organizations who can share.

TIP: This is also an opportunity for you to collect letters of support for your project to attach to the application. Letters of support show that you involved community stakeholders and you have their buy-in, increasing the competitiveness of your application.



This can also include:

- Organizational History (mission statement, background, community facts, etc.).
- Demographics (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status).

QUANTITATIVE

Quantitative data equals a focus on numbers. For example, if you are addressing mental health illness in your community, how many individuals are struggling with mental illness? How many are seeking treatment?

Also:

- Use local data.
- Compare your local data to state and national data.

TIP: Your community stakeholders and organizations may already have this data available!

COMPONENTS OF A COMPETITIVE NEED STATEMENT

A successful application includes a competitive need statement. Every competitive need statement includes:

- Clear identification of the priority problem.
- Tangible evidence of the problem (qualitative and quantitative data).
- Identification of strategic partnerships (community stakeholders and organizations).

Once data collection and the description of need is complete, you have a solid foundation for the rest of your application.

NOTEWORTHY: ITEMS TO CONSIDER AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Finally, below are key considerations to help you prepare to apply:

- **Create a grants calendar:** You have started your search and when you find a few great opportunities add the estimated due date to your calendar, or preferably, to a calendar that every stakeholder can access.
- **Start now:** Now that you have tools to get started, now is the time to start collecting data and creating a strong need statement.
- **Data Collection:**
 - Start collecting data now! The department began collecting data before the grant program was identified.
 - Data can be qualitative (personal stories of those impacted by the problem) or quantitative (an identified increase in response times).



CASE STUDY OF A SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATION

Over the last several years, law enforcement has experienced significant changes. Social factors, perceptions of policing, increased violence and the demand for technological improvements have changed the landscape of policing in the 21st century. Combine that with budget reductions, staffing and retention challenges, and deadly force interactions that garner national attention, and you have agencies that readily acknowledge additional tools and innovation are necessary to bring change. New hot topics like officer health and wellness, de-escalation and co-responder programs are at the forefront of conversation, while things like community policing have come full circle from earlier eras and are now widely embraced as standard.

With that, police agencies are being asked to do more now than ever. Implementing programs in these new areas can come with substantial cost. This includes expensive equipment and technology and the need to hire more officers and support staff to accommodate more flexible, proactive policing and help alleviate overtime related to additional training and court time. While the modernization of law enforcement is crucial to improve response and provide safer police interactions, how do agencies secure funding for these critical initiatives?

Below we explore key elements of one agency's successful grant proposal and consider what your agency can take from them.



PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

A small law enforcement agency in Pennsylvania had experienced an increase in violent crime coupled with significantly low clearance rates and was encountering roadblocks with potential witnesses afraid of coming forward because of a lack of successful prosecutions. The department was also seeking to improve community relations through greater transparency and leverage more effective training aids in areas like effective communication, problem solving, de-escalation and professionalism.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The agency sought approximately \$100,000 in state funding through the Local Law Enforcement Support grant program to implement a body-worn camera (BWC) program. They believed this would help produce improved prosecutorial outcomes and an overall reduction in violent crime. The goals of the project were to enhance community and officer safety, support evidentiary effectiveness and promote law enforcement transparency and accountability. The BWC technology would provide clear and indisputable evidence in criminal cases and with citizen

complaints, as well as a transparent means to build an environment of public trust. All sworn officers would be required to use the BWCs while on duty.

The department would also develop a body-worn camera policy in accordance with the state's accreditation commission and the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). As part of the deliverables for the proposed project, the department would track and compare violent crime and clearance rates pre- and post-award, as well as collaborate with the district attorney's office to collect data on prosecutorial outcomes. It would also disseminate officer surveys to determine usefulness and acquire feedback on the equipment.

APPLICATION TAKEAWAYS

The department incorporated several key elements that led to a persuasive grant application and ultimately a funding award. They were able to identify a priority problem and provide tangible evidence by analyzing their increase in service calls in violent crime and low clearance rates. They then correlated the existing service gap to internal barriers.

Potential witnesses were unwilling and/or afraid to cooperate with investigations because they feared retaliation or the potential for interactions with suspects if they were not convicted.

Present-day juries often expect video and/or audio evidence to support verbal testimonies and physical evidence during criminal proceedings to feel comfortable convicting beyond reasonable doubt. Some community members also mistrust police, and the department was seeking ways to improve relations. When the department received a citizen complaint against an officer, there was no way to verify accurate information regarding the interaction, since at the time the department did not have body-worn cameras. The BWCs would also further facilitate community connections and improve relations and understanding between the community and law enforcement.

The agency clearly defined their goals, objectives and outcomes in alignment with the funding program. They also proposed a collaborative strategic partnership with their district attorney's office. They were able to outline a strong financial need and compelling cost benefit for the project. While \$100,000 is no small change, the return on investment easily justified the cost. These elements comprised the agency's strategic plan to implement their proposed project and led to a standout grant application for this state grant.

CONCLUSION

For decades law enforcement agencies have faced limited resources while balancing competing priorities. However, the rapid rise in operational, personnel, equipment and technology costs in recent years has left many in even more precarious positions. With shorter equipment life cycles and rapidly advancing technology, departments are often scrambling for alternatives. Luckily, foundation, state and federal grant funding is available to help. With a thoughtful project plan and a baseline understanding of what contributes to a successful grant application, your agency can be well positioned to prosper.



NOTE: While the above example is specific to law enforcement, the key take-aways can be easily translated for various applicant entities, including non-profit organizations, educational institutions, municipal government, fire departments, and more. Applicants are encouraged to develop a strategic approach to their identified problem, thinking beyond linear solutions to implement collaborative proposals. Financial need is often a significant aspect when a funder makes award determinations. Applicants who lack the resources to address a problem without supplemental funding receive priority consideration. Including quantifiable information on who will directly benefit from a project in comparison to the total project cost will help determine the overall benefit. Detailing your organization's budget components, revenue sources and limitations, and any increasing expenses and operational costs further emphasizes your inability to fund the proposed project without assistance. Incorporating these best practices within your organization's application will create a compelling proposal like the example above.

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