

Report on the grant writing work shops at the NUSA Conference in Sacramento California
6/22/2005

The Grant "Writing" workshops, in one form or another, were morning and afternoon for three hours all four days of the conference. The two primary speakers in the workshops I attended were Roland D. Smallwood, who works for the City of Columbia. His is a grant "reviewer" who gives the up or down vote on grants sponsored by private persons or companies, local, State and Federal sources. The second was Ed (Edward) Schwartz, a former Philadelphia City Council member, and now president of the Institute for the Study of Civic Values, (edcivic@libertynet.org) he is also the past president of the Philly Neighborhoods (similar to DONE, <http://www.phillyneighborhoods.org>) also a member of, Neighborhoods USA <http://www.neighborhoodsonline.net>. Both workshops presenters dealt with needs assessments and the available of funds, local, State and Federal, also International.

Grant Writing for Neighborhood Organizations: success of grant writers; professional grant-writers, twenty-five percent. Local, non-professional grant-writers (first time) seventy-five percent and the percentage goes up from there. Pit-falls of professional grant writers: to much foo-foo in the grant appellation, but ones the grant-writer's employer takes notice of, and applying to be the grant's evaluator. When applying for a grant, do not be distracted by the past nor become side tract by personalities of others in the group. The success of a grant writer is not being liked by the group, but obtaining a grant, so the group can continue funding its project or projects.

a. foo-foo: how many coats the council members own or how many dogs the mayor lives with. Things that have nothing to do with the grant or the needs the grant is designed to address.

b. minimum for operational success for most grants, whether one hundred dollars or a hundred million dollars, is three years.

1. Most grants initial founding is two years: as part of miscellaneous section of grant form always ask for an extension or wording to that effect.

2. Operational success: satisfactory completion of the grants goals as set forth in the applicants "written" presentation for the grant.

c. The Need

1. What is the need? How was it determined, needs assessment.

2. Why is it important? Factors involved within the community.

Example: Information supporting Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs in the Los Angeles/Long Beach, California area, PMSA FY 2005 MFI: 54450.

30% of median (poverty)

1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7 persons	8 persons
\$13,7500	\$15,700	\$17,700	\$19,650	\$21,200	\$22,800	\$24,250	\$25,950

50% of median (very low income)

1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7 persons	8 persons
\$22,950	\$26,200	\$29,500	\$32,350	\$35,350	\$38,000	\$40,600	\$43,250

80% of median (low income) the population in category on which most grants are based

1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7 persons	8 persons
\$36,700	\$41,900	\$47,150	\$52,400	\$56,600	\$60,800	\$65,000	\$69,150

median income great Los Angeles/Long Beach area

1 person 2 persons 3 persons 4 persons 5 persons 6 persons 7 persons 8 persons
\$45,900 \$52,300 \$58,950 \$65,500 \$70,500 \$76,000 \$81,250 \$86,450

note: for more information on criteria from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) go to the following site <http://www.hudsuer.org/datasets/il/il05/index.html> or you can just go fishing in the main HUD web site. <http://www.hudsuer.org>.

d. How do you know? Stress the good points of the community. You have already out line the community's needs in the "needs assessment." The hour-glass in half full (not half empty). Your community needs the grant to fill the hour-glass for the rest of the community. In large parts of the country, gated communities are getting interlocking public transportation grants, to provide access to those communities for the service employees who work inside the gates of those communities. These bus routes are operating at a profit, to the surprise of all concerned, especially the transportation engineers.

e. Criteria for funding: If your organization deal with the capture of "dogs" do not apply for a grant that deals with the capture of "cats." Know when the grant is due and schedule back from that date. "DO NOT MISS THE FILLING DATE." If you think you will miss the filling date, request "dispensation" from the grantor. You have nothing to loose by asking; but the grant. If you miss the filling date, you have lost the grant anyway.

f. Your Organization:

1. Who are you? What does your organization do in the community? Not what your president does or any other individual within your group, no matter how famous the members of you group are.

