# SC&H Group Nonprofit Summit December 8, 2015

*Strategic Planning - Grant Readiness*

Presented by: RBW Strategy, LLC

# Agenda

- Introductions
- Session Objectives
- Grants overview and lifecycle
- Impacts and benefits of grant readiness
- Are you grant ready?
- *Hands-on: Completing grant readiness scan*
- Common pitfalls and challenges

# Introductions

- Role within organization
- Common challenges during pre-award stage
- Organizational size
- Grants experience

# Facilitator Introduction

- Rachel Werner, Founder of RBW Strategy, LLC
- Based in Washington, DC metro area
- Over 12 years of grant seeking, grants management and project management experience with government, nonprofit and corporate entities
- Grants Management Certificate, Certified Grants Professional, and Project Management Professional

# Session Objectives

- Identify how strategic planning impacts grant seeking activities
- Understand components of grants lifecycle and how they impact one another
- Gather information on how to establish organization for successful grant seeking
- Obtain resources and information to inform the pre-award process
- Use hands on exercise to determine your organization's grant readiness

# Topic: Grant Readiness Assessment

**Discussion Question 1:**
Why do you seek grants for your organization? Is this part of a larger organizational strategy or fundraising strategy, a board member/executive leader's focus, or is this what you have always done?

# Grants Overview and Lifecycle

- **Grant** = a sum of money given by a governmental agency, or private funding source, for a particular purpose.
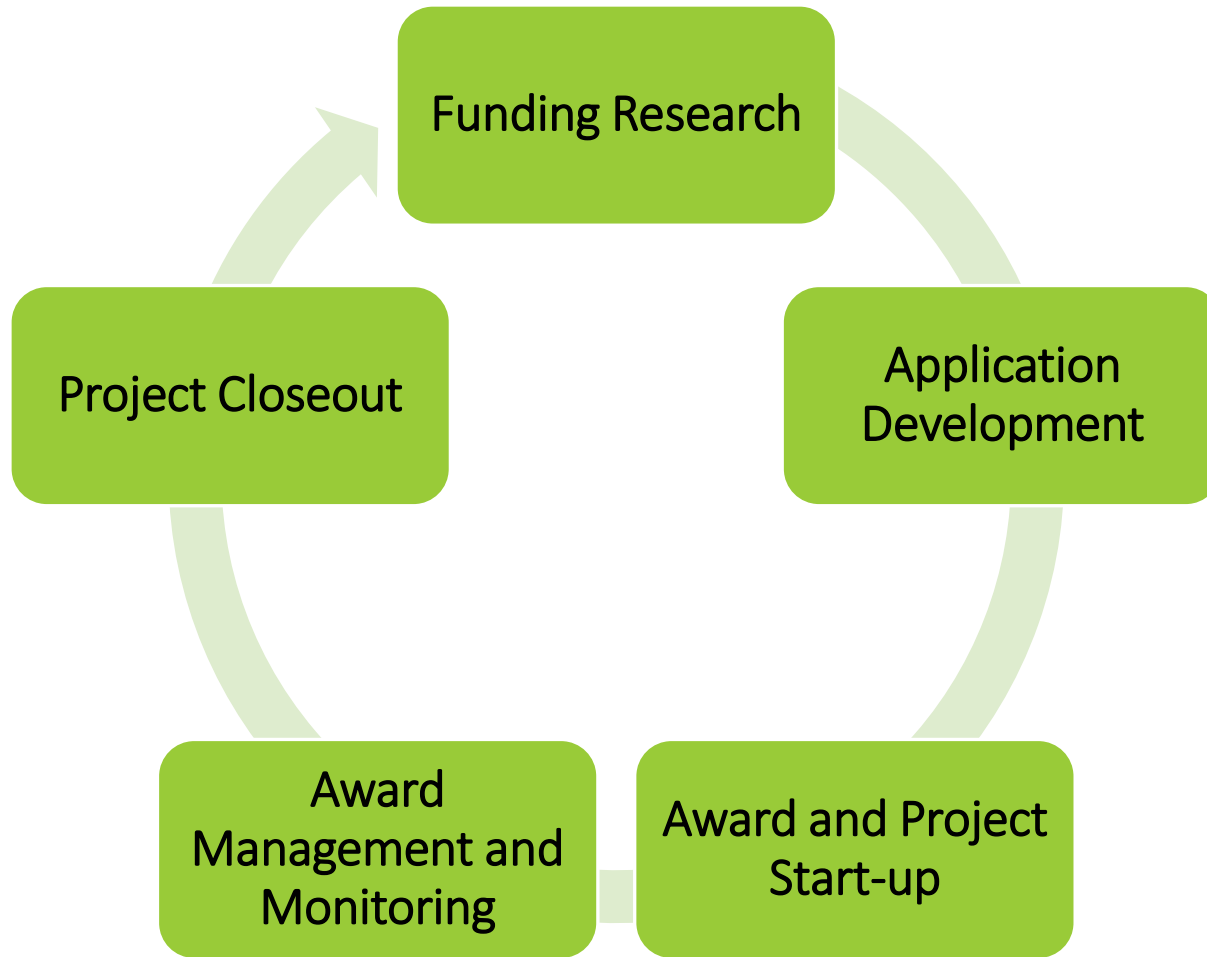
- **What do grant funds typically support?**
    - General operating budget
    - A specific project or program
    - Capital improvements
    - Capacity building
    - Special event
    - Meeting or conference
    - Sponsorships or scholarships

