



# MAKE IT RAIN:

## HOW TO WRITE A KILLER GRANT

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NYLA 2017

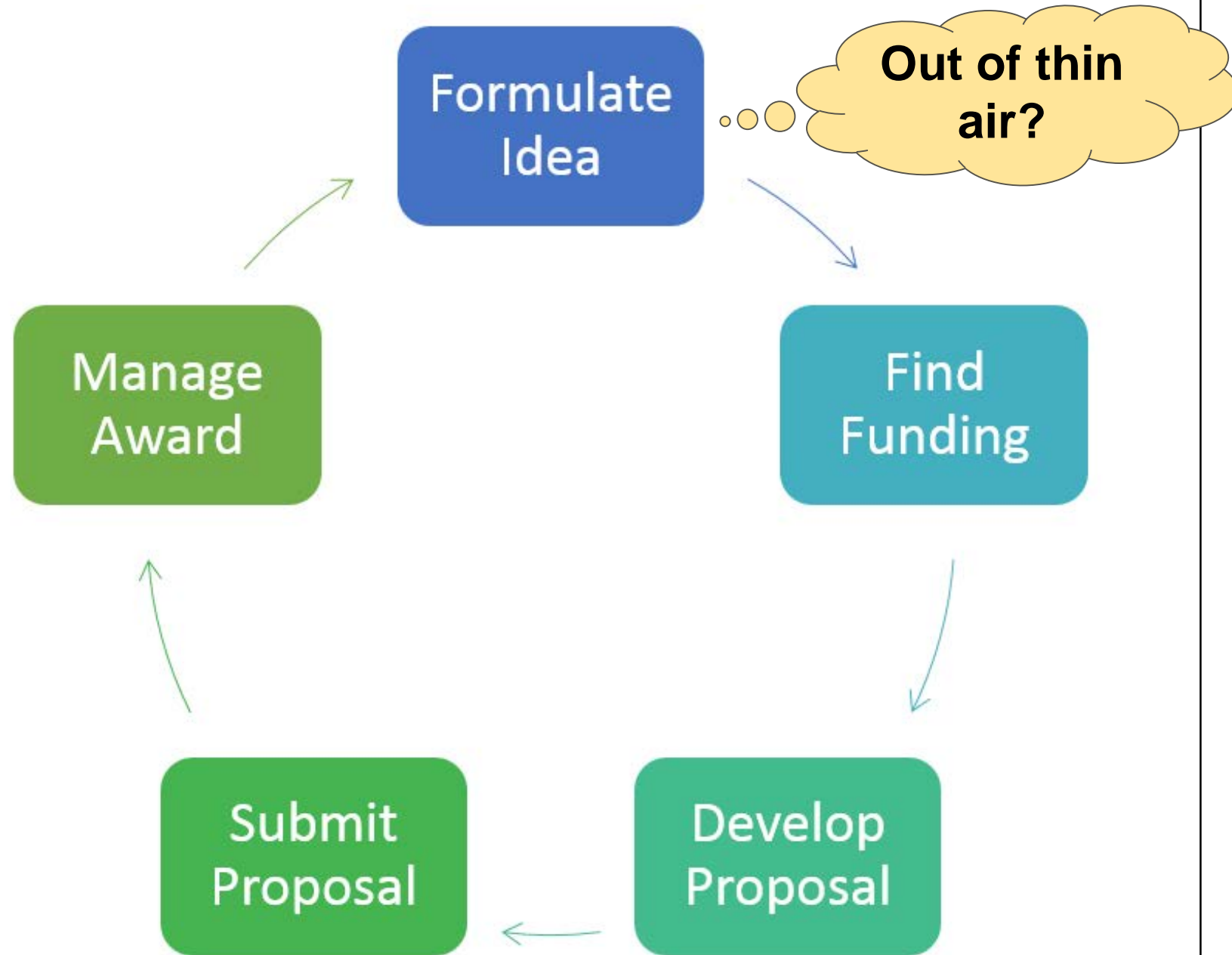
**Why?**

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# How?

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# Traditional



More  
Effective

Start  
Here!

