

# Applying for Grants and Loans

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# How can you get *FUNDING* for your *PROJECT*?

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## Three Steps to get *Funding*.

1. Have an excellent project.
2. Have an excellent team to implement your project.
3. Understand your funding agency.

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## Funding Secret #1: Every Application is really asking 4 questions

- ▶ What is the problem?
- ▶ Who cares? / Why should they Care?
- ▶ What are you going to do about it?
- ▶ How much will your solution cost?

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## Funding secret #2: Every application is a sales pitch

You are asking somebody else to spend their money on your project.

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## Step 1: Have an excellent project

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### Excellent projects solve problems

- ▶ Do you know what problem your project is solving?
- ▶ If you don't, this is a warning sign.
  - Is your project solving the right problem?
  - Is your project dealing with the symptoms, or addressing the root causes?
- ▶ You can't solve your problem if you don't know what it is.

### Ask yourself "WHY?"

- ▶ WHY?
- ▶ WHY?
- ▶ WHY?
- ▶ WHY?
- ▶ Keep asking till you identify your real problem

### Many projects suffer premature "HOW?"

- ▶ Is your project a pre-chosen solution looking for a problem?
- ▶ Solving the wrong problem isn't going to move you forward.
- ▶ Remember, not every problem is a nail.
  - Even if you have the most amazing hammer in the world.
- ▶ Figure out your problem first, then think about how to solve it

### How do you solve your problem?

- ▶ Facility Planning / Alternative Analysis / Value Analysis / Cost Effectiveness Analysis
  - 0 Identify the REAL PROBLEM / NEED.
  1. Brainstorm. Get a big list of possible solutions.
  2. Evaluate their ability to solve the problem.
  3. Look at the lifecycle costs and benefits of the solutions.
  4. Pick the Best/ Least Cost/ Highest Value alternative.
  5. Plan the path forward to implement that project.

### Brainstorming when you're stuck in a rut



### Really brainstorm, go get more alternatives

- ▶ Think "outside the box".
  - Or hire somebody who can.
- ▶ Think about scale.
- ▶ Reconsider your assumptions.
- ▶ Think about levels of technology.
- ▶ Consider political and regulatory approaches.
- ▶ Keep the "nobody will do that" ideas.

## For capital projects, always consider the Life Cycle Costs (LCC)

- ▶ Construction costs (design, construction management, change order / high bid risk)
- AND**
- ▶ Operations costs (labor, power, chemical, laboratory, legal, financing, and admin)
- AND**
- ▶ Replacement costs (short lived assets, and end of useful life replacement)

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## Yes, Step 1 is basic project planning

*Plans are worthless,  
but planning is everything.*  
– Dwight D. Eisenhower.

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## Step 2: Excellent Implementation

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## So, you have a brilliant solution to your problem

- ▶ Solves the problem
- ▶ You can afford it
- ▶ Environmentally sustainable
- ▶ Perfect in every way

Unfortunately...

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## Brilliance is not enough to get funded

- ▶ Everyone else applying has a brilliant idea too.
- ▶ To get funding you have to prove you can implement.
- ▶ An idea that has a good chance to become reality becomes a project.
- ▶ *You are asking funders to invest money in your project. If the project doesn't look like it will be successful, why would anyone invest?*

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## Moving from an idea to a project takes a team

- ▶ A team is not just a collection of individuals.
- ▶ Teams work together.
- ▶ Teams have a shared objective.
- ▶ Teams understand the project and the problem it will solve.
- ▶ Teams are committed to the project.

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### Who's on your team?

- ▶ Utility staff (the project manager)
- ▶ Elected officials
- ▶ Design Engineers
- ▶ Clerk/Treasurer/Accounting staff
- ▶ Construction Manager
- ▶ Contractor

- ▶ Have you identified all your team members?
- ▶ Are they all on the team?

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### Your team must include "THEM"

- ▶ Regulators
- ▶ "Stake Holders"
- ▶ Utility Customers / Ratepayers
- ▶ Neighboring Communities
- ▶ Permitting or review agencies

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### Other success factors

- ▶ Environmental Review
- ▶ Other funders are on board
- ▶ A realistic schedule
- ▶ Lots of public involvement
- ▶ Elected officials are on board

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Once you have a great project and a great implementation team, you can start to worry about the funding application

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## Step 3: Know your funding agency

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### Understand your funding agency's perspective and limitations

- ▶ What do they want to fund?
- ▶ What can they fund?
- ▶ What are they prohibited from funding?
- ▶ Where does their money come from?

