Place Matters: Working Together to Create Healthy Communities

Tips on Writing Better Grant Applications and Securing Funding

November 2, 2010

Tips on Writing Better Grant Applications and Securing Funding

Presenter…

Rick Horton, GPC

- Grants Manager, The Oregon Zoo Foundation
- BA (biology), Colby College (Waterville, ME)
- Non-profit sector (1978 – present)
- Education program development & fundraising (CT, MA, SD, OR)
- Related professional activities
  - Willamette Valley Development Officers
  - Grant Professionals Association
  - Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Contact:

E-mail: hortonrh@gmail.com

Why Do We Need Grant Funding?

- It's easy money

<p style="text-align:center;color:red;font-size:2em;">NOT!!</p>

- Money can be used wherever we need it

<p style="text-align:center;color:red;font-size:2em;">NOT (usually)</p>

Why Do We Need Grant Funding?

- To fund priority, mission-driven projects

- To provide budget relief (direct/indirect costs)

- To support innovation

- To address community needs

- To demonstrate competency & credibility

- The grant proposal process helps us plan!

G.R.E.A.T. Grants Are….

Genuine … don't chase the $$

Responsive … address identified needs

Effective … have measurable outcomes

Accountable … financially & programmatically

Timely … they help if/when you're ready

G.R.E.A.T. Grants Can…

- provide early narrative and financial information for requests by your entire development team
  - Individuals
  - Corporations

- help leverage additional grants & donations
  - early grants attract others
  - challenge grants stimulate fundraising efforts
  - "topping off" grants can bring you to goal

Proposal Fundamentals

1. Evidence of Need or Problem
2. Project Goals and Objectives
3. Organization Credibility and Capacity
4. Project Design
5. Project Budget
6. Project Evaluation
7. Future Funding Plan
8. Executive Summary
9. Cover Letter
10. Attachments
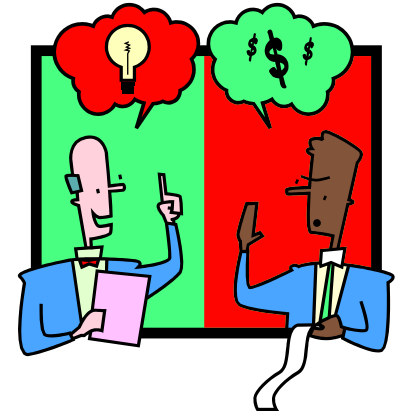
**Developing the Local Program Plan:
Definitions, Instructions, and Best Practice
Objective (BPO) Guidance Sheets**

**County Tobacco Prevention and Education
Programs
2010-2011**

**Tobacco Prevention and Education Program
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section
Public Health Division
Oregon Department of Human Services**

Developing the Local Program Plan: Definitions, Instructions, and Best Practice Objective Guidance Sheets

Table of Contents

Developing the Local Program Plan: Definitions, Instructions, and Best Practice Objective Guidance Sheets

What are SMART Objectives?

SMART Objectives are:

- ***Specific****: Describe exactly who will do what to address local community need(s).*

- ***Measurable****: Describe a change that can be measured or counted by the end of the grant period.*
  - *How many policies will be adopted?*
  - What will change from baseline?

- ***Achievable****: The objective should be doable. It should be realistic given the time, staffing,* resources, and community will.

- ***Relevant****: The SMART objective is clearly linked to the BPO.*

- ***Time-framed****: There is a timeline or "due date" (e.g., the end of the fiscal year).*
  - The SMART Objective should be achievable within the timeframe of the grant cycle even if the overall Best Practice Objective is projected to take longer to accomplish.

Commonly cited proposal weaknesses*

Objectives

Weak - poorly stated, not measurable

Workplan (Methods/Activities)

- limited detail in quarterly activities ("copy & paste" strategy not adequate)
- ill-defined description of how project "flows"
- lack of clarity how project events & activities moves the program towards the accomplishment of objectives, goals and policy implementation
- limited ideas & strategies for media and media advocacy
- weak partnership brainstorming and development

*Oregon Department of Public Health
Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Prevention Section
October 2010

However….

According to the DHS Question & Answer page*:

Q. How do I list activities that occur in multiple quarters in the new program plan template?

A. You can simply copy and paste any activities that span multiple quarters. It's okay that some activities repeat.

WEAK Proposal Plan Example

Plan of Action Subcategories:

Coordination and Collaboration (same for all four quarters)

- Tobacco Program Coordinator (TPC) will facilitate meetings to Work with Tribal Tobacco Coalition (TTC) and Tribal Agencies.

