



# **THE FUNDAMENTALS OF GRANT SEEKING AND *WRITING* FOR IDAHO ORGANIZATIONS**

Alisa Anderson and Kathleen Lewis  
Public Transportation Advisory Council

# Welcome to the Idaho Public Transportation Summit...



# Introductions – Your Experience

- How many of you are employed by a public transportation agency?
- How many of you have previously written and submitted grant applications to organizations other than ITD?
- Of those that have applied how many have been awarded a grant?
- Of those awarded how many have administered the award from beginning to end?

# Funding Portfolio Status

- Types of Funding:
  - Infrastructure
  - Equipment
  - Program/Operations
  - Technology
  - Compliance
- Does your Organization have a capital projects budget that is accumulating dollars in reserve for matching fund requirements?



# Organizational Information

- Is there in-house staff or an accounting firm which performs an annual audit that can assist in preparing financial information for a grant application?
- Does the Organization you work for have multiple divisions and/or departments?
- Does your Organization have sufficient operating equipment?





# Operational Information

- Does your public safety personnel have sufficient personal protective equipment?
- Does your Organization take advantage of the free grant workshops and certifications available through state sponsored programs?
- Does your Organization have citizen volunteers and/or advocates who can assist with grant seeking and writing?



# A Few More Questions...

Does your Organization have planning documents to support your requests?

- Strategic Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Multi-Modal Transportation Plan
- Economic Development Plan (Local)
- Facilities Master Plan
- Conservation Plan
- Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan

# Key to Success = Planning the Proposal in Advance

- Logic models are road maps to your destination – Does it make sense?
- Use graphics i.e. tables, charts and/or photos.
- Shows how project outcomes are linked to resources, activities, and outputs.
- Short and Long Term Outcomes – Be specific!
- Collaborate with other entities to create a multi-jurisdictional or regional project.



# Prepare in Advance

Maintain a library of current supporting materials:

- Most recent financial audit and financial statement for your organization.
- IRS Letter of Determination.
- Complete list of Staff and Board of Directors.
- Pertinent Certifications (Certified Grant Administrator).
- Keep copies of past proposals, including cover letters, budgets, and supporting information that can be modified and updated.
- Compose example letters of support and/or participation.
- Maintain statistics and supporting evidence for the project.

# Collaboration Maybe the Key

- It is the new “Name of the Game.”
- Funders Expectations.
- Joint Proposal.
- Combining Resources.
- Letters of Support and Participation.
- Administrative Responsibilities.
- Fiscal Agent.

# What are the First Questions?

## Eligibility and Applicability

- How to determine if your Organization is eligible to apply for this specific grant program.
  - Look for City, Township, Local Government, Non- Profit 501 (c)(3) or other designated Non-Profit
- Contact project officer with questions if unsure.
- Does the eligible activities of the grant announcement fit your project or program?
- Or, are you putting together a project or program after reading the grant announcement?
- Round Project Square Funding = Poor Proposal?!

# Application Preparation Tips

- Allow plenty of time to prepare. Keep in mind approximately 25-40 (uninterrupted) hours is needed to complete a solid proposal.
- Read the application package in its entirety (NOFA), highlight and make notes list “must do’s” (i.e. letters of support or participation, matching funds commitment).
- If you have any questions, contact the program manager or refer to the website assistance links.

# Developing the Proposal

- Create a Concept Paper - Commit ideas to paper and describe the program or project.
- Be Concise - Outline the Goals, Objectives, Timeline, Costs, and Benefits
  - What is the background and historical information?
  - What do you intend to do?
  - What is the cost?
  - What is the timeline?
  - Who is responsible?
  - How do you plan to execute the project or strategy?
  - What is the expected outcome?



# Developing the Proposal - Continued

- Executive Summary – Overall summary of project and funding request in a summarized manner.
- Statement of Need – Direct statement identifying the following:
  - What problem, issue or situation to be addressed or resolved -- Evidence – Quantitative and Qualitative.
  - Who are the proposed beneficiaries?
  - What is the project's intended outcome?
  - Are the project outcomes sustainable?
  - What happens if nothing is done?

# Developing the Proposal - Continued

- Project Description – Develop a Strategy
  - Mission – Defines the “what” and “why” of the project.
  - Structure – How you intend to solve the problem, serve an unmet need, provide a program, create a safe environment.
  - Be Concise – Focus on the project outcome and achievable methods, what do you need help with and what will you do?
- Develop a Work Plan
  - Goals, objectives, relevant activities/tasks, who is responsible for completing tasks and what resources are needed.
- Evaluation
  - Determining how you will measure successful completion of the project or program and intended outcome.

# Strategic Elements of Proposal Content

- Describe your organization to the funder.
- Describe organizational capacity (ability to do the work). Who is your “Rock Star”?
- Describe the organization decision making structure?
- Describe key staff, consultants, contractors, partners and their functions related to the project.
- Describe who will maintain or sustain the project or program.

# Key Things to Consider

- Funder's Priorities.
- Funder's Objectives.
- Funder's Strategy.
- Method for Releasing Funds (lump sum, reimbursement, advance payment).
- Grants Management Requirements (organizational capacity).
- Award and Project Timeframe.

