

A supplement to *Public Safety Communications* and  
*Law Officer Magazine* sponsored by PlantCML

# TAPPING INTO FEDERAL FUNDS

Your Ultimate Grant Resource



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# WHERE'S THE MONEY?

## An Introduction to Grants

By Keri Losavio



**T**he directors of, and telecommunicators who work in, public safety communications centers don't think of the PSAP as a business. Neither do the members of the communities that rely on comm centers to get them the help they need when they need it. People call 9-1-1 when they've been the victim of a crime, when a fire is threatening their home or business, when they're sick or when they've been injured. They call for a service, and they expect that service to be delivered. But the harsh economic realities of recent years have brought home the message that comm centers need money—and lots of it—to deliver the services expected of them.

Above and beyond the usual operating expenses that fall within annual budget sources (local and state 9-1-1 funding, which is also coming under increased scrutiny and often diverted to fund other priorities), major project and equipment expenses need to be funded. All equipment ages, breaks down, needs repairs and, eventually, replacement. New consumer technologies create the need for new ways to access 9-1-1 and proactively communicate with the general public. Natural and man-made disasters have revealed the need for local first responders to be able to communicate seamlessly with state and federal responders. New regulations mandate the need for equipment to be modified, upgraded and replaced, often at the agency's

expense (consider the narrow-banding requirement). Where do public safety comm centers find the money to fund the equipment and projects that fall outside the scope of the annual budget cycle?

*The answer:* Grants.

### Types of Grants

Federal grants can be categorized into several types. *Project grants*, the most common grants, are awarded competitively. *Formula grants* provide funds as dictated by a law. *Categorical grants* may be



Burke County, N.C., used a homeland security grant to purchase a mobile Incident Management Unit and equipped it with communications capabilities nearly identical to those of fixed PSAPs.

spent only for narrowly defined purposes, and recipients must often match all or a portion of the federal funds. *Block grants* combine categorical grants into a single program. Recipients of block grants have more leeway in using funds than recipients of individual categorical grants. *Earmark grants* are explicitly specified in appropriations of the U.S. Congress.<sup>1</sup>

Grant funds can be used to meet specific, discrete needs or to fund major, long-term projects. *Examples of recent grant awards:* 1) A \$214,000 Rural County Grant from the Florida Emergency 9-1-1 Board for the Walton County (Fla.) Emergency Operations Center to fund consolidation.<sup>2</sup> 2) The Johnson County Sheriff's Department received an \$850,000 COPS Technology grant for the purchase of equipment designed to enhance interoperability.

Grants are *not* free money. Funds are awarded only after an agency does extensive planning, preparation and research, pays minute attention to application details and, possibly, meets a matching funds requirement. Then the money comes with stipulations on how it can be spent, monitoring and reporting requirements, and myriad other strings.

### Where's the Money?

In December 2009, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced \$2.7 billion—yes *billion*—in grant program funding for fiscal year 2010. (See Table 1, opposite, for a summary.) At first, that sounds like a phenomenal amount of money, but when you realize that it's less than last year, that much of it is earmarked for specific programs and areas and that local agencies will be competing for what's left, figuring out how to get a share of the available funds can be daunting.

Fortunately, the DHS grants that everyone knows about and

PHOTO: C.A. PATRICK/VOIGT

will be competing for aren't the only sources for grant funding.

You can increase your odds of obtaining grant funding if you look for less traditional funding sources and figure out how to position yourself so you're competing with fewer agencies for different money.

Some of the money you may not know about comes from another alphabet soup of government sources: ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), DOT (Department of Transportation), USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture), DOC (Department of Commerce), Weed & Seed (a community-based, multiagency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention and community revitalization sponsored by the DOJ), DOL (Department of Labor), HHS (Department of Health and Human Services) and the Department of Tourism and Trade.

**Define what you want your regional operation to look like & get it started on your terms before someone does it for you.**

When you factor in the budgets of the departments above and the programs they fund, you're looking at a pot of approximately *\$1.8 trillion*. Now wouldn't you rather compete in that arena? (See pages 7 and 8 for where to find and apply for available grants.)

**Set the Stage for Success**

Money is available, but how you go about describing your need, designing a solution and quantifying its benefits in a way that qualifies for the money is the differentiator that ensures your agency gets a share. Remember, the government funds its priorities. So show the reviewers and policy makers that you understand

the big picture, and they'll show you the money.

Interoperability, Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1), a nationwide broadband network for public safety and changing consumer technology are the major factors driving investment in public safety technology right now.

