So You Want to Get a Grant: Tips for Successful Grant Projects

National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children Professional Development Webinar Series December 12, 2012

Esther Larsen
Spokane County Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Project Director
Washington DEC Alliance State Leader
Spokane County Sheriff’s Office Grants & Contracts Coordinator
Overview

- Strategies and resources from solicitation of grant funds through sustaining grant-funded projects
- Focus will be on multidisciplinary, community-oriented collaborative partnerships
Topics

- Researching grants and funding
- Identifying the problem and performing a needs assessment
- Developing a successful project
  - Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result
- Developing tools to measure performance
- Budgets and financial management
- Evaluation plans and methods
- Sustaining projects after grant funding ends
What is a grant?

- A financial assistance mechanism whereby funds (or personal property, such as equipment) are provided to an entity to perform an approved set of activities and to achieve certain goals and objectives to solve a problem that has been identified in a community or agency.

- Grantor is the provider of the grant
- Grantee is receiver of the grant
Researching Grants and Funding

- Funding/Resource Development
  - Federal
  - State and local
  - Foundation
    - Private
    - Corporate
  - Community Partnerships
  - Volunteers
    - Professional groups
    - Higher education
    - Community service organizations
  - Gifts and donations
Researching Grants and Funding

- Funding/Resource Development (cont’d)
  - Government grantors (federal, state and local)
    - Federal grants = $500 billion approximately annually
    - Government grants typically have highest compliance standards and regulations regarding grant programs and finances; Office of Management and Budget federal rules apply
Researching Grants and Funding

- Funding/Resource Development (cont’d)
  - Foundation grantors
    - A foundation is a non-profit organization; may be part of a large for-profit company
    - 70,000 foundations in USA
    - Foundation grants = $90 billion approximately annually with $10 billion from corporations
    - Foundation may require 501c3 non-profit status or government entity for grantee’s award eligibility
    - Foundations seek out grantees to “give back to the community” and usually receive tax deduction for donation/grant
    - Corporation grants are easiest to manage due to fewer regulations
Researching Grants and Funding

- Types of grants
  - Mandatory Grant
    - Formula/entitlement/block grant
      - Grantor is required by statute to award based on eligibility and compliance requirements
      - Usually awarded to states to disburse at state and local levels
  - Discretionary Grant
    - Competitive grant open to applicants meeting criteria in Request for Proposal
Researching Grants and Funding

Types of awards (cont’d)

- Cooperative Agreement
  - Similar to a grant with more involvement and control from grantor

- Congressional Earmark
  - Often referred to as “Pork Barrel” grants
  - Congress adopted strict rules in 2008 requiring members to disclose when they steer federal funds to “pet projects”
Types of awards (cont’d)

- **Contract**
  - An agreement between grantor and recipient to provide tangible services or products for the grantor’s exclusive use in return for compensation
Searching for Grants – Internet searches

- **www.grants.gov** – lists grant announcements
- **www.cfda.gov** – lists all government programs
- **http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/index.htm** - lists state administrative agencies (SAA) contacts for US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs
- **http://www.foundationcenter.org/** - online foundation directory; locate grants; connect to resources
- **http://www.foundationsearch.com/** - online database of foundations in the USA
Researching Grants and Funding

- Searching for Grants – Develop sources and contacts
  - Ask other agencies/partners for information
  - Attend seminars and webinars
  - Sign up for email and notification lists
  - Meet your SAA contact and request to be sent notices of funding/resources/information
  - Join/form a local or regional group of grant seekers and others working on grant management
Identifying the problem and performing a needs assessment

What is a problem statement?

- Describes the problem to be addressed by the project
  - Supported by current data and relevant information
  - Sets forth a working definition and documentation
- Describes what you have already done to solve the problem and what still needs to be accomplished
Identifying the problem and performing a needs assessment

- Identifying the problem
  - Why does the problem exist?
  - What will be the consequences if the problem is not addressed?
  - What will be the consequences if the problem is addressed?
  - What have you done to attempt to solve the problem?
  - Why should the grantor provide funds and resources to address this problem?
Identifying the problem and performing a needs assessment

- Identifying the problem (cont’d)
  - Provide data to support the existence of the problem
    - Statistics for 1-3 years validating the problem
    - Describe the community with data that gives the grantor information about the economy, income levels, services provided, relevant populations, etc.
  - Convince the grantor that a problem exists
Identifying the problem and performing a needs assessment

- Needs assessment
  - Why have you not provided your own resources to correct the problem?
  - What attempts have you made to obtain resources to correct the problem?
  - Why are you in need of funding from the grantor?
Identifying the problem and performing a needs assessment

- Needs assessment (cont’d)
  - What conditions (socio-economic or other) are preventing you from providing resources for your programs/operations?
    - Loss of tax base, natural disaster, increased crime, new legislation
  - What alternatives have you explored to provide for your needs?
  - What resources are you able to provide?
    - In-kind match, cash match, volunteers, partners
Identifying the problem and performing a needs assessment

