WRITING BETTER GRANTS

State of Nevada
Department of Conservation &
Natural Resources
Conservation District Program
QUESTIONS TO ASK: ????

- Are you ready?
- Is a grant the solution to your problem?
- Can you fulfill your obligations?
- Do you have partners on board?

If so.........

Then Let’s Go!
PREPARATION WORK

- DEFINE YOUR PROJECT
  - Does the project fit within the Conservation District’s Mission?
  - Is the end product identified within the Conservation District’s Annual Workplan?
  - Is the project within acceptable practices identified in the Nevada Revised Statutes?
PREPARATION WORK

- Decide who will benefit. Those may include general public, other agencies, environment, wildlife, etc.
- Define your potential partners.
- Draft expected outcomes in measurable terms.
- Draft a timeline that includes planning, fund search, proposal writing, and a realistic implementation date. This may be determined by season for projects involving planting.
DETERMINE PROJECT GOALS

- Determine goals and specific objectives that define how you will focus work to accomplish those goals:

  *(Example) Goal:* To improve water quality by reducing erosion

  - Remove noxious weeds from 2 miles of streambank and revegetate with native grasses and willow.
  - Reduce erosive slopes to a 3:1 grade
  - Install fencing for protection on 5 miles of stream
  - Monitor erosion activity and plant regeneration success
  - Educate the public by encouraging participation
IDENTIFY THE RIGHT FUNDING SOURCES

- Foundation centers, state and federal agencies, computer databases, publications, public libraries, and internet.
- Don’t limit to one funding source – apply to many sources.
- Look for matches and similarities between your project and the potential Grantor’s purpose and goals.
READ, READ, READ!

- Read ALL of the Request For Proposals.
- Read it again.
- Clarify any questions you may have.
- Ask how proposals will be ranked?
- Research the Grantee’s Mission, Vision and Goals – identify how you can help them achieve their goals.
- Understand the restrictions, timetables, and reporting requirements.
MAKE CONTACT

- Make a phone call –
- Request proposal guidelines.
- Request a list of projects previously funded.
- Request a copy of the Grantor’s Annual Report.
- Inquire about the maximum/minimum amount available.
- What is the average size and funding range of awards?
- Does the Grantor have other grant sources for which your project may be eligible?
WRITING THE PROPOSAL

- Be brief and ‘to the point’
- Have someone outside the project and agency read the proposal
- Be NEAT, COMPLETE and ON-TIME
- Beware of acronyms
- Use proper spelling, punctuation and grammar.
There are many ways to represent the same idea. However, the HOOK tailors the description of the idea to the interest of a particular funder. The HOOK aligns the project with the purpose, and goals of the funding source. This is a critical aspect of any proposal narrative because it determines how compelling reviewers will perceive your proposal.
PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- Deadlines
- Eligibility
- Format: forms, margins, spacing, number of pages, font, etc.
- Budgets
- Number of copies or originals to submit
PROJECT BUDGET

- Be reasonable
- Identify required personnel by function or position
- Overhead or indirect costs
- Operating Costs:
  - Office Rent
  - Equipment
  - Office Supplies
  - Project Costs

Q.) Does the funder allow these costs? If not, can you afford to pay them?
PROJECT BUDGET

- Administrative Costs
- Reimbursable expenses or pre-paid?
  - Can the CD afford to expend funds prior to reimbursement?
- Matching Costs:
  - Cash
  - In-Kind

DOES THE BUDGET MATCH THE PROPOSAL?

- Wiggle Room

Well-planned budgets reflect carefully thought out projects.
OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Measuring Success
  - Vegetation Monitoring
  - Reduction of erosive slopes
  - Education – number of children participating
  - Number of adults educated
  - Evaluation form from conference attendees

- Identify data and research methods with projected numbers.
PROJECT RESULTS

- SPECIFIC QUANTATIVE measurements used to determine the outcomes and impact of your project.
- An explanation of what will be measured, how it will be done, and how the information will be used.
OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

What will change if the project is successful?

- Monthly meetings?
- Written agreements between partnership agencies, etc.
- Legislative changes?
- Money savings for the community?
THE WAITING GAME

- Allow the Grantee time to contact you about the status after submittal – but not too long!
- It is important to request feedback about a proposal’s strengths and weaknesses.
- Try, try again.
IMPLEMENTING YOUR GRANT

- Meet ALL obligations.
- Submit reports on time and well written.
- Acknowledge the grantee in everything you do – give credit where credit is due.
- Consult the grantee before making ANY changes.

- **You are operating under a contract!**
- Give them “more than they bargained for”.
- Remember this is a partnership.
THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PROGRAM (CDP) IS YOUR GRANT WRITING RESOURCE.

- The more you write, the easier grant writing becomes.
- The CDP can assist you with the process.
- The CDP can offer grant writing training on request.