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GRANTS OFFICE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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volume 1, issue 4
February 2011

Investing in Innovation (again)

WHAT OBAMA'S 2011 STATE OF THE UNION MEANS FOR GRANTS *P2*

Civic Organizations and You: Finding Alternative Funding

By Vince Siragusa, Grants Development Consultant

In building a comprehensive grantseeking strategy, the educated grantseeker will work to diversify potential funding options. Considerations should be afforded to the usual suspects, including federal, state and foundation/corporate funding. However, depending on the structure of the would-be applicant and the nature and cost of the project(s) being considered, a number of other funding opportunities may also be at your finger tips.

In addition to some of the more common funding options, consider service clubs and civic organizations as potential supporters of your initiative. Quite often, these benevolent organizations will gauge the proposed project's potential as a parallel to the capabilities and roles that the applicant plays in the community. For example, rather than strictly measuring potential financial support via a formalized proposal process, the civic organization may rely more upon personal knowledge of the applicant organization in their consideration. Entities already recognized as community assets may have a leg up on organizations not garnering that same level of recognition. Some examples of organizations whose support one might pursue include:

1. Lions Clubs: www.lionsclubs.org
2. Rotary Clubs: www.rotary.org
3. American Legion: www.legion.org
4. Elks Clubs: www.elks.org
5. Kiwanis Clubs: www.kiwanis.org

The projects these philanthropic organizations look to support vary a great deal but are often focused more on grassroots and humanitarian efforts than capital improvements. Which is not to say that equipment cannot or will not be supported but, similar to any other grant seeking endeavor, you should be sure to position that solution as a necessary project component that allows you to achieve the goals and objectives identified in your application.

Best practice for approaching these types of organizations generally begins with identifying the specific project you have in mind and then locating the local chapter that serves your particular region. Similar to the process involved with soliciting foundations, you will want to present background on your organization and articulate the need for assistance. An email or phone conversation may suffice for a quick introduction or exchange of ideas but the intimacy and potential advantage made possible in a face-to-face discussion should not be underestimated. Additionally, each of these organizations may have a preferred process when being approached for assistance. Gather some information and do your homework before soliciting support. Through that information gathering, you should work to identify the correct contact person or department and the method of contact most appropriate for the request.

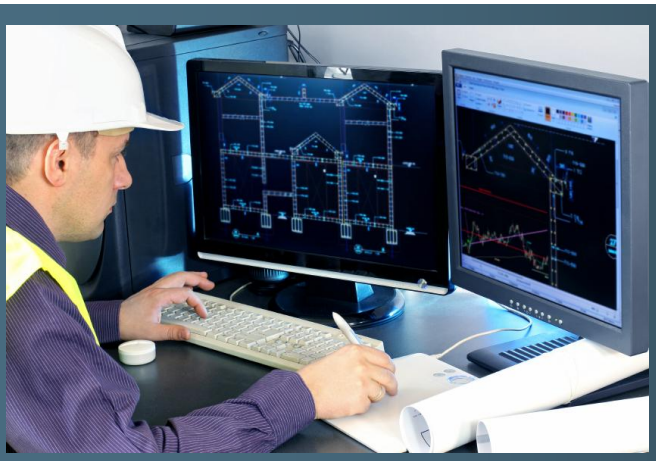
Identifying potential contacts or lists of civic organizations in your area often starts with checking your local phone directories or the local Chamber of Commerce. And as important as anything else in this process, utilize previously established relationships with the people and organizations you may run into every day. Survey your internal organization and your network of contacts to see if anyone has a relationship or familiarity with any of these organizations. A person you see at your weekly softball game may be the same contact who helps you get your foot in the door to ensure long-term civic-organizational support.

FUNDED GRANTS OFFICE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Investing in Innovation (again):

WHAT OBAMA'S 2011 STATE OF THE UNION MEANS FOR GRANTS

By Christopher Haight, Grants Development Consultant



President Obama's second State of the Union speech may have easily been titled "Investing in Innovation," borrowing from one of his signature education reform grant programs funded under the Recovery Act. Throughout this speech to the U.S. Congress and nation, Obama emphasized the imperative to support innovation for the health of the U.S. economy and future welfare of the country. While the speech was short on specific policy items or legislative goals, Obama made clear broad priorities going forward, including energy, education, and infrastructure.

