

Community Emergency Response Team

Grant Application Writing Tips

- 1) A stated purpose of the CERT and other Citizens Corps programs is to secure the highest possible level of involvement from volunteers in both administration and training activities. Therefore, great care should be taken when justifying the budgeting of any personnel who are to be funded by the grant. Stress benefits such as accessibility, data collections and communications improvement associated with the hiring of any grant funded personnel, noting how they would assist the volunteers.
- 2) Determine, if possible, whether your state has a maximum grant award that it is prepared to make. Prepare to be asked to rebudget your application while it is being reviewed. Structuring your budget concisely will allow you to respond quickly to these requests. Work closely with the state agency responsible for the grant program to garner hints on where budget issues may exist.
- 3) Identify the persons that will initiate and manage the project. These will probably include members of City or County, Fire, Emergency Management or Law Enforcement agencies, possibly in conjunction with a representative of City or County government.
- 4) Identify how the individuals who will complete the CERT Train-the-Trainer course will be recruited and trained. Leverage other promotional activities of your Citizens Corps. Plan to utilize free local media opportunities such as public service announcements and news coverage to attract both potential CERT trainers and CERT members.
- 5) Show how you will get your local Fire, EMS, Public Health and Law Enforcement agencies involved. They can provide subject matter experts to support your training program and, very importantly, local level contacts between agencies and CERT members. These contacts and resulting communications can improve the effectiveness of the CERT when activated and can also enhance the sustainability of the CERT by reducing attrition among members. In many cases front-line emergency responders will want to become actively involved in the training process and are willing to complete the CERT Train-the-Trainer course.
- 6) Keep your goals reasonable. Activities under programs of this nature tend to grow organically, especially due to the reliance on volunteers and a very small core of locally or grant funded individuals. Designate the targeted number of members per CERT and the number of CERTs expected to be established during the first and second half of the grant period.
- 7) Be prepared to justify any purchases of electronic equipment, especially laptops and LCD projectors. Place more emphasis on the equipment needs of the CERT trainers and providing equipment kits to each of the CERTs that you are planning to establish and train. List out exactly the items proposed and their unit costs.
- 8) Complete every section and answer every question. It is most probable that incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.
- 9) Even if they are purported to be available, avoid requesting any Administrative or Indirect Costs. Again, the spirit of the entire Citizen Corps program is that of volunteerism.

Community Emergency Response Team

Grant Application Writing Tips

- 1) A stated purpose of the CERT and other Citizens Corps programs is to secure the highest possible level of involvement from volunteers in both administration and training activities. Therefore, great care should be taken when justifying the budgeting of any personnel who are to be funded by the grant. Stress benefits such as accessibility, data collections and communications improvement associated with the hiring of any grant funded personnel, noting how they would assist the volunteers.
- 2) Determine, if possible, whether your state has a maximum grant award that it is prepared to make. Prepare to be asked to rebudget your application while it is being reviewed. Structuring your budget concisely will allow you to respond quickly to these requests. Work closely with the state agency responsible for the grant program to garner hints on where budget issues may exist.
- 3) Identify the persons that will initiate and manage the project. These will probably include members of City or County, Fire, Emergency Management or Law Enforcement agencies, possibly in conjunction with a representative of City or County government.
- 4) Identify how the individuals who will complete the CERT Train-the-Trainer course will be recruited and trained. Leverage other promotional activities of your Citizens Corps. Plan to utilize free local media opportunities such as public service announcements and news coverage to attract both potential CERT trainers and CERT members.
- 5) Show how you will get your local Fire, EMS, Public Health and Law Enforcement agencies involved. They can provide subject matter experts to support your training program and, very importantly, local level contacts between agencies and CERT members. These contacts and resulting communications can improve the effectiveness of the CERT when activated and can also enhance the sustainability of the CERT by reducing attrition among members. In many cases front-line emergency responders will want to become actively involved in the training process and are willing to complete the CERT Train-the-Trainer course.
- 6) Keep your goals reasonable. Activities under programs of this nature tend to grow organically, especially due to the reliance on volunteers and a very small core of locally or grant funded individuals. Designate the targeted number of members per CERT and the number of CERTs expected to be established during the first and second half of the grant period.
- 7) Be prepared to justify any purchases of electronic equipment, especially laptops and LCD projectors. Place more emphasis on the equipment needs of the CERT trainers and providing equipment kits to each of the CERTs that you are planning to establish and train. List out exactly the items proposed and their unit costs.
- 8) Complete every section and answer every question. It is most probable that incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.
- 9) Even if they are purported to be available, avoid requesting any Administrative or Indirect Costs. Again, the spirit of the entire Citizen Corps program is that of volunteerism.

Post Award Considerations

- 10) Place your equipment as early as possible. Some items might be in short supply due increased demand for first responder equipment and could induce delays in the provision of training.
- 11) Make your public relations/outreach activities a priority. Have a Press Release, get an article into the local papers and secure coverage on local radio and TV stations. Build a web page outlining the training opportunities available.
- 12) Keep track of grant related expenditures in a segregated account and file all reports on time. Otherwise, future releases of funds might be delayed.
- 13) Encourage on-going communications between CERTs and first-line responder agencies. Improves coordination and reduces CERT member attrition rate. Help schedule regular drills and exercises to maintain member interest.
- 14) Keep detailed records of each person involved in the program, preferably using a database structured to allow the generation of e-mail lists etc. that will facilitate the program's member retention efforts.
- 15) Transfer responsibilities to volunteer participants whenever prudent. This will keep the full-time staff available to grow the program.