

**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

Grantsmanship: A Look at the Future for Law Enforcement

**An Administrative Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Required for Graduation from the
Leadership Command College**

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June 2007**

ABSTRACT

Funding for law enforcement has never been more of an issue than today in a post 9/11 world. Agencies are being asked to do more work with less money. Obtaining outside funding, in the form of grants, has become a necessity for law enforcement administrators faced with budget restraints that eliminate equipment or programs that help serve their community. The current “norm” for most agencies is to have the grantsmanship process assigned to one individual who already has a regular assignment. The purpose of this study is to determine if using professional grant writers would aid departments in obtaining more outside funds.

The methodology for this research consisted of: surveys to determine the current “norm” and successfulness of law enforcement grantsmanship policy, a review of literature to establish what current trends are, and personal interviews with professional grant writers for insight into the grant-writing process. The majority of officers surveyed did not believe their agencies were very successful obtaining grant money. Half of the respondents who stated their departments were very successful in obtaining grants had full-time grant writers on staff. Interviews and literature pointed to the large amount of time necessary to have a successful grant writing program, which indicated a need to create a full-time position for a grant writer.

The research demonstrated that the high cost of using professional grant writers made the hypothesis unrealistic. However, the study revealed that utilizing an employee in a full-time grant writing position, in effect making them a “professional” grant writer, would highly increase the productiveness of any agency’s grantsmanship

program. The new position would, in essence, pay for itself with the additional funds that would not have otherwise been obtained.

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INTRODUCTION

Funding has always been a major concern for law enforcement, but in this post 9/11 world, finding enough money to do the job has become a critical problem. A faltering economy increases the burden as agencies are required to do more work with less money. State and federal governments have funds to assist agencies. However, the grant process has become more competitive and complicated. Most agencies are still applying for grants the same way they did twenty years ago. One employee, who has little or no formal grantwriting training, is responsible for the research, writing, and follow-up of all grants, while also working his daily assignment. Finding and applying for outside funding for new programs and additional equipment is a labor intensive, time consuming task. Without the ability to obtain grants from a variety of sources, police administrators will find themselves lacking the necessary tools to keep their communities safe.

The purpose of this research is to determine if law enforcement agencies need to re-evaluate their approach to grantwriting. Research will show the current “norm” for law enforcement, and draw conclusions about why some agencies are more successful at acquiring outside funding than others. The basic question asks, “Should law enforcement agencies utilize professional grant writers?”

Several methods of inquiry will be used to research this question. Articles will be cited to give background and current trends. Surveys will be conducted of law enforcement agencies to get a broad sample of grant writing policies. Finally, personal interviews with professional grant writers will be conducted to understand the time

investment, training, and special knowledge required to construct a high quality grant application.

It is anticipated the research will show a successful grant writing program is extremely time intensive, however, the norm in law enforcement is to make it a secondary responsibility of an employee who is unable to properly research, apply, and follow up on grants. Therefore, the hypothesis is that agencies could improve their chances of receiving outside funding if professionals were employed to produce grant applications. As law enforcement agencies face the dilemma of insufficient funding for projects and equipment, it is inevitable that they will turn to grants to meet their financial shortfalls. It is intended for this research to force agencies to re-evaluate their grantsmanship procedures and look to the future by utilizing professional grant writers. To sum it up, this research is intended to help law enforcement agencies get their hands on more money.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Grantsmanship is the process of acquiring outside funding for a project, and has been part of the world's modern civilization development. Dunn (1988) points out that the adventures of Marco Polo and the building of Notre Dame were accomplished by outside funding; and goes on to say that fund raising is the main element that made the highpoints of mankind's history possible. Today, the idea of obtaining a grant for a project brings connotations of federal dollars. In early American history, however, the idea of the federal government granting money for a project within a state was considered a violation of the constitution. That all changed with the Civil War. The Union Army was in desperate need of engineers, scientists, and farmers, so in 1862

Congress passed the Morrill Act. The Morrill Act of 1862 gave land grants to states with the attached requirements that the state build colleges that would educate young men in the needed fields (Hale & Palley, 1981). Congress gave the first monetary grant to an organization for the blind in 1879, and the Hatch Act of 1887 established the first annual cash grant for agriculture experiment stations. The positions of Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of the Interior were established to monitor the grant money and verify that the states were adhering to their agreements. Although funding for these projects had taken the taboo away from federal grant money, the amount was relatively small. In 1913, however, large amounts of cash began traveling to Washington.

