

Environmental Information



EN2015

How To Write a Winning EN Grant Application

What Gail George Would Want Me To Tell You and More!

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<http://www.exchangenetwork.net/en2015>

ABSTRACT

The objective of this presentation is to help states, tribes and territories prepare successful Exchange Network grant applications. It provides an overview of the FY 2016 Solicitation Notice, summarizes best practices, and offers a list of takeaway messages of applications do's, don'ts and definitely nots.

Overview

- FY 2016 Focus
- Critical Elements of the Solicitation Notice
- Best Practices
- Takeaways
- Reminders
- Questions/Contacts

FY 2016 Focus

- Phase 2 (data access, e-reporting, new priority systems)
- Phase 1 priority systems
- No separate e-Enterprise (EE) projects
- EN activities that support e-Enterprise remain

Critical Elements of the Solicitation Notice

- Priorities
- Types of assistance agreements
- Eligibility and threshold criteria
- Application instructions
- Evaluation criteria

Grant Priorities

- Section I-E
- Two Tiers
 - Tier 1 (Phase 2 Focus)
 - Tier 2 (Phase 1 Focus)
- Tier 1
 - Data access projects
 - Other cross-program projects
 - Program-specific projects
- Tier 2
 - Phase 1 reporting priorities
 - CROMERR compliant enterprise solutions (w/o SCS)
 - National data sets

Priorities (cont.)

- Seeking EN projects that align with EE, not EE projects
- Integrate with registries where possible
- Project Narratives must
 - Clearly define each goal
 - Explain how each goal meets programmatic or administrative business need
 - Explain project methodology and demonstrate technical understanding
 - Explain how project enhances data sharing and data availability, providing value to applicant and the partnership
- Grants do not fund
 - Development and deployment of nodes
 - Operations and Maintenance
 - Data flow enhancements

Types of Assistance Agreements

- Section II
- Stand-alone or PPG etc.
- Grant or cooperative agreement
- Direct funding and/or in-kind services
- Sole applicant or partnership

Eligibility

- **Section III**
- **Entities**
 - States
 - Tribes (and tribal consortia)
 - Territories
- **Threshold Criteria**
 - Complete projects
 - Comply with instructions (e.g., page length, listed application components)
 - Meet deadline
 - Correct budget ceiling
 - Four active grants limit
 - Unaddressed compliance issues
 - Duplicative funding
- **Partnerships (eligible for higher ceiling)**
 - State to Tribe
 - Tribe to Tribe
 - State to State
 - No intrastate

Evaluation Criteria

- **Section VI**
- **Project outputs and outcomes**
 - Definitions
 - A grant application must have at least one goal
 - Each goal must have at least one outcome
 - A grant application must have a plan for tracking progress toward achieving each goal
- **Project feasibility and approach**
 - Roles and responsibilities of applicant staff and partners
 - Programmatic collaboration
 - Reuse/Sharing
- **Priorities**
 - Goal(s) clearly stated
 - Tier 1 vs. Tier 2
 - Need
 - Approach and demonstrated understanding
 - Enhances data sharing and availability and provides value to EN partners

Evaluation Criteria (cont.)

- Resources
 - Budget broken down by goal
 - Qualifications of Project Manager and key staff
 - Expenditure of awarded funds
- Past Performance
 - Substantive achievements
 - Administrative requirements
 - Unliquidated obligations

Application Instructions

- Section IV and Appendix E
- Due November 13, 2015 by 11:59 pm
- Must submit using grants.gov, unless applicant has obtained a waiver
- Remember that an applicant receives two confirmation emails from grants.gov if submission is successful

Best Practices

- Read Solicitation Notice (SN) carefully
 - Note all requirements for a complete application (Notice includes a document checklist)
 - Highlight the key elements
- Call us if you have any questions or require clarification
- Must propose to develop and deploy a fully functional product or service that your organization and/or EN partners will use
- Address the evaluation criteria
 - Only include text that will be awarded points
 - Make it easy for the reviewers
- Review carefully before submitting
 - Have a colleague not familiar with the project and/or the EN review
 - Make sure it is complete and follows all instructions

Reminders

- Be explicit regarding reuse of existing products/services
- Describe partner roles and responsibilities and include commitment letters
- Include AG letter if not a state agency or department
- Make indirect cost agreement will not expire before award
- Include a schedule with a October 1, 2015 as the project start date
- Remember to state the type of agreement being sought in the cover letter
- Submit final technical reports for completed grants
- Keep track of expenditures – there are point penalties for applicants with excessive unliquidated obligations

Takeaways

- The Good
 - Well organized – logical flow
 - Clearly written – easy for reviewer to understand
- The Bad
 - An IT project is not necessarily an EN project
 - Does not use goal/outcome terminology correctly
 - Jargon
 - Budget errors
 - Includes O&M
 - Explains the organization's commitment to environmental protection
- The Ugly
 - “There's no there there” – G. Stein
 - Does not propose to deploy a product/service
 - Exceeds page limit

Questions?

Contacts

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