Engage with  
Community

Formulate  
Idea

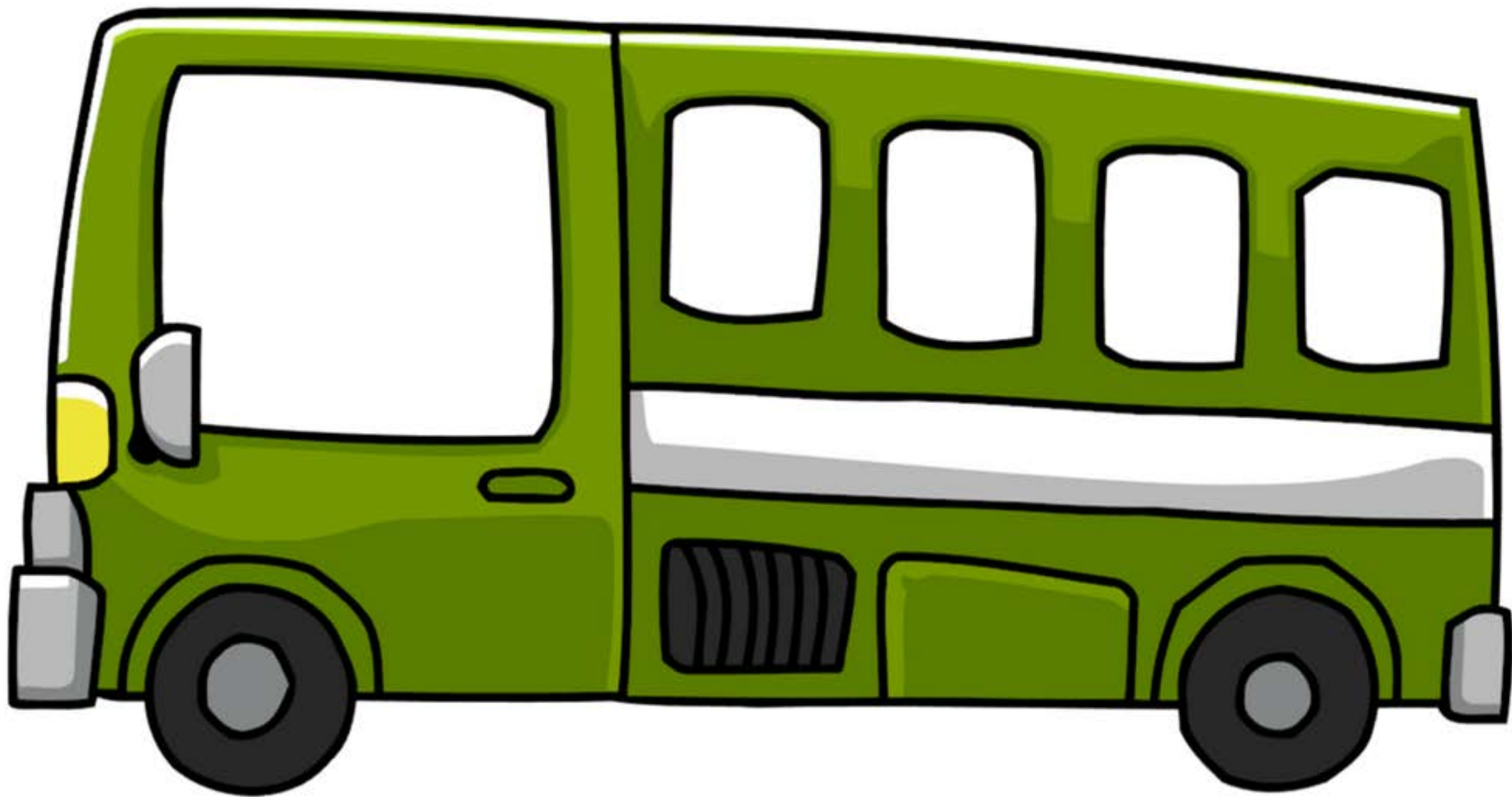
Find  
Funding

Develop  
Proposal

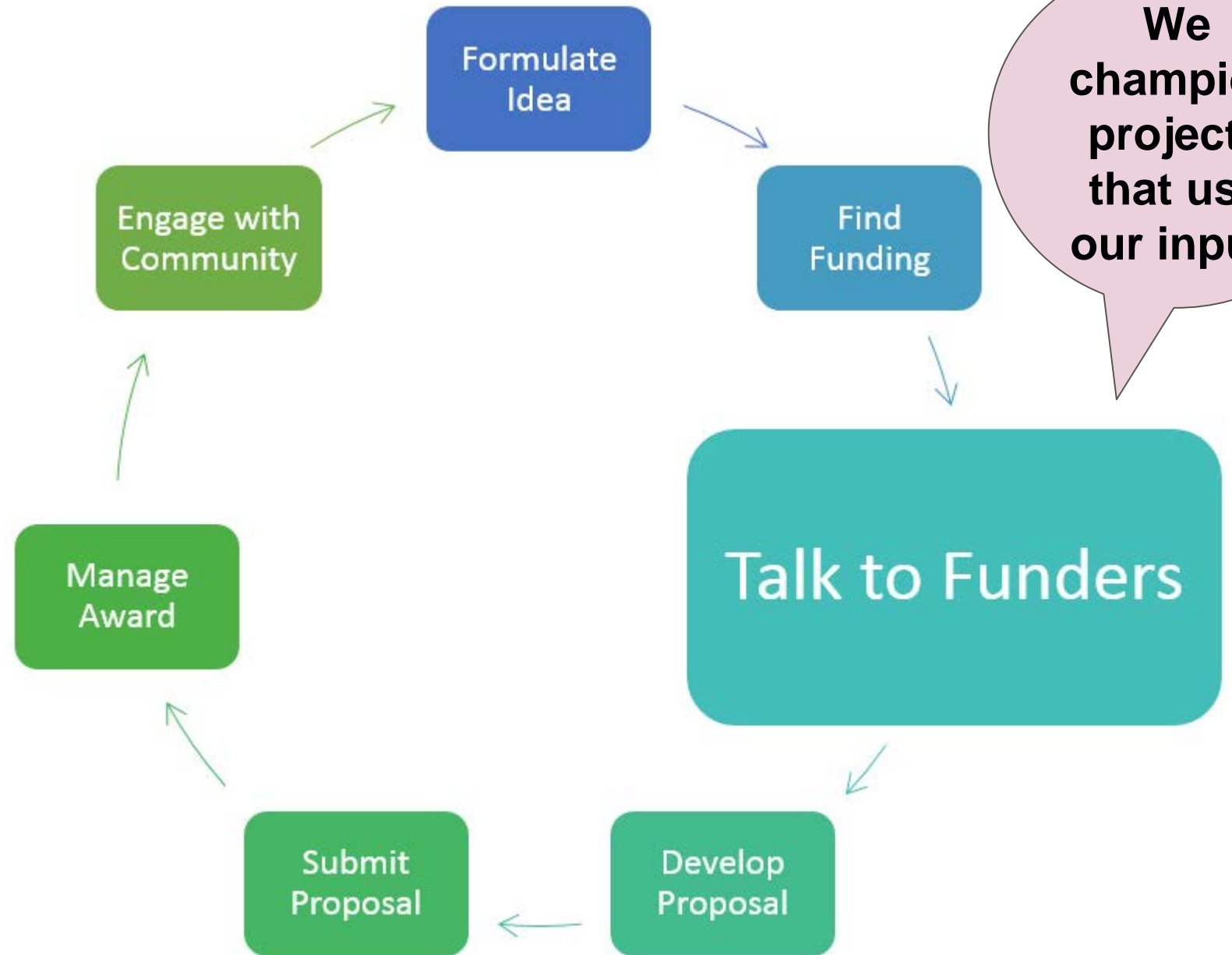
Manage  
Award

Submit  
Proposal





More  
Likely



# What?

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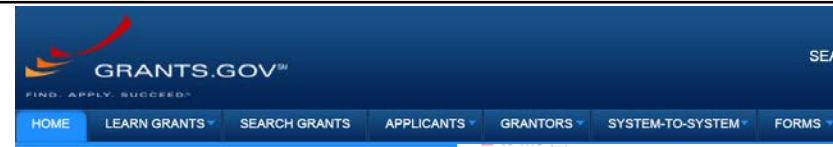


- **Where to Look**
- **Basic Proposal Structure**
- **What do Reviewers look for?**
- **Key points**
- **Common Mistakes**
- **Case Studies**



# Where to Look?

- Foundations
  - Foundation Directory
- Government Grants
  - Federal: Grants.gov
  - State: Get grant notices from appropriate departments
- Local Businesses
- Corporate Giving Programs
- *Where else?*



Find Grant Opportunities

BROWSE NEWEST | BROWSE CATEGORIES | BROWSE AG

Opportunity Number	Opp
NOAA-NMFS-NEFSC-2017-2004963	2017/2018 Sea Scallop Research
USGS-16-FA-0253	NOTICE OF INTENT TO AWARD information



# The Basic Structure of a Proposal

- Summary of the proposal
  - Amount requested and “Why?”
- Organization description/history/mission
  - Does the organization have the capacity?
- Background
  - Describe the problem
  - Demonstrate the need



# The Basic Structure of a Proposal

- Program description
  - Address the problem
  - Who does it serve?
  - Components of the project
  - Assess success
  - Align program goals with the funder
  - Leverage collaborations
  - The bigger picture

# The Basic Structure of a Proposal

- Impacts/Outcomes
  - What are the anticipated benefits of the program?
  - If this isn't specifically asked, put it in the narrative
- Program Timeline
  - When will the project begin and end?
  - When will the major component parts begin and end?
  - When will funds be expended?