The 16th Amendment introduced the federal income tax. Federalism had become part of the cash flow of the country, and states began demanding money for their projects. The first major federally funded program would be the 1916 Federal Aid Highway Act, which would distribute money to states based on population to create the interstate highway system we know today. That program would be dwarfed, however, in 1935 by the Social Security Act, which has become the biggest federally funded program to date (Hale & Palley, 1981). From 1935 through President Johnson's Great Society in the 1960's, federally funded programs became a major part of American culture, and the modern grant process developed from the need of more and more organizations wanting a piece of the pie.

At the same time federal money distribution was becoming more grant reliant, private donations followed suite. In America's early years, if outside funding was needed for a museum or a community theatre, donations were usually obtained from wealthy philanthropists over a dinner conversation. The 1913 income tax laws suddenly

gave people and businesses an incentive to donate money since it was made tax deductible (Dunn, 1988). Suddenly non-profit organizations began sprouting up all over America. There was little or no accountability up through the 1960's, and many corporate donations were made in back door deals to whatever "non-profit" group that had influence over a company's chief executive officer. The Tax Reform Act of 1969 put an end to under-the-table donations to questionable charities. Foundations now had to report where they had received their donations, and those reports were available to the public (Dunn, 1988). Shareholders began demanding explanations from Company heads to whom and why they were donating money. That accountability created the modern grantwriting process.

The process of writing a grant has been called an art as much as a skill (Smith & McLean, 1988). There are many resources, both books and magazine articles, which go through the step-by-step procedure of writing a grant. According to Shane (2003), the grant proposal process includes 15 steps that can take four to six months of effort. The writer goes on to explain as much as 30 percent to 50 percent of the time period is spent waiting for the funding source to review the proposal. Of course the grant writer does not get to enjoy the down time, because this procedure is usually not over with one application. Webb (1995) explains that grantsmanship is not over when the application is complete; it is more of a process than an end result. In comparison, Smith and McLean break the grantwriting process down to six steps: 1) idea formulation/ problem identification, 2) identification, selection and solicitation of external funding source, 3) proposal preparation including application forms, narrative and budget, 4) proposal submission, 5) proposal acceptance or rejection, 6) grant administration or

proposal revision and resubmission (Smith and McLean, 1988). David G. Bauer (2001) has written five books on the subject of grantwriting. In his book How to Evaluate and Improve Your Grants Effort, Bauer has detailed 28 steps to writing a successful grant. A close look at the different steps cited by different authors concludes that they all say the same thing with variations only in the details. The differences of opinion occur in grantsmanship style.

New and Quick (2003) emphasize the detailed oriented aspect of writing a grant and justify their position by saying the majority of the process hinges on project development and thorough research. Other authors explain that uniqueness and urgency in the application will get the attention of funders who have looked at hundreds of similar proposals (Hennessey, 1983) All authors agree that the each application should be specifically tailored to the requirements set forth by the individual donor. A grant writer cannot expect to write one proposal that will exactly fit the criteria for several different grant applications. Reviewers of grant proposals are selected for their knowledge of the subject and goal of the donor, and they expect the grant writer to be up to date on the topic for which he is requesting funds (McShane, 1996).

All authors also cited the research necessary to prepare a quality grant application is extremely time consuming. Some items requiring lengthy research including joint application with other law enforcement agencies to increase the odds of grant approval (Reboussin & Schwimer, 1997). Other items include collaborating with community groups who would benefit from the grant (Tidwell, 1995). Lastly, conferring with technical staff, if applying for specialized equipment, also requires lengthy research (Kardasz, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

The author's goal in conducting this research is to produce an answer which considers whether or not law enforcement agencies utilize professional grant writers. Should law enforcement agencies utilize professional grant writers? The hypothesis proposes that agencies could improve their chances of receiving outside funding if professionals were employed to produce grant applications. Several methods of inquiry will be used to research this question. Articles will be cited to give background and determine the current methods organizations use when filing for grants. Surveys will be conducted of law enforcement agencies to get a broad sample of grant writing policies. Finally, personal interviews with professional grant writers will be conducted to understand the time investment, training, and special knowledge required to construct a high quality grant application.

