

Hot Topics

Take Nothing for Granted ... Finding and Getting Grants: The Basics

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County Grant Writing 101

By M. MINDY MORETTI
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Counties rely on billions of dollars a year in grant funding to support their programs and services. From the federal government to the states to foundations, the monies come from a variety of sources. However, knowing how and where to go for the necessary grants is handled differently in each county. Some counties rely on a sole grant writer to write grants for every department, others rely on a handful of staff in several departments to take on the responsibility and some are looking for ways coordinate what they do.

Collin County, Texas

In fast-growing Collin County, Texas, the Board of Commissioners authorized the hiring of a grant development officer in late 2003 to look for grant opportunities for the county. Michelle S. Patrick began her job as the county's first grant development officer in January of this year and since then, it's been quite a learning experience for all those involved.

"There have been some growing

pains here," Patrick said. "When I first started, for the first six months or so, the county administrator would ask every day how much money I had brought in that day."

Patrick begins each day by looking through the available federal and foundation grants each day. If the available grant applies to a county function and the funds are needed, she will apply for it. Because Collin County does not provide many direct services, such as health care, finding applicable grants has been a challenge for Patrick. Although she has had successes in finding grants for the county, where she has been most successful is helping nonprofits in the county that provide services to county residents.

"I created a funding working group of nonprofits and we get together about every two months and look at different issues," Patrick said.

Not only does she help the service-oriented nonprofits find grants, she also works with the nonprofits to better showcase their needs and to serve as a conduit between the grantor and the nonprofit.

"If the nonprofits are successful, then the county is successful as well," Patrick said.

Buncombe County, N.C.

In the past, Buncombe County, N.C. had a dedicated grants writer. However, now the county relies on certain individuals in each department to write the grants for that particular department.

"We tried having a central grant writer, but found that for us, that route just didn't work," explained John Creighton, assistant county manager.

Because writing a grant often requires institutional knowledge about a particular department, the centralized grant writer had to spend as much time coming up-to-speed on the issue as she did actually writing the grant, Creighton explained.

However, department-specific grant writers do not spend their time exclusively on writing grants. Writing the grant is merely a part of the job description. For instance, in addition

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Frequently Asked Questions

■ Are counties eligible for all federal grant programs?

No. Federal grants come in many programs that do not support county activities. However, NACo has searched through all federal grants and created a separate database which includes only the programs for which counties can apply.

■ How often can a county apply for the same grant?

If the county fails to get a grant, it can always re-apply for the next funding cycle. There are certain federal grants that are only available to previous grant recipients and other grants stipulate how often a county can apply and under which conditions.

Some grants are just one-time offerings of financial assistance with the expectation that the county will find other sources of funding to continue with the project.

■ What if our county just needs a small grant, can we get one from the federal government?

Yes, you can, but make a cost estimate of what it may cost the county to get the small grant in terms of writing the grant application and any compliance required.

■ Where else can our county go to get additional grant funding?

Many foundations are currently providing funds to county governments for special projects. Some of these grants coincide with issues that counties are currently facing. Foundations are currently making grants to assist with affordable housing, homelessness, the environment and children and youth.

Many local foundations will target a multiple county area for funding eligibility and make grants exclusively in those counties. Others will fund projects only in specific states. According to the Foundation Center, nearly 4,000 foundations have funding. Not all are making grants to counties, but many will if your project area coincides with their project area.

Some states also provide grants to cities and counties. Some of these grants are from designated funds while others are from state general funds. Examples of some of these grants include:

- **Recycling and Waste Management Grants** are awarded by some states to assist with these efforts.
- **The Solid Waste Grant Program** is funded in some states by fees on appliances and lead-acid batteries. These items have a \$2 fee that is charged upon purchase at the retail level.
- **Road Mileage Grant Programs** are funds directly from some states to counties for road improvements, maintenance and paving. These grants are based on the miles of road in each county.

■ How should grant funds be used?

Most grantors will not fund a grant for maintenance and operational expenses. Most grants are for capital expenditures and the grantors will look for the prospective grantee to outline in the original grant proposal how the project will be supported after grant funds have been exhausted. Counties should never come to rely on grant funds for day-to-day operations.

Rural Grants: The Great Funding Divide

By **STEPHANIE OSBORN**
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Charitable foundations in the United States give away \$30 billion annually, but only 1 percent of that sum, or about \$300 million, goes to support rural America. "Rural issues, as a concern of institutional philanthropy lag," according to a May 2004 report, *Beyond City*

Limits: The Philanthropic Needs of Rural America.