- Needs assessment (cont’d)
  - Make sure your needs match the grantor’s mission and the purpose of the funding that is available from the grantor
  - Set forth clearly the benefit to the grantor, the grantee and the community from the funding being requested
Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result

- What is the goal of the project?
  - An ambitious statement broadly describing what you hope to achieve
  - The end toward which all of the resources and activities will be directed
  - The outcome that is expected after the activities have been completed and funds have been used
  - A method to communicate why the project exists
Developing a successful project

- Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result (cont’d)
  - How are goals achieved?
    - Objectives explain how the goal will be achieved
    - Objectives are generally short-term and specific regarding their timing and their actions
    - Objectives may also be long-term and a mix of short-term and long-term
    - Objectives must be measurable
    - Objectives must be achievable
Developing a successful project

- Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result (cont’d)
  - Types of objectives
    - Implementation objectives relate to the program’s operation
      - Examples: 10 certified Core DEC trainers will be trained within 3 months of project funding; 20 community training sessions will be completed by the trainers within 6 months of certification; 10 Community DEC Teams will be formed within 6 months of communities receiving training
Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result (cont’d)

- Types of objectives
  - Outcome objectives relate to the results expected from the program’s operation
    - Knowledge/attitude/skill change = short-term objective
  - Example: Within 60 days of receiving training 85% of law enforcement officers will be skilled in responding with child welfare to drug endangered children incidents
Developing a successful project

Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result (cont’d)

- Types of objectives
  - Outcome objectives relate to the results expected from the program’s operation
    - Behavior/performance change = long-term objective
  - Example: Within one year of forming community DEC Team 90% of responses to drug endangered children incidents will follow guidelines established for community’s DEC Team
Developing a successful project

- Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result (cont’d)
  - Types of objectives
    - Outcome objectives relate to the results expected from the program’s operation
    - Situational change = short- and long-term objective
    - Example: Within one year of forming community DEC Team 95% of drug endangered children identified in the community will have received needed services, including a safe, drug-free environment
Developing a successful project

Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result (cont’d)

- SMART Objectives
  - Specific
  - Measureable
  - Action-oriented
  - Realistic
  - Time-specific
Developing a successful project

- Goals, objectives and activities designed to bring about desired result (cont’d)
  - Activities
    - Tasks that are specific and expected to produce results to meet objectives and goal
    - For each objective, set forth a list of activities outline
      - Description of activity
      - Resource needs
      - Start, duration and end of activity
      - Individual(s) responsible for performing activity
      - Impact of the activity: What result was produced by the activity? Did the result meet the objectives and goal of the project?
Developing tools to measure performance

- How will you measure whether or not you have achieved success?
- What type of assessment will be used to measure performance?
- What type of measurement terms will be used?
Developing tools to measure performance

- Types of assessments
  - Monitoring using ongoing data collection and feedback from participants involved in project activities
  - Performance measurement by measuring the progress of the program or project in meeting the objectives on an ongoing basis
    - Measures the process and the outcome of the project
    - Recurring updates on performance are obtained
Developing tools to measure performance

- Types of assessments (cont’d)
  - Process assessment – provides feedback on implementation or delivery of program
  - Outcome assessment – provides information on how the program changed the participants, clients or the situation of the community
  - Impact assessment – provides information on the impact the program had on the problem being addressed and the community
Developing tools to measure performance

- Types of performance indicators – target levels of performance expressed in measurable terms against which actual achievement can be compared
  - Quantitative – expressed as a number or degree of change
  - Qualitative – expressed in a non-numerical manner with narrative descriptions of what was observed or with photographs showing the situation before and after the program
  - Example: photographs of 25 different homes from which drug endangered children were removed; 25 is quantitative and photographs are qualitative
Developing tools to measure performance

- Measurement terms
  - Activities – Tasks that were put in place to achieve objectives and goal
  - Outputs – The results of the program; how much of each activity has taken place
  - Outcomes – The effects of the program on the clients or the situation in the community during and after the program; the changes in knowledge, skills, attitude, behavior, conditions as a result of the program
Developing tools to measure performance

- Measurement terms (cont’d)
  - **Target** – People, places or situations that are the focus of the program
  - **Coverage** – The extent to which the program did focus on the target that was identified
  - **Attrition** – The clients or the cases that drop out of the program before completing the program
Developing tools to measure performance

- Deciding on what tools to use to measure performance will depend on many factors; however, ultimately the grantor will expect to see some measurement of performance that provides assurance of the project’s integrity, accomplishments and sustainment.

