

The New York Recovery Network: E-Bulletin

Published August 27, 2014

A special issue on grant funding

We've compiled three articles from past bulletins to produce a special issue on grants. Also, check out our updated grant pages on the NYRN, with new resources added weekly.

Headlines

Improve your chances for a grant award

Before you apply for a grant, make sure you consider these six tenets: eligibility, originality, credibility, simplicity, connectivity and sustainability. The ideas in this article may improve the odds that your proposal will be funded.

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Navigating the federal grant application process

This article is based on information from *Finding and Applying for Federal Grants*, a workshop highlighting resources for finding grant opportunities and detailing how to prepare a strong application.

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Short listing of grants to help fund resilience projects

NY Rising committees may be looking for funding for a variety of resilience projects. We've compiled a short list of funding opportunities that could be leveraged for NY Rising and other community improvement projects.

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Recovery News

[Airbnb partners with San Francisco and Portland on disaster relief](#)

Emergency Management, August 14, 2014

[Bayville residents miss deadline for home-elevation assistance](#)

News 12, August 15, 2014

[FEMA inspectors arrive in Suffolk to assess damage from historic rainfall flooding](#)

CBS New York, August 20, 2014

[Islip beach damaged by Sandy reopens](#)

News 12 Long Island, August 21, 2014

[Long Beach approves \\$28 million for Sandy-related infrastructure and rebuilding projects](#)

Newsday, August 21, 2014

[Study identifies challenges faced by NYU nurses after Hurricane Sandy](#)

Medical Press, August 22, 2014

Upcoming Events

August 28, 2014

[Webinar: Fundraising Strategies for Economic Transformation](#)
International Economic Development Council

September 3, 2014

[Rechargeable Buildings: Battery storage comes to NYC](#)
Urban Green Council

September 3, 2014

[Under the Hood: Corporate Sustainability 2014](#)
Robert Zicklin Center for Corporate Integrity

September 5, 2014

[Video Webcast Workshop: Measures of Disaster and Community Resilience: From Lessons Learned to Lessons Applied](#)
National Academy of Sciences

September 16 - 17, 2014

[IAEM USA Region 2 Educational Conference: "Recovery"](#)
International Association of Emergency Managers

Job Postings

[Electrical Engineer](#)

[Policy and Communications Fellow](#)

[Counselor- Part time](#)

[Community Organizer](#)

[Senior Advisor for Vice President for Disaster Recovery](#)

Improve your chances for a grant award

Government agencies and foundations that make large grants are more likely to read proposals in their entirety compared to readers in smaller companies. Proposal reviewers assign points and make comments throughout the grant application. Understand every detail of the Request for Proposal (RFP) thoroughly to be successful. Do not offer more information than what is asked for but be careful that you do not provide anything less.

Here are some ideas on how to improve the odds that your proposal will be funded:

1. Eligibility. Make sure you qualify before you start the process.

Confirm your eligibility and then make sure you have proof of eligibility. According to [one report](#), the Office of Housing and Urban Development rejected 40 percent of 281 applications because the organizations were not eligible to apply. The Office of Community Services reported it rejected one out of three applications. Eligibility can be found in the RFP, Request for Applications, Notification of Funding Availability or Funding Opportunity Announcement. Requirements are not always clear. Read that section carefully and contact the grant officer to review your eligibility.

2. Originality. Your proposed project may not be as unique as you think.

You have to make it stand out among many others competing for attention. Do your homework on whether your idea or project already exists. Check to see if the grantor currently has grant awards or contracts to doing similar programs. If that is the case, your proposal might be perceived as a duplication of effort. But if you have new ideas or you can show that your proposal offers significant differences or improvements, go for it. But always research similar proposals or projects first.

