01: Securing and Managing Federal Grants

Trainer(s):

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Securing and Managing Federal Grants

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About Dr. Bev Browning

- Veteran grant writer with 41 years of grant writing successes ($400+ million in funded grants and contracts)
- Author of 41 grant-related publications, including *Grant Writing for Dummies*
- Workshop presenter for national, state, and regional organizations
- Online facilitator for grant writing classes (www.bevbrowning.com)
- Nationwide keynote speaker, radio talk show guest, and webinar facilitator
- Earned Master of Public Administration
- Honorary Doctor of Business Administration

Based in Arizona
Session Overview

• In this session, participants will learn how to research grant funding opportunities using subscription-based grant research services. In addition, the presenter will cover the critical essentials of winning a federal grant award ranging from assessing grant seeking readiness to selecting the right partners to seeking political advocacy. Participants will also be briefed on the 2014 federal grants management requirements for units of municipal government.
Session Goals

• Provide NLC members with the knowledge and skills needed to identify and qualify their units of government for federal grants
• Understand the current management basics for a federal grant award
Session Objectives

• Increase awareness of grant funding research databases for government grant funding opportunities
• Increase critical analysis skills for determining if a grant funding opportunity is a go or a no-go
• Increase competitive grant application writing skill sets related to content and format
• Increase understanding of what the federal government requires for post-grant award reporting
Agenda

• Researching Grants
• Essentials For Winning a Federal Grant Award
• 2014 Grants Management Requirements
RESEARCHING GRANTS

Free and Subscription-Based Databases
Grants.gov

- Register
- Subscribe to Specific Alerts
- Download Grant Application Guidelines
- Upload Completed Grant Applications
• Subscribe
• Search
• Set up Grants Network: Research Email Alerts
• Download Grant Application Guidelines for Review and Decision-Making Process
ESSENTIALS OF WINNING A FEDERAL GRANT AWARD

Federal Grant Seeking Readiness
Go/No-Go Assessment
Prepared?

• DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number? You will need one to apply for federal grants.

• Registered with grants.gov and sam.gov? This process can take between 14 and 21 days. If you are on deadline for a grant application, you likely have less than 30 days to register, research, write, and submit. It’s called grant roulette!
Prepared?

1. 1.0 FTE grant writer dedicated to searching for grant funding opportunities and writing your grant applications? Writing a competitive federal grant application can take anywhere from 60 to 100 hours. If your grant writer has multiple other job duties in addition to writing grant applications, you may not make the application deadline without major external assistance.
Prepared?

• Cash reserves on-hand to match up to 100% of a federal grant application request? Uncle Sam does not give your organization 100% of the grant award upfront. Often grants are awarded on a cost-reimbursement basis. If you don’t have the funds on hand to cover the beginning grant project-related expenses, you’re already in trouble before you submit!
Prepared?

- Does your organization have a sustainability plan to continue the grant-funded activities or programs in part or total after the grant award has been expended? The government does not award grant funds that supplant; they award grant funds that supplement!
Capable?

- **Monitoring**: Diligent daily monitoring of grant funding opportunity alerts.
- **Communicating**: Frequent communications with your Congressional team members about your grant-related needs.
Capable?

• **Planning:** Writing can’t happen until aggressive and thorough internal team planning has been completed and provides direction, concept, and capability language to support the grant writing process.
Capable?

• **Training**: All grant writing team members from the business manager, project director, and principal investigator (or project manager) to the grant writer need training in the grant readiness process before you tackle a highly competitive federal grant application.
Capable?

• **Tenacity:** Some federal funding agencies automatically reject your first, second, and even as high as eighth grant application submissions. Why? If your organization truly needs the funding, it will never give up applying for the funding. For most grant seekers, the first time is just a trial run that *may* not be funded.
Apply?

• Is your community eligible to apply (look at the eligible applicant type and geographic priority areas for the funding)?
• Does your project concept exactly match the description of the proposal request?
• Are there more than 10 awards? (Federal grants are awarded based on politically related factors. If there are fewer than 10 awards, chances of winning one are slim.)
Apply?

• Has anyone within a 100-mile radius gotten this grant in the past 5 years? If the answer is yes, **don’t apply**. (Usually, grant awards rotate to other regions every 5 years.)

• Is the grant award large enough to fund a sizeable portion of your project’s budget? (Don’t waste time on a laborious research and writing project with a minimal return on investment of your efforts.)
Apply?

• Can you meet the grant application deadline? (You need at least 1.0 FTE to meet a deadline of 20 days or less; if not, get help from an outside grant writer.)

• Does the grant funding opportunity fit your community’s or department’s current priorities for funding? (Don’t apply if funding area is not a strategic plan priority.)
Apply?

