

Justification for Professional Grant Writing Training and Consulting

There is an old adage that says, "you get what you pay for". This statement rings especially true in grant writing. The value of formal training and professional instruction in grant writing cannot be emphasized enough.

In the public safety profession, we are constantly being held to standards requiring certification. Law enforcement officers, firefighters, and EMTs all have to go through long hours of formal instruction in order to meet the certification requirements of our various states. Most of us also have to continue this education process throughout our career, in order to stay proficient and maintain those certifications.

How much time and money do you spend trying to maintain those certifications? If you are like most departments, a sizeable portion of your annual budgets go to "training funds". We spend thousands upon thousands of dollars assuring that our personnel are professional in everything that they do.

Ask yourself a question though. How much money has your city or agency expended to assure themselves of a continuing source of money to carry out operations, for training, equipment and expansion of services? If you are reading this article, the answer is probably "not much".

If You Don't Play, You Can't Win

An effective grants program for a public safety agency should be a priority in every agency. Unfortunately, grant writing is usually given a low priority until a crisis situation develops. This should never be the case in your agency. The continual and persistent search for grant monies should be at the top of every chief's or agency head's list.

Why do you continually risk not having enough money in your budget to cover these items, when millions of dollars a year are available for you to receive? It is like playing the lottery: "if you don't play, you can't win".

The first strategy to apply to your grants program is to ensure that you have a trained, informed person working for you when going after grants. Who would you rather invest your retirement money with, a gas station attendant or a graduate with an MBA from Harvard?

The return on investment for sending an individual to receive professional grant writing training is enormous. You must maximize your efforts at receiving a grant award by investing in someone who knows and understands the process, thereby assuring your proposal the advantage in the extremely competitive business of grants.

One Grant Writer Can Bring Thousands of Funding Dollars

A well-trained grant writer can bring in thousands of dollars per year to your agency. This is a fact that needs to be "force fed" to local governments and agency heads who often times scoff at expending \$1,000 to send an individual to a professional school to become a grant writer.

Ask your citizens if they would rather you spend \$1,000 on sending two of your commissioners to a retreat or send an individual who could bring back a return of 10X that amount in one grant. That, my friends, does not take a Harvard MBA to figure out! Not only do you recover the cost of the training itself but, you assure yourself of a continuing source of funding for many, many years to come. You cannot ignore the facts here. Ask any agency who has an on-staff professionally

trained grants writer how much that person is worth. Just about any agency will tell you that their grant writer is a KEY person in the agency, and for good reason.

If you cannot find an individual to send to the training, then you should consider hiring a professional grant writer to write and submit your grant proposals for you. Their expertise and advice can be the difference between having your grant funded or rejected.

I encourage you to make use of the training course announcements and links provided here. They can make a real difference in your agency's quest to obtain supplemental funding.

Find & Train the Right Person

Part of my service to you is to train you how to have an effective grants program within your department or agency. The first thing for you to accomplish, is to get someone within your agency professionally trained. You should make a concerted effort to locate someone in your organization that has an interest in learning the "art of grant writing," and then do everything in your power to encourage them.

Regardless of whether you choose to train someone from within your own agency or hire a consultant to assist you, you should look for training or consulting that is offered by organizations whose specialties are in grant funding for public safety agencies. Homeland Defense – Grants is a good place to start. Send them to the training and start maximizing the return on your dollars spent.

— *Kurt T. Bradley, Vice President*

Homeland Defense - Grants