- If the performance did not meet all of the expectations, document and describe the obstacles that were encountered and how they were overcome as well as what effect the program is having in the community and any outcome objectives that were met.
Budgets and financial management

- **Budgets**
  - Follow the grantor’s directions in the RFP in detail when preparing the budget
  - Use the budget forms required by the grantor
  - Know and follow the federal OMB rules or other applicable rules regarding what costs are and are not allowed
  - Check and double-check all calculations in the budget forms
  - Provide for any required match funds and/or in-kind match
Budgets and financial management

- **Budgets (cont’d)**
  - Review all activities to ensure budget for the activities has been provided
  - Use current documented and verifiable quotes, bids, salary projections, etc.
  - Obtain assistance from a person with accounting expertise and/or grant financial management to prepare and/or review the budget to be submitted
Budgets and financial management

- Financial management
  - Once again, know and follow the applicable financial rules (OMB or other rules)
  - Set up a reliable and accepted record keeping system
  - Comply with all grant agreements
  - Document and keep all required information regarding all aspects of the grant financial management
Financial management (cont’d)

- Follow the Cost Principles that apply to the grant and/or are required by the grantor
  - Allowable = within the authorizing and/or appropriating legislation; not prohibited by statute, regulation or decision
  - Allocable = costs incurred specifically for the award; costs listed in the approved budget; costs that have not been shifted from another award
Financial management (cont’d)

- Follow the Cost Principles that apply to the grant and/or are required by the grantor
  - Reasonable = Prudent Person Test
    - Cost reflects good business practices
    - Cost reflects market prices
    - Cost does not exceed what would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances in existence at the time the decision was made to incur the cost
  - Necessary = costs necessary for the performance of the award
Budgets and financial management

- Financial management (cont’d)
  - Follow applicable rules regarding supplanting
    - A supplement is something that completes or makes an addition; if the grant funds complete or add to what is already in existence in the grantee’s local budget, the grant funds are supplementing the local budget and, in most circumstances, the grant funds may be used to pay for the item in the grant budget
    - To supplant is to take the place of and serve as a substitute; local funds already budgeted by the grantee for an item are not allowed, in most circumstances, to be supplanted by using the grant funds to pay for the item in the grant budget
Evaluation plans and methods

- Evaluators generally have three tasks
  - Describe what did and did not take place during the project
  - Analyze the data collected and the performance measurements compiled
  - Recommend next steps
    - Changes where and when needed to accomplish the goal and objectives of the project
    - Sustaining or ending the project
When will the evaluation take place?
- Ongoing throughout the project
- At the end of each phase or time period of the project
- At the end of the project
Evaluation plans and methods

- Relationship of program goals, objectives and activities to evaluation
  - Goals and objectives list what the program is to accomplish
    - Evaluation: What did the grant want to accomplish and was it accomplished?
  - Activities list what program tasks are to be completed to meet the objectives
    - Evaluation: What activities were and/or were not completed?
  - Outcomes of the activities
    - Evaluation: Did the activities which were completed achieve the objectives?
Evaluation plans and methods

- Relationship of program goals, objectives and activities to evaluation
  - Impacts
    - Evaluation: What effect did the program with its activities have on the problem, the situation, the clients, etc.?
  - Recommendation:
    - What are the next steps if the problem was solved?
    - Should the program continue, and if so, are any changes needed?
    - Is the program able to be sustained at the end of the grant funding?
Sustaining projects after grant funding ends

- Partnerships during the project can lead to assistance with sustaining the project
  - Structuring partnerships to provide partners with roles and management during the project will provide partners with incentives to sustain the project
    - Include roles in policy-making, decision-making, funding, advising, operations and technical assistance
    - Include management participation and leadership
Sustaining projects after grant funding ends

- Partnerships can improve the project
  - By sharing ownership of the problems and solutions to produce more effective programs
  - By building coalitions
  - By assisting with community change needed for the project to succeed
Sustaining projects after grant funding ends

- Potential partners to sustain the project
  - Local government organization which received the grant award as seed money to assist with solving the local problem
  - Private sector organizations whose missions are aligned with the goals and objectives of the project
- The community at large
- Elected officials who would benefit from having problems solved during their watch
- The media
In summary

- Grant projects succeed when
  - Directions and rules in all aspects of grant project from application to closeout are followed
  - Clear goals and objectives line up with the mission and purpose of grantor
  - The described project has value to the grantor, the grantee and the community
  - A strong team implements the project
  - Required partners are identified and given well defined roles
In summary

- Grant projects succeed when
  - Objectives are SMART
    - Specific
    - Measureable
    - Action-oriented
    - Realistic
    - Time-specific
  - Performance is measured
  - The project is able to be replicated in other communities
In summary

- Developing and implementing a successful grant project is a process that takes time, hard work, partners and the willingness to never be afraid to ask for assistance or to make changes needed to improve and sustain the project.
In summary

Contact information

Esther Larsen
elarsen@spokanecounty.org
509-477-6709