The survey instrument will consist of six questions which will ask the name and size of the surveyors' department. In addition, surveyors will be asked if personnel who are not sworn in were ever used by their agency to write grants, and if so, was that person on staff or on a contractual basis? Furthermore, the survey will ask, how would the respondent rate the successfulness of his or her agency's efforts at obtaining outside funding?

Telephone interviews will be conducted of grant writers from outside of law enforcement. The goal of the interviews will be to obtain background information on the training requirements that other grant writers undergo. Their opinions will also be

solicited about the time restraints of writing successful grants, and whether or not a writer could effectively produce quality grant applications on a part-time basis.

FINDINGS

Thirty questionnaires were given to officers at the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT) training Module I and 25 surveys were returned. For the purpose of this research, agencies were divided into groups of: small (less than 60 sworn personnel), medium (70-160 personnel), and large (over 1,500 sworn personnel). Although this is not a large enough sample to make scientific conclusions, the questionnaires provided a good cross section of small and large departments in which to evaluate the “norm” of law enforcement’s current use of grant writers. The surveyors opinions of their agencies’ success rate was evaluated to determine why some departments are better than others at obtaining grant funds.

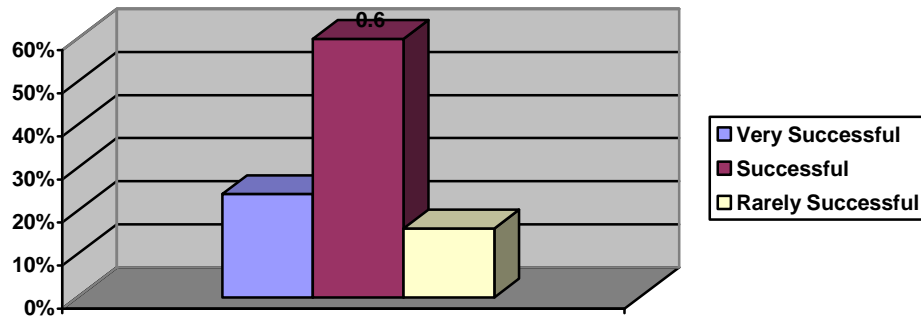
In addition to survey results, a review of literature on grant writing revealed that the art of grantsmanship has a long standing place in the history of the United States. The process of grantsmanship is so thoroughly ingrained into outside funding procedure, that it appears to be here to stay. Federal and state governments, as well as corporate donors, rely on the grant writing process to sort through numerous organizations asking for funding. Current law enforcement publications suggest that the competition for funds has grown to the point where only the most detailed oriented and professionally prepared applications get considered.

Books and articles on grant writing emphasize the importance of spending the necessary time to complete each step of the process. While not every author agrees on the number of steps, they all stress the time needed to complete each one. Writers also

sort through agree that each application is an individual product tailored to an individual funder. They emphasize that even though a grant writer may be using the same general information on a project or piece of equipment, each grant application must be rewritten; not only for the requirements of each source of funding to be met, but for the desires of the funder to be satisfied.

Probably the most time consuming aspect for any grant writer is research. Authors stressed the research step infiltrates the grant writing process on many levels. Research into the funding source reveals what specialized requirements they might have, what their motivation for project funding is, and what they have given money for in the past. Research into other agencies who received grants for a similar project or piece of equipment will give insight into a successful strategy. Research into what other agencies, departments, or groups could benefit from the funding and getting them to be joint applicants will greatly increase the success chance of a grant proposal. The most important research of all may be finding grant sources to begin with. As one article by Reboussin & Schwimer (1997) emphasizes, "Grants rarely seek out a department. Rather, agencies must stay abreast of what is available from the various sources and investigate the best ways to secure funding for their proposals" (p. 18).

The questionnaire revealed that the majority of the officers surveyed felt their department was doing a lack luster job of obtaining grants. 60% of the surveyed officers stated their departments were only "somewhat successful" in obtaining grants. Combine that with the 16% who characterized their department's performance as "rarely successful", and a grim picture of the "norm" in law enforcement grantsmanship comes to life.



Probably more revealing is of the remaining 24% of officers who ranked their agency as very successful, further inquiry revealed that half of those agencies had a full time grant writer, and one officer worked at an airport where Homeland Security grants were easily obtained. Forty-four percent of officers stated non-sworn personnel did the grant writing for their agencies, but they all worked on staff. None of the departments surveyed had ever contracted a professional grant writer. While by no means a scientific result, a strong case for the use of full-time grant writers can be made by the questionnaire's data. The research question at hand, however, asked if professional grant writers should be utilized by law enforcement.

