

Preparing to Apply

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Locating Funding Sources

- Understand your project budget
 1. Short-term start-up or capital costs
 2. Long-term operating or maintenance costs
 3. Amount of local funding available
 4. Amount of outside funding needed
- Matching needs and intended outcomes with funders' priorities and expectations.

Finding Funding Sources

- Websites
 - www.grants.gov
 - http://cnr.ncsu.edu/rrs/other_grant_resources.html#Research
 - <http://www.foundationcenter.org/>
- Fee-based sites (and how to access them for free)
- Thinking outside the grant: the importance of partnerships, in-kind contributions and volunteer support
- Don't be afraid to ask

Organizing Application Materials

- Understand the funding source:
 - Read the application with a fine-tooth comb
 - Understand the amount of available funding and what constitutes a “reasonable” request
 - Get to know your funder
 - Guidestar
 - Websites
 - Annual Reports

Organizing Application Materials

- Develop a Checklist
 - Application Forms
 - Narrative Components
 - Evaluation Measures
 - Signature Pages
- Develop a Timeline
 - Factor in stakeholder review, funding agency review (if possible), and governing body approval.
- Leave yourself some wiggle room.

Organizing Application Materials

- Get to know the grant program:
 - Source: Government, foundation or corporate?
 - Is there a match requirement? Can it be in-kind or cash only?
 - What are the grant administration requirements?
 - What special measures must be undertaken prior to the application deadline (planning documents, Board approval, certifications, etc.)
 - What is the decision-making timeframe?

Communicating Project Needs

- **Follow the directions**
- Write concisely but thoroughly. Keep page limits and formatting rules in mind.
- Understand the level of familiarity reviewers are likely to have with your field and your project.
- Understand and address the funders' priorities.

(For example, an application to the Clean Water Management Trust Fund support should address a project's water quality outcomes first and foremost, although it may have many additional benefits)

Making the Most of Opportunities for Assistance

- An application is just the first step in a long, and hopefully happy, relationship with a funder.
 - Make contact with the program officer
 - Many program officers will review application drafts and provide feedback
 - When approaching foundations or corporations seek linkages with Board Members, partners, friends of the program, and staff
- If at first you don't succeed, seek suggestions for improvement, and try again.