

Tips on Getting Funded

Write well. Start by writing a concise, focused, bulleted statement of your project's specific goals: (a) your project description and goals, (b) action plan/implementation timetable and (c) a detailed line item budget and cash flow projection. Follow directions to the letter. Tailor your proposals appropriately.

Be real. A realistic measurable implementation plan is paramount. Define, assess, and measure the community needs, create clear goals, and include time-based and measurable objectives. Your goals must be achievable and incremental. Be creative without being risky. Monthly and quarterly, quantitative and qualitative benchmarks are very important and are critical to obtaining funding. Accurate, detailed, line item budgets and cash-flow projections identifying all of your sources of income and expense should be included.

Be informed. Find out what others have done and are doing in your community, and across the country. Invite them to talk about their project, call them, visit, or partner with them. Learn from their mistakes and successes.

Partnerships are a must. Form a strategic alliance or partnership with different organizations. Remember to involve all of your project stakeholders (board, staff, clients, other agencies). Direct, demonstrable, broad-based, community stakeholder collaboration, participation and involvement will help ensure success. Creating community and agency alliances can significantly reduce your competition for grants and attract more funders.

Sustain yourself. CCDO places great importance on sustainability. How will your project or services be sustained *after* the grant runs out? Sites must build a wide donor base of community participation, ownership, and investment to gradually take up the load before the end of the funding. Use Weed and Seed as an opportunity to change the way your community does business. Sustain the coordination infrastructure, maintain enhanced service delivery, and ensure the commitment of ongoing resources.

Possibility of non profit status. Consider the pros and cons of becoming a 501(c) 3: In many cases, you will not be able to obtain corporate or foundation funding without a 501(c) (3) actually in place. Some Weed and Seed sites choose to become non profits, others do not. Getting the formal IRS paperwork done is time-consuming, so be sure to plan accordingly.

Self-Promote--twice. First you must promote your idea to funders and then you must sustain the idea through marketing your project to the larger community. Remember public meetings, hearings, seminars, workshops, and surveys are all good methods.

Be persistent. You may have a great idea but still get rejected for funding for various reasons. Ask the grantor for reviewer comments and thank the grantor for considering your application. If you feel your application could have been better, think about hiring a consultant.