Preparing to Apply

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Locating Funding Sources

- Understand your project budget
  1. Short-term start-up or capital costs
  2. Long-term operating or maintenance costs
  3. Amount of local funding available
  4. Amount of outside funding needed

- Matching needs and intended outcomes with funders’ priorities and expectations.
Finding Funding Sources

- Websites
  - www.grants.gov
  - http://cnr.ncsu.edu/rrs/other_grant_resources.html#Research
  - http://www.foundationcenter.org/
- Fee-based sites (and how to access them for free)
- Thinking outside the grant: the importance of partnerships, in-kind contributions and volunteer support
- Don’t be afraid to ask

Organizing Application Materials

- Understand the funding source:
  - Read the application with a fine-tooth comb
  - Understand the amount of available funding and what constitutes a “reasonable” request
- Get to know your funder
  - Guidestar
  - Websites
  - Annual Reports
Organizing Application Materials

- Develop a Checklist
  - Application Forms
  - Narrative Components
  - Evaluation Measures
  - Signature Pages
- Develop a Timeline
  - Factor in stakeholder review, funding agency review (if possible), and governing body approval.
  - Leave yourself some wiggle room.

Organizing Application Materials

- Get to know the grant program:
  - Source: Government, foundation or corporate?
  - Is there a match requirement? Can it be in-kind or cash only?
  - What are the grant administration requirements?
  - What special measures must be undertaken prior to the application deadline (planning documents, Board approval, certifications, etc.)
  - What is the decision-making timeframe?
Communicating Project Needs

- **Follow the directions**
- Write concisely but thoroughly. Keep page limits and formatting rules in mind.
- Understand the level of familiarity reviewers are likely to have with your field and your project.
- Understand and address the funders’ priorities.

*(For example, an application to the Clean Water Management Trust Fund support should address a project’s water quality outcomes first and foremost, although it may have many additional benefits)*

Making the Most of Opportunities for Assistance

- An application is just the first step in a long, and hopefully happy, relationship with a funder.
  - Make contact with the program officer
  - Many program officers will review application drafts and provide feedback
  - When approaching foundations or corporations seek linkages with Board Members, partners, friends of the program, and staff
- If at first you don’t succeed, seek suggestions for improvement, and try again.