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GRANTS OFFICE

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World-class grants intelligence, at your fingertips

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE RKB IN HOMELAND SECURITY GRANTS

By Vince Siragusa, Grants Development Consultant



Over the course of proposal development, applicants are often challenged by indentifying eligible equipment and solutions as part of their submission process. Programs like the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) are very flexible in their procurement allowances. Other programs, much more nebulous with offering information on allowable solutions, rely heavily on the grantee's ability to identify solutions most appropriate for project goals.

Shedding light on allowable expenses often requires the gathering of information from various sources, including the guidance document, the program website, or the program's point of contact. Any organization seeking information on homeland security-related standards, certifications, training and equipment must also attend to the Responder Knowledge Base (RKB).

Funded by the DHS FEMA National Preparedness Directorate, RKB is offered as a free public service with the mission "to provide emergency responders, purchasers, and planners with a trusted, integrated, on-line source of information on products, standards, certifications, grants,

and other equipment-related information." Since 2003, the RKB site (www.rkb.us) has proven to be a valuable resource for those researching a variety of grant-related topics.

As a major component of the RKB site, the Authorized Equipment List (AEL) provides first responders with a reference list of generic equipment category items. It is through these items that agencies like DHS are able to identify the allowable equipment categories eligible for their grant support. It's important to note that the AEL is an authorized equipment category list—not an authorized product list. That means that the AEL provides descriptions of types of categories of equipment which are allowable for purchase. It does not list products by brand or manufacturer. In the vast majority of circumstances, only those items listed on the AEL will be allowable for acquisition using DHS grant funds.

In some ways mirroring the AEL, RKB also supports the Standardized Equipment List (SEL). Both share many of the same equipment categories and provide general descriptions on types of allowable equipment. However, the SEL also make recommendations on training and standards that can be linked to actual products on the RKB. Fortunately, the RKB

HOMELAND SECURITY GRANTS:

- State Homeland Security Program
- Emergency Management Performance Grants
- Interoperable Emergency Communications Grants
- Urban Areas Security Initiative
- Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)

To learn more about these and other grants, visit www.homelandsecuritygrants.info and be sure to attend our January 6th webcast on DHS programs!

site offers an integrated format that displays both AEL and SEL information in a single record—in effect, eliminating the need to reference two separate lists.

As important as access to information is for those tasked with homeland security, it is equally vital for those offering products

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(continued from page 1) to the responder community to share information on the equipment and solutions they can provide. Therefore, another main point of interest for RKB visitors is the products section of the site, a feature that holds a lot of value for equipment manufacturers and vendors. RKB actively seeks out information on those who have responder-related products that fall within eight categories: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Operational and US&R Equipment, Information Technology, Communications, Detection, Decontamination, Medical, and Uncategorized Products. While these categories do not provide an exhaustive list of eligible equipment, they do succeed in providing consolidated information on thousands of responder-related solutions.

Fortunately, there is no charge for manufacturers to post their information and no charge to the responder community for accessing it. Vendors and manufacturers will find that the product content they upload will be screened by

RKB staff for validity and for relevance to the first responder mission. Once the product information is completed and reviewed, the RKB staff then posts the information to the site where it can be easily viewed and searched by RKB users.

The steps in submitting RKB products begin with a registration on the RKB site. As a registered public user, you can contact RKB with a request to become a Content Administrator (CA). The CA will have the ability to add and edit product information on the RKB site that will enter a queue for staff approval. RKB staff will review each product record before being published to make edits and to remove marketing language.

The RKB will continue to serve as a trusted resource for all of those involved with securing the country's safety. For more information on the RKB site or to become a Content Administrator, contact the RKB help desk at RKBMailbox@us.saic.com or by calling 1-877-336-2752.

ASK ABOUT OUR GRANTWRITING SERVICES:

Are you ready to begin the grant application process but don't have the resources?

Our tiered, flat-rate pricing schedule gives you access to work with seasoned grant-writers and highly-qualified support staff for a minimal fee.

For more information about our grantwriting services, please contact Meaghan Provost at (585) 473-1430 ext. 118 or mprovost@grantsoffice.com.

