

## ALABAMA STATE–COMMUNITY RECOVERY TASK FORCES

Community Planning and Capacity Building

Grant Writing Workshop Day 1

September 19, 2011

### ATTENDEES

NAME	AGENCY & INFORMATION	NAME	AGENCY & INFORMATION
Donald Eubank	MCHC	Wendy Hester	ADECA
Deb Ryan	Phil Campbell	Amanda Barnett	NWCAA
Jeff Fleming	NWCAA	Lisa Kemmerlin	Cleburne Co. EMA
Sherry Davis	Phil Campbell Recovery Chair	Nathan Willingham	NACOLG
Maritetta Mills	NACOLG	Barbra Cain	Phil Campbell
Gelane Nelson	Dekalb County Schools	De'an Bass	FEMA LTRC
Danny Hester	Gryphon Inc.	Martha Farmer	Phil Campbell
Susan Hargett	Franklin County Schools	Michael Posey	Dekalb Co. EMA
Charlotte Howell	Marion County Schools	Mike Kastner	KWM
Isaac Earls	KWM	Kristin Kizziah	FEMA LTRC
Jessica Dent	ADECA	Chris Cunningham	FEMA LTRC
Evan Kilgore	FEMA LTRC	Micah Farfour	FEMA LTRC

### SUMMARY

#### AGENDA ITEMS

##### Project Planning

- Plan the work then work the plan
- The project itself is the number one focus; look at how best to complete the project, this is key not who is in charge of the project or where the money will come from or other secondary considerations
- Your regional council of government, elected officials, and the media are all invaluable partners in developing your project and securing funding
  - Writing letters to the Governor and other elected officials is still an effective way to get support for your project

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- Heflin, Al had citizens that wanted an Art center; they got together and now the center teaches violin, cello and other arts because people that were dedicated to making this happen; this is a great example project
- Look at how your city was built the first time, it was not built on grant dollars but by the citizens of the community
- You must first develop great projects; do not stop developing or fail to develop a project because you don't know where the money will come from
  - Your community can find a way to make a great project happen
- Get letters of support from all of the community organizations as well; community organizations are centrally important to you community and to further development of your community, involve them in the project development
- A lot of issues can derail your project development; all issues can hurt your project, first and foremost.
  - Find ways to resolve these issues, while keeping your project moving forward
  - Politics, personality conflicts, misunderstandings, hurt feelings, questions and a host of unexpected issues can arise
  - Keep the project at the forefront and moving forward

#### Nathan Willingham, NACOLG

- Grant Writing and grant administration is one of the Cog's primary roles
- They also do the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Comprehensive Economic Development planning (CEDS) and transit
- Largely we directly provide services and resources to similar local governments

#### Prioritizing the Project

- Consider immediacy, scope the benefit to all segments of the community and sustainability of the project including self supporting projects
- Look at whether the community can afford the project
- What is the cost/benefit of this project
- Look at how long it is going to be use and how well it will be used
- Find out what money is available out there now
- Look at whether the project is connected with any other projects or if the project can be combined so that the operation and maintenance cost can be minimized; does the project need to be built before another project can take place
  - An example would be the concession stand before the ball field
- The goal is what the overall purpose of this project; is it to improve healthcare access or to provide quality education?
- The objective is what the specific action to be taken is

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- Avoid scope creep; consider your project like a balloon, and everything you add to that project is like blowing in the balloon one more time, eventually it will burst
- Do not knock out innovative ideas, involve the youth; they don't know what we can't do, they only see opportunities to solve problems, let them be heard
- Be realistic in your expectations about the time frames to accomplish these projects, long standing issues take substantial amounts of time to resolve
- Stay clear and be able to recognize projects that come up but provide not real value to the community

#### Project Action Plan Worksheet

- Give your plan a name, why not?
- Identify the goal, this is the overarching reason for working on this project
- Objectives are the ways in which this project helps accomplish the goal, who will do it (remember one person cannot do it all- do not let your inability to do everything prevent me from doing anything)
- All of the planning that goes into project development also goes into your grant application; this is the meat of you grant application and the more planning the easier the grant writing will be
- You need to know what change your project will cause in your community
  - Keep it realistic and doable, but the more positive change a project creates the more competitive it will be

#### Community Commitment

- The community are a whole is a powerful entity; harness that power for your projects
- Hold community wide meetings, involve community organizations, hold community-sponsored events such as potlucks to garner support for the project
- Get the issues out in the open to be discussed; discuss the possible solutions and get partners involved to help

