

Secrets of Grant Writing  
**CONNECTICUT  
SERC MEETING**

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**BUSINESS CARDS UP FRONT!**

**This is a talk about the  
SECRETS of  
WRITING GRANTS  
that  
I learned over a  
FIFTEEN YEAR PERIOD**

# GRANTS

- Allow you to:
  - Effect change
  - Get the help you need
  - Go where you need to go
  - Do what you need to do
  - MONEY ,POWER, FRIENDS

## Grantwriting:

- Learn the Game
- Be in for Long Haul
- Well Done, Professional
- Part of Agency Strategic Plan
- Be Tight with Finance/Admin
- Learn From Doing Grants
- Look at a Hundred Sites

## **Grantwriting cannot be:**

- Hobby**
- Once in a While Job**
- One-Time Only**
- “Set it and forget it”**
- “Get the money and run”**

## **PROPER PERSPECTIVE**

- PROGRAMS (Federal, Tribal, State, County)**
  - Personnel, Space, Equipment, Budget**
  - Permanance, Respect, Sense of Role**
- PROJECTS (Federal, Tribal, State, County)**
  - Cobbled together, temp jobs, etc.**
  - Short Term with start/end dates**
  - Deliverables, then done**

# PROPER PERSPECTIVE

- PROGRAMS
  - CHRISTMAS TREE
- PROJECTS
  - ORNAMENT

# PROPER PERSPECTIVE

- PROGRAMS
  - PERMANENT FUNDING PROCESS
- PROJECTS
  - GRANTS

**Need & Fill the Need  
Or  
“You Don’t  
Need My  
Money”**

## **Statement of Work**

**Goals**

**Objectives**

**Tasks**

**Task: Skill Person, Hours, Equipment, Supplies,  
Travel (miles), Room Needs, etc.**

# Budget

**Goals**

**Objectives**

**Tasks**

**Task:** Skill Person, Hours, Equipment, Supplies, Travel (miles), Room Needs, etc.

**Costs:** as estimated by the skill person or someone with knowledge

**“Standard Accounting Principles”**

**Meet Goals of Grant-  
Giving Agency**

**or**

**“You Don’t Get  
My Money”**

**The Goals of Your Agency,  
Program and Grant Project  
Should Parallel  
Those of the Grant-  
Giving Agency**

**CONTRACTS vs. GRANTS**

- Recent consulting job with CEO of large private, non-profit corporation
- She had been the “Contracts Officer”
- Her Question: “What is the difference between CONTRACTS and GRANTS? I am not getting it and this causing me so much trouble?”

# CONTRACTS

- Federal government, grantor, **DEFINES PROJECT, writes the SPECIFICATIONS**
- You, grantee, propose way to fulfill **THEIR DESIGN, THEIR PROJECT, THEIR SPECIFICATIONS.**

# GRANTS

- Federal government, grantor, defines their goals, type of project, but with **FEW SPECIFICS**
- You, grantee, **DESIGN YOUR PROJECT to YOUR SPECIFICATIONS**

## **Make Room For More “Bang for Buck”**

- Began grant writing 1992**
- Hazmat Program Manager**
- Program had 1990, 1991, 1992 funds**
- Shoveling snow in Montana**
- “Best bang for the buck”**
- “Bull, your bucks are in the bank”**

## **Make Room For More (cont'd)**

- Get rid of most of the money in the grant as quickly as you can**
- Never return money, unless you can do it by half-time**
- Early on, make sure subgrantees are going to use all of their allotments**
- Have legal way to spend leftovers. If change from original grant, get permission**

# Tree vs. Ornament

- **Programs: like Christmas Trees**
  - Budget, space, personnel, equipment
  - They are there, funded every year and NEVER END
- Projects: like Ornaments**
  - Beginning date and END DATE
  - Specific goal, deliverables, self-contained
- People don't like to give ornaments (project grants) to people who don't have a good Christmas Trees (programs)

# No Shotgun Approach

- Do not submit grant applications haphazardly
- Recipients should be glad they got your application, not ask why they got it
- Massage your application to fit the granting agency's needs
- Don't say "I've got nothing to lose" because you have your good name to lose as well as the respect of the granting agency

## **Know Who You're Talking To!**

- Grants Manager: runs a grant program, knows federal grant program and laws**
- Projects Manager: knows about projects, but not about grant laws and programs**
- Financial Section: gets you the money, knows nothing about grant programs or projects**
- Meebee, Weebie, Deebee or some such thing: who knows nuttin' about nuttin' but one form**