To understand what Obama's general remarks on these areas for reform and investment really mean, it is instructive to look towards the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), otherwise known as the Recovery Act or the Stimulus, that included many of the same priorities discussed below.

Energy. One of the top priorities for many public agencies, including school districts and municipalities, is the need to become more efficient not just in their provision of public services, but also in their basic operational costs. A key program in the ARRA, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG) provided funds to public agencies to implement energy-saving technologies - including those focused on enhanced efficiency or alternative energy sources. With most federal funding in the energy sector focused on research, development, or commercialization, there is a void of funding opportunities like the EECBGs that fund the actual implementation of such technologies. The money that does fund it is administered at the state level and often subject to budget cuts or outright elimination as states face over a collective $100 billion shortfall this year. A revised national energy policy that aims to reach Obama's goal of 80 percent clean energy usage by 2035 will likely require additional supports similar to EECBGs that allow public agencies to pursue "greener" options for keeping the lights on.

Education. Obama most clearly emphasized his intent to use his track record of progress through the Recovery Act to inform his approach to education. Obama specifically cited the $4 billion grant program, Race to the Top, as a key motivator

" The first step in winning the future is encouraging American innovation. " -President Barack Obama

for states to achieve the kinds of reforms that have long remained relegated to policy papers - including teacher tenure reform and higher academic standards.

"Race to the Top is the most meaningful reform of our public schools in a generation. For less than 1 percent of what we spend on education each year, it has led over 40 states to raise their standards for teaching and learning," Obama stated when discussing education.

With a long-overdue reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and relatively close policy positioning between Obama and the newly empowered Republicans, education may be the likeliest target for bipartisan compromise. Expect in any new version of the ESEA to be grant programs such as a modified Race to the Top and Investing in Innovation, as well as other supports for teacher professional development. Given the success of Race to the Top in achieving reform even before awarding any grants, it is likely these new and extended grant programs will continue to remain competitive, rather formula-based.

Infrastructure. Similarly to energy and education policy, much of what Obama's State of the Union addressed could be traced back to the Recovery Act with highlights in the areas of transportation and expanded access to broadband. Obama noted that new economic prosperity would rely in large part on building the "fastest, most reliable ways to move people, goods, and information" throughout the country and world.

Grantseekers may recall this included multi-billion dollar Recovery Act grant programs such as high-speed rail and the broadband technology opportunities and broadband initiatives programs. The administration has already launched its effort to build on the promise of high-speed rail, calling for $53 billion to be spent over the next five years on developing a new network of lightning-fast trains to America. Obama has also pushed for developing an infrastructure bank composed of public and private capital that would award funds to projects based on merit (similar to grant programs), rather than by earmark or formula. The Universal Services Fund, which administers programs meant to help expand internet access (such as E-Rate), is likewise moving towards implementing changes to its programs.

President Obama reiterated much of what he has already made clear his administration considers priorities for the 21st century - a new paradigm of energy creation, distribution, and consumption; a reformed education system that continues to produce the best and the brightest; and a focus on (literally) rebuilding and reimaging America.

Grants Program Spotlight: Improving Literacy Through School Libraries

This grant provides funding for: (1) Purchase up-to-date school library media resources, including books; (2) Acquire and use advanced technology that is integrated into the curricula to develop and enhance the information literacy, information retrieval, and critical-thinking skills of students; (3) Facilitate Internet links and other resource-sharing networks; (4) Provide professional development for school library media specialists of PK-3 students and provide activities that foster increased collaboration among library specialists, teachers, and administrators of PK-12 students; and, (5) Provide students with access to school libraries during non-school hours.

School districts with a poverty rate of at least 20% are eligible to apply. The deadline is March 28, 2011.

Learn more at http://grantsoffice.com/webservice/show.aspx?gID=17517

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Helping Fund Tribal Safety Initiatives with CTAS Grants

By Meaghan Provost, Grant Development Assistant

In only its second year of the current structure, the Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS) was recently released by the Department of Justice. Unique in its layout, the CTAS program combines a multitude of tribal-specific grant opportunities into one solicitation with one due date. Tribal applicants now are responsible for one submission for up to 8 program areas, where previously separate applications were due for each program at varying times during the year. Tribes are also eligible to receive multiple awards for projects that span several purpose areas.

