Finding and Managing Federal Grants
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Presentation Overview

• How to get ready to submit a federal grant
• Putting together a federal grant package
• Implementing your federal grant award
Grants Life Cycle

1. Get Ready to Apply
2. Find Funding
3. Write Your Proposal
4. Submit Your Proposal
5. Award Set Up
6. Manage Your Award
7. Close Out and Audit
Grants Life Cycle – Step 1

1. Get Ready to Apply
The Federal Government

U.S. CONGRESS
Sets appropriation for grant programs

FUNDING AGENCIES

GRANT OR PROGRAM OFFICES
Offices within the funding agency responsible for administering grant programs
Are We Ready to Submit a Federal Grant?

- Are we legally incorporated?
- Does our financial management system meet federal standards?
- Do we have good internal controls?
- Do we have enough cash in the bank to cover program costs until we get reimbursed?
- Does our work line up with federal priorities?
We ARE Ready to Submit a Federal Grant!

- What do we need?
  - Tax Identification Number (TIN)
  - DUNS Number
  - SAM.gov registration
  - grants.gov registration

- There is no cost associated with these registrations
We ARE Ready – Tax ID Number

- Issued by the IRS
- Must be legally incorporated prior to applying
- Immediate if you apply online
  - 2-3 weeks if you fill out and submit a SS-4
We ARE Ready – DUNS Number

- A unique, 9 digit number issued by Dun & Bradstreet to identify your organization to the federal government.
- Must verify that you are the authorized agent for your organization.
- Takes one business day.
We ARE Ready – SAM.gov Registration

- Notarized letter is required to designate your entity administrator
- Registration must be maintained for the life of your federal grant
  - Must be renewed annually
- Takes 7-10 days to be approved
We ARE Ready – grants.gov Registration

- Centralized portal to find and apply for federal grants
- Multiple logins are allowed but only one can be the Authorized Official (AOR)
  - Multiple people can work on a single application using the Workplace feature
- Approval is same day
Grants Life Cycle – Step 2

2. Find Funding
Where to Look for Federal Grants

• grants.gov
  • Not a one stop shop
  • Sign up for grants.gov notifications

• Federal Register
  • Lots of extra information

• Google
  • Best research tool for finding grants

• Agency Websites and Mailing Lists
Finding the Application

• Look for a document that outlines the requirements for the grant application

• Called the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) here, it goes by many names
  • Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
  • Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
  • Request for Proposals (RFP)
  • Application or Grant Guidance
Grants Life Cycle – Step 3

3. Write Your Proposal
Getting Started on Your Application

• Read your FOA very carefully for required elements
  • Put together a checklist or matrix

• Are we eligible?
  • Is our organization the kind of organization the funder wants?
  • Do we meet all the special criteria?

• Do we have a good project fit?
  • Does our project do what the funder wants to do?
  • Look up prior awards to see if they’ve funded similar projects
Getting Started (con’t)

• Who should write your application?
  • NOT A VENDOR
  • Someone who knows the organization and project well

• Don’t compete against yourself
  • Make sure you are coordinating your applications
  • Pay attention to number of projects allowed
Putting Together Your Application Packet

- Common Application Elements
  - SF 424
  - Letter of Intent (If required)
  - Abstract or Executive Summary
- Program Narrative
  - Needs Statement
  - Project Design
  - Organizational Capacity
  - Objectives
  - Sustainability
- Budget & Budget Narrative
- Attachments
Putting Together Your Application Packet (con’t)

• Reviewers will come from across the country
  • Do not assume they know our community or your organization
  • Attachments can be helpful to orient readers

• Show how your project fits with the national priority
  • Tie goals and objectives back to the goals outlined in the Funding Announcement

• Federal dollars are an investment of tax-payer money
  • Organizational Capacity and Sustainability are especially important to the federal government
Putting Together Your Application Packet (con’t)

- The budget is the single most important part of your application

- Costs should be reasonable, allocable, and necessary
  - Can’t pay a premium just because you have grant funds
  - Use federal guidelines or agency guidelines – whichever is more restrictive

- Also not already funded
  - This is supplanting and is very bad
What is Supplanting?
• When you take an already funded expense and try to replace existing funds with federal funds
  • This is Suzie.
  • Suzie runs one of your programs, and her position is 100% funded.
  • But wait! A federal grant comes along that will provide funding for that program!
  • Can Suzie be paid out of the grant?
  • No! This is supplanting.
General Grant Writing Tips

