

Grant basics – Keep it Simple!

It is important to read funding requests in detail, to understand if your organization and proposed project are eligible for funding.

Consider starting with, “Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How” in thinking about a project that could be funded by a grant opportunity. Although request for funding applications (RFAs) or request for proposals (RFPs) have many detailed specifics, simplifying your project plan prior to applying is beneficial.

There are two main categories RFAs will expect of applicants:

1. Explanation/Qualifications of **applicant organization** (applicant qualifications, history, capacity, connection to community)
2. Clear explanation of **project proposed** for funding (how will project funds be spent (focus on this funding, associated and related activities belong in Applicant Organization).

Organization

Start with simple description of your organization.

Start with the organization’s **eligibility**, then organization’s **capacity/ability** to be successful before moving forward.

When thinking about your organization, frame **qualifications** within the scope of the RFA (for example, if you are applying to work on air issues, what is your organization’s history working with air).

Who: Is your organization (history of working with specific communities, subject matter (air, waste, drinking water issues, etc., mission)). Project manager and staff expertise to needed undertake proposed project.

What: Is your organization **eligible** for particular funding? What type of organization (501(c)3 Non profit, tribal government, or tribal organization)?

Where: Location of organization? Relation to geographic areas, pollution sources, highways, energy development hub, relation to community of concern?

When: History of organization. When did your organization start working on particular environmental/public health issues? When did organization receive previous funding, undertake similar projects of size and scope?

Why: Identify organization’s involvement/expertise in particular environmental/public health issue. Why is organization qualified to undertake this project?

How: Organization’s connection/relationship to community. How is organization related to partners?

Project Plan

Start with a simple description of your project plan.

What: Environmental/public health concern you wish to address for project.

Where: Identify location(s) of environmental/public health concern. Where are sources of concern (drinking water, power plant, air quality, indoor air)? Where are sources in relation to community, vulnerable populations?

Who: Identify who is impacted by environmental/public health risks/impacts. Are there particular individuals that are more vulnerable (socio-economic status, geography, gender, age, disability status, etc.). How are individuals or community impacted? Is community disproportionately, adversely impacted, or vulnerable? How will community benefit from this project?

Why: Describe why it is important to address this issue? Why now?

How: Detail how your organization addresses the issue (training about issue, data collection, partnering with industry, governments, etc.). How will your organization partner to address issue? Detail roles/tasks/responsibilities of partners (Suggest table format).

What: Detail planned project goals (broad; create a list of project goals, identify tasks (activities) for each goal, associate timeline to tasks, resources needed – connect these with outcomes). It is sometimes useful to start in reverse with intended outcomes.

When: Detail when activities/tasks/milestones will occur. Be reasonable about timeline. Consider what can be accomplished in project period. Suggest table format.

What: Describe intended project outcomes (short-term (during funding) and long-term (may occur during project or after project). Describe how funding proposed project will result in improved environment/public health for community. What does success look like? What will this funding specifically be used to accomplish?

How: Define measurements of how organization will measure success.

Planned outcome	Milestone/timeline	Activity/outputs	Resource	Goal
Reduce exposure to radon in homes	03.01.2014	Identify certified radon inspectors in county	Intern review of county certifications	Address radon in community
Increase understanding of radon in homes	08.01.2013	Outreach to real-estate agents in county regarding radon	Pamphlets; radon speaker; Intern organizing	
County policy on radon testing for home sales	10.01.2014	Meetings with city council, developers, and homeowners association	Meeting space; facilitator; note-taker; Project manager led	
Understand current radon conditions	04.01.13	Disseminate test kits to 80% of community	Radon Test kits; system to provide kits; approach to review test results; reporting and next steps for those with high readings	

Output: An environmental activity or effort, and/or associated work products that are produced or provided over a specific period of time. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Outcome: The result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature, must be quantitative, and may not necessarily be achievable within an assistance agreement funding period. EPA encourages recipients to identify outcomes wherever possible because they lead to environmental and/or public health improvement more clearly than outputs.

The Relationship Between Outputs and Outcomes is illustrated by the following example: Assistance agreement for an outreach program to building code officials on radon-resistant building techniques: Outputs would include development of a model building code manual and training sessions on the benefits of radon-resistant construction. Intermediate outcomes would be the enactment of local building codes and the actual construction of radon-resistant houses. This would contribute to an end outcome of improved indoor air quality.

Performance Measure: A metric used to gauge program or project performance. When grant recipients and EPA project officers negotiate target values for outputs and outcomes, they become performance measures.

For questions on EPA EJ Grants, please contact April Nowak (Region 8 EJ Grant Coordinator), Nowak.april@epa.gov
For more on EPA EJ Grants, see the Office of Environmental Justice site: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/>