The program is structured slightly differently from the previous years' application based on feedback from applicants considered by the program managers. Major changes include a longer span from release to deadline, a standard 3-year project period for each purpose area, merging of several purpose areas, and elimination of matching funds (except for purpose areas that statutorily require a matching amount). Tribal Authorizing Resolutions are not due at the time of application, as well, but do need to be in place before awards are utilized. Purpose areas in the FY2011 CTAS solicitation include:

1. Public safety and community policing (COPS)
2. Methamphetamine enforcement (COPS)
3. Justice systems, and alcohol and substance abuse (BJA)
4. Corrections and correctional alternatives (BJA)
5. Violence against women (OVW)
6. Elder abuse (OVC)
7. Juvenile justice (OJJDP)
8. Tribal youth program (OJJDP)

Even though only one submission is required (and only the last submission will be reviewed) by the tribal applicants, the application does include separate program documents for each purpose area, including a narrative for the particular program as well as a timeline. Applicants must also submit only one demographic narrative and summary of the current state of operations that apply to the application as a whole.

While this might seem to be an easier approach to tribal funding opportunities on all fronts, there are some challenges to structuring the application as it stands today. While the application this year included a longer runway for developing the program documents, the three-month timeframe from release in late January to the deadline on April 12, 2011, because there are so many purpose areas that can be targeted, is still a time crunch for some applicants. It

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also requires a great deal of coordination on behalf of each applicant with the different tribal departments responsible for each purpose area, since there are documents that are communal for the application and must reflect the application as a whole. This includes only one executive summary, demographic narrative, problem statement and needs assessment, and a budget that combines the requests for each program over the three-year project period. There is also the option to include only one timeline reflective of the projects together. It's important for applicants to be aware of these communal documents, and have conversations early on about the responsibilities for each department or project to get a consistent application budget and narrative together in time for the quickly-approaching deadline. Since it is a time crunch, it is also necessary to have conversations about which purpose areas will tackled in each application. It might seem like a good idea to pose responses for each purpose area to maximize the funding, especially since the programs are now all combined at one time during the year, but it is important to recognize the areas with the most dire needs and focus efforts on presenting a cohesive application to these specific programs.

Overall, the format of the CTAS application makes it a unique funding opportunity, holding great potential for tribal applications. Last year alone, the Department of Justice awarded over $127 million to 150+ applicants—69% of applicants saw awards for one or more purpose area. Technology is also an allowable budget item for many purpose areas, including computer hardware/software, digital cameras, video equipment, vehicles, computer networks, data management systems, and law enforcement technology/equipment.

For more information about this years' CTAS application, please see: http://www.tribaljusticeandsafety.gov/ctas11.html

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A New Opportunity for Education, Technology, and Jobs

By Christopher Haight, Grants Development Consultant

Of the two bills signed into law that enacted the historic health care reform effort under President Obama, the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 features one of the least cited yet critically important grant opportunities since the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The Reconciliation Act passed in conjunction with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA, or ACA) with two purposes: the first, to amend features of PPACA such as the infamous legislative dealing that was required to pass PPACA in the Senate (think Senator Ben Nelson's "Cornhusker Kickback" or Senator Mary Landrieu's "Louisiana Purchase," both of which disproportionately alleviated Medicaid costs on those states); and the second, to institute student loan reform, eliminating the use of financial institutions as intermediaries between federal financing of higher education and students/borrowers.

The student loan reform, formally known as the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA), included $2 billion in funding for competitive job training grants targeted primarily, although not exclusively, at community colleges across the nation. Released in late January, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grants program (TAACCCT) is now available with a deadline of April 21, 2011.

For any institution of higher education seeking to implement new, two-year job training programs, this is the key opportunity for the foreseeable futures. With $500 million available for each fiscal year through 2014 and at least $2.5 million guaranteed for recipients in each state, it cannot be stressed enough how important this opportunity is.

The TAACCCT program includes the following priorities for funding: (1) Accelerate Progress for Low-Skilled and Other Workers; (2) Improve Retention and Achievement Rates to Reduce Time to Completion; (3) Build Programs That Meet Industry Needs, Including Developing Career Pathways; and (4) Strengthen Online and Technology-Enabled Learning. Applicants must address these priorities within their proposals as well as undertake several partnerships and engage in community outreach, including working with local employers and industry associations, local governments, workforce investment boards, labor organizations, and other educational institutions such as K-12 school districts. Applicants that fail to address these priorities or include all of these partnerships will place themselves at a competitive disadvantage.

