

### Is Your Organization “Grant-Ready”?



*This article was written by Amy Whitlock Jennings, MS, GPC, a co-author of the Study Guide and Bibliography: Support for the Grant Professional Certification Examination (Second Edition) and grantwriter for the seventh largest public healthcare system in the*

*United States. The study guide, which Thompson has partnered with the authors to make available, may be found at <http://thompson.com/public/offerpage.jsp?prod=GYPSY>. This piece is the second in a series of columns written by the authors of the study guide for Local/State Funding Report on a range of grant-seeking topics.*

*Just because your organization wants grant money doesn't mean that it is grant-ready. Boards of directors often assume that grants are "free money," but nothing could be further than the truth. A lot of work must be done prior to even writing your first grant, and numerous items must be in place prior to any grant submission.*

*There are typically only about 30 days between when a funder releases an RFP and the application due date. Waiting to complete all of the necessary preliminary items until 30 days before your grant is due will create nothing but turmoil and chaos on top of the pressure of preparing your first grant application, and the chances are high that you will not succeed at completing either task in time for a grant submittal.*

*To be successful, ensure that your organization has all the critical pieces in place before you think about submitting a grant proposal. The time to get your organization grant-ready is before you apply. A good starting place is with the documents that are required for any submission.*

*First, if you don't already have it, you need to obtain the appropriate legal status, (e.g., IRS 501(c)(3)) and the documentation certifying that status. You will also need to ensure that your organization has a current IRS Form 990 (if appropriate) and audited financial statements. An operational budget and articles of incorporation are also usually required.*

*Funders will generally want to see a fully operational board of directors that has been in place for more than one year. This board should operate under approved*

*bylaws and consist of community members and, if possible, beneficiaries or end users of the organization's services and activities. Including consumers is beneficial to the board's understanding of the plight of its stakeholders. It not only strengthens your mission, but also supports organizational staff in meeting the needs of the community.*

*Prior to applying for a grant, your organization must clearly define its vision and mission. It is vital for the organization and its board to have a vision that outlines the ultimate goal of the organization and a mission that provides its purpose. A strategic plan should also be developed in order to set up the priorities that provide your organization with a roadmap to achieving its vision and mission.*

*When creating the strategic plan, don't forget to capture the history of your organization. Document what the organization has accomplished since its establishment. Use the history to capture the organization's uniqueness. Consider why it is different and what other organizations are meeting the needs of the population. Provide a chronological history of how the organization has made a difference in the lives of the people it serves.*

*If your organization plans to apply for a federal grant, it must first be registered on Grants.gov and the Central Contractor Registry, as well as have a Data Universal Numbering System number. Grants.gov is the source to locate and apply for federal opportunities, and the Central Contractor Registration (CCR.gov) is the primary vendor database for the federal government. The CCR collects, validates, stores and disseminates data in support of agency acquisition missions. A DUNS number is a unique organizational identifier that is assigned and maintained by Dun & Bradstreet.*

*The next item to consider is the capacity of the organization. What's going to happen when your organization receives a grant? Does it possess the appropriate amount of insurance coverage? Does it have the necessary resources (information technology, staff, accounting systems, etc.) and ability to implement a grant? Are staff members invested in the project? How will the organization demonstrate success? How will the project be evaluated? Does the organization have the ability to compile and sub-*

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are achieving the flood loss reduction goals of the NFIP. **Contact:** Regional contacts; see funding announcement. **More information:** <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=113513&mode=VIEW>.

**Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE) - Supplemental (Region 5)** — **Deadline:** Aug. 26, 2011. **Eligibility:** State governments. **Fund uses:** To provide technical assistance to communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that they are achieving the flood loss reduction goals of the NFIP. **Contact:** Regional contacts; see funding announcement. **More information:** <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=113515&mode=VIEW>.

**Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE) - Supplemental (Region 6)** — **Deadline:** Aug. 26, 2011. **Eligibility:** State governments. **Fund uses:** To provide technical assistance to communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that they are achieving the flood loss reduction goals of the NFIP. **Contact:** Regional contacts; see funding announcement. **More information:** <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=113517&mode=VIEW>.

**Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE) - Supplemental (Region 7)** — **Deadline:** Aug. 26, 2011. **Eligibility:** State governments. **Fund uses:** To provide technical assistance to communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that they are achieving the flood loss reduction goals of the NFIP. **Contact:** Regional contacts; see funding announcement. **More information:** <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=113533&mode=VIEW>.

## Reauthorization (cont. from p. 6)


was cut by \$300 million in the continuing resolution that was ultimately enacted for FY 2011.

Even if the reauthorization bill had continued to move forward this summer, its path would have been rocky, with ultimate passage in the Republican-dominated House anything but sure.

Fiscal conservatives' laser-like focus on discretionary spending cuts has put many programs on uncertain footing. And the divisive debates over federal spending of any kind have bogged down the fate of many programs.

WIA supporters acknowledge that the program could benefit from some improvements, but with even the draft bill seemingly stalled, there's little hope of enacting changes anytime soon.

### Need More Information?

The National Skills Coalition's analysis of the Workforce Investment Act reauthorization is at <http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/homepage-archive/help-committee-reschedules.html>. Information about the WIA is at <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/act.cfm>. 

**Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE) - Supplemental (Region 8)** — **Deadline:** Aug. 26, 2011. **Eligibility:** State governments. **Fund uses:** To provide technical assistance to communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that they are achieving the flood loss reduction goals of the NFIP. **Contact:** Regional contacts; see funding announcement. **More information:** <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=113554&mode=VIEW>.

**Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE) - Supplemental (Region 9)** — **Deadline:** Aug. 26, 2011. **Eligibility:** State governments. **Fund uses:** To provide technical assistance to communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that they are achieving the flood loss reduction goals of the NFIP. **Contact:** Regional contacts; see funding announcement. **More information:** <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=113573&mode=VIEW>.

**Community Assistance Program - State Support Services Element (CAP-SSSE) - Supplemental (Region 10)** — **Deadline:** Aug. 26, 2011. **Eligibility:** State governments. **Fund uses:** To provide technical assistance to communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that they are achieving the flood loss reduction goals of the NFIP. **Contact:** Regional contacts; see funding announcement. **More information:** <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=113575&mode=VIEW>.

**Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) Program (Multiple Regions)** — **Deadline:** Aug. 26, 2011. **Eligibility:** State, county, local and tribal governments, institutions of higher education and nonprofits. **Fund uses:** To ensure that CTP partners can perform program management and mapping-related activities. **Contact:** Regional contacts; see funding announcement. **More information:** <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=113393&mode=VIEW>.

## Education

**Public School Improvement Projects** — **Deadline:** Oct. 14, 2011. **Eligibility:** Public K-12 schools and parent associa-

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mit all of the required reports to the funder? You need to be able to answer these questions before you apply to have confidence that your organization is capable of performing to the funder's standards. Funders are taking greater interest in organizational capacity and are increasingly asking applicants to address those issues in their applications. Organizations that cannot clearly convey their capacity will be less likely to be awarded funding.

If your organization has these items in place, it is grant-ready, and it's time to write a grant! 