#### Logical Grant Writing Process

- There are 14 essential elements in writing a grant
- Preparation 1
  - This is like getting your house in order before company comes to visit, get everything ready before the grant notice is posted
  - Generally there is a short turn-around time for getting a grant written and submitted
  - You have to get everything together before then , know what your vision is
  - Look at what your budget looks like, is the bank going to loan you money to buy a car when you have bad credit and you can't show that you have any means of paying for this car
- Preparation 2

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- Staffing, who is going to administer the grant; it can be difficult to administer a grant and you have to be able to show who will administer the grant in order to get the grant
- Organizational planning, you want to show a history of planning and community involvement in your community
- You need to be able to show that your community is behind the project
- Evaluation, you want to be able to objectively evaluate your own progress, this will be helpful in future planning'
- Preparation 3
  - History of funding and growth, what makes your community special so that your community should get the money
  - Ask what roots are supporting your community
  - Keep up with the positive newspaper articles, news coverage or community rankings , all these things help you lure grantors
  - IRS tax determination letter, keep your books up to date; this helps attract grantors by showing fiscal responsibility
  - Annual reports, newsletters, news articles help show the positive history of your community and how responsible your community is as a whole
  - This helps attract grantors to provide funding, this is also a good way to get community support for projects and is also a good way to get community support for projects
  - Photographs are truly worth more than a thousand words in a grant application, nothing can communicate what your community is, was and had done like a photograph of the actual event; if it is a positive or negative that you are trying to communicate, put in photo(ex. Raw sewage in citizens backyard)
  - The grant application is a puzzle, you just have to gather all of the pieces and put them together

#### Request for Proposal

- RFP, RFA, RFQ, NOFA, SGA all mean 'we have money, come and apply for it'
  - The most important thing to remember about all of these is READ THE DIRECTIONS, then REREAD THE DIRECTIONS, the REREAD THE DIRECTIONS AGAIN
  - Read once just to familiarize yourself with it, then read and highlight the key points and 'buzz words', finally double check all of the key points and criteria
- Cenus.gov has great information about your community
- EDPA has community profiles that have great information about your community
- Determine your eligibility and make sure your community or organization is an eligible applicant for this grant
- Make sure your project is an eligible project for this grant
- Ensure the goal of your project supports the goal of the grant, you can't make you project goal fit after the fact
- Again READ THE DIRECTIONS, the FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS

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#### Elements of a Formal Proposal

- A formal proposal can be a 2-inch thick or a 2-page document, depending on the requirements of the grant, FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS
- Add a cover letter if the cover letter is provided; cover letters are very generic
- The abstract is generally about half a page long
- The executive summary is slightly longer and more detailed, entailing several paragraphs
- FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS
- The Narrative
  - Make certain you reinforce the issue and how the project helps resolve the issue
  - Illustrate the goal and how the projects accomplish the goal
- Be able to substantiate any statements of claims you make in your narrative; state the issue and provide supportive information
- Make sure the information is qualitative and quantitative
- Try to include numerical facts and human interest points if there is room; it will be another person reading this grant application is something you want to keep in mind tell your story, sell your story
- If you can't prove it DON'T WRITE IT

#### Project Objectives

- Discuss the importance of the benefits of this project, make sure the project correlates and supports your community's vision statement
- Make sure the objectives support the goal and goal supports the vision
- Objectives are very specific and measurable, they support your goal
- Actions support objectives, objectives support the goal, the goal supports the vision
- Most of the work is done in the project action plan stage

#### Grant Budget

- The budget only represents a preliminary estimate of the cost of your project
- The budgeted amount should be as specific as possible
- Put together a team to write simple grants
- Each part of the team can take responsibility for different portions of the process
- The team can be made up of school teachers, local accountants or even students
- Many grants are straight forward enough that no or minimal outside professional support will be necessary
- Carefully document all of your "In-Kind Contributions" so that they can be used]

#### Budget Narrative

- Write out where you got the numbers in the summary, who gave you the estimate and when was it given

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- Leverage your funds; sometimes you can use in-kind donations as the matching funding
- Make sure you document everything so that you can use it