# Grants Overview and Lifecycle

**What types of entities award grants?**

- Government agencies (Federal, State, Local)
- Private foundations (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)
- Corporate foundations (AT&T Foundation)
- Family foundations (Bezos Family Foundation)
- Community foundations (Northern VA Community Foundation)
- Corporations (through the corporation itself)

# Grants Overview and Lifecycle

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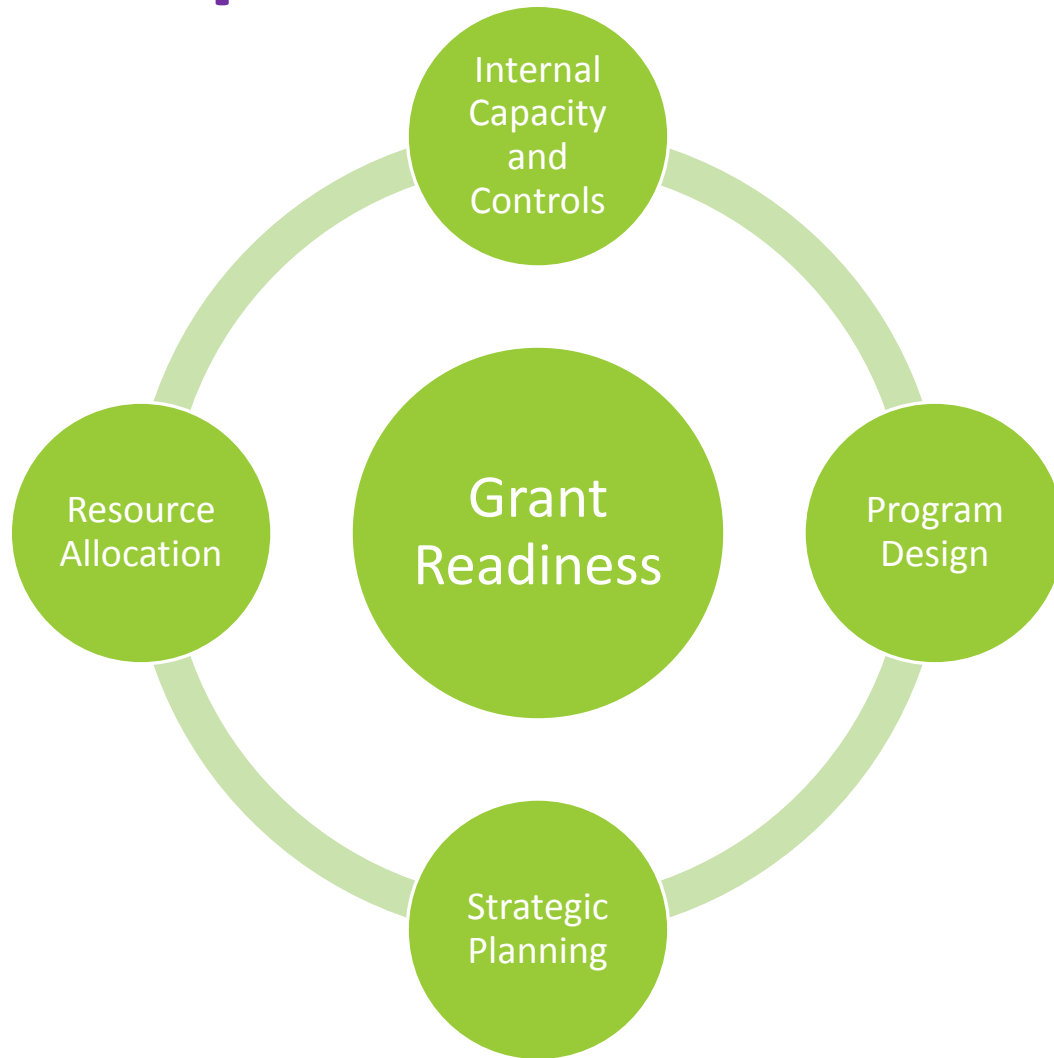| Lifecycle Phase | Description |
|---|---|
| *Prospect Research* | ▪ Review grantors' requirements and create prospect list Determine potential fit with grantors' priorities<br>▪ Alignment of potential grantors to organization's fundraising strategy, and grantors' deadlines |
| *Application Development* | ▪ Compile financial, programmatic, and organizational data required to complete proposal<br>▪ Prepare proposal(s) in advance of deadlines and review for accuracy |
| *Award and Project Start-up* | ▪ Grantor notifies grantee of grant through written communication (typically notice of award)<br>▪ Grantee begins to expend funds and implement grant as indicated in the proposal |
| *Award Management and Monitoring* | ▪ Provide grantor with financial and programmatic reports, meeting attendance and/or other requirements specified in the notice of award<br>▪ Gather data to effectively evaluate success in how grant funds are expended, and ensure quality control |
| *Project Closeout* | ▪ Expend all grant funds provided by the grantor<br>▪ Ensure alignment of actual and budgeted expenditures<br>▪ Provide final reports as requested |