# The Basic Structure of a Proposal

- Program Budget
  - Broken into categories (eg. salaries, equipment, etc)
  - In-kind support
- Budget Narrative
  - Describes each budget line & how the figures were reached
  - Gives enough description to answer potential questions
  - How will budget shortfalls impact the project?

# What do Reviewers Look for?

- Applications that are complete & follow the instructions
  - Is the application on time?
  - Have all the parts been filled out completely?
- Proposals that are clearly communicated
  - Is it clear what the applicant plans to do with the money?
  - Is it clear what the project is?
- Realistic budgets with a lot of backup (e.g. quotes/bids)



# What do Reviewers Look for?

- Proposals that have demonstrated thoughtful planning
  - Is the applicant chasing money or is the project part of a well-designed planning process?
- Does the proposed project meet the purpose and intended outcomes of the grant?
  - The project should help the granting agency accomplish its goals
- Does the application use the language I'm looking for?



# Key Points—Most Importantly

- Read the Instructions!
  - What does the granting agency fund?
  - Structure your proposal to fit the application
  - Is it worth your time?
  - Follow the directions!
  - Meet deadlines



# Key Points—Timeline

- How often are applications reviewed?
- Does your program period match the timeline?
- Do you have the same fiscal year as the funder?
- What part of the application will take the longest?

# Key Points—Talk their Language

- Build a relationship with the granting agency
  - Call and talk about your proposal
  - Ask questions! Ask for advice!
- Clear goals and objectives
  - SMART Objectives:  
Specific, Measurable, Attainable,  
Relevant, Time-bound



# Key Points—Sell it

- Demonstrate a clear need
- How will your project fill a need or solve a problem
- Echo the granting agencies' language
- Reference local economic development plans
- Know your story!

# Key Points—Evaluation

- How will you evaluate your project?
  - Quantitative or Qualitative?
  - Outcome-Based Evaluation
  - Project Outcome



# Key Points—Take the Final Report Seriously

- Know ahead of time:
  - How you write the proposal may change when you know what you are expected to report.
  - Are changes allowed?
  - Will you be eligible for future funds if you do not fulfill the grant requirements?

## Common Mistakes (and how to avoid them) cont...

- Too much Copy and Pasting  
(Tailor your ask)
- Shoehorning  
(Your project does not fit the grant)
- Missing the deadline  
(Start early)
- Being a stranger  
(Call the agency)
- Being a bad partner  
(Be effusively thankful)

# Common Mistakes (and how to avoid them)

- Not answering every question  
(Read instructions carefully... and follow them!)
- Sloppiness  
(Have another pair of eyes review your grant)
- Lack of effort  
(Take your time! If it's not worth your time, don't do it)
- Not knowing what the grant covers  
(Read the guidelines!)





## Common Mistakes (and how to avoid them) cont...

- Using hyperbole or conversational language
- Using jargon or slang
- Using overly complex language making your sentences difficult to read & annoying.

(Write clearly and directly)

## Case Studies: You are the reviewer!

**In groups of 2 or 3, 10 Minutes:  
Read the applications as if you are the reviewer**

- Did the applicant follow instructions?
- What common mistakes did they make?
- What could they have done better?

# Case Study #1: Corporate Giving

## Peace through Crafts" Grant Application

Which Common Mistakes did the applicant make?

What would dramatically improve their chances of getting the grant?

What are your main concerns as a reviewer?

## Case Study #2: Federal Grant

Which Common Mistakes did the applicant make?

What did they do right?

Should they have applied for the grant?

What are your main concerns as a reviewer?

# If You Don't Get the Grant

- Relax, it happens.
- Thank the funder for their consideration.
- Ask how your application could be improved.
- Is the project still worth doing?
- Apply again, apply elsewhere

# Resources

Elements of a Grant Proposal: [http://www.hotwinds.com/Grant\\_Prop.html](http://www.hotwinds.com/Grant_Prop.html)

GrantAdvisor: <https://grantadvisor.org/>

Guide to Outcome-Based Evaluation for organizations w limited resources:  
<https://managementhelp.org/evaluation/outcomes-evaluation-guide.htm>

Outcome Based Evaluations: <https://www.imls.gov/grants/outcome-based-evaluation/basics>

Project Management Templates: <http://www.projectmanagementdocs.com/>

Proposal Checklist: <https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/apply/evaluation-checklist.html> (specific to archives, but lots of good info to think about)

Purdue University's OWL on Grant Writing: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/981/1/>

Shaping Outcomes Course: <http://www.shapingoutcomes.org/course/overview/a1.htm>

SMART Goals & Objectives: <http://www.bpcc.edu/grantsexternal/funding/goalsobjectives.html>

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***Thank You!***

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