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## What gets funded?

- ▶ Brilliant ideas don't get funded.
- ▶ Awesome implementation teams don't get funded.
- ▶ Although both of these help...

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## What gets funded?

- ▶ Projects that get funded Solve Problems, For the People Who Have the Money.
- ▶ Propose your project in a way that solves **their** problems.

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## What if I don't know what their priorities are?

- ▶ Find Out - before you apply.
- ▶ Ask them directly.
- ▶ Read their application.
- ▶ Follow the money.
- ▶ Understand who the funder is responsible to.

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## Sure way to doom your application (don't do this)

- ▶ Apply for something the funder is prohibited from funding.
- ▶ Fail to follow the application instructions.
- ▶ Forget to include any required attachments.

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## Can you answer these questions?

- ▶ What is the problem?
- ▶ Why should the funder care?
- ▶ How will you solve the problem?
- ▶ How much will it cost?

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## Are your answers clear and concise?

- ▶ Put your answers in writing.
- ▶ Two Sentences per answer.
- ▶ No more than 20 words per sentence.
- ▶ No more than 3 commas per sentence.
- ▶ Written in plain English.

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*OK, let's apply for funding*

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### Applying for funding

1. Plan your timeline and assign jobs for completing the application.
2. Read the application, instructions, and guidelines.
3. Answer the real questions.
4. Edit your writing.
5. Get an independent review, AND FIX THE PROBLEMS they find.
6. Pull everything together and deliver by the deadline.

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### When developing your schedule, remember:

- ▶ If it can go wrong it will go wrong.
- ▶ Work backward from the due date.
- ▶ If somebody can take longer than you scheduled them for, they will.
- ▶ Identify critical steps and due dates.
- ▶ Murphy was an optimist.
- ▶ Build in slack where you can.

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### Rules for writing:

- ▶ KISS
  - 20 words per sentence, no more than 3 commas.
  - Keep simplifying until there is no confusion, and no way to misinterpret.
- ▶ ~~Eschew Surplusage and Jargon~~ Use short, common words.
- ▶ Use the active voice.
- ▶ Always consider the audience. Sometimes audiences.
- ▶ Grammar and Spelling are critical.
- ▶ Use formatting to make reading easy for the evaluator.
- ▶ Put the conclusion first.

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### Rules for writing: Keep it simple

- ▶ Complex sentences and long paragraphs will kill your application.
  - The reader will zone out, or
  - The reader will misinterpret your project.

*The post-adolescent human male perambulated at a high rate of speed in a pronouncedly down slope direction.*

**or**

*The man ran down the hill.*

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### What is an executive summary?

- ▶ It's a summary, that has been further condensed down for an "executive".
- ▶ i.e. its SHORT.
- ▶ Tell your entire story in 5 sentences.
- ▶ Never use Jargon.

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## Editing and independent review

- ▶ These two steps are critical.
- ▶ Do not skip them.
  
- ▶ You are going to need help.
- ▶ You can't edit your own writing.
- ▶ I'm serious. Squash your ego. Go ask for help.

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## Let's review:

- ▶ Develop an excellent project.
- ▶ Assemble a great implementation team.
- ▶ Write the perfect application.
- ▶ Get edits and reviewer feedback.
- ▶ Listen to your editors and reviewers.

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## What if you don't get funded?

- ▶ Find out why.
- ▶ Correct the problems and try again.

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## What if you do get funded

- ▶ Celebrate! (but realize the hard work is now starting)
- ▶ Contact the funder (early and often) and keep them informed.
- ▶ The funder has now bought into you.  
Your success = their success
- ▶ When something goes wrong, ask the funder for help.

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Thank You!

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## Additional information

- ▶ [David.Dunn@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:David.Dunn@ecy.wa.gov) 360/407-6503
- ▶ Ecology funding program site:  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/funding/funding.html>
- ▶ Grant and Loan listserv:  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/maillist.html>

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