## **Recycling Applications**

- If a project was worth an application in the first place, it's worth reworking**
- If an application was worth submitting in the first place, it's worth resubmitting**
- If you recycle an application, it only takes about 5% of the original work**
- You should have learned from the rejecting agency why it was rejected and you fix it up**

## **Waiting for the Target**

- Sometimes as a “grant sniper” you have a great project, complete with goals, objectives, tasks, budget—but no grant program that looks good**
- Hang it on the wall within sight of desk**
- Wait long enough and a program will come along**
- Have small grants ready for use of end-of-year monies (often returned by inefficient grant recipients who couldn't spend their money)**

## **Make bosses look good!**

- Grant program managers have to justify their grants to their bosses**
- Their bosses probably helped design the grant project parameters**
- Think of yourself as on a mission to make their bosses look good to their bosses**
- Think of yourself as on a mission to make your boss look good to her/his boss**

## **They have to give it away**

- The grant managers are under the gun to give away their grant monies**
- You are doing them a favor by giving them a great project to fund**
- Your goal should be to get reputation for your program as a great place to dump money**
- They will, sooner or later, come to you and ask you to apply for their grants**

## **Keeping Score**

- The people who give grants away have a scoring system**
- They have a scoring system and would be happy to share it with you**
- They will use the system so you should**
- You can ask for your score if you want to know why you didn't get the grant**

**I used to have a friend that  
always said:  
“Same String, Different Yoyo”**

**What he meant was:**

**“Try the same thing somewhere else.”**

**or**

**“Try something else with the same  
agency.”**

**Different String, Same Yoyo  
(Different Agency, Same Project)**

- You have a good need, project and grant application**
- One agency has turned you down**
- Next year, find another agency**
- Change the sales pitch a bit**
- Try the same project, since it was good!**

## **Different Yoyo, Same String (Different Project, Same Agency)**

- You were told by a granting agency that they like the application, your agency, etc., but the project did not fit their programs**
- Use that good will and respect**
- Talk to them about types of projects they like and develop a project (with a real need)**
- Submit it the next year**

## **Just a Part of the Pie**

- Break project down into “severable” parts**
- Get first portion of funds from known, friendly supporter**
- Show prior support to others**
- Don’t forget in-kind, they are easy and several of these could be your first supporters**
- Get a local group to sponsor part of project**
- Perhaps have multi-year, multi-part project**

## Similar Projects

- Show how your application projects fits with other work currently going on in your agency
- Show how it fits with other grant projects submitted to other agencies

## Model or Replicable

- Show that you are developing a model project that can be used in many jurisdictions in U.S.
- Show that the deliverable is easily and cheaply reproduced
- Offer technical help on model replication to other jurisdictions at end of grant period
- Offer to present findings at sponsoring agency's future conferences

## **Project Manager**

- Make sure Project Manager has the skills, education, experience, time and will to carry the project to completion**
- Make sure Project Manager is right person in the organization to be the Project Manager**
- Make sure Project Manager is available to talk to personnel from grant giving agency**
- Make sure the resume/bio of the Project Manager reflects everything above**

## **Charts and Graphs**

- More charts and graphs rather than more narrative**
- PERT charts work the best for projecting out the work**
- Organizational chart allows grantor to find program in agency and project in program**
- Baseline data would best be collected prior to project and used a basis of project**

## **Never Kid a Kidder**

**Figure that the grant giving agency**

- Knows more about these types of grants**
- Knows more about these types of projects**
- Knows more about money management**
- Knows more about running a scam**

## **Banker**

- Could you get a bank loan for this project?**
- Does your application look professional?**
- Would you stake your personal reputation and credit on a project like this with your bank?**
- Would you drag in your boss and your boss's boss with you to the bank for this application?**

## **Occam and Einstein and KISS-KISS**

- Occam's Razor: Cut off all unnecessary stuff!**
- Einstein: Keep it as simple as possible, but no simpler!**
- Keep it Simple, Stupid!**
- Keep it Short, Stupid!**

## **EDITS**

- Negativity**
- Fluff**
- Acronyms**
- Redundancy**

## **The Foundation Center foundationcenter.org**

- They were founded by grant givers to help grant writers**
- Online mini-grantwriting course**
- Check your knowledge and capabilities**
- They have links to private foundations**
- They have some search capabilities**

**Frederick J. (Fred) Cowie, Ph.D.**

**The End  
Fred's Secrets of  
Winning Grant  
Writing**