

# How to Successfully Obtain Grant Funding -- And Be Glad You Did

*Keys to successful grant applications*

## Keys to successful grant applications

- Are you qualified?
- Understanding what the funders wants to support.
- Assessing agency capacity and resources needed to operate the program.
- Planning.
- What makes an application strong?

## Are you qualified?

- Grant funds are usually restricted to applications from certain groups or jurisdictions, such as a not-for-profit agency or a unit of state or local government.

# Are you qualified?

- Funders specify documentation needed to verify that an agency is qualified.
- Funders may require specific certifications or licenses necessary to apply for funding.
- Funders may require audit reports to indicate that your agency finances are in good order.

# Are you qualified?

Federal grants administered by ICJIA require several specific certifications. For more information, see [ICJIA Federal & State Grants Unit: A guide for grantees.](#)

## What does the funder want to support?

- Type of organization.
- Issue or need.
- Type of program.
- Program model.
- Target population.

*Does the program you want to create  
meet the funder's objectives?*

# Planning

***START WITH A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT  
OF BOTH YOUR CAPACITY AND YOUR  
COMMITMENT.***



## Planning

- Assessing grant requirements.
- Assessing you agency capacity to meet them.
- Assessing the investment necessary to implement the program.

# Planning

- What will it take within my organization to *apply*?
- What will it take within my organization to *make the program happen*?

## Can you make the necessary investments?

- Time and effort.
- Matching funds.
- Political capital within your jurisdiction or community.

## Time and effort

- Research
- Writing
- Program planning
- Program implementation
- Reporting

# Partnerships

- Does the grant require formal partnerships or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)?
- What agencies need to cooperate in this project?
- How can that cooperation be solidified?

# Getting to your goal

- Define your goal. What do you want to change?
- What evidence or data will you need to collect from the beginning of the project in order to later demonstrate program performance?
- How will you know when you are successful?

## Long-term commitment

- How can I build long-term support for the program before it starts?
- How can I demonstrate the value of this program to my stakeholders?

# Soft and hard match

Soft or in-kind match is the dedication of an existing resource to the new program, such as office space or a supervisor's time.



# Soft and hard match

Hard or cash match is a new resource used for new program expenses, such as additional office space for the program or overtime for the supervisor.

*Cardinal rule of federal grant making*

# Don't supplant

Supplanting is the replacement of an existing resource with grant funding.

## Procurement guidelines

Procurements must be competitive, including:

- Public posting of job openings.
- IFBs, RFPs.
- At least three quotes.
- Sole source procurements.

# Subcontracting

- Some grants do not allow subcontracting
- Check the grant guidelines for the rules before you fill out your application.
- Provide sufficient time in your implementation plan for procurement and hiring.

## Cash flow

- How are funds disbursed?
- How often are they disbursed?
- Do you have the cash flow to run the program if disbursements are delayed?

## Define the problem before seeking funding

- How do you know you have a problem?
- What does the data show?

Find a solution to the problem and  
then propose a program to address  
the problem.

## Planning questions

- Continuing salaries without continuing funding?
- How long will it take to achieve your objective?



# Application development

DO THE JOB RIGHT

Read and follow instructions.

Be detail-oriented!

Take advantage of any and all  
technical assistance.

Find out what the grantor is looking  
for before you invest your time.

Follow the rules specified  
by the funder

Follow the timelines

*Read the materials before the  
deadline looms*

## Be thorough, but concise

- Complete all necessary paperwork.
- Draft clear and precise answers to the questions. Don't just fill space.

## Scoring

Pay attention to the scoring criteria and meet them.

Ask for feedback...

...both good and bad.



Learn from your mistakes, even  
when you get funded.

Build local support  
and collaboration now.

Don't wait until you need the grant.

# Common errors

## Lack of goals and measurable objectives

See *Program Goals, Objectives and Program Indicators: A guide for grant and program development*

## Failure to demonstrate need.

When requesting equipment, clearly demonstrate the need for it in the proposal.

## Failure to document the problem.

Do your research. Cite recent data.  
Utilize ICJIA's *online data tools*.

## Data and budget inaccuracies

Does the data make sense?

Does your budget add up?

Document your ability to get the  
job done.



Understand the funder's perspective.

*Does your program fit  
the funding goals?*

What does the grantor need to  
achieve with these funds?  
How can your program help?

*Remember...*

*Funding is not an end in itself,  
but a means to an end.*