

Section 2.2.1: Grantee Roles and Responsibilities

Establishment of Grant Needs and Priorities

In order to be an effective grant seeking organization, a state agency must establish their annual and long-term grant needs and priorities. These priorities should be aggressive while still being realistic. Most importantly, they should be related to the core mission and vision of the entity. It is advised that agencies go through a formal process to develop their grant road map and that these efforts are closely aligned to the strategic plan and budget development processes of the organization.

Opportunity Research

Once a state agency has outlined their grant needs and priorities, they should begin aggressively researching outside funding opportunities. Most of these opportunities will originate from the federal government, but organizations should also be cognizant of funding available from other state agencies, local government, non-profits, and various corporate and other private foundations. The primary tool that state entities should be using for researching funding opportunities is the eCivis grant software system made available through the Office of Grants and Federal Resources (GFR).

Opportunity Pursuance and Vetting

While state agencies should aggressively pursue funding that aligns with their internal grant needs and priorities, they must also be aware that many funding opportunities come with requirements and restrictions that could limit their value to the state. Therefore, organizations should have a formal pursuance or vetting process to properly screen funding opportunities before agency resources are expended. This vetting process can be as simple as approval from senior management or as formal as a grant pursuance matrix that explores the various cost and obligations of each funding opportunity. This topic will be explored in much greater detail in Chapter 4; but in general, those employees who will receive direct salary or other benefits from a grant program should not be the ultimate decision maker for pursuing a funding opportunity.

Application Development and Submission

The application development and submission process can be a very labor intensive and lengthy process. As discussed in the section above, agencies should be fully committed to a funding opportunity before expending agency resources to pursue. Developing an application should be treated like any other project and therefore current project management tools and techniques should be utilized. This subject will be the topic of Chapter 5. At a minimum, an organization should establish an application development team with clear roles and responsibilities; set budgetary resources and limits; create a timeline and notify the GFR Single Point of Contact (SPOC). A kick-off meeting should be held to ensure everyone is clear about their assignments and deadlines. GFR strongly encourages that agencies use eCivis or another project management tool to coordinate their application development and serve as a document repository for the project.

Funding Decision Notification

Funding decisions can happen fairly quickly or sometimes drag out for months. During this period, state agencies should effectively communicate with various stakeholders, as well as continue preparations to implement the project if the funding is awarded. The reality is that many times the funding notification will be a negative one, but it is strongly encouraged that agencies utilize this information to refine their internal processes in order to be more competitive in the future. Chapter 6 will explore this topic and provide guidance on how organizations can be better prepared for either an award or denial notification.

Award Set-Up

Once funded, there are numerous internal, as well as external steps that state agencies must take to begin implementing the funding opportunity. These steps include award acceptance, accounting system setup (both agency internal and GAO), stakeholder communication, etc. Agency staff involved in the application development should be prepared to hand off the funding opportunity to the programmatic and financial staff who will implement the project. Having a formal award set-up process will ensure that all programmatic and financial requirements are met and will limit potential monitoring and audit findings in the future, all the while ensuring that all programmatic or policy objectives are met.

Grant Implementation

After the award is accepted, a grant program manager becomes responsible for managing the grant in accordance with programmatic and administrative requirements, as set forth but not limited to this manual. Additional requirements are determined by GAO SAM, U.S. Office of Management and Budget, U.S. General Accounting Office, Arizona General Accounting Office and the distributing federal agency. Chapter 7 provides procedures for grants administration and adherence to financial standards. Grantee reporting requirements are also covered in this chapter.

Grant Closeout

Closeout of a grant is a process by which the funder determines that the subgrantee has completed all applicable administrative actions and all required work on the project. Upon expiration of a grant, the grant program manager is responsible for working with the funder to ensure the timely and proper closing of the grant. Chapter 8 provides further information on grant closeouts.