#### Submit Your Grant

- DOUBLE-CHECK THE DIRECTIONS
- If your grant does not perfectly follow the directions, it will not be considered, make sure it is submitted on time
- Once the application is submitted, continue to work on this project
- Continue to seek other funding sources, don't put all your eggs in one basket
- Get an outside point of view, let others review and critique your application
- Be courteous and persistent
- Make friends with your grant manager, ask them questions
- Pay attention to all the details

#### If the Grant Is Not Awarded...

- Do not give up
- Go back and review the projects that were awarded and use that to improve your write-up
- Ask for comments
- Look for ways to make your application stronger for the next time
- Start planning for the next grant opportunity for your project and your community

#### Grant Agreements

- (1) Deadlines, you are legally bound to the project description outlining the scope of work
- (2) Make sure you set up a schedule showing due dates and who is responsible for making that deadline; remember some deadlines are subject to other deadlines being made

#### Toot Your Own Horn

- Send your grantor frequent updates
- Send them the newsletters, pictures and thank you letters from the elementary school kids
- You want these people to remember you in a positive light
- You want them to want to come back

#### Grant Sources

- The current economic climate has impacted not only the federal funding sources, but also the private and foundation funding sources; there has been a significant decline in both
- Private Corporations and foundations are an available source
- Take a compass and draw a circle with about a 50 mile radius around your community; research what industries and businesses are within that area.
  - Find out what funding opportunities each of those businesses have to offer

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- “Sell” your community and your projects to the company
- For example 3M is a company with a lot of money that is headquartered right here in Alabama
- Grantsalert.com is a free website resource; free websites like this one can help you find grant opportunities
- Colgate, Hamburger Helper, Scott’s Weed & Feed, Coca Cola, John Deere and Purina all have philanthropic arms
- [www.alabamagiving.org](http://www.alabamagiving.org) is a good free resource for Alabama specific grant opportunities, as well as training and information about grants and grant writing
- <http://alabamanonprofits.org> is the website for the Alabama Association of Non-profits; this is a great free resource for finding non-profit grant opportunities as well as training and information about grants and grant writing.
- Research and get involved with any organizations you are thinking about applying to
  - Know who is on the board of directors and if you have any connection to them
  - Know what types of projects they fund
- <http://donationcenter.org> is a center that offers free resources to help you find grants and gain knowledge about grants and writing

#### Community Foundations

- Community foundations are set up by locals at the local level to help their community; they are wonderful resources
- They give money and get money for their communities
- They publish newsletters to let the world know what they are doing and how they can help
  - For example the Walker Area Foundation serves the Walker County area
- If your community does not have a community foundation set up, it is a great thing to set up both to attract funding and to manage funding once you have received it

#### Federal Funding

- There are more than 20 types of federal funding
- Cooperative agreements for example are if the government comes to your community to provide training about fighting obesity, rather than giving money
- The 3 most common are cooperative agreements, contracts, grants
- Formula or block grants are awarded to units of government for broad purposes such as services or transportation
- The Federal Register, [www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html), is huge; it may be a useful resource but not a place to look for grants
- Look for grants on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov); this is the official government website for finding grant money

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- This website also includes a boatload of resources for the grant writer, such as the checklist for grant writing and FAQs
- Rural Information Center, [nal.usda.gov](http://nal.usda.gov); this is a USDA website that includes guides to funding resources
- Also look at the CFDA (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance), [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov)
- Congresswoman Terry Sewell's Grant Alert is another resource, this is a very comprehensive grants alert
  - Most representatives have a grants alert like this one

#### USDA Assistance

- Community facilities are an example of all the things that USDA Rural Development can assist with building or rebuilding
- USDA can also help with many issues related to business and cooperative programs
- Utility programs are another area of projects the USDA Rural Development can help with
- Hackleburg, Al and Phil Campbell, Al are under USDA Rural Development Area 1
- Also look to the Regional Councils of Government for assistance; they work for you by law

#### State Grants

- Governor's Office of Faith Based & Community Initiatives
  - Jon Mason, Director
  - [www.servealabama.gov](http://www.servealabama.gov)
- ADECA
  - [www.adeca.alabama.gov](http://www.adeca.alabama.gov)
- ADEM Recycling Grants
  - [www.aeonline.org](http://www.aeonline.org)
- Alabama Arts Council
  - [www.arts.state.al.us](http://www.arts.state.al.us)
- Congresswoman Terri Sewell's Grants Alert
  - <http://sewell.house.gov>
- RC&D Councils
- The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
  - The upper half of Alabama falls within the range of the ARC, they have grants available as well as technical assistance