In the past 12 months, Grants Office has assisted clients in securing over \$200 million!

PLANNING YOUR 2011 GRANTSEEKING STRATEGY

The end of the year can be a busy time for everyone. However, one of the most important things for schools, hospitals, public agencies, and other nonprofit organizations is to start planning ahead for 2011. Many of the most sought-after grant programs are released within the first-half of the calendar year and getting a jump-start on the competition will help increase your chances of winning an award.

It is critically important that grantseeking organizations begin identifying priorities for funding and planning their 2011 projects now. That may include speaking with relevant stakeholders to gain support or creating a project management plan to gather the initial details of the project: Who will benefit? Who is responsible for administering funds? How much do we need?

Grants Office provides multiple resources for you to learn more about upcoming funding opportunities. You can visit www.grantsoffice.info to get free information on grants by sector or register for one of our free-to-attend webcasts at <http://grantsofficeevents.webex.com>. Additionally, Grants Office offers a specialized Get in the Game program for grantseekers. To learn more, please contact Meaghan Provost at mprovost@grantsoffice.com or (585) 473-1430, ext. 118.



STATE FUNDING BECOMES FRUGAL

By Alexandra Palmieri, Research Associate

With many state budgets in the red, funding is not always easy to find. Program funding has been cut drastically, and in many instances, funding is not even being directed toward new grant recipients but towards continuation grants. There doesn't seem to be much to look forward to, but there are still programs at the state level that grantseekers may find helpful, if not as fruitful, as they have been in the past.

Finding state funding through the use of state websites can be a frustrating task. No two sites are the same in terms of web design and formatting. Some states are better than others. For example, the Texas Education Agency has a complete database of state-level grants. The drop down menus and search functions are some of the best at the state level. Searching capabilities exist by program area, availability dates and other targeted searches. On the opposite end of the spectrum are state websites that may not be updated on a yearly basis. The broad range of quality in grants management, at the state level, calls for more attention to detail in locating information that can be useful.

Although it doesn't seem to be a priority for states to make the information readily available, especially during such tough economic times, the grants are still out there. State departments of education, health and public safety have moved along at different paces in terms of posting timely information on funding. Education seems to be in the forefront with the majority of state websites containing detailed information on the availability of federal and state level funding. Public safety comes in at a close second only because there are many departments where grants can be found, such as departments of homeland security, public safety, and criminal justice. State departments of health are trailing behind and it is rare to find grants management sections with programs that may be helpful to specific needs.

While states have been making a lot of progress in terms of accessibility of grant information, the downturn of the economy has lessened not only funding but the urgency to create a strong foundation to house grants. This creates obstacles but doesn't make it impossible to find grant money that may be useful. Smaller grants may be the jumpstart you need to get the recognition and

funding for larger projects. This "low-lying fruit" can present programs that may be more viable to target rather than larger state programs which only hand out one or two grants.



Here are a few tips for finding funding at the state level:

- 1.) Check all menus drop downs and sidebars for not only "Grants" but anything that looks like it could house grants.
- 2.) If the website has a search bar and the term "grants" doesn't turn up anything, try "finance" "funding opportunities," and "funds"
- 3.) Online Search: Some of the best opportunities can be found by using online search engines for education grants (or any type of grant you are looking for) and the state name. You may not find direct grants but news articles and press releases can be a goldmine for state information that is difficult to unearth.





MUCH ADO ABOUT EARMARKS

By Christopher Haight, Grants Development Consultant

Earmark spending, the direct appropriation of federal funds to a specified recipient, is paradoxically one of the most beloved and abhorred traditions in American politics. After all, one legislator's definition of pork barrel spending is another's much-needed job-saving investment - opposing views shared just as often among constituents as well.

The results of the 2010 midterm elections coupled with a renewed national conversation on deficit reduction brought new prominence to attacks on earmarks. With a new majority in the House of Representatives and an enlarged minority in the Senate, Republicans have committed themselves to eliminating earmarks as a source of federal funds. The G.O.P. caucus in the House voted to continue their collective ban on earmark requests and after a confluence of various pressures, Republican counterparts in the Senate soon followed suit. However, the political arithmetic isn't quite that simple.