The study, conducted by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy in Washington, D.C., also found that barely 300 of the nation's 65,000 active grant-making foundations use the term "rural" in their grant descriptions.

The study focused on grants for

rural development; one-third of rural grants went for community and economic development. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Ford Foundation led rural development funders, comprising 42 percent of all such grant-making in 2001 and 2002.

According to the report, predominantly rural states have fewer philanthropic resources and, not surprisingly, those states receive less grant funding. Foundations in North Dakota own the least total philanthropic assets, and the state also receives the least private grant funding. Alaska, Montana, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Maine, Mississippi, Wyoming, New Hampshire and New Mexico round out the 10 poorest philanthropic states.

The National Center for Responsive Philanthropy believes there is untapped potential for rural grant-making and is urging foundations, rural development groups and other community organizations to step up to the plate. Community foundations, re-granting institutions (such as regional development centers) and corporate foundations — especially those with a financial interest in development — are playing a growing role in supporting rural America. So, too, are some major foundations that traditionally focus on health, as there is "an emerging recognition that community health care requires a healthy community," according to the study.

One initiative to champion rural funding, the National Rural Funders Collaborative (NRFC), has been in place since 2001. The seven private foundations that founded NRFC are spending \$100 million over 10 years to provide a forum through which funders, national and local partners, such as NACo, and others can share knowledge, influence and dollars in order to expand the resources available to communities facing persistent poverty.

Now entering its fourth year, NRFC has plans to make grants for poverty-reduction projects in regions it identifies as high priority, likely the South, the Northern Plains and areas along the Mexican border. The collaborative thus far has focused its grant-making efforts on grassroots and community groups but recognizes the critical

So We Got the Grant — What's Next?

By **JACQUELINE BYERS**
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

Before you reach for that federal grant application, you may want to seriously consider the administrative requirements of a federal grant and ask yourself if it's worth it. Project funding from a grant may not be sufficient to make compliance with the federal requirements feasible.

What follows is a run-down of the requirements that generally apply to a federal grants. We hope they will help you decide whether pursuing funding from Uncle Sam will help you in the long term.

There are generally two types of major responsibilities that face counties when they receive federal funding. These are requirements that direct implementation and grant closing. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) generally provides the central monitoring of these funds through guidelines that are issued as circulars and designed to ease administration by providing uniform requirements.

The three primary circulars of interest to county governments who receive federal funds are:

OMB Circular A-87, Cost Principles for State and Local Governments

The Office of Management and Budget has established standards that can be used for determining allowable costs that can be charged to federal programs. Covered items include reimbursements to grantees, when advance payments can be made and other guidelines that apply to the use of these federal funds. These principles are generally adopted by each federal agency and are then included as part of the grant agreements with all recipients. The definitions set out in this circular are used to decide if a cost is reasonable, allowable and can be charged to the federal grant.

OMB Circular A-102 Grants and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments

This circular was designed to provide consistent and uniform requirements among all federal agencies in the way they manage grants with state and local governments. In 1987, the president directed all federal agencies that administer grant programs to follow a common rule for grants management. In rare cases, OMB may grant exceptions allowing other rules to apply, but the overriding commitment to consistent and uniform rules makes these occur

only in exceptional situations.

Included in this circular are the following:

- requirements for advance public notice and priority setting
- standard application forms for grants, and
- definitions of ineligible recipients.

OMB Circular A-133 Audits of States, Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations

This circular spells out for recipients what audit requirements apply to any federal funding they receive. In the Single Audit Act, promulgated in 1984 and amended in 1996, the federal government eased the audit burdens of grant recipients. The act was created so that grantees no longer had to have separate audits for the various grant funds they had received from different federal agencies. This act allows one audit that will determine whether the county overall has proper internal controls and financial processes that would allow proper administrative management of federal funds and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. This single audit requirement applies to all recipients of more than \$300,000 in one year in federal funding, regardless of whether the funds are from one source or several.

It is required that the single audit be conducted by an independent auditor and according to all applicable governmental auditing and accounting standards. Each auditor must look at the county's financial statement, internal controls and compliance with the rules and regulations of the program agency.

Each recipient must arrange for the audit and hire the auditor. They must also file the audit report with the appropriate federal agencies and work with the agency to correct any deficiencies cited. In general, federal grant funds can be used to cover the cost of this process.