• READ AND FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS
  • Make sure you answer the questions the FUNDER is asking
  • Pay particular attention to page limits, character counts, and file requirements

• Proofread
  • Have a friend or colleague review prior to submission

• Keep it clear, concise, and consistent
  • Don’t include irrelevant information
  • Don’t make your funders guess what you are doing
  • If it’s in the budget, make sure you explained it in the narrative
Grants Life Cycle – Step 4

4. Submit Your Proposal
Submitting Your Application

• Carefully review your application for completeness
  • Have someone who doesn’t know your program review

• Pay special attention to WHERE to submit each element, especially attachments
  • You may have to submit some items via grants.gov and some to be submitted via another website

• Wait for confirmation that the system has accepted your application
What Happens to My Application?

• Several layers of Review
  • Technical Review
  • Peer Review or Scoring

• Proposals will typically be ranked by score
  • Rankings typically need approval from the head of the Program Office or Secretary

• You should be notified if you were awarded or not
Tracking Your Application

- Check grants.gov or the agency’s submission portal for requested corrections

- Pay close attention to email and snail mail

- Don’t be afraid to follow up directly
We Weren’t Funded 😞

• Don’t be discouraged!
  • Only 25 – 35% of grant applications submitted by an agency will be funded

Everybody remembers the guy who planted the flag...  ...but nobody remembers all the hikers who didn’t make it to the top of the mountain

• Request feedback or scoring sheets from the funding agency
We Weren’t Funded (con’t)

• Common Reasons for Rejection
  • Mismatch between project and grant opportunity
  • Not all questions from the FOA are answered
  • Program Design is unclear or not linked to Problem
    Statement
  • Problem/Need is not well described or documented
  • Budget contains costs not linked to the narrative, or costs
    are not justified
  • Objectives are not tied to the problem statement or aren’t
    measureable
  • Typos and grammatical errors
Grants Life Cycle – Step 5

5. Award Set Up
We Got the Grant! NOW WHAT!?!?

• Re-read your application and Funding Announcement

• Read your contract – pay attention to key information
  • Award date
  • Performance Period
  • Reporting Requirements
  • Additional Requirements

• Get board approval, if not already done

• Set up your fund in your financial system

• Put together your grant binder
We Got the Grant! (con’t)

• What should go in the grant binder?
  • Funding Announcement and Agency Grant Manuals
  • Application
  • Award Letter and Grant Contract
  • Executive Board Approval
  • Project and Budget Changes (GANs)
  • Reports – Financial and Programmatic
  • Drawdown Requests
  • Backup Documentation
  • Monitoring Visits/Audits
  • Misc. Correspondence
Grants Life Cycle – Step 6

6. Manage Your Award
What Are Your Responsibilities?

• Spend funds in accordance with the authorized purpose

• Safeguarding all assets

• Develop systems and policies to ensure proper stewardship of funds
  • Financial management systems
  • Internal controls
  • Procurement systems
  • Time & effort reporting systems
  • Monitoring activities
Where Are All the Requirements?

• 2 CFR 200
  • 2 CFR 200 Subtitle III – Procurement Standards
  • 2 CFR 200 Subpart E – Cost Principals
  • 2 CFR Subpart F – Audit Requirements

• Agency Financial Guides or Grant Manuals

• Funding Announcement and Grant Contract

• Keep in mind that federal requirements apply to pass-through funds as well
Fraud, Waste and, Abuse

• Grant funds are awarded for specific purposes and grantees must use them accordingly
  • Fraud: lying, cheating or stealing at any point in the grants process for an unlawful benefit
  • Waste: failure to ensure taxpayers get good benefit for the money through mismanagement or lack of oversight
  • Abuse: behavior that a prudent person would not consider reasonable or necessary for business given the situation

• Grantees must disclose all suspected cases of fraud to their awarding agency in writing, and in a timely manner
Common Requirements

• FFATA Requirements
• Purchasing Requirements
• Inventory Requirements
• Single Book Audit Requirements
• Documentation Requirements
• Other Requirements
FFATA Requirements

• Prime recipients must register at FSRS.gov

• Must report first tier subawards and all contracts >$25,000

• Requires that you report the names and compensation for your 5 most highly compensated officials if:
  • 80% or more of your revenue is from federal sources, and
  • You receive $25 million in total federal contracts and assistance, and
  • The public does not have access to information about executive compensation of your agency
Purchasing Requirements