Interviews with two grant writers, who do not work for a law enforcement agency, revealed the same concerns about time restraints that the review of literature uncovered. Dr. E. Anne Brockett is the Field Service Planner for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, and oversees the drug courts grant allocation for the Community Justice Assistance Division. Dr. Brockett stated she had written grants two ways; as part of her daily job assignment and as a solely dedicated grant writer. Brockett said the ideal situation is for the person writing grants to do it full-time. Setting the time aside necessary for the research and writing is easier when you have completely devoted a

period of time to it, instead of squeezing it in between your other job duties (E. A. Brockett, personal communication, June 27, 2006).

Jami Russell, director of Mesquite Social Services, has applied for over 20 grants a year for the past seven years. She stated that she was a self-taught grant writer, but she knew of programs with high reputations for anyone who wanted to learn grantsmanship. Russell expressed the same opinion as Dr. Brockett, which considers that anyone writing grants on a full-time basis has a huge advantage over someone with other duties as well. Russell stressed that the time necessary to personalize each application toward each funder was extremely important, and that making the effort to go meet the funding committee, and do some “necessary handshaking”, sometimes made the difference in landing a grant. Ms. Russell went on to say that especially for government grants, it is vital to spend the extra time to do the proper research, obtain the appropriate statistics (J. Russell, personal communication, July 13, 2006).

With all the findings pointing to the advantages of law enforcement utilizing professional grant writers, a quick feasibility study was done on costs. Grantwriter.com is one of the few companies found on the Internet that advertises their rates to write an entire grant. The fee-based, Grantwriter.com website quotes for a state or federal grant is \$3,000 to \$8,000. They will do a proposal review and make suggested improvements for \$500-\$1500. An article found at raisefunds.com stated a good professional grant writer should charge \$60-\$70 per hour (Poderis, 1997). The article went on to say that the act of paying grant writers a percentage of the grant money, only if it is obtained, has unethical complications since grants are often denied for reasons beyond the grant writer’s control.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

Without the ability to obtain grants from a variety of sources, police administrators will find themselves lacking the necessary tools to keep their communities safe. The purpose of this research was to determine if law enforcement agencies need to re-evaluate their approach to grant writing. The author's goal in conducting this research was to consider whether or not law enforcement agencies should utilize professional grant writers. The hypothesis proposes that agencies could improve their chances of receiving outside funding if professionals were employed to produce grant applications.

The research shows that the more time a grant writer has to devote to the grantsmanship process, the better chances for obtaining funding become. However, the question of hiring professional grant writers became a moot point after the fees charged by those in the business were discovered. Obtaining permission from a city council to spend \$8,000 on a grant proposal would be an uphill battle. Couple that with research by Smith & McLean (1988) that says 80% of grant applications are rejected, and the utilization of professional grant writers by any law enforcement agency would be an impossibility. With that being said, if a more liberal definition of the word "professional" is accepted, the hypothesis is fully substantiated by the research.

If an officer, sergeant, or non-sworn staff member of a law enforcement agency is devoted full-time to the grant writing process, then in essence they are a "professional" grant writer. Also, with the advantage of law enforcement experience available to him or her, they would be better suited applying for state and federal funds specified for law enforcement than an outsider would be. Research shows that grantsmanship training is

available to anyone anywhere in the country. Even though unintended, the results from the questionnaire pointed to the conclusion that agencies who used full-time grant writers were much more likely to consider their department “very successful” in obtaining outside funding. This research was hindered by the original hypothesis, and further research should be done on the advantages agencies with full-time grant writers have over those that do not.

According to an article quoting grants projects specialist Sergeant Bruce Clemonds of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, a full-time person for grants is a necessity in this day and age. According to Slahor (2005), “grants are a service to the community, just as the other work the police do... look at it as any other service and have a full-time person doing the grant applications. That will get money beyond your core budget and you’ll be able to fund programs that would otherwise be neglected or non-existent” (p.23). A full-time grant writer would basically pay for himself with just one grant that would not have been obtained by a part-time person. The question all law enforcement agencies should ask is not, “Can we afford a full-time grant writer”, but “Can we afford NOT to have a full-time grant writer?”

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