If your county passes funds through to other organizations or entities, it is responsible for monitoring the activities of these sub-recipients to make sure they are complying with all of the requirements including the program rules and accounting procedures.

The Single Audit Act does not apply to those counties that receive less than \$300,000 a year in funds from federal agencies in one year. However, the county may have to

Top 20 Rural Development Funders

| All Foundations | Total Rural Development Grantmaking 2001-2002 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| W.K. Kellogg Foundation | \$31,213,802 |
| Ford Foundation | \$10,475,500 |
| William and Flora Hewlett Foundation | \$4,550,000 |
| California Endowment | \$4,391,125 |
| Blandin Endowment | \$3,924,650 |
| F.B. Heron Foundation | \$3,390,000 |
| Charles Stewart Mott Foundation | \$2,943,698 |
| Walton Family Foundation | \$2,677,000 |
| Duke Endowment | \$2,200,000 |
| Richard King Mellon Foundation | \$1,600,000 |
| Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation | \$1,545,458 |
| Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation | \$1,379,000 |
| Otto Bremer Foundation | \$1,336,200 |
| Rockefeller Foundation | \$1,274,470 |
| Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation | \$1,180,000 |
| Robert Wood Johnson Foundation | \$1,110,850 |
| Houston Endowment | \$1,100,000 |
| Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation | \$1,091,500 |
| Fannie Mae Foundation | \$1,021,800 |
| William Randolph Hearst Foundation | \$985,000 |

Corporate Grantmaking for Rural Development

| Corporate Foundation | Rural Development Grantmaking 2001-2002 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Fannie Mae Foundation | \$1,021,800 |
| Energy Foundation | \$348,200 |
| Washington Mutual Foundation | \$336,000 |
| Wachovia Regional Foundation | \$250,000 |
| Citigroup Foundation | \$215,000 |
| Hitachi Foundation | \$210,000 |
| Bank of America Foundation | \$160,000 |
| Wal-Mart Foundation | \$150,000 |
| J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation | \$145,000 |
| Wells Fargo Foundation | \$140,000 |
| Wachovia Foundation | \$125,000 |
| Nationwide Foundation | \$100,000 |
| Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation | \$100,000 |
| Comerica Foundation | \$75,000 |

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NACo database helps in finding appropriate federal grants



By ALEX KARR
RESEARCH DIVISION INTERN

NACo has produced an extensive federal grants database tailored to meet the needs of county governments. The database, which only contains grants for which counties can apply, was designed to create a central location of federal grants while also providing counties with the ability to search for specific grants within the database. A county can search for a grant in the database by funding activity category, population, amount of grant or whether matching or cost-sharing is required. There is also information available about technical assistance and training. This allows counties to find specific grant announcements to meet their needs.

The grant announcements provide contact information for the each granting federal agency. The county will need to contact the agency to determine if applications are currently being accepted or when they will be accepted for a particular grant. Furthermore, funding is not always available for the grants found in the database due to congressional appropriation issues or timing of the release of funds by the granting agency.

NACo also maintains a list of county-eligible grants that are currently funded and accepting applications. This list provides an

up-to-date source and quick access to grants that county governments can apply for immediately.

So You Found A Grant. Now, How Do You Apply?

To begin this process the county should contact the grantor to obtain all information concerning necessary applications and forms or to clarify any concerns the county might have. Furthermore, it is helpful to develop a relationship with the grantor agency so the county can readily ask for suggestions, and advice about the application process and the grant proposal.

Community Support for the Project

Community support of projects and proposals is often necessary to help prove the worthiness and the overall community commitment to the program or proposal. The grantor agency is more likely to favorably view proposals that have broad support from diverse groups in the community. Therefore, it is important

to seek out other organizations in the community to partner with or provide letters of endorsements.

Writing a Grant Proposal

A grant proposal is the county's statement of why it should receive the grant. In other words, the county should use the grant proposal to convince the grantor that it is deserving of the grant. It is important that the proposal provide a strong case that is well thought out, well written and supported by factual evidence. A complete proposal is a must for a successful grant application.

A complete grant proposal has nine fundamental parts.