Any piece of legislation, including the annual appropriations bills, requires passage by the House and Senate, and the President's signature. In the upcoming 112th Congress, Republicans will control only one-third of those necessary components. Republicans in the Senate remain outnumbered by Democrats by 53 to 47 - meaning not only will they not control the various Committees, including Budget and Appropriations, they do not have the votes to impose an earmark moratorium nor will they be able to override a President's veto (which requires two-thirds vote to succeed). Sure enough, on November 30, the Senate rejected the proposed ban on earmarks 56 to 39.

Furthermore, it's not entirely clear Republicans themselves will stand firm with their party's anti-earmark position. The reject ban that failed November 30 included eight Republican Senators voting against the party line. In the previous Congress, House Republicans while in the minority voted to impose an earmark ban on the caucus - only to have Rep. Don Young request millions for his state of Alaska, where one-third of the economy can be traced to federal expenditures. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) who

scored a surprising write-in bid for a third term even campaigned on her ability to bring home the money.

So where does this leave earmark funding? Unfortunately, still in a gray zone of ambiguity. If President Obama endorses an earmark ban and threatens a veto of any bills with earmarks, that would strengthen the hand of the House in negotiating with the Senate on final appropriations bills. If Obama remains noncommittal or against the earmark ban, earmark-seekers may have hope yet - albeit their requests will now best be channeled through Senators who have defended and continue to support use of earmarks.

As it currently stands, all of the talk about moratoriums on earmarks remains just that - talk. Refusing to engage in the practice does not actually save the government money, but rather provides more funding for the executive branch to award through various spending programs - thereby transforming a crusade against earmarks into a potential windfall for grants.

EARMARK RESOURCES

- Determine your Congressional Representative:
<https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/>
- Office of Management and Budget Guidance:
<http://earmarks.omb.gov/earmarks-public/>
- FY2010 Earmark Summary:
<http://earmarks.omb.gov/earmarks-public/2010-appropriations-by-spendcom/summary.html>



The biggest news for the health sector funding landscape came in the form of the election results from November. The fact that the Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives (House) has fueled speculation that the health reform package that was passed earlier this year may be repealed. The health reform legislation, which is known as the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)*, included appropriations for several demonstration projects and grant programs that are scheduled to open over the next several fiscal years. While the exact dollar amount is unknown, it is estimated that the total amount available through PPACA grants will reach ten figures. Many of the Republicans that came to office as part of the TEA Party (Taxed Enough Already) movement ran on a platform of repealing PPACA. In terms of political spin, the GOP has characterized their overtake of the House as a referendum on the health reform package. For readers that are new to federal funding, this is an important learning experience: in order to effectively monitor the grants landscape, you must track the political and legislative agenda.

WILL HEALTH CARE REFORM REMAIN FUNDED?

By Chris LaPage, Grants Development Consultant

While these factors do indeed offer a legitimate concern that PPACA will be repealed, several forces at play indicate many of the grant programs will remain intact and proceed as planned. First and foremost, Democrats still enjoy a narrow majority and control of the legislative agenda in the Senate and President Obama maintains his veto powers should any repeals pass Congress. Republicans do not have enough numbers (two-thirds majority) to overturn a presidential veto. Considering the results of the election, Obama and Democratic leaders in congress have admitted that modifications to the health reform package might be in order. However, all remain opposed to a complete overhaul or any type of large

repeal. In all likelihood, PPACA will remain mostly intact with some minor tweaking. How do we know the minor tweaking will not include repeal of planned grant programs? There are two other factors worth noting. The grant programs included in PPACA are among the least controversial components of the overall health reform package. The GOP has mostly taken aim at the big price tag items (and implications for raising taxes) and the effects on the insurance industry and small businesses. Secondly, the amount of money dedicated to potential grant programs in PPACA is inconsequential relative to the other provisions, which include allocations for government oversight and a public health insurance option.

While you will hear a lot about repealing health reform over the next several months to years, you should still continue to monitor the grant funding flowing from this monumental legislation. It is unlikely that the grant programs will be repealed, but even if they eventually are pulled, it will be well into next year after months of negotiation and debate. Fortunately, the bulk of the grant programs authorized through PPACA were front loaded with appropriations in fiscal years 2011 and 2012.