• Must have written procurement procedures
• Must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition
• All vendors given contracts must be checked against SAM.gov to ensure they are not suspended or debarred
• Sole-source procurements in excess of $150,000 must receive prior approval by your funding agency
  • Sole source procurements are contracts issued without competitive bidding
Inventory Requirements

- Must maintain a list of all equipment purchased with federal grant funds
  - Equipment is tangible property with a unit cost of more than $5,000 and a useful life of more than 1 year, or items likely to get lost or stolen

- Must tag items to indicate they are grant funded

- Must perform a physical inventory once every 2 years

- Must follow federal disposition rules if equipment is disposed or no longer used for the original purpose
Single Book Audit Requirement

• A Single Audit is required if you spend $750,000 or more of federal funds in a given fiscal year
  • Not just on one award, for your organization in total

• Typically is an eligible grant expense
  • But has to be pro-rated across your grants

• Once finished, submit to the Federal Clearinghouse
  • https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/
Documentation Requirements

• IF IT ISN’T DOCUMENTED, IT DIDN’T HAPPEN

• Document anything that could be a potential audit finding
  • Late report – especially if it’s not your fault
  • Budget or program changes
  • Staff changes
  • Special Approvals

• All records must be maintained for 3 years after grant closeout
Other Common Requirements

- Sub-recipient Monitoring
- Davis-Bacon Act

Civil Rights Compliance
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Equal Employment Opportunity Plan Requirements

- Drug-free Workplace Act

Environmental and Historic Preservation
- National Environmental Policy Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
Not So Common Requirements

• Read your grant contract and agency grant manual for less common requirement, such as:
  • Approvals on work plans
  • Credit on published materials or advertising
  • Ownership of inventions or materials produced
  • Approvals on “controlled assets”
  • Special drawdown requirements
  • Qualifying criteria such as maintaining plans
  • Sustained funding for positions or maintenance
Changes to Your Grant

• Funding agencies understand that conditions change and things go wrong!
  • Each program will have its own standards and processes

• Common changes include:
  • Financial Changes
  • Programmatic Changes
  • Extensions

• Keep in mind that all changes must:
  • Receive PRIOR approval from the program office
  • Comply with grant terms and conditions
Grants Life Cycle – Step 7

7. Close Out and Audit
Closeout

• Make sure all funds have been obligated and liquidated according to your grant agreement

• Submit your final reports
  • Financial
  • Programmatic

• Complete any closeout processes your agency requires

• Review your grant binder to ensure documentation is complete, and archive for the records retention period
Audits

• Types of audits
  • Desk Reviews

• Site visits
  • Programmatic
  • Financial

• Single Audit

• Audits can occur at any time during the grant cycle including the records retention period
Audit Tips & Tricks

• Do what you said you would do

• BE ORGANIZED!
  • Have all grant documents in your binder and ready for review
  • Have all relevant policies in a separate binder

• Don’t be afraid of your auditor

• Don’t answer questions the auditor doesn’t ask

• If you have a finding, fix it quickly
Common Compliance Issues

• Late or inaccurate reports
• Unallowable costs
• Insufficient sub-recipient monitoring
• Not getting project or budget changes approved
• Lack of documentation
  • Time and effort records
  • Inventory
  • Suspended and debarred checks
• Special approvals
What Happens if We’re Not in Compliance?

- Agency can withhold funds
- Costs can be disallowed
  - You have to refund that money to the grant
- Grant contract can be terminated
- Organization can be put on a high-risk list
  - This can impact future funding requests
  - You may be required to take additional action to stay eligible
- Organization can be suspended or debarred
Questions?
Helpful Links

- **Grants.gov**
  - [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

- **EIN**

- **DUNS**
  - [http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform](http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform)

- **SAM.gov**
  - [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)

- **Federal register**
  - [https://www.federalregister.gov/](https://www.federalregister.gov/)

- **Federal Financial System Requirements**

- **2 CFR 200**
  - [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl)

- **FFATA Reporting**
  - [https://www.fsrs.gov/](https://www.fsrs.gov/)

- **GSA.gov**
  - [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877)

- **DOL Volunteer Rates**
  - [http://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm)

- **FEMA Equipment Rates**
  - [http://www.fema.gov/schedule-equipment-rates](http://www.fema.gov/schedule-equipment-rates)

- **Internal Controls**