1. Cover Letter
2. Proposal Summary
3. Organizational Description
4. Problem Statement
5. Project Objectives
6. Program Methods and Program Design
7. Product and Process Analysis
8. Future Funding
9. Create Budget

Program Design Flowchart

| Inputs | Throughputs | Outputs |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Five nurses to operate a child care unit. | Maintain charts, Counsel Children, Set up a daily routine | Discharge 25 healthy children per week |

This is an example of one type of organization chart. It comes from the Congressional Research Service publication, "How to Develop and Write a Grant Proposal."

Rural counties struggle for foundation, government grants

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role that counties play in building successful community initiatives, according to James A. Richardson, executive director.

A separate rural grants survey conducted by NACo in 2003 found that rural counties are struggling to obtain foundation and federal grants alike. While 96 percent of counties had applied for federal grants to support local programs, only 53 percent reported having applied for foundation or corporate grants. Counties that had applied for grants relied heavily on information and assistance from regional development centers, Cooperative Extension, private consultants and alerts from their Congressional delegations.

The most significant barriers were lack of awareness of grant opportuni-

ties (72 percent); lack of staff with grant writing skills (56 percent); and lack of understanding of the federal grants process (29 percent). More than nine of 10 respondents favored the federal government establishing a centralized location for grant announcements and applications. Later in 2003, after lobbying by NACo and others, the federal government launched the Web site *Grants.gov* as this centralized repository of grants information.

Information about the National Rural Funders Collaborative, as well as the full text of the reports from NACo and the National Committee on Responsible Philanthropy, can be found on NACo's Grants Clearinghouse at www.naco.org/grantsclearinghouse.

The county agency seeking the grant should consider sending in a concept paper before it sends in the full grant proposal. A concept paper is a short, one to three-page report that concisely states the problem, how the program addresses the problem, what are the final objectives of the program and what measures will be used to determine success. Many grantor agencies are willing to review and comment on concept papers. This is a great benefit for the county and can be used to gauge the interest the grantor has in the proposal and receive constructive feedback on the proposal.

Cover Letter

A cover letter discussing the mission of the applying county agency and how this mission is inline with the grant objective should accompany the proposal. Furthermore, the cover letter should briefly outline the program. The problem can be discussed in the cover letter, but it is important not to over emphasize it. It is more important to show the grantor that the county government is capable and dedicated to fulfilling the objectives of the grant.

Proposal Summary

The proposal summary outlines the project or program. This outline should include an organizational description of the county agency applying for the grant, a problem definition, the objectives of the program, program activities that will be used to meet the objectives, how the program will be evaluated, the future of the program after the grant funding has ended and the cost the program. The summary should be kept brief, one page or less. Each description should be a concise statement. Remember, this is the first impression and it sets the tone for the rest of the proposal. It should be well written in a manner that clearly and concisely summarizes the proposal.

Organizational Description

It's important that the county agency applying for the grant provide a description of its organizational structure. This should include a brief biography of key staff members, how the grant is relevant to the county's mission and the county agency's track record with other grants. Furthermore, the goals and mission of the county agency should be explained. It is also good to include all relevant success stories in this section. The purpose of the organizational description is to assure the granting agency or foundation that

the county agency seeking the grant is well structured, well-run and capable of meeting the proposed objectives and an appropriate entity to undertake the grant. The organizational description is meant to show that the county agency is well-qualified to carry out the grant objectives.

Problem Statement

The problem statement is an important element of the proposal because it presents the county's statement of why it needs the grant. To aid in the development of the problem statement, the county might conduct a needs assessment that attempts to answer the following questions.

- What is the problem or need?
- How did the problem begin?
- What are the economic and social costs of the problem?
- What is the effected population?
- Who will benefit from the program?
- How are current programs insufficient to adequately deal with the problem?
- What are the future implications if the problem is not addressed?

The problem statement should be supported with facts and hard evidence. The more one outlines and describes the problem, while providing reliable evidence that there is real problem, the greater likelihood of success in receiving the grant.

Do not describe a potential solution as the problem. For example, the problem is not the lack of a water tower in a rural community, but the lack clean water access. The water tower is a potential solution.

Project Objectives

The next step is to state the objectives or goals of the proposed program. This process should discuss the predicted outcomes of the program. Furthermore, a timetable should be provided that shows when the objectives will be achieved. The objectives or goals will likely become the standard that is used to evaluate the program's success in the future, and it is important for the objectives to be realistic and measurable. If possible it is best to incorporate quantitative measures of success.

The methods to be used to meet this objective should not be detailed at this point; rather the focus should be on discussing the goals of the program. In the next section, the methods will be explained in greater detail.

