

# Grant Finding and Writing Seminar B

Government Fleet Expo &  
Conference

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
*Promoting Healthy Communities*

**DENVER**  
THE MILE HIGH CITY

# **1. Locating Funding Opportunities** (Hint: not grants.gov)

## **A. GET IN THE GAME EARLY!**

- Finding out from the RFP is too late
- **Join Local/Regional Fleet Organizations**
  - Look for chapters sponsored by funding agencies (EPA—NCDC, DOE—Clean Cities)
- **Attend the Meetings**
  - Large networking group (public & private)
  - Early notice of grants (timing, scope, etc.)
  - Obtain info about funded projects in your area
  - Learn about local goals you can directly support
  - OK to send alternates/designate staff representative

## **B. Start Now**

- **History Tends to Repeat Itself**
  - **Research past FOAs and RFPs**
  - **What would you have proposed?**
  - **Identify projects in your area/region that were funded**
- **Assemble Your Straw Man Army**
  - **Make a project “wish list”**
  - **Group into categories**
    - » **Idle reduction, alt. fuels, hybrids, etc.**
  - **Keep a Range of Options—Don’t get too specific**
    - » **Ballpark for funding (\$250K vs. \$4 Million)**
    - » **Timeframe (months, years, shovel ready?)**

## **C. Get Feedback**

- **Ask peers, funding agencies (before FOA issued)**
- **General questions about eligibility etc. are welcome**

## **2. Power of Partnership**

### **A. Regional Air Agencies /MPOs**

- **Strong Partners**
- **Often have additional funding sources**
  - CMAQ, SEPs, etc.
- **Small Fleets Fear Not**
  - Help aggregate demand
  - Generally write & administer the grant
  - May assist with reporting and data gathering

### **B. Intra-Agency Partnerships**

- **Effective Means of Leveraging Resources**
- **Ask sustainability programs, OED, etc.**

## C. Public-Private Partnerships

- **Private Organizations NEED Your Fleet**
  - Usually not eligible to be sole applicant
  - Beware of easy-money/over-promise and under deliver
  - Always verify the information in the proposal; particularly what assumptions are going into the performance measures.
- **Your Public Fleet MAY Benefit**
  - Required for Emerging Technology Grants (EPA)
  - Identification of vendors in proposals demonstrates:
    - » Ability to rapidly implement project (shovel ready)
    - » Contribution to regional strategy
  - Be mindful of fair and open competition & WBE/MBE requirements

## D. You Must Trust Your Partners!

- Their performance will impact the score of your next grant application
- Make sure roles & responsibilities are known and agreed upon
- Have a change-management structure in place

## **3. Writing a Successful Proposal**

### **A. Determine Project Scope**

- **Identify best straw man (men) based on:**
  - **Programmatic Priorities (national & regional)**
  - **Award Size**
  - **Timeframe**
- **Add, subtract or expand components based on funding eligibility**
- **Get Your Resources/Match in Place**
- **Identify partners**
  - **Agree to roles & responsibilities**



## **B. Keep It Focused!**

- **Use the Evaluation Criteria to Shape Your Proposal**
  - Sections with the highest % points should be the longest
  - Don't include irrelevant information
- **Only Request Funding for Aspects of Your Project That Are Specified as Eligible!**
  - If an unfunded aspect of your project will directly support the proposal, then briefly describe it and how it will contribute to the project.
- **Never allow “pet projects” to make their way into your proposal**
- **Don't include partners that are not contributing any resources/ are not directly involved with implementation**
  - It's not a popularity contest.
  - These are stakeholders.

## **C. How To Stand Out From the Rest**

- **Be Original**
  - Never copy sections of a sample proposal
  - Never copy sections of another agency's proposal or workplan
- **Use charts, tables and graphics freely**
  - Excellent way to convey complex ideas and/or significant amounts of technical information in a relatively small amount of page space.
- **Showcase the Accomplishments of Your Fleet and Staff**
  - Include any awards/ recognitions/accomplishments
  - Demonstrates qualifications and capabilities to implement proposal
- **Talk About Similar Past Projects that Were Successful**
- **State if Your Agency had a Policy/Planning Structure That Aligns with the Grant Program's History/Long-Term Goals**
  - Demonstrates sustainability beyond the funding period.
  - E.g., XO for Alt. Fuels or a Sustainability Program.



