

Grant Finding and Writing Seminar B

Government Fleet Expo &
Conference

June 10, 2009

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
Promoting Healthy Communities

DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

1. Locating Funding Opportunities (Hint: not grants.gov)

A. GET IN THE GAME EARLY!

- Finding out from the RFP is too late
- **Join Local/Regional Fleet Organizations**
 - Look for chapters sponsored by funding agencies (EPA—NCDC, DOE—Clean Cities)
- **Attend the Meetings**
 - Large networking group (public & private)
 - Early notice of grants (timing, scope, etc.)
 - Obtain info about funded projects in your area
 - Learn about local goals you can directly support
 - OK to send alternates/designate staff representative

B. Start Now

- **History Tends to Repeat Itself**
 - **Research past FOAs and RFPs**
 - **What would you have proposed?**
 - **Identify projects in your area/region that were funded**
- **Assemble Your Straw Man Army**
 - **Make a project “wish list”**
 - **Group into categories**
 - » **Idle reduction, alt. fuels, hybrids, etc.**
 - **Keep a Range of Options—Don’t get too specific**
 - » **Ballpark for funding (\$250K vs. \$4 Million)**
 - » **Timeframe (months, years, shovel ready?)**

C. Get Feedback

- **Ask peers, funding agencies (before FOA issued)**
- **General questions about eligibility etc. are welcome**

2. Power of Partnership

A. Regional Air Agencies /MPOs

- **Strong Partners**
- **Often have additional funding sources**
 - CMAQ, SEPs, etc.
- **Small Fleets Fear Not**
 - Help aggregate demand
 - Generally write & administer the grant
 - May assist with reporting and data gathering

B. Intra-Agency Partnerships

- **Effective Means of Leveraging Resources**
- **Ask sustainability programs, OED, etc.**

C. Public-Private Partnerships

- **Private Organizations NEED Your Fleet**
 - Usually not eligible to be sole applicant
 - Beware of easy-money/over-promise and under deliver
 - Always verify the information in the proposal; particularly what assumptions are going into the performance measures.
- **Your Public Fleet MAY Benefit**
 - Required for Emerging Technology Grants (EPA)
 - Identification of vendors in proposals demonstrates:
 - » Ability to rapidly implement project (shovel ready)
 - » Contribution to regional strategy
 - Be mindful of fair and open competition & WBE/MBE requirements

D. You Must Trust Your Partners!

- Their performance will impact the score of your next grant application
- Make sure roles & responsibilities are known and agreed upon
- Have a change-management structure in place

3. Writing a Successful Proposal

A. Determine Project Scope

- **Identify best straw man (men) based on:**
 - **Programmatic Priorities (national & regional)**
 - **Award Size**
 - **Timeframe**
- **Add, subtract or expand components based on funding eligibility**
- **Get Your Resources/Match in Place**
- **Identify partners**
 - **Agree to roles & responsibilities**

B. Keep It Focused!

- **Use the Evaluation Criteria to Shape Your Proposal**
 - Sections with the highest % points should be the longest
 - Don't include irrelevant information
- **Only Request Funding for Aspects of Your Project That Are Specified as Eligible!**
 - If an unfunded aspect of your project will directly support the proposal, then briefly describe it and how it will contribute to the project.
- **Never allow “pet projects” to make their way into your proposal**
- **Don't include partners that are not contributing any resources/ are not directly involved with implementation**
 - It's not a popularity contest.
 - These are stakeholders.

C. How To Stand Out From the Rest

- **Be Original**
 - Never copy sections of a sample proposal
 - Never copy sections of another agency's proposal or workplan
- **Use charts, tables and graphics freely**
 - Excellent way to convey complex ideas and/or significant amounts of technical information in a relatively small amount of page space.
- **Showcase the Accomplishments of Your Fleet and Staff**
 - Include any awards/ recognitions/accomplishments
 - Demonstrates qualifications and capabilities to implement proposal
- **Talk About Similar Past Projects that Were Successful**
- **State if Your Agency had a Policy/Planning Structure That Aligns with the Grant Program's History/Long-Term Goals**
 - Demonstrates sustainability beyond the funding period.
 - E.g., XO for Alt. Fuels or a Sustainability Program.

