

INTERNET RESOURCES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION INITIATIVES

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There are several on-line sources available to assist grant seekers with the preparation of grant proposals for local law enforcement initiatives during competitive state and federal government solicitation periods. While many websites offer grant writing tips and related services, others provide access to information for individuals interested in receiving technical training on how to approach the designing of proposals to meet specific requirements desired and preferred by state, federal and private grant funders.

New Jersey's professional public safety community may derive substantial benefits from announced offerings provided by sponsors of selectively cited **internet websites** in their efforts to establish and maintain effective crime reduction programs without the fiscal restraints imposed by municipal budgets due to shrinking resources. Multi-purpose law enforcement grant projects intentionally shaped by this latter concern can potentially succeed in receiving an award through most funding providers. Furthermore, efforts to develop a successful proposal in this regard may be facilitated by obtaining print and visual materials that will help to establish a reference library on current criminal justice concerns and emerging chronic crime issues which support statistical data comprised by your locality. This internal resource will significantly aid grant writers with determining appropriate language and useful "catch phrases" prior to finalizing the entire grant file for submission to the program sponsor.

Approaching the crafting of your grant in this manner will capture the attention of reviewers and favorably increase chances for award approval. The **Community Oriented Police Services (COPS) website provides free print and audio-visual materials** to help launch library building efforts on specific subjects for this purpose.

Law enforcement agencies, whose priorities are centered on projects such as anti-crime team patrols to eliminate neighborhood "hotspots" and disaster preparation (including search and rescue, as well as the development of programs to impact gang activity or positively influence juvenile misbehavior through community partnerships forged with local non-profit organizations) are encouraged to peruse referenced websites.

Statewide police agencies seeking to become recipients of available awards in these areas can buttress their efforts through internal resource building. This can be done by delegating that the individuals who have grant development responsibilities attend regional seminars designed to teach proposal structure and research methods. Adapting these skills will strengthen important components of the grant application: such as project summary, anticipated community benefits and program evaluation.

Assistance to attain this goal can be found at the **Northeast Counter Drug Agency** located in Fort Indian Gap, Pennsylvania. This facility offers federally sponsored programs which provide forty-hours of classroom training for civilians and police officers in categories specific to contemporary crime trends. Their curriculum includes grant writing, crime mapping and analysis and criminal street gang identification, as well as instruction in other related subject areas. There is no cost to participants or municipalities outside of their travel expenses.

At each governmental level, effectively preparing and equipping police officers to perform their public safety duties is considered to be a high priority. Crime reduction and resolution are traditionally taught at all police academies. The collection of crime scene evidence requires specialized training of individuals charged to perform this task.

The **DNA website entitled What Every Police Officer Should Know About DNA Evidence** is an invaluable asset that will help to upgrade investigative abilities. This on-line training program is viewer interactive and displays on-screen questions relative to the crime occurrence. Logging-on to this site will assist viewers in developing keener observation skills by identifying details of the simulated crime scene, as well as learning how to gather and preserve trace evidence for forensic examination.

ExpectMore.gov is a website which grant seekers should frequently visit. On this site you will find evaluations or program assessment summaries for every federal grant program, as well as the sponsor's performance review. Insight into what the federal government considers either successful or failing grant programs will assist you with designing significant programmatic features into your project to make it strongly competitive for funding approval.

Another key preparation program is furnished by the **Bureau of Justice Assistance** through its **Gang Resistance and Education Training (G.R.E.A.T.)** initiative for police officers and civilians. Each may attend regionally sponsored workshops that comprehensively teach application procedures exclusive to the G.R.E.A.T. program. Participants are supplied with materials to guide them through each stage of the application with sample grant documents and ranking categories formerly used by reviewers to determine the acceptance or rejection of proposals.

A noteworthy reminder for public safety agencies is to focus on the need to build and establish genuine community partnerships. This factor is important because the awarding of G.R.E.A.T. funds received by numerous jurisdictions was made possible due to collaborative efforts with nationally recognized non-profit organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the National Association of Police Athletic League.

Establishing anti-crime programs with local branches of these organizations as well as religious, civic and community groups, is always helpful when seeking grants as most funding providers award points for collaborative efforts and program authenticity.

It is important to be cognizant that your municipality as a governmental entity may not always be eligible to apply for some state, federal or private foundation grants due to selective requirements intended to serve only non-governmental agencies. When this occurs, non-profit groups partnering with government entities can make interesting and meaningful things occur to serve the public in your respective localities. Since expanding citizen needs in social services and public safety are imposing an unprecedented strain on most municipal budgets, the adoption of alternative and non-traditional measures to confront such concerns are necessary actions to be undertaken so that common good purpose projects can be realized. Therefore, non-profits are essential to government operations and the delivery of vital services to residents in each municipality in the State of New Jersey.

This viewpoint was recently highlighted on October 17, 2007 in Jersey City when the Department of Finance's Office of Grants Administration and Compliance **successfully sponsored the city's first "Strategies for Success Non-Profit Conference"**.

Local organizations, corporations, banking institutions and non-profit support groups were invited to the conference.

The event was well attended and effectively achieved the following stated goals:

- Compiling a listing of functioning local non-profit groups and creating a dialogue between government, non-profit conference attendees and private foundations;
- Sponsored workshops exploring the creation of new public service projects, ways to strengthen existing programs and the building of supportive networks within the foundation and corporate community for both government and non-profit endeavors; and
- Providing non-profits with a fresher understanding of the grant application process, demonstrated usage of viable tools for grant writing and researching, as well as how to correctly report program expenditures and design project sustainability to fulfill public mission objectives.

Non-profit support groups such as the **New Jersey Center for Non-Profit Organizations, Bohse & Associates, Inc.** and the **Foundation Center of New York City**, as well as corporate community representatives **Verizon, Goldman-Sachs** and **PSE&G** and local and county government participants from the **Division of Community Development**, the **Department of Health and Human Services** and **Rutgers University's Mason-Gross School of Arts** significantly contributed to meeting the above aims.

In summation, identifying appropriate internet resources affords advantages for the pairing of law enforcement programs with concerns held by community organizations. Coalescing government and non-profit objectives through grant seeking opportunities are essential to the management and servicing of public needs. Additionally, forming such partnerships can potentially aid municipalities to enrich quality of life imperatives for specific neighborhoods, reduce budgetary expenditures and create beneficial public-private partnerships to sustain common good purpose projects.

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