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Hot Topics

This special County News section is sponsored by NACo's Membership Programs and Services Committee, chaired by Supervisor Gerry Hyland, Fairfax County, Va.

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Web utilized to write grants

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to being the assistant county manager, Creighton is also the director of planning and has written a few grants in his time.

Not all departments in Buncombe have someone writing grants for them, either. According to Creighton, the larger departments — such as planning or transportation — have a go-to person for grant writing, but some of the smaller departments rely on the grant writers in the other departments.

Unlike Patrick in Collin County, who has a career in grants development, most of the staff in Buncombe does not come to their grant writing duties with experience in the field. Creighton said staff is sent to educational courses when necessary and when new grant-writing opportunities become available, such as the many grants from the Department of Homeland Security, someone from the county will attend whatever informational sessions are available.

In addition to federal and foundation grants, states also provide counties with funding opportunities, but Creighton said in the case of Buncombe County, it's often easier to work directly with a state legislator than get a state grant.

Maricopa County, Ariz.

With a population of more than 3 million people and a land area of more than 9,000 square miles, Maricopa County, Ariz. is one of the

largest counties in the country. The county provides an array of services from juvenile justice to health care to planning and transportation. Because of the size and complexity of the county structure, Maricopa employs multiple grant-writing tactics.

Although each county department prepares its own grants, all grant applications appear on the Board of Supervisors consent agenda as a form of oversight. Despite this oversight from the supervisors, the county has found there is often some project overlap. So there is talk in various county departments about looking to an outside source to provide the county with the grant opportunities available. Essentially, the county would still be writing the grants, but they would rely on a grant locating service to research and notify the county about the availability of grants.

"We're such a big county with so many complex departments that we couldn't have a lone grant writer or grant writing department," explained Linda Mushkatel, special projects coordinator for Maricopa. Mushkatel is currently helping the county find and write grants for a large centralized health campus.

Despite the different ways these three counties and really all 3,066 counties work to find and write grants, there are a couple of things they all seem to agree on. Utilizing the Internet to find available resources and inter-department cooperation are the key to successful grant writing.

The Foundation Center: A Wealth of Knowledge for the Grant Seeker

The Foundation Center's mission is to strengthen the nonprofit sector by advancing knowledge about philanthropy in the United States. The center helps grant-seekers succeed by providing information about grant-makers and their funding interests, and about the grant-seeking process.

The Foundation Center provides a variety of resources and services to grant-seekers. Many resources are available for free use at its Web site, www.fdncenter.org. Beginners, as well as more experienced grant-seekers, will find a great deal of information at the Learning Lab (www.fdncenter.org/learn) including answers to more than 125 Frequently Asked Questions, resource lists and user aids, the Online Librarian and online

tutorials in the Virtual Classroom. The Virtual Classroom covers such topics as grant-seeking basics (in English and Spanish), proposal writing and budgeting, guided tours of the center's databases and the interactive course, Finding Foundation Support for Your Education.

The Web site also offers Finding Funders (www.fdncenter.org/funders/), which features several search tools for finding information on grant makers; and *Philanthropy News Digest*, the center's online news service containing abstracts of philanthropy-related articles nationwide.

Also available at the center's Web site are the online subscription services, *The Foundation Directory Online* and *Foundation Grants to Individuals Online*. The center's New York headquarters and

four field offices operate research libraries open to the public, where grant seekers may use electronic and print resources, free of charge. Each library/learning center offers a wide array of onsite training, including free one-hour classes to full-day courses (fee-based). Each location also offers special programs and events, such as Dialogue with Donors panel presentations, technical assistance programs, brown bag lunches and workshops on a variety of topics in the field. (For locations, please see <http://fdncenter.org/about/locations.html>).

A network of some 220 Cooperating Collections makes a core collection of Foundation Center print and electronic resources available to grant seekers and researchers across the country (www.fdncenter.org/collections/).

Federal grants require compliance with rules

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conduct a limited audit. This audit does not require an examination of the entire county organization as in the Single Audit Act, but examines specific aspects of the area where the program(s) was administered. In some situations the federal agency that awarded the grant may specify that an audit

or some other type of review must be undertaken.

No matter what type of audit requirement your county has to meet, it will have to make sure that accurate program compliance and financial records are kept until the project is completed and that this information is available to the federal grant-making agency or auditor at any time.