## Discussion Question 2:

Do you understand the requirements to manage a grant throughout its lifecycle? Do you spend most of your time on a particular phase? Do you know why it is important to be a strong grants manager, and how this relates to grant seeking?

# Why is Grant Readiness Important?

- Allows organization to focus on required components to support grant seeking activities
- Ensure readiness and internal capacity to seek funding, and whether it is best to pursue now
- Preparation in advance of a funding opportunity
- Gather necessary information in advance of a deadline or RFP publication

# What Impacts Grant Readiness?



Internal Capacity and Controls

Resource Allocation

Grant Readiness

Program Design

Strategic Planning

# What Impacts Grant Readiness?

| Focus Area | Description |
|---|---|
| **Internal Capacity and Controls** | ▪ Organizational Policies and Procedures<br>▪ Staffing capacity and previous experience managing grants<br>▪ Alignment between programmatic and financial teams |
| **Program Design** | ▪ Robust information concerning organization/program/project<br>▪ Evaluation measurement plan and data capture process<br>▪ Research/evidence-based approach |
| **Strategic Planning** | ▪ Board and executive leadership guides programmatic and fundraising activities – refreshed plan annually<br>▪ Shared mission/vision/goals/objectives<br>▪ Alignment between fundraising and programmatic goals |
| **Resource Allocation** | ▪ Specific resources devoted to key activities within grants lifecycle and fundraising activities<br>▪ Support and training to maintain awareness of any changes in grant seeking activities<br>▪ Teamwork and alignment of resources to ensure working towards common goals |

# What Impacts Grant Readiness?

| Internal Factors | External Factors |
|---|---|
| • **Evaluation measurement processes**<br>• **Internal controls**<br>• **Qualitative and quantitative data capture**<br>• **Prospect research calendar and tracking system**<br>• **Standard operating procedures**<br>• **Resources and staff to support activities** | • **OMB Uniform Guidance**<br>• **Funding landscape**<br>• **Relationship building with grantors (and board contacts)**<br>• **Collaborations with partner organization** |

# Benefits to Grant Readiness

| Grantor Perspective | Grantee Perspective |
|---|---|
| • Grantee has the capacity to serve as good steward of grant funding<br><br>• Grantee has all required information to meet grant requirements<br><br>• Project/program design is robust and showcases thorough knowledge and understanding of potential solutions and activities<br><br>• Clear alignment of goals and objectives to outputs and outcomes | • Increased ability to seek out funding using a strategic approach<br><br>• Seek out funding for opportunities that are a fit for organization, not modifying organization to meet funders' requirements<br><br>• Increased collaboration within organization to guide grant seeking activities<br><br>• Making a strong first impression on any new funding prospect |

# In-Class Exercise:
## *Grant Readiness Assessment*

# Are you Grant Ready?

**Grant ready organizations should be prepared with the following:**

- All information required in a typical grant application
- Organizational information
- Financial information
- Project/Program information
- Internal controls and capacity to manage grant once funded

# Common Pitfalls and Challenges

- Resource capacity (personnel, funding, materials, etc.)
- Strategic planning and alignment with fundraising planning
- Alignment of goals to activities to outputs/outcomes (i.e. logic model)
- Financial management and internal controls
- Continuous quality improvement/evaluation measurement
- Adherence to grant award requirements

# Resources

- Annual Report of Philanthropy in America: http://www.givingusareports.org/
- Foundation Center: http://foundationcenter.org/washington/resources.html#01
- Grant Space: http://grantspace.org/
- OMB – Federal grant forms: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms
- The Grantsmanship Center: http://www.tgci.com/resources

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