- TPC- will participate in Community Events Qtrly for Wellness and Casino Employee Events to raise awareness on Tobacco Free policy & Employee Cessation Services

- TPC will facilitate Tribal Tobacco Coalition meeting with Government Departments to start policy process, and BPO education processes.

GOOD Proposal Plan Example

Plan of Action Subcategories:

<u>Coordination and Collaboration</u>

- Work with Human Resources to promote and recruit for a worksite wellness committee. (Q1)

- Identify champions within County to plan and implement employee activities such as lunch walking groups, healthy vending machine choices, StairWell, and the Great American Smokeout. (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)

- Recruit employees who support a tobacco free environment policy (Q1)

- Collaborate with department heads to promote worksite wellness activities. (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)

- Collaborate with local Chamber for weekly farmer's market promotion to County employees. (Q1)

WEAK Proposal Plan Example

Policy Development, Promotion, & Implementation
(same for Q1 – Q4)

- Develop Personnel Policy with Human Resource Director
- Legal Team -Resolution development and codes
- Facilitate information sharing with General Council, Board of Trustees, information sharing
- Department Administrators-input on TTC & policy building
- Facilitate information sharing with Education Administrators
- Facilitate information sharing with Housing Administrators

GOOD Proposal Plan Example

<u>Policy Development, Promotion and Implementation</u>
(same for Q2 –Q4)

- Using employee participation in the wellness program, develop a worksite wellness policy to sustain wellness efforts in the workplace.

- Present tobacco free environment policy, worksite wellness policies, and other health promotion policies to the board of commissioners for ultimate policy adoption.

- Work with HR to develop policies.

- Promote benefits of tobacco free environment policies to employees, department heads, and commissioners through employee intranet.

Project Streamline: Guide to Streamlining series

- **Project Streamline** is an effort of funders and nonprofits to improve grant application, monitoring and reporting practices.
    - Grants Managers Network
    - Association of Fundraising Professionals
    - Association of Small Foundations
    - Council on Foundations
    - Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers
    - The Foundation Center
    - Grantmakers for Effective Organizations
    - National Council of Nonprofits
    - For more information, go to *www.projectstreamline.org*.

TIPS ON WRITING BETTER GRANT APPLICATIONS

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE APPLYING FOR A GRANT

1. Is our work aligned with the funder's mission, goals, and guidelines?

2. What is the likelihood of receiving funding?

3. Do the funder's application and reporting requirements allow us to fairly and adequately portray our work, its challenges, and our successes?

4. Does the funder make their application and reporting requirements and timelines clear up-front—including budgets and any attachments?

5. Is the amount of effort required to complete the application, reporting, and program delivery something we want to invest in, given our staffing levels and other resources and priorities

6. Who at the funder organization is available to answer our questions? If no one is available, is it worth applying?

TIPS ON WRITING BETTER GRANT APPLICATIONS

Online Applications and Reporting (Relieving the Burden)

Tips for Grantseekers

1. Read guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions provided by the funder

2. Take care when writing

3. Back up critical information

4. Voice your concerns

TIPS ON WRITING BETTER GRANT APPLICATIONS

GRANT BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

Tips for Grantseekers

1. Post your information online

2. Watch for any red flags you might have

3. Be sure that your grant budgets and financial information are internally consistent

4. Ask if you're not sure about a funder's requirements for financial information

5. Be upfront and clear about your project's real cycles

TIPS ON WRITING BETTER GRANT APPLICATIONS

RIGHT-SIZING THE GRANTMAKING PROCESS

Tips for Grantseekers

1. Apply to funders whose missions and goals are aligned with yours
2. Make sure you know the full range of the funder's application and reporting requirements, and assess the time and effort necessary to meet them in light of the size of the potential grant
3. When applying for a grant, don't send information that was not requested by the grantmaker
4. Make information about your organization accessible to funders by posting often-requested materials on your website
5. Keep good records
6. Incorporate application and reporting costs into your budget
7. Be prepared to offer grantmakers constructive feedback on their grant application and reporting process

WHO'S THE BEST? WHO'S THE WORST?

- If you're a grantseeker or grantee, we hope you'll nominate grantmaker organizations with great and not-so-great application and reporting practices.