# Competition, Not Entitlement...

## You Must Clearly Communicate...

- Significance
- Solid Approach
- Feasibility
- Capability
- Appropriate Resources



# Most Effective Writing Style

- Use active rather than passive voice.
- Use the funders Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) outline.
- Provide headers and subheadings.
- Simple sentences.
- Do not use jargon or acronyms, provide explanations if necessary.
- Write from the prospective of the beneficiaries.
- Remember funders goals and priorities.

# What are “Selection Criteria?”

Selection criteria are used by the grantor agency to target specific eligible project activities & benefits:

- Long-Term Outcomes
- State of Good Repair
- Economic Competitiveness
- Livable Communities
- Environment Sustainability
- Safety
- Job Creation
- Innovation
- Partnership

# Selection Criteria Continued...

- Peer reviewers score and evaluate the quality of answers based upon the weighted percentage given to each of the Selection Criteria questions.
- Grant making decisions are based on proposals with clear budgets, timelines and outcome.
- The relevance of the project to the objectives must be clear to reviewer.
- Some applications also have another section of questions called the “Secondary Selection Criteria” which are usually weighted less in the scoring model.

# Challenges, Expectations & Goals

- Define the Challenges – Ask for Help!
  - Technological as well as personal (are graphics not your forte; are you a procrastinator like me)?
- Set Realistic Expectations
  - Mastery is not achieved overnight, know the subject (grant writing takes practice)!
- Keep Your Eye on the Goal
  - The more you do the better you get (engage proofreaders and feedback, reach out to peers)!
  - Ask for a funder debrief if not awarded.

# How to Treat the Reviewers

Do Not Make them Work to Find Answers and Meaning!

- Be Clear and Concise – Specific.
- Logically and Visually Lead the Reviewer through the Proposal.
- Make Key Information Easy to Find.
- Avoid Referring the Reviewer to Other Parts of the Proposal.



# Review Key Elements of a Proposal

- Proposal Summary (Executive Summary)  
Specific and Direct to Point – Entire Story  
(Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How)
- Introduction - Draw a Visual Picture of Location, Situation, Need, or Goal.
- Problem Statement and/or Desired Outcome.
- Budget – Funding Required, Local Contribution, and Other Resources.
- Selection Criteria (i.e. Evaluation, Sustainability)

# Where to Find Grants

## Federal Grants

- Register with SAM <https://sam.gov/portal/SAM/##11>
- You MUST apply through: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

### Grants from the Federal Government Agencies:

- Email project officer with questions.
- Most are need, performance, and preparedness based.
- Politics can be involved – consider resources.
- Participate in webinars and teleconferences prior to submission deadline.

# Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), signed into law in 2006, required information about Federal awards to be posted on a single, searchable website that is open for public access.
- Review prior awards on funders website.
  - Search websites for funded requests.
  - Call or email the awarded applicant and ask for a copy of their complete application.
  - Ask awarded project managers how they developed their project and grant request.

# State Grant Programs

Do you request State organizations who manage grant funds to visit your business operations in person to discuss available grant programs?

- Idaho Department of Commerce (IDOC)
- Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)
- Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC)
- Idaho Department of Lands (IDL)
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ)
- Idaho Commission on the Arts (ICA)
- Idaho Humanities Council (IHC)
- Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

(State agencies may receive their funds from federal sources.)

# Non-Federal Grant Programs

- Foundation Center
- Community Foundation Locator
- Walmart Foundation
- Local Banks – Community Reinvestment Programs
- Letter of Intent or Interest – Invitation Only

# Non-Federal Foundation Grants – Idaho

- Idaho Community Foundation
- **ICF's Mission:** To enrich the quality of life throughout Idaho.

**ICF's Grant Making Goals and Values:** To award meaningful grants in all 44 counties in Idaho for projects both large and small that address pressing community needs as defined by the people who live in and love those communities.

**Eligibility:** The Idaho Community Foundation makes grants to 501(c)3 nonprofit public charities under IRS Code Section 170 and governmental entities including special taxing districts and public schools.



# Non-Federal Foundation Grants – Idaho

- Idaho Non-Profits
- Association of Fundraising Professional, Idaho Chapter
- **Other Resources...**
- The Grantsmanship Center
- GuideStar Non-Profit Reports & Forms 990

# Additional Funding Sources

- **Foundation Types:**
  - Family
  - Independent/Private
  - Federated Funds i.e. United Way
  - Corporate
  - Community or Local Civic Groups
  - Special Interest
  - Animal Clubs (Lions, Elks, Eagles)

# Grant Maker (Grantor) Relations

- Identify contact persons and email or call with specific questions, don't waste their time.
- Do not ask questions that are already answered in on-line materials (websites, printed guidelines, webinar Q&A, etc.).
- Foundation staff, federal project officers, corporate representatives are good resources for gathering information.

# Why People Give...

- Personal Gratitude to Organization.
- Involvement in the Life of the Organization.
- Being Sought Out and Asked.
- Sense of Duty to the Community.
- Paying it Forward – Repayment for Good Life.
- Sharing Organization Goals.
- Recognition.
- The Joy of Giving.
- Enlighten Self Interest.

# Key Things to Remember Prior to Submittal Your Proposal

- Do NOT wait until the last minute to submit an application – the spinning freeze!
- If you are submitting an e-application, know the specific deadline date and time zone.
- Have a fresh pair of eyes proof read your proposal before submittal.
- Make certain all the required forms are included in the correct order and all signatures are obtained for your application.



**QUESTIONS? WHAT  
DID THE SPEAKERS  
NOT ADDRESS YOU  
WANTED TO KNOW?**





# NOTES

