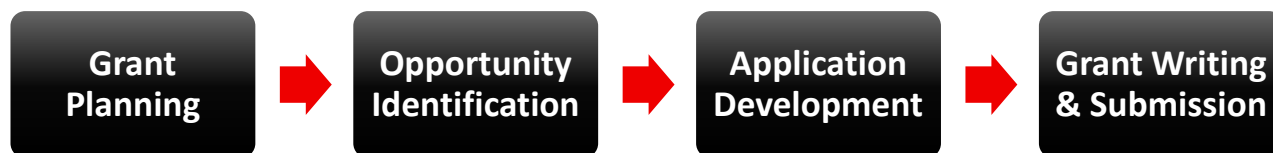




## Introduction to Grant Planning

Commonly cited federal grant application success rates range from 10-20%: to maximize efficiency of grant pursuance efforts in a highly competitive environment, effective grant planning is essential for organizations seeking to fund and implement their strategic goals. A strong pre-award grants management approach involves coordination across departments, alignment with organizational priorities, and active engagement with community stakeholders. By establishing a structured process to identify, evaluate, and pursue grants, while maintaining a clear understanding of funding sources and requirements, organizations can enhance their capacity to secure and manage grant funding successfully.

### A Successful Pre-Award Grant Management Approach:



## Grant Planning

### Establish an Intelligence Network

- Ever expanding set of funding options - need to look beyond federal sources.
- Develop an increased understanding of funding channels.
- Increase focus on state and philanthropic grant opportunities.

### Develop a Grants Plan that Reflects Local Priorities

- A documented grants plan helps define and prioritize opportunities.
- Create a grants plan in coordination with budget and capital plan development; continuously monitor and update plan.
- Key elements include Elected officials' priorities; current and expected grants; grant funding landscape; strategies and approaches for building and managing the client's grant funds.

### Keep Inventory of Community Needs and Desired Projects

- Focus pursuits based on inventory, regularly update to align with new priorities.
- Identify needs that cannot or should not be funded by the general fund.

### Develop Tools and Processes to Identify a Potential "Capital Stack"

- Few significant projects rely on a single funding source.
- Determine how to properly layer funds and optimize funding.

- Understand the timing considerations associated with all funds in the stack as well as any potential costs (e.g. interest).

## Opportunity Identification

### Track Funding Opportunities on a Regular Basis

- Know where NOFOs are posted and register for notifications.
- Application timelines are short - teams should meet at least once a month.
- Track grantor's funding rhythm to prioritize projects.
- Consider a grant research automation tool through the use of a grants management technology platform.

### Establish a Decision Criteria

- Ensure grant pursuits align with local wide priorities.
- Define key elements to use for vetting opportunities.
- Consider ability to implement when making pursuit decisions.
- Build off prior successful experiences (internal & past awardees).
- Share grant opportunities that may not be a local fit with external partners.

## Application Development

### Break Down the Process

- Establish a team to understand funding opportunities and map responses.
- Closely read the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and identify key dates and required information.
- Assess prior awardees, attend debriefings, analyze successful applicants, and review grantor websites.
- Maintain a library of prior responses; identify those relevant to current grant pursuit.
- If using partners or subrecipients, ensure all parties are aware of the process, understand their role, and provide the required information.

## Grant Writing and Submission

### Thoroughly Address Grantor's Points of Emphasis

- Understand grantors' priorities and their perspective on the grant program.
- Create an outline to ensure prompts are answered thoroughly.
- Review prior library of responses.
- Use data and graphics to support arguments where appropriate.

### Follow Directions and Take Care of the Little Things

- Direct and action-oriented writing.
- Pay attention to page counts, font and text size, presentation styles, deadlines, and method of delivery.
- If submission is electronic, make sure the organization is properly registered and has access to the portal.

Effective grant planning is a strategic, ongoing process that aligns funding pursuits with community priorities. By building strong networks, tracking opportunities, and using clear decision criteria, organizations can better position themselves for success. A well-organized approach to planning, writing, and submitting grants increases the chances of securing funding and delivering meaningful results.

## Ready to Transform Your Grant Management?



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