• Make sure that answer is yes to all questions (except awards to nearby cities, counties and states within the last 5 years) before deciding to apply.
Do You Have the Right Partners?

- State agency?
- County agency?
- Other Units of Municipal Government?
- Business and Industry?
- Associations?
- Commissions?
Have You Nurtured Your Political Connections?

• Who is representing your district in Congress?
• Do you know the Washington, DC office staff on a first name basis?
• Do you send your elected officials your financial wish list every new fiscal year?
• Have you requested information and advocacy related to federal grant seeking?
Have You Collected Relevant and Recent Demographics to Write a Statement of Need?

Writing Exercise
Did You Include?

• Figures
• Graphs
• Diagrams
• Charts
• Tables
• Footnotes
Is Your Project Description Succinct and Magnetizing?

Write a 50-70 word description of the project in need of funding.
Do You Have a Workplan?

What will happen after the grant is awarded?
What are the tasks and who will do them? Add timeframes for each task.
2014 GRANTS MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Transparency and Accountability
Transparency

- The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) aims to:
  1. Make federal spending information more accessible
  2. Increase the availability of data to the public
  3. Improve oversight of federal funding
Transparency

• The Recovery Act, and its spending website (Recovery.gov) may be the most recent attempt to increase transparency and accountability for recipients of federal contracts, grants, and loans. Recovery.gov is now the official website for the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board (RATB)—extends the Acts reporting deadlines until 2017)
Finding grant funding opportunities will get easier

• All grants will soon be advertised and submitted on the enhanced Grants.gov website. In the past, grants were advertised on various federal sites, and the new website creates a transparent process for applying for all grant opportunities.
All public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities will be tracked via assigned federal numbers

• Entities receiving federal funds will need to:
  – Have an Employer Identification Number (EIN)
  – Have a Data Universal Numbering System or D-U-N-S number (apply through Duns & Bradstreet)
  – Register in the System for Award Management (SAM)
  – Report all federal awards (grants, loans, and contracts) in FSRS (Federal Subaward Reporting System).
Grant recipients may see an increase in administrative burden

- All awarded entities should develop a grants management system or purchase software that allows them to customize and track the data elements required for federal grants. Contract compliance will be of utmost importance, and complying with the requirements of the DATA Act will bring about a small increase in compliance monitoring for grant managers.
All the data elements that will be required to be tracked are unknown, but we do know that certain elements will continue to be tracked.

- Compensation of top five highly compensated officers
- D-U-N-S number
- Registration expiration for SAM
- Congressional district
- Subawards and contracts with other entities including vendors
- Photographs of work
- Jobs created
- Number of people (unduplicated) served with grant funds
Public accountability will be enhanced. Agencies and award recipients may want to create unique centralized governance structures to improve agency administration, performance monitoring, and compliance oversight of federal funding.
Accountability

• On December 20, 2013, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in coordination with the Council on Financial Assistance Reform (COFAR) announced the release of the Uniform Administrative Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

• The document is affectionately known as the “OmniCircular” or the “Super Circular” because it combines eight OMB Grants Management Circulars into one document (759 pages) effective December 26, 2013.
Accountability

Of the eight circulars, five were (and still are) relevant to local governments:

- A-87  State and Local Governments
- A-89  Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
- A-102 Grants & Cooperative Agreements with State & Local Governments
- A-133 Audits of State, Local Governments & Non-profit organizations
- A-50  Audit Follow-up
Accountability

• The guidance provides a grants management agenda that strengthens evidence-based grant-making models with performance metrics and evaluation, which should improve accountability in Federal grants administration.
Accountability Changes

• All grant notifications of funding availability will be available for a minimum of 30-60 days.
• Interest earned during grant programs can now be remitted annually to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
• Agencies that do not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate can now request a rate up to a maximum of 10% per the grant award. The de facto rate can be charged for up to four years.
Accountability Changes

- Administrative costs may now be charged as a direct expenditure of a grant instead of calculated as an indirect cost.
- Geographic preference in competitively bid contracts (as opposed to grants) is prohibited with the use of federal grant funding.
Accountability Changes

• Child-care and dependent-care costs resulting from travel related to grant-funded conferences, is an eligible expense.

• The Single Audit threshold has been increased from $500,000 to $750,000. This represents a cost savings to organizations (i.e., nonprofits) that pay an additional cost to have a single audit completed.
Accountability Changes

- Federal agencies will include language in their grant terms and conditions that provides authority to terminate awards when performance is not met or when federal budget appropriations require modifications to programs.
Recap of Today’s Session Objectives

- Increase awareness of grant funding research databases for government grant funding opportunities
- Increase critical analysis skills for determining if a grant funding opportunity is a go or a no-go
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- Increase understanding of what the federal government requires for post-grant award reporting
GPS Contact Information

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