3. Credibility. Show you have broad community support.

Look for community leaders, groups and organizations in your locality that **will write letters of support**. Having their support will enhance the quality of your proposal and increase your credibility. Don't overlook your local public officials and government agencies or members of academic and professional groups who are familiar with your work in the community. Support letters should reference the key points of your proposal. Remember that gathering these letters may take quite a bit of time; it's important that this effort begin in the early stages of developing the proposal. When submitting your application, clearly identify these letters and include them in the proposal's appendix.

4. Simplicity. Avoid using jargon, buzzwords and acronyms.

Technical jargon and acronyms may not be understood by the reader. Avoid vague claims, trendy language and obscure terms - they won't impress the funder and may actually cause a negative reaction. The prose must be simple. Proofread for grammar, spelling and syntax errors. Have someone read it with fresh eyes. Readability is the key to a successful proposal. To be safe, seek out a neutral third party to review the proposal working draft for continuity, clarity and reasoning.

5. Connectivity. Develop a relationship with the grant reviewer.

Many grant writers will reach a point where the RFP guidelines cannot address all the unique aspects of a proposal. That is the time when the grant point of contact (POC) may be your most important ally. Nurture your relationship early. Call the grant POC to request an application. Get to know other agency personnel you may be dealing with. Ask for suggestions, criticism and advice about your proposed project. In many cases, the more agency personnel know about your proposal, the better the chance it will be supported.

Sometimes it is useful to send a proposal summary to a specific agency official in a separate cover letter, *and ask for review and comment at the earliest possible convenience*. Before you submit a request, check with the granting agency on specific rules and guidelines on receiving feedback before you anticipate the grant announcement. If the review is critical with many corrections or modifications that cannot be resolved, ask for a recommendation to submit to a more appropriate agency. If possible, arrange for a personal visit to the agency's regional office. Facetime not only establishes a direct personal connection, but may also bring out some finer points about the proposal.

Here are some additional tips:

- a. Schedule time to speak with a grant officer for additional assistance. Don't call at the busiest time of the day (ask first) or at the end of the day with lengthy questions. Same with email. You don't want your email to sit overnight in the grantor's inbox. Don't wait until the deadline is imminent to ask additional questions. It will just show that you have not been diligent.
- b. Attend informational calls and seminars about the proposal. You will often discover tips or gather additional information from other attendees' questions.
- c. It will be too late once the proposal is submitted if you didn't follow the detailed instructions in the RFP. If you are stuck on a particular requirement, make that call immediately. Grant officers first check to see if you followed RFP instructions and may not forgive you if you missed a significant point or omitted a step in the process that should not have been overlooked.

6. Sustainability. Show or demonstrate you are prepared for a long-term commitment to your project.

After your grant funds are exhausted how will you sustain your activities? The funder wants to know that your organization won't close its doors after they've sent you the last grant payment. How will this important program that you've designed survive after their investment has ended? Simply stating that you will raise more money is not sufficient. You must have multiple avenues of additional funding including individual donations, special events or other fundraising methods. Create a realistic plan or a 'red flag' may go up against your proposal. Don't neglect long-term sustainability if you want the funder to look at your proposal favorably.

For more information, please visit the New York Recovery Network's [section on grant writing](#).

Navigating the federal grant application process

Organizations looking for federal grants should prepare well in advance to successfully receive funding.

This article is based on information from *Finding and Applying for Federal Grants*, a workshop presented in June 2014 by Barbara Andrews and Joan Gibson from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Earleene Sealy from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Central grant application portal

To apply for a federal grant, applicants and/or organizations must register with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Registration can take between three and five business days, or more if all steps are not completed in a timely manner.

Grant research

Once the federal budget is approved, funds for grant projects become available and are announced in the Federal Register throughout the year. Grant opportunities that have been announced will appear in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). The CFDA is a listing of grant and assistance programs administered by 57 federal agencies.

Applicants can conduct simple keyword searches or more advanced searches that index categories such as “agency” and “grant type” on Grants.gov. The website also allows users to save searches and create email alerts of grant opportunities as they are posted.