Depending on what federal agency is the grant-making agency, your county may have to comply with any of the following federal rules:

- Age Discrimination – which prohibits unreasonable discrimination on the basis of age in any funded program or activity

- ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act – which provides civil rights protection for people with disabilities

- Buy American Act – which requires that only American-made products are purchased with federal contracts

- Civil Rights – which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color and national origin

- Clean Air and Water – violating agencies or facilities cannot use funds in excess of \$100K a year

- Conflict of Interest – requires a written and enforced policy regarding significant financial interests.

- Davis Bacon Act – establishes wage rates for construction, alteration and renovation

- Drug Free Schools and Campuses – requires the adoption and implementation of a drug prevention program for students and employees

- Drug Free Work Force – which applies to Department of Defense contracts

- Drug Free Workplace – policy required before the receipt of any federal funds

- Equal Employment Opportunity – requires equal employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex or nationality

- Fly America Act – which requires that federally-funded travel must be on U.S. carriers except in certain limited situations

- Lobbying – which prohibits lobbying for federal funds with federal funds and a disclosure of lobbying with other funds

- Privacy Act of 1974 – which applies to federal contracts that involve setting up systems of records of individuals

- Sex Discrimination – which prohibits exclusion of an individual from an educational program or activity based on sex when federal funds are used

- Smoke-Free Workplace – which does not allow smoking in any facility providing services to children under age 18 if it receives federal funds, even as a pass through.

- Stevens Amendment – which requires information describing federal projects that is released to the public also include the total costs and the percentage and amount of non federal funding, and

- Walsh-Healy – which establishes fair labor standards for most federal contracts.

Need a grant?



Look no farther
than NACo's Grants
Clearinghouse

www.naco.org/
grantsclearinghouse

An online resource
JUST FOR COUNTIES

Exclusive to NACo members

Looking for a Grant Writer? Try the Web

By M. MINDY MORETTI
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

While many counties rely on members of their staff to write grants in addition to performing other duties, sometimes, the county just needs to hire an outside grant writer.

Professional grant writers not only have skills in a variety of areas and are knowledgeable about the grant writing process and where to look for grants; they are also good writers, which is vital to a successful grant. Hiring a professional grant writer often translates into higher funding rates.

Hiring a permanent grant writer for the county is no different than hiring any other county employee. In addition to newspaper and trade publication advertisements, counties can also seek help to hire a grant writer through associations such as the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

However, because budget constraints often prevent counties from creating a grant writing position, the best option is to hire a contract/freelance grant writer for specific needs.

There are thousands of these writers available through a variety of sources. Several Web sites can help counties find contract grant writers and often working with a local college or university, or large

nonprofit can put the county in touch with the right people.

Contract grant writers are paid in a variety of ways. Some of them charge a flat fee, which often means that the money is paid at the time the grant is submitted, whether or not the county ultimately receives a grant. How much the flat fee grant writer will ask for really depends on the amount and type of grant they will be writing for. Contract grant writers can make anywhere from a few hundred dollars for writing a grant, to thousands of dollars.

Other writers work under a contingency fee and will charge the county a percentage on the amount the grant when it's awarded. While this pay-as-you-go option may seem ideal for many cash-strapped counties, as with many things, this option may not be all its cracked up to be. Many grants have language in them that prohibit the grant writer from seeking compensation from the grant money, so even though the county may need just been awarded thousands of dollars to fund a program, they will still need to find money within the county budget to pay the grant writer.

(For more information about hiring or contracting a grant writer, visit www.guru.com or the Association of Fundraising Professionals at www.nsfre.org.)

Grant writing involves budget, product analysis, future funding plans

■ DATABASE from page 3

Program Methods and Program Design

In this section the county will be detailing its plan of action; exactly how the program will work. The federal government suggests that this plan be broken down to three main components:

1. inputs
2. throughputs, and
3. outputs.

Inputs are the resources and staff that are used to operate the program. The county must detail how specific inputs (resources and staff) will be used to undertake program activities. The county should fully describe all activities the program will conduct, and what resources and staff will be used to carry out the activities.

Once the inputs become engaged in specific activities of the program they become throughputs. Describing the throughputs involves detailing the interaction of the inputs within the program; i.e. the interaction of personnel, facilities and transportation and support services, and how the interaction leads to a desired outcome. An important aspect in this section is to detail the job description of personnel and how these positions will help to reach the objectives of the program. Moreover, the county

must describe how the resources and staff will conduct the program in a manner that will produce the desired results.