## **D. Clearly Define Your Performance Measures**

- **Outputs**
  - **Direct products of your project activities**
  - **Quantitative or qualitative**
  - **Must be measurable within the project period**
  - **Examples: lbs of pollution reduced, gallons of fuel conserved**
  - **Should use the assessment method/tool specified in the FOA**
- **Outcomes**
  - **The result, effect or consequence of your project's implementation**
  - **Must be quantitative**
  - **Might not be measurable within the project period**
  - **Examples: Increased understanding of the new technology, improved air quality, health benefits achieved, jobs created/preserved**
- **Impacts**
  - **Fundamental changes to your agency resulting from a project**
  - **Example: adoption of biodiesel after demonstration grant**
- **Develop a Logic Model for Your Program**
  - *Logic Model Development Guide, W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

## **E. Submit a Complete Application Package**

- **Don't Procrastinate on the Required Forms**
  - **Have someone else double check everything on them**
  - **Make sure they are in agreement with each other**
- **Answer ALL of the questions/Address ALL requirements in the FOA**
  - **No matter how obvious they may seem**
  - **Don't neglect the threshold eligibility criteria**
- **Take Advantage of Appendices and Supplemental Documents**
  - **Usually don't count towards page limits**
  - **Opportunity to provide additional information about your project and/or program.**

## **F. Submit Early and Use the Correct Format**

- **Hard Copy Submission is Vanishing...**
- **Do You Have Your DUNS?**
- **Electronic Systems Can Be Tricky:**
  - **It can take days/weeks to get fully set up with an account**
  - **Gets over loaded close to the deadline**
    - » **Creates problems logging in & uploading large files**
    - » **Allow several hours for uploading and submitting your proposal**
- **Email Has Issues Too:**
  - **Large files can have long transmission times**
  - **Government firewalls can block/strip out attachments**
  - **Timestamp is when the agency receives the email, not the time you sent it.**

## **G. Do Not Pass Go—How To Have Your Proposal Automatically Rejected:**

- **Request less than the minimum/ more than the maximum award size**
- **Exceed the page limit**
- **Not adhere to format/ font size requirements**
- **Request funding for non-eligible projects**
- **Submitting an incomplete package**
- **Submitting after the deadline (yes minutes and seconds do count)**

## **H. Grant Writing: To Contract or Not To Contract?**

- **Good idea if you are just starting out and do not have anyone on staff with experience**
- **Have an agreement/contract in place in advance**
  - **Try to develop a relationship with one writer**
- **Be mindful of deadlines and allow time for several drafts**
- **Your agency is still responsible for the proposal and project:**
  - **Writers assist with format and pulling the written aspects of the proposal together—they are not your project manager**
  - **Many writers are not scientists, engineers or mechanics:**
    - » **If you cannot provide the technical information, assess your ability to directly implement the project.**
  - **Be mindful of your agency's ability to complete the reporting and data gathering requirements in-house if you are awarded.**



## **4. Tips for Getting Your Fleet Started**

### **A. Start Small and Build on That Success**

- **Get Your Foot in the Door**
- **About 10% of your proposal's score is based on your past performance**
- **Bad projects will come back to haunt you**
  - **Need to be able to trust your partners**
  - **Don't propose anything you are not confident in your ability to complete**

## **B. Don't Compete Against Yourself**

- **Resist the urge to submit multiple proposals**
- **Demonstrates a lack of focus**
- **Don't assume at least one will get funded**
- **Consider if your private partners are doing this as well**

## **C. Plan for Partial Funding**

- **Seems to happen more often than not**
- **Will you be able to implement your project if you are only awarded 60% of your requested funding?**

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Questions.....

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## Thank You:

- Ernie Ivy & Denver Public Works Fleet Maintenance Division
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- Denver Environmental Health