Preparing a strong application

Meeting the application requirements for a federal grant will require time. Each grant program will have specific goals, program and eligibility requirements. In many cases, more than one federal agency or more than one division within an agency may award grants for similar purposes.

Complete pre-application steps in advance (e.g., get a [Data Universal Numbering System](https://www.data.gov) number and register with Grants.gov).

When a new funding announcement is issued, read it carefully. Establish a plan for what needs to be accomplished, by whom and when. Assign a person to request and coordinate letters of commitment and support. These letters must be recent and specific about any resources that are being committed to the project.

Developing collaborations that can help implement the project and meet cost-sharing requirements could make a stronger application. Collaborations can help applicants assess

organizational strengths and address any capacity building needs that might prevent organizations from successfully competing for funds.

Applicants can research federal agency clearinghouses for successful methods and tools (protocols, forms, position descriptions, etc.) that are being used in similar projects. Requesting copies of successful proposals under the Freedom of Information Act can help applicants build strong applications.

Application requirements

Make sure to include information on all review criteria. Each section of the criteria has a designated point value and is scored separately. Include **specific objectives, the tasks required to accomplish the objective, the timeline, who will do the work, who is the target population, why you choose this approach and how you will evaluate the accomplishments.** If you don't understand the criteria, call the program contact and ask questions.

Explain any omissions rather than leave anything blank. If the funding announcement asks for something that you are unable to provide, explain why it is not included. Unexplained omissions can cost you points in the review process.

Make a reasonable funding request and match the budget to the scope of work. The budget request must clearly fit the project. Be specific. Justify each item requested including staff, consultants, travel, equipment and anything else that might appear unusual to reviewers.

Additionally, follow instructions regarding the format of your submission, including page limits and font size. If there is a suggested outline for organizing the narrative content, use the same order and section headings.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to request technical assistance and advice from program contacts. Be sure to sign up for agency workshops, conference calls or webinars that are scheduled to assist applicants. The more you know, the more likely you are to receive federal funding for your project.

Making you stronger

Even if you don't get a federal grant, applying for one can improve your ability to compete in future funding cycles. It also makes it easier to apply for private funding. Ask the federal agency for feedback on the grant proposal you submitted. This feedback will vary depending on the funding agency. Some will offer to meet you to discuss your proposal, while others will provide you with a summary of the reviewers' comments. Use this information to improve your grant proposal and submit the revised version when new funding is announced.

Short listing of grants to help fund resilience projects

After an intense planning process involving the engagement of community stakeholders, engineering firms and governmental partners, NY Rising committees may now be looking for funding for a variety of resilience projects.

These potentially transformative projects will require even more detailed study and community engagement over several years. They will also take considerable money. The plans are unlikely to be fully funded through one source.

Here's a sampling of funding opportunities that could be leveraged for NY Rising and other community improvement projects.

The listing is not comprehensive, and we invite you to check the New York Recovery Network's Grant Announcements page frequently for new opportunities posted every day. We suggest you also search Grants.gov for federal funding programs. Many of the federal programs are annual. If the deadline has passed, you now have more time to prepare a stronger proposal.

Read this [primer on Grants.gov](#) to help bolster your applications. Additionally, this [link](#) will generate Sandy-specific search results.

The following listings are programs that may help fund NY Rising and other community resilience projects:

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Grant Deadline: Sept. 7 and 8, 2014

[National Institutes of Health grants for Social and Behavioral Research on the Elderly in Disasters](#)

The National Institute on Aging and the National Institute of Nursing Research encourages research regarding the consequences of natural and man-made disasters on the health and well-being of the elderly to help prevent or mitigate harmful consequences.

Grant Deadline: Oct. 15, 2014

[New York Community Trust Grants](#)

The New York Community Trust Grants support programs that serve all ages in areas of children, youth and families, community development and the environment, education, arts, justice, health and people with special needs.