The last part of a program design is to detail how inputs and throughputs produce the outputs. The outputs are the results of the program. The county will have to logically describe how the inputs become throughputs and how this combination creates the outputs or the results of the program. The description of the program methods should also highlight any innovative practices to be incorporated into the program.

The county should consider creating an organizational or flow chart to aid in the development of the program design. (See sidebar, Program Design Flowchart)

In developing the program methods and program design, the county is providing a roadmap of how it will use the grant money to accomplish a specific objective. It is necessary to provide as much documentation as possible to support the program methods and program design. Yet, the documentation should be presented in an appendix. By placing the supportive information in the appendix it can be clearly referenced in the report while not distracting from the proposal's readability.

Product and Process Analysis

Whether a federal or private grant, many grantors will require, at some point, an evaluation of the program. The evaluation plan is how the program will be judged. Grantors want to measure the success of the program they are helping to fund; it is the program report card.

The evaluation should analyze both the product and process of the program. The product analysis will determine what the results of the program are and whether the goals and the objectives were met. Did the program adequately address the problem? The process analysis will evaluate how the program was conducted, such as analyzing the methods, administrative structure and the organization of the program; moreover, it will ask how these factors affected the success of the program. The analysis will also determine if the processes used in conducting the program are consistent with processes described in the proposal.

While no evaluation plan may be required upfront, the development of one at the proposal stage helps

to add credibility to the proposal. Furthermore, by having a plan in place at the start of the program it will be easier to know what data needs to be collected before, during and after the program.

Future Funding

It is important to discuss what will happen to the program once the grant funding has expired. Within this discussion, the county agency applying for the grant needs to put forth possible methods and sources of future funding. The grantor will want to see evidence of longevity in the program and be assured that the program will not end when the grant ends.

Create a Budget

The grant proposal must contain a budget for the program. It is important that the grantee determine all areas that will require funding. Such areas include, but are not limited to, salaries, rent or payment for facilities, travel, supplies, equipment, utilities, insurance and training.

It is important to keep in mind that the cost for some of the areas can have unpredictable increases from month-to-month and year-to-year. Furthermore, inflationary pressures can cause prices to unexpectedly increase for all areas. However, one should avoid over padding potential cost increases, as it hurts the credibility of the proposal. The grantee will likely have to justify the budget to the grantor, so it is important to have a well-defined and efficient budget.

The budget should be presented in an itemized form detailing the cost of each item. The items should then be summed to give a total cost. A common method of budgeting is to separate funding into two general areas; personnel cost and operating or non-personnel cost. Personnel costs should include salaries and fringe benefit costs. While the operating cost includes a wide variety of resources, common areas include office supplies, rent and travel. Once the budget has been formulated it is necessary to write a budget summary that describes the budget to the grant reviewer.

(This article uses information from the Congressional Research Services report "How to Develop and Write a Grant Proposal" and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance publication "Developing a Grant Proposal.")

References and Resources

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/CATALOG.FIND_ASSISTANCE_PROGRAM_DYN.show

Building Better Rural Places Grants Guide

www.attra.org/guide

Writing a Good Grant Application

<http://research.microsoft.com/Users/simonpj/papers/Proposal.html>

Writing a Grant Proposal

www.cpcwnc.org/Toolbox/writinggrants.html

Tips and Hints for Writing and Winning a Grant

www.polarisgrantscentral.net/tips.html

Annenberg Foundation Grants

www.annenbergfoundation.org/grants

Communicating Well: Lessons in Writing Good Grant Proposals

www.infotoday.com/mls/jun00/smith.htm

Environmental Protection Agency Grant Writing Tutorial

www.epa.gov/seahome/grants/src/grant.htm

Generic Fundraising and Grant Writing Online

www.fundsnetservices.com/grantwri.htm

Grant Writing Tools for Non Profit Organizations

www.npguides.org/index.html

Selected Proposal Writing Web

www.pitt.edu/~offres/proposal/proppwritng/websites.html

Sample Federal Grant Proposal

www.uvsc.edu/grants/grantsubmission.html

The Fundraising Resource Center Association of Fundraising Professionals

(800) 688-3463 • www.afpnet.org

The Grantsmanship Center

(213) 482-9860 • www.tgci.com

The Council on Foundations

(202) 466-6512 • www.cof.org

The Grant Institute

(888) 824-4424
www.thegrantinstitute.com