- Just fill out a quick survey at **http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6B95J9W.** Your thoughts will be anonymous, and none of the nominated organizations will be highlighted by name without their consent

Responding to a "NO"… part one

- **Before the Call: Background Work**
  - Revisit the current landscape

- **Review file**
  - **Proposal, rejection letter, old/new foundation information**
  - **Develop list of talking points relevant to project and to funding prospect**

- **What Do We Want Our Call To Accomplish?**

- **When would you suggest that we send you something and in what form would you prefer?**

- **Are there any other potential sources of funding that you might suggest?**

- **We would love to have you come out for a visit to learn more about us and our education, conservation and cultural services to the community.   How might we make such a visit possible?**

GRANT PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Funding Source, Project

Foundation Funder

- **Website /Phone:**

- **Funding Contact/Title:**

- **General Operating or Project - Name:**

- **New/Renewal:**

- **Identify Board connection (if any):**

Timeline

- **Deadline:**

- **Date Application Mailed:**

- **Anticipated Funding Decision:**

GRANT PROPOSAL CHECKLIST, cont'd.

If Declined

- Submission entered in database?
- Declination Date:
- Thank you letter sent:
- Followup phone call (if declined):
- *Questions to funder:*
    - *1. Is there anything we could have done differently in our proposal?*
    - *2. May we resubmit for your next funding cycle?*
    - *3. Are you aware of any other foundations that we might approach?*
- Resubmission Date:

GRANT PROPOSAL CHECKLIST, cont'd.

<u>Financial</u>

- **Amount Requested:**

- **Amount Awarded:**

- **Date of Award Letter:**

- **Report Due:**

- **Thank you letter sent:**

- **Notes:**

Stewardship

- Thank Yous (your call, ED letter, board if involved)
- Rejection Letters
  – Follow Up
- Recognition of funder (as approved & promised)
- Reports (interim & final)
  – Programmatic
  – Financial
- Post-grant (as appropriate)

Grant Management

- Post grant meeting with staff to review:
  - Schedule of key activities (including evaluation)
  - Specific responsibilities
  - Budgetary impacts
- Deadlines
  - Reports from staff (internal)
  - Reports to funders (external)
- Tracking
  - Proposals submitted/pending
  - Proposals funded
  - Proposals denied
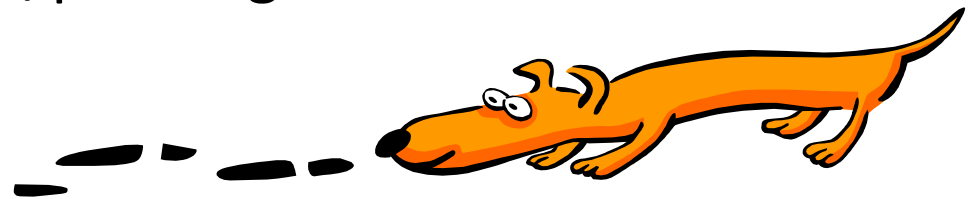
Federal Funding Sources

- A-Z Index of Federal Agencies
http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
http://www.recovery.gov/Opportunities/Pages/Grants.aspx
http://oregon.gov/recovery/StimulusReporting/ARRA_Projects.shtml

- National Science Foundation (NSF)
http://www.nsf.gov/funding/

- US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/nofas/index.html

- US Department of Commerce (DOC)
http://www.commerce.gov/Grants/index.htm

- US Department of Defense (DOD)
http://www.defense.gov/RegisteredSites/RegisteredSites.aspx

- US Department of Education (ED)
http://www.ed.gov/fund/landing.jhtml

- US Department of Energy (DOE)
http://www.energy.gov/sciencetech/grants.htm

Federal Funding Sources, cont'd.

- US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) http://www.hhs.gov/grants/

- US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) http://www.dhs.gov/xopnbiz/grants/

- US Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD) http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/topics/grants

- US Department of Justice (DOJ) http://www.justice.gov/10grants/

- US Department of Labor (DOL) http://www.dol.gov/dol/grants2.htm and http://www.doleta.gov/grants/

- US Department of State (DOS) http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/subject/index.htm

- US Department of the Interior (DOI) http://www.fws.gov/grants/ and http://www.usgs.gov/contracts/grants/

- US Department of the Treasury (Treasury) http://fms.treas.gov/faq/grants.html

- US Department of Transportation (DOT) http://www.dot.gov/ost/m60/grant/grelate.htm

- US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/

- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) http://www.epa.gov/epahome/grants.htm

Thank you & Good Luck!