Grant Deadline: Ongoing

[Safeway Foundation](#)

The Safeway Foundation funds nonprofit organizations that strengthen neighborhoods. The foundation will consider proposals in the following areas: health and human services, hunger relief, education and helping people with disabilities.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Grant Deadline: Oct. 1, 2014

[City Parks Foundation Capacity Grants](#)

City Parks Foundation capacity grants fund projects that range from \$200 to \$5,000 to support events, activities, and programs that take place on NYC Parks Department property. Small, volunteer-run groups demonstrating a long-term commitment to their neighborhood parks and street trees will receive preference.

Grant Deadline: Jan. 27, 2015

[Citizens Committee Neighborhood Grants](#)

Citizens Committee for New York City awards micro-grants of up to \$3,000 to resident-led groups to work on community and school improvement projects throughout the city. They prioritize groups in low-income neighborhoods and Title I public schools.

INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS

Grant Deadlines: Sept. 1-15, 2014 and Feb. 1-17, 2015

[National Science Foundation: Hazard Mitigation and Structural Engineering](#)

The Hazard Mitigation and Structural Engineering program supports fundamental research to mitigate impacts of natural and human-caused hazards on civil infrastructure and to advance the reliability, resiliency, and sustainability of buildings and other structures.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Grant Deadline: Oct. 21, 2014

[Green Infrastructure Grant Program](#)

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) offers a grant program for private property owners in combined sewer areas of New York City. If selected, DEP will provide funds for the design and construction of the green infrastructure system. Eligible projects include blue roofs, rain gardens, green roofs, porous pavement and rainwater harvesting on private property in combined sewer areas. For more information, read [DEP's handout](#).

Grant Deadline: Nov. 7, 2014

[U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Small Grants Program](#)

The Small Grants Program is a competitive, matching grants program that supports public-private partnerships carrying out projects that further the goals of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The projects must involve long-term protection, restoration and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats for the benefit of all affected wetlands-associated migratory birds.

Grant Deadlines: July 15-Aug. 15, 2014, Nov. 15-Dec. 15, 2014 and Feb. 15-March 15, 2015

[Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc.](#)

This Lily Auchincloss Foundation supports art, preservation and community programs that serve to enrich the lives of the people of New York City. The online application is available one month prior to each deadline.

Grant Deadline: Sept. 30, 2015

[FY 2014 - 2015 Broad Agency Announcement](#)

Communities have the opportunity to propose research, education and outreach, innovative projects or sponsorships not addressed through National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration competitive discretionary programs.

ECONOMIC

Grant Deadline: July 24, 2014 and Dec. 22, 2014

[Living Wage Capital Fund request for proposal](#)

The New York City Economic Development Corporation intends to disburse up to \$10 million to subsidize the costs of capital improvements for selected projects.

Grant Deadline: Ongoing

[Hurricane Sandy Business Loan and Grant Program](#)

The City of New York and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are providing small businesses in New York City with disaster recovery loans and grants. Small businesses that sustained damage as a result of Hurricane Sandy and can demonstrate an ability to repay the loan can now access up to \$150,000 in loan funding. Loans have a one percent interest rate and must be repaid in five years. Businesses approved for the loan are also eligible for a matching grant of up to \$60,000.

Grant Deadline: Ongoing

[Storefront Improvement Program](#)

The Small Business Storefront Improvement Program provides funding for facade improvements to eligible small businesses and property owners impacted by Hurricane Sandy located in New York City Evacuation Zones one through six. The goal of the program is to enhance the impacted commercial corridors and support small businesses.

Grant Deadline: Ongoing

[NYC Business Solutions training grants](#)

NYC Business Solutions provides access to professional training services that can reduce employee turnover and increase productivity. Customized training is available by providing awards of up to \$400,000, which can cover 60-70 percent of eligible training costs.

Grant Deadline: Ongoing

[Hurricane Sandy NYC Matching Grant, NYC Small Business Services](#)

To be considered for NYC matching grant, you must submit the NYC emergency loan application through a NYC business solutions account manager.