D. Clearly Define Your Performance Measures

- **Outputs**
 - **Direct products of your project activities**
 - **Quantitative or qualitative**
 - **Must be measurable within the project period**
 - **Examples: lbs of pollution reduced, gallons of fuel conserved**
 - **Should use the assessment method/tool specified in the FOA**
- **Outcomes**
 - **The result, effect or consequence of your project's implementation**
 - **Must be quantitative**
 - **Might not be measurable within the project period**
 - **Examples: Increased understanding of the new technology, improved air quality, health benefits achieved, jobs created/preserved**
- **Impacts**
 - **Fundamental changes to your agency resulting from a project**
 - **Example: adoption of biodiesel after demonstration grant**
- **Develop a Logic Model for Your Program**
 - *Logic Model Development Guide, W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

E. Submit a Complete Application Package

- **Don't Procrastinate on the Required Forms**
 - **Have someone else double check everything on them**
 - **Make sure they are in agreement with each other**
- **Answer ALL of the questions/Address ALL requirements in the FOA**
 - **No matter how obvious they may seem**
 - **Don't neglect the threshold eligibility criteria**
- **Take Advantage of Appendices and Supplemental Documents**
 - **Usually don't count towards page limits**
 - **Opportunity to provide additional information about your project and/or program.**

F. Submit Early and Use the Correct Format

- **Hard Copy Submission is Vanishing...**
- **Do You Have Your DUNS?**
- **Electronic Systems Can Be Tricky:**
 - **It can take days/weeks to get fully set up with an account**
 - **Gets over loaded close to the deadline**
 - » **Creates problems logging in & uploading large files**
 - » **Allow several hours for uploading and submitting your proposal**
- **Email Has Issues Too:**
 - **Large files can have long transmission times**
 - **Government firewalls can block/strip out attachments**
 - **Timestamp is when the agency receives the email, not the time you sent it.**

G. Do Not Pass Go—How To Have Your Proposal Automatically Rejected:

- **Request less than the minimum/ more than the maximum award size**
- **Exceed the page limit**
- **Not adhere to format/ font size requirements**
- **Request funding for non-eligible projects**
- **Submitting an incomplete package**
- **Submitting after the deadline (yes minutes and seconds do count)**

H. Grant Writing: To Contract or Not To Contract?

- **Good idea if you are just starting out and do not have anyone on staff with experience**
- **Have an agreement/contract in place in advance**
 - **Try to develop a relationship with one writer**
- **Be mindful of deadlines and allow time for several drafts**
- **Your agency is still responsible for the proposal and project:**
 - **Writers assist with format and pulling the written aspects of the proposal together—they are not your project manager**
 - **Many writers are not scientists, engineers or mechanics:**
 - » **If you cannot provide the technical information, assess your ability to directly implement the project.**
 - **Be mindful of your agency's ability to complete the reporting and data gathering requirements in-house if you are awarded.**

4. Tips for Getting Your Fleet Started

A. Start Small and Build on That Success

- **Get Your Foot in the Door**
- **About 10% of your proposal's score is based on your past performance**
- **Bad projects will come back to haunt you**
 - **Need to be able to trust your partners**
 - **Don't propose anything you are not confident in your ability to complete**

B. Don't Compete Against Yourself

- **Resist the urge to submit multiple proposals**
- **Demonstrates a lack of focus**
- **Don't assume at least one will get funded**
- **Consider if your private partners are doing this as well**

C. Plan for Partial Funding

- **Seems to happen more often than not**
- **Will you be able to implement your project if you are only awarded 60% of your requested funding?**

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Questions.....

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Thank You:

- Ernie Ivy & Denver Public Works Fleet Maintenance Division
- Greenprint Denver
- Denver Environmental Health