FUNDED GRANTS SPOTLIGHT: NURSING EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

It is that time of year again. HHS is releasing its package of nursing education grants, many of which allow distance learning and other forms of technology as allowable expenses. Applications for the Nursing Education, Practice, Quality and Retention (NEPQR) grant program are due January 21, 2011. The Nursing Workforce Diversity program is due January 14, 2011. The Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship (AENT) grant program has two deadlines: phase I is due December 22, 2010 and phase II is due January 21, 2011.



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU'VE BEEN FUNDED?

By Meaghan Provost, Grants Development Assistant

The application has been submitted, the award has been drawn down, and all seems quiet on the grant front. Can you relax, now that the project planning and actual writing has been drawn to a close? The short answer is no, for a variety of reasons. Although it might seem that the hardest part is done, and the project directors and planners can sit back and enjoy the fruits of their labor in terms of the grantwriting process, much work is still yet to be accomplished. This work varies in scope with each particular program, but most if not all grant opportunities require documentation, reports, invoices, and other required information to be funneled back to the funding agency throughout the project period.

Grant administration can be an arduous process, as any financial or budget person can tell you. There are rules that have to be followed, procedures to adhere to, and for many opportunities very strict reporting to be done. This does not only apply to the

financial end of things, either—projects have to remain on schedule, and for some opportunities, continuation of funding past year 1 rests on the results from the first project period. It's imperative that everyone involved in the implementation of the project is on the same page, and know what is expected and required with each reporting period.

As it is with the actual grantwriting process, every opportunity is different. Some grant funds are dispersed on a schedule, while others are on more of a reimbursement basis.

Most Federal and often state-specific applications require that the grantee keep records on hand, including the original application and guidelines, for at least three years. This includes all reports, invoices, audits (if necessary) and progress reports. If reports are entered through an online system, it's suggested that you print a copy and keep the reports in your documentation for the entire project

period. While individual foundations and other awards might not have this rigorous approach, it's suggested that the grantee follow similar guidelines in documentation to ensure consideration of future awards. In keeping this important documentation, it can make the process a little easier on the grantwriting side when an organization goes after similar funding sources. Drawing on past successes, including financial management as well as program reports, is a must for proposal development, and what better documentation to use than past successful programs.

Some programs may also require site visits, either in the form of foundation executives or Federal program reporters. This is an important step in the grant administration portion, too, and should not be treated lightly. Although there are different expectations with each of these site visits, it's important to keep in mind that these individuals may be coming to your organization to see how their funding is being used. Audits may also be performed by Federal staff, and it's important to have the documentation they will need in one place that is easily accessible, and not to be hunting through multiple filing cabinets and drawers for invoices and reports.

Above all, make sure your organization understands the reporting requirements and other administrative duties for the post-award process even before the application sails through the funding agency's doors—it will ensure that the project meets baseline grant administration requirements and does not jeopardize future funding from the awarding agency.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2010 Webcasts

- **December 16, 2010:** Putting Communities to Work: Grants for Training America's Workforce, *sponsored by Polycom*
- **December 17, 2010:** NEPQR: Funding Nursing Education & Technology Initiatives, *sponsored by Polycom*

- **February 17, 2011:** Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG), *sponsored by Cisco*
- **February 22, 2011:** Grantwriting Series, Grants for Public Safety

Webcasts are FREE to attend. To register for these and view previous Grants Office events, please visit <http://grantsofficeevents.webex.com>.

January 2011 Webcasts

- **January 4, 2011:** Prepared for the Worst: Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Grants
- **January 6, 2011:** DHS Programs, *sponsored by Cisco*
- **January 11, 2011:** DHS Program Overview: Understanding Homeland Security Funding
- **January 13, 2011:** Engaging HCOF and Other Earmarks, *sponsored by Cisco*

February 2011 Webcasts

- **February 8, 2011:** Funding Community Policing through COPS Program
- **February 15, 2011:** Grants with a Campus Safety Component
- **February 16, 2011:** Show Me the Money: The 2011 Healthcare Funding Landscape, *sponsored by Philips*

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