In terms of allowable costs, the grant funds can be used for hiring or training new instructors or staff, developing program curricula, purchasing supplies and equipment, leasing space for educational and training purposes, implementing necessary information technologies, and other costs of program development.

One of the key motivators many colleges and universities have in seeking out grant funding is to implement new technology infrastructure - this an ideal opportunity in terms of programmatic purpose, allowable costs, and the size of the awards (which can range from $2.5 million up to $20 million).

With FY2011 appropriations still at a standstill and a new Congress focused on cutting up to $100 billion from current and future fiscal years, applicants that are slow to act now are missing out on what is likely to be the best grant opportunity for higher education throughout the next five to ten years.

For more information, please visit http://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/SGA-DFA-PY-10-03.pdf

Making Sense of the Medicare and Medicaid Incentives Packages: Eligibility and Funding Levels

By Chris LaPage, Grants Development Consultant

Unless you have been hibernating in a cave for the past year, everyone connected to healthcare has been hearing the buzz words - Certified EHR Technology, Incentives, and Meaningful Use. The Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentives were included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, but registration just recently opened as payments will be dished out for the first time in 2011. Almost $20 billion is available to encourage the adoption of electronic health care records by health care providers across the United States.

The program was primarily designed to benefit individual practitioners (office or clinic setting) and hospitals. For the most part, long term care agencies and other types of providers will not benefit from the incentives. Acute care hospitals that have at least 10% Medicaid patient volume (children' hospitals have no volume threshold) will be eligible to receive incentive payments through both Medicare and Medicaid. Over $6 million in incentives are theoretically available to hospitals through the Medicare and Medicaid programs, but the actual amount pulled down will be based on discharge data, the relative number of Medicare/Medicaid inpatient bed days and the amount of charity care provided by the hospital.

Individual practitioners, on the other hand, must select only one program if they happen to be eligible for both. In order to be eligible for the Medicaid program, individual practitioners must meet a 30% volume threshold. If eligible physicians are duly eligible, the programs are set up so that the Medicaid program offers the larger incentive over the life of the program. Most practitioners will max out with the Medicare program at $44,000 in payments whereas Medicaid providers can receive up to $63,750 in incentives. In addition, in the first year of payment, practitioners receiving incentives through Medicaid will not be required to meet the definition of *Meaningful Use*. Medicaid providers only need to present evidence that they have adopted, implemented or upgraded EHR technology during the reporting period for their first-year payment.

Knowing the amount of money that can potentially be recouped through the incentive programs is only the first step. The Medicare program is open to physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, Chiropractors and acute care hospitals reimbursed under the prospective payment system. The Medicaid program is open to physicians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, dentists and certain types of physician assistants that meet the volume thresholds previously discussed. Assuming you are eligible, you must acquire a certified EHR unless you already have one in place. Either way, it must be certified by an Office of the National Coordinator - Authorized Testing and Certification Body (ONC-ATCB). Finally, you must demonstrate meaningful use of that EHR, which requires you to meet about 20 objectives and measures established by HHS. Registration for the Medicare/Medicaid Incentives started January 3, 2011. You do not have to have an EHR in place or demonstrate meaningful use to complete registration. It is recommended that you go ahead and complete the registration so that you are ready to realize payments once the EHR is adopted and you can prove meaningful use.

The FIRST of a three-part series exploring Medicare and Medicaid Incentives! More to come in our following issues!

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 2011 Webcasts

- **February 15, 2011:** Grants with a Campus Safety Component
- **February 16, 2011:** Show Me the Money: The 2011 Healthcare Funding Landscape, *sponsored by Philips*

March 2011 Webcasts

- **March 1, 2011:** Funding Interoperable Communications, *sponsored by Tate Radio*
- **March 8, 2011**: Medicare & Medicaid Incentives, *sponsored by AT&T*
- **March 10, 2011:** Connected Classrooms: Distance Learning & Telemedicine, *sponsored by Cisco*
- **March 29, 2011:** Higher Ed Collaboration with Department of Labor
- **March 21, 2011:** Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program for Healthcare initiatives, *sponsored by Cisco*

April 2011 Webcasts

- **April 5, 2011:** Distance Learning & Telemedicine
- **April 14, 2011:** Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) & Justice Earmarks, *sponsored by Cisco*
- **April 19, 2011:** Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)
- **April 26, 2011**: Mobile Telehealth, *sponsored by AT&T*
- **April 26, 2011:** Energy Efficiency Funding for Municipalities

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