

# TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING

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12.19.16



# COUNTY COMMUNITY GRANTS DATES

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- **Application submission deadline: 4pm Wednesday Jan 11, 2017**
- **Notification of grant: Late May, as part of the approved County Budget. CE grants are announced first and CC about a month later.**
- **Funds are released only after a rigorous internal process - usually September or October.**

# WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT COUNTY GRANTS

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- They are a part of the county budget, which means they are written in the law.
- When you are approved for a grant, you will then enter a contractual relationship with the County .
- This will not a standard grant process but a procurement transaction.
- Changes and modifications are impossible!
- County decides if the funds are on reimbursement basis or periodical installments of the funds.
- You have 12 months to spend the funds from the time the contract is signed.

# WHAT HAS BEEN FUNDED BEFORE

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- Last year five villages successfully applied for funds: Olney home for Life, Little Falls Village, Bethesda Area Metro Village and Silver Spring Village
- Funds were approved for: office rental, insurance and other operational support, staff salaries.
- Other organizations have asked for a variety of expenses: Transportation expenses, capital expenses, general operating support, special pilot program and much more.

# WHAT MAKES FOR A STRONG PROPOSAL

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- Data – demographics to demonstrate who you serve, survey results, documentation of your work thus far.
- Need: Make a strong case for why you need funds.
- What are you going to use the funds for
- Outcomes: What do you expect to accomplish with the funds you could not otherwise. Do you have a way to measure it?
- Capacity: Can you prove you have the ability to deliver

# WHEN SHOULD YOU HOLD OFF APPLYING

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- If you do not have a 501c3 status. (you could use a fiscal agent but that complicates things too much)
- If you are not sure yet what they funds will pay for
- If you do not have the necessary people power to properly manage the grant (treasurer, accountant, admin to send reports and documentation)
- If you think this cumbersome process is going to be more work than it is worth (and it is!)

# PREPARING FOR THE APPLICATION - DOCUMENTS

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- Your tax exempt letter from IRS
- MD DAT letter of good standing (from the website)
- List of board members and their contacts
- Statement that all board members donated to the village
- Financial statements (prepared by an accountant preferably)
- Approved budget
- Last years I-990

# APPLICATION PREP

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- Print the list of questions and prepare them in a word document. You can then copy and paste them onto the online application
- Start with your budget. You will be asked for two budgets – one for the program and one for the organization. If these are not different, that is OK.
- Work on getting letters of support from other organizations. (for grant applications other than CC and CE, you may obtain a letter from Uma Ahluwalia but must go through me for that)
- Make sure your staff/board approve the proposal. They will be responsible for implementation. This means you need to finish your draft soon so you give them time for feedback.



# CONSIDER PARTNERSHIPS

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- Funders love partnerships. Who are yours?
- Only one entity can receive the funds.
- If a few villages apply, your application will be stronger. Are there opportunities for that?

# CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHAT YOU ASK FOR

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- Since this grant is viewed as contract you will be asked to review and sign it before receiving funds. Contract is based on your application but changes may be made.
- You have the opportunity to negotiate before signing the contract but it is kept within the scope of the work you had outlined in the proposal.
- you are not entitled for the entire grant amount, only to the sum of the expenses associated with the service. Example – LVF rent. There will be no room for modifications.
- This means your budget proposal for the program should include a few line items to give you later flexibility in the use of funds. Example – operational support (includes printing, mailing, supplies, phone line etc.)

# LET'S REVIEW A SAMPLE OF LAST YEAR'S PROPOSAL

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- Village of Takoma Park

# LAST THOUGHTS

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- You will be asked about sustainability. Have a plan in place not just to mollify the funders but to ensure you are viable
- Never put all your eggs in one basket. Diversify your resources
- Once you have a strong proposal, use that to apply with other foundations.
- Do not lose heart if you do not get the funds. Try again another year.