

Bloomberg Federal Assistance e311 Content Workshop: Navigating Federal Grants: Building Capacity, Writing Skills, & Strategies for Municipalities

Navigating Federal Grants Workshop Experts



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Workshop Goals



Guide cities in their review of their internal grants planning and application development capacity; highlight ways for cities to build additional capacity and capability



Review various grants management models and the pre-award phase of the grants management lifecycle



Discuss actionable steps cities can take on grant planning and grant application development, including grant writing



Help participants understand how to map funding sources to their projects and create a successful grant application

Agenda

Building Internal Capacity

Grant Management Models

Grant Planning & Opportunity Identification

Grant Writing & Application Submission

Case Study

Q&A

Building Internal Capacity

Why should municipalities consider enhancing grant management capacity?

Identify needs to support grant writing and management

- Capture structure in administrative code
- Develop a cross-departmental strategic plan and a Capital Improvement Plan
- Develop program and service overviews
- Establish a “grant team” to assess the suitability of grant opportunities, with representatives from various programs and operations

- **Structure:** Focused, coordinated approach; formalized process; transparency
- **Strategy:** Maximize funding and greater impact
- **Compliance:** Monitoring and auditing; reporting; waste, fraud, and abuse

How can municipalities build internal capacity?

Organizational Capacity

Understand your municipality's current needs and organizational capacity

1. Resources
2. Infrastructure
3. Knowledge & Skills
4. Culture & Climate
5. Engagement & Partnership

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Overview of Grant Management Models

Decentralized

- Siloed within agencies, with no coordination between departments



Hybrid

- Some level of internal coordination, with departmental points-of-contact meeting regularly
- Technical assistance/training offered to departments, which are ultimately responsible



Centralized

- Established resource to align policy goals with emergent opportunities
- Uniform grant policies & procedures
- Compliance and technical expertise
- Centralized training resource



Considerations:

- A centralized approach can be used to foster relationships with external partners, community resources, and jurisdictions

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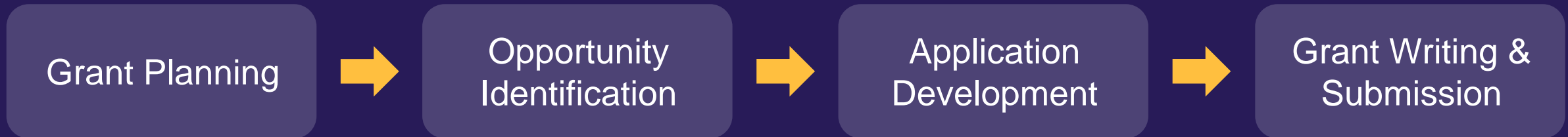
Case Study

Q&A

Introduction to Pre-Award Phase

A successful pre-award grants management approach:

- Prioritizes grant planning and aligns it with citywide priorities and policies
- Engages stakeholders in the community
- Closely tracks and evaluates grant opportunities, including ability to implement
- Thoroughly addresses the NOFO's points of emphasis



Grant Planning



Establish an Intelligence Network

- Ever expanding set of funding conduits - need to look beyond federal sources
- Increase focus on state and philanthropic grant opportunities



Develop a grants plan that reflects citywide priorities



- Create grants plan in coordination with budget and capital plan development; continuously monitor and update
- Key elements: Elected officials' priorities; current and expected grants; grant funding landscape; strategies and approaches for building and managing the city's grant funds

Grant Planning



Keep inventory of community needs and desired projects

- Focus pursuits based on inventory, regularly update to align with new priorities
- Identify needs that cannot or should not be funded by the general fund



Develop tools and processes to identify a potential “capital stack”

- Determine how to properly layer funds and optimize funding
- Understand the timing considerations associated with all funds in the stack as well as any potential costs (e.g. interest)

Opportunity Identification

Establish a decision criteria

- Consider ability to implement when making pursuit decisions
- Build off prior successful experiences (internal & past awardees)
- Share grant opportunities that may not be a municipality fit with external partners



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Grant Application Development



Break down the process

Establish team to understand funding opportunity and map the response

Closely read NOFO and identify key dates and required information

Assess prior awardees - attend debriefings, analyze successful applicants, and review grantor websites

Maintain library of prior responses; identify those relevant to current grant

If using partners or subrecipients, ensure all parties are aware of process, understand their role, and provide required information

Grant Writing and Submission



Thoroughly address grantor's points of emphasis

- Understand grantor's priorities and their perspective on the grant program
- Create an outline to ensure prompts are answered thoroughly
- Use data and graphics to support arguments where appropriate

Follow directions and take care of the little things

- Direct and action-oriented writing
- Pay attention to page counts, presentation styles, deadlines, and method of delivery
- If submission is electronic, make sure organization is properly registered and has access to portal

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Case Study - City of Detroit