2. Why are you the right group "in your area" to undertake a project cover by the funding criteria.

3. What is you groups, relevant, previous experience? Have you received a grant before and from whom. The grant reviewer "will" call and find out how your "group" handled other grants. Grant reviewers are not interested in why your group may have failed to perform to the grantors satisfaction, the reviewer will get that information from the grantor. It is the need your organization tried to address and how you tried to address that need in previous grants, that a reviewer is interested in and evaluates the grant application on endeavor not success or failure. If a reviewer finds that your organization is of merit, but because of your organizations pervious failures, my recommend add criteria to the grantor. If your organization can meet the add criteria, you get the grant.

3. What are your resources for the project? The federal government and most State governments "do not fund" start up project.

example: A community member, living in a large city on the west coast, serviced by a large metropolitan transit authority (MTA) found that a main street linking five neighborhoods within his area had no public transportation. He petitioned the local MTA to provide public transit on that main street and was turned down. He then found that a bus company was offering to provide a grant for the operation of a commuter bus line and after calling the bus company and getting all the criteria, submitted a grant application. The grant request was for two years at two hundred, fifty thousand dollars a year. In the beginning of the second year an application for an extension of one year was submitted and the extension was granted. By the first quarter of the third year, the line was braking even. In the middle of the third year, the federal government offered a five year grant at ten million dollars (two million dollars for five years) to established bus

line. The grant was awarded, however maintenance could only be handle in the MTA facility and the MTA a twenty five percent maintenance fee. This maintenance fee was incompatible the federal criteria. After six months of negotiation the MTA would not move off the twenty five percent maintenance fee and the grant had to be turned in to the federal government. Then, the MTA filled for the grant with a ten percent maintenance fee. However, it went to the same grant reader and on reviewing the grant application from the west coast MTA, the reader sited the under estimation of the maintenance fee as a reason the federal government should reject the grant application. The federal grant was awarded to a local MTA in the Midwest.

Grant Application Part I.

1. What are your goals? To fulfill the need presented in the needs assessment.
2. What are your expected out comes? How the specific needs in the needs assessment will be services. Listed 1, 2, 3, etc. specific, specific, specific and specific.

Project Description, Part II, Implementation.

1. Who is the target population?
2. How will this project address their needs?
3. How will you proceed?
4. How long will it take: remember most grants are awarded for only two years. Apply for two years and ask for an extension after completing the first year, but do not count on getting the extension and work with that in mind.
6. Who will do the work:
 - a. You are responsible for administration of the grant and only ten percent of a grant is for administration; loaded at the front end of a grant. However, there is a miscellaneous cost at the end of all grants. This miscellaneous cost should be, between six and ten percent, but no higher.
 - b. The employees who operate the buses or catch the dogs are paid out of the body of the grant, not the administration part of the grant and should be one of the those served by the grant in the expected outcomes section of Project Description.

Evaluation:

1. How will you know that you've met your goals? It is imperative, that who ever is chosen to evaluated the grant's results be independent, but be informed of every step in the grant process and fully understand the grant's goals and the methods used to achieve those goals. The first person chosen to work in support of the project.
2. How will you report your results/findings?
 - a. vision of the project: what are the needs being address by the project.
 - b. mission: what the project is meant to accomplish.

c. objectives within the project, how they should be reached and when they should be reached. Sub-steps

d. organization structure of the project's administration. Who is responsible for what and who is responsible for over site.

e. systems: both internal and external; from what type of computer to location of offices.

f. people: who will make the project happen and how many people it will take. Who will drive the bus or will chase the dogs.

Budget:

1. How much money do you need to successfully complete the project?

2. What do you need the money for?

a. a line item budget

b. include percentage of funds. three percent for stationary etc.

c. Identify matching funds:

I. Cash - money that will add to the bottom line cash amount. Matching funds.

II. In-kind contributions of time and effort is not cash, but can be valued as cash and will provide evidence of community support for project.

III. Narrative description of expenditures and income. out sourcing of secretarial work, bus riders pay fairs, adoption and licence fee for dogs etc.

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