- **Grants Management Reform: key restructuring initiative during Detroit's financial crisis and bankruptcy**
- Philanthropic organizations funded assessment and initial implementation
- Implementation plan focused on entire grants lifecycle, included structural and non-structural reforms



Case Study – City of Detroit

Implementation Plan

(6-9 months)

- ✓ Establish and communicate vision
- ✓ Establish citywide grant priorities
- ✓ Establish roles & responsibilities
- ✓ Procure & implement Grants Management System (GMS)
- ✓ Hire leadership, key staff
- ✓ Clean up accounting and migrate data

Immediate
Stabilization

Begin Sustainable
Reform

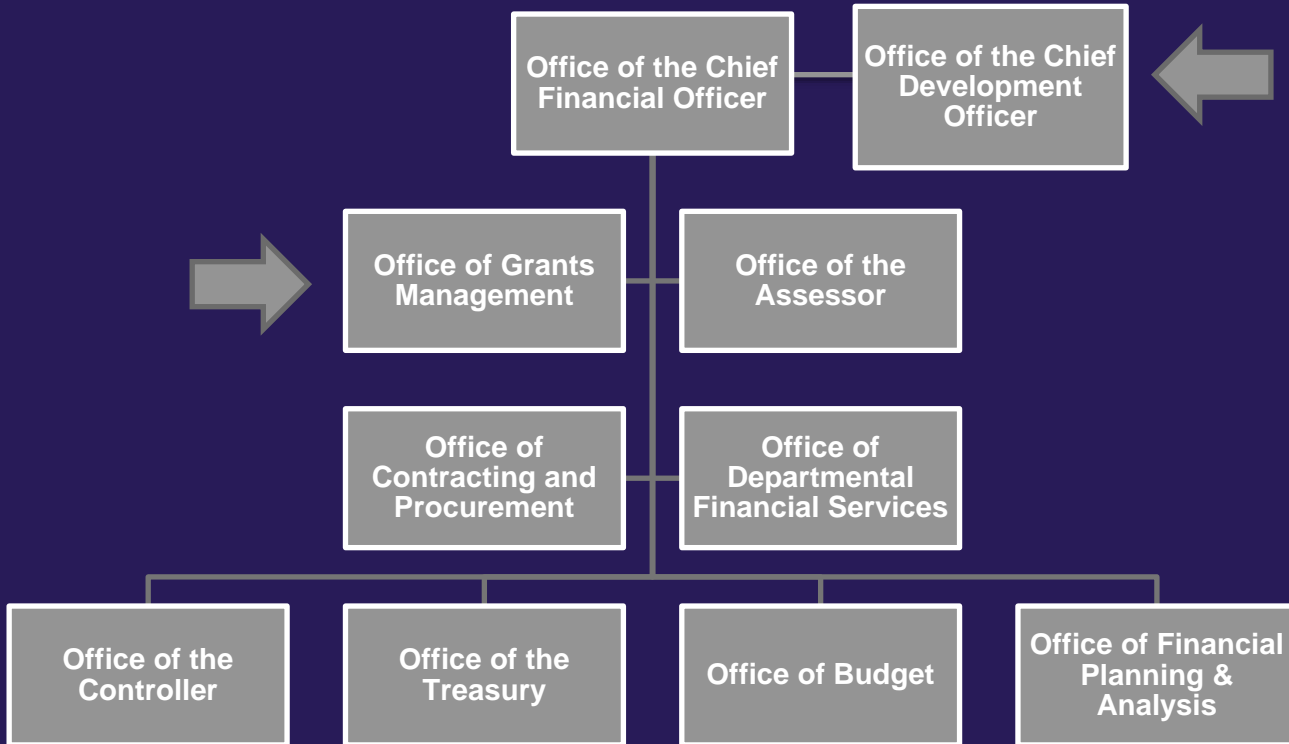
(18+ months)

- ✓ Align with OCFO restructuring
- ✓ Create new legislation and policies mandating reforms
- ✓ Develop & implement new procedures
- ✓ Close federal CAPs and correct ongoing audit finding
- ✓ Align with new enterprise-wide financial management system

CONTINUOUS TRAINING

- ✓ Provide staff with resources
- ✓ Leverage federal agencies for guidance

Case Study – City of Detroit



Office of Grants Management

Strategically oversee, coordinate, source, and administer grants for the City of Detroit by establishing processes that support end-to-end grants management activities consistent with federal, state, and local requirements, thereby achieving the greatest use and accountability of grant dollars.

Office of the Chief Development Officer

Provide support to the City and departments through the identification and acquisition of strategic public and private resources. Accomplish this through researching and writing grant and donation opportunities that match City priorities, building public-private partnerships, and leading cross-departmental application teams.

In late 2017, the City merged both offices into the Office of Development and Grants, which exists today

*As of 2017, in order to show structure and mission during the reform period

Case Study – City of Detroit

Identifying and Pursuing Grants

Pre-Reform: Decentralized

Opportunities identified *ad hoc*, few competitive grants pursued

Pursuit decisions not necessarily made in consultation with Mayoral priorities

Fragmented application production and approvals process

No visibility into opportunity progress or success rate

Post-Reform: Streamlined and Effective

Comprehensive grants repository, including private and competitive opportunities

Standardized approval process, including Mayor's Office approval

More coordinated application production with task accountability

Opportunity and application status tracking

	Overall Funds Raised	Number of Active Grants
2015	Not Tracked	Not Tracked
2016	\$258 million	156
2017	\$275 million	318
2018	\$298 million	327
2019*	\$309 million	411

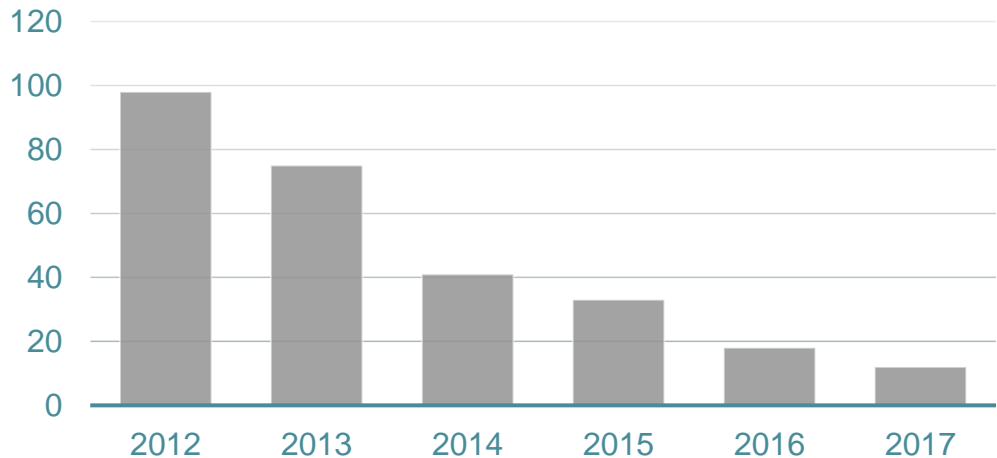
Source: <https://www.flipsnack.com/hadroutdesign/odg-impact-report-final-20191216.html?p=1>

*Funds raised are projected; active grants are to-date

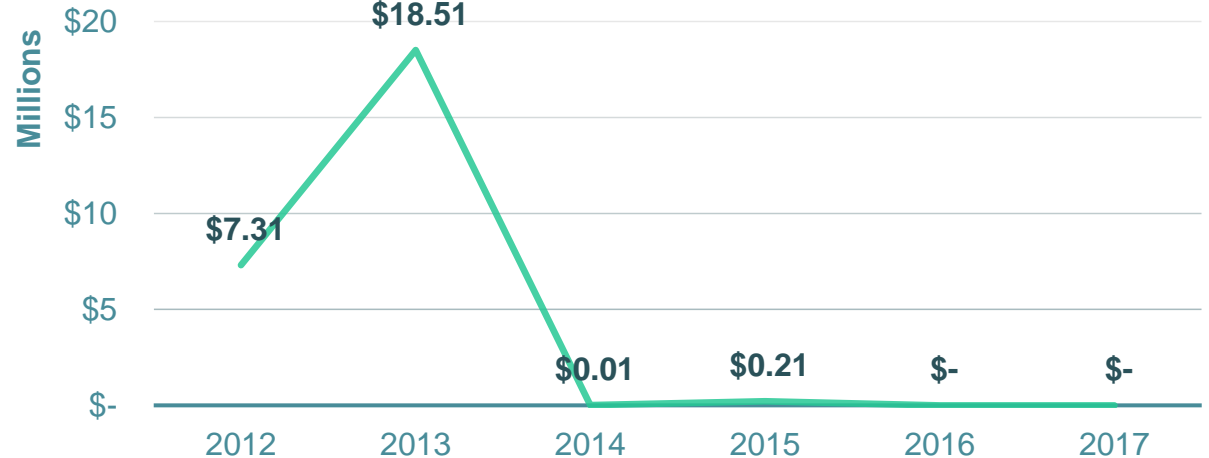
Case Study – City of Detroit

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Federal Award Spend	\$ 293,393,583.00	\$ 200,166,706.00	\$ 129,869,289.00	\$ 202,630,590.00	\$ 157,676,621.00	\$ 101,588,163.00
Number of Findings	98	75	41	33	18	12
Amount of Questioned Costs	\$ 7,305,027.00	\$ 18,512,118.00	\$ 11,918.00	\$ 214,100.00	\$ -	\$ -
Number of Indeterminable Questioned Costs	8	4	13	8	1	0

Findings



Questioned Costs



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