Interoperability is a stated and demonstrated government priority. "If we cannot talk to each other every day, how are we gonna talk when the 'Big One' happens?" asks Paul Werfel, a former dispatcher and current director of the paramedic program at Stonybrook University (N.Y.).

The path to interoperability requires common platforms and secure paths that allow incident details to be shared. Incoming call handling, outbound mobilization and case management must bridge all major regional partners for true communications interoperability. NG9-1-1, a DOT initiative, was conceived to promote

**TABLE 1: DHS Funding Distribution—FY 2009 & FY 2010<sup>4</sup>**

Program	FY 2009	FY 2010
Homeland Security Grant Program		
State Homeland Security Program	\$861,265,000	\$842,000,000
Urban Areas Security Initiative	\$798,631,250	\$832,520,000
Operation Stonegarden	\$60,000,000	\$60,000,000
Metropolitan Medical Response System	\$39,831,404	\$39,359,956
Citizen Corps Program	\$14,572,500	\$12,480,000
Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program	\$1,660,000	<=\$10,000,000
UASI Nonprofit Security Grant Program	\$15,000,000	\$19,000,000
Emergency Management Performance Grants	\$306,022,500	\$329,799,991
Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program	\$48,575,000	\$48,000,000
Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program	\$31,002,500	\$33,600,000
Emergency Operations Center Grant Program	\$34,002,500	\$57,600,000
Driver's License Security Grant Program	\$48,575,000	\$48,000,000
Buffer Zone Protection Program	\$48,575,000	\$48,000,000
Port Security Grant Program	\$388,600,000	\$288,000,000
Intercity Passenger Rail (Amtrak)	\$25,000,000	\$20,000,000
Freight Rail Security Grant Program	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000
Intercity Bus Security Grant Program	\$11,658,000	\$11,520,000
Trucking Security Program	\$2,224,750	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,098,795,404</b>	<b>\$2,714,879,947</b>

interoperability; enable PSAPs to accept and use text, video and other data sources; allow you to transfer a call with accumulated data; and coordinate a centralized incident-based response. IP-enabled systems and networks that promote the fluid sharing of crisis-specific data are a reality and will serve as the architectural foundation of the currently defined scope of NG9-1-1.

Current models of public safety communications support incoming calls only via certain paths, such as 9-1-1 and 3-1-1. Can a 3-1-1 center operate on the same platform as a 9-1-1 system? Absolutely, and there are already regions in the U.S. bridging this three-digit synergy. If emergency and non-emergency (9-1-1 and 3-1-1) calls can be managed on the same architecture, the questions become, "What else (and who else) can we serve with like-challenges and common goals? Can (and should) an existing communications architecture already managing the most critical public safety calls serve a greater population without requiring multiple systems to be purchased, deployed and serviced?"

Emerging technologies, such as broadband, wireless data networks, IP-based mobile communications devices and location-based commercial services, are being designed to meet interoperable and emergency communications challenges. The coordination of multi-stream, multi-source data in real time is the goal. There's also a lot of talk about emergency notification systems and social media.

With all of these initiatives and new technologies being bandied about, you should define what you want your regional operation to look like and get it started on your terms before someone does it for you.

Adapt your objectives, and think beyond the narrow need you may have already identified.

From 9-1-1 there's a natural progression to emergency management, infrastructure protection and homeland security.

Mark Pallans, system administrator for the Nevada Shared Radio System, says, "The most important thing to remember when writing a grant is this: Don't write the grant telling them what you want. *Tell them what they want to hear*, and you stand a chance of getting a better score."

So tell a compelling story. Fear has been a motivating factor in getting the government to spend its money since the inception of government as a concept. Ask "what if," and create a scenario: What if the city's water supply becomes contaminated with a foreign substance? What if a pipe bomb were found on a city bus?

*Consider regional solutions:* If a tragedy of non-traditional proportions were to strike your region, you would need a secure, fluid and architecturally superior solution in place to control the threat. Could the city's water supply be equipped with a single communications feed that would trigger a "smart alert" system to automatically activate the 9-1-1 system and Department of Water and Power resources, mobilize first responders, alert hospitals and medical centers and notify all citizens in the affected geographic area about what they should do?

If your solution involves upgrading the 9-1-1 system to a common, countywide platform, you'll be implementing the backbone architecture required for multi-agency interoperability.

Careful planning and grant funding can provide regions with the right tools and solutions before the what ifs happen. And solutions that bridge political jurisdictions tend to become funded solutions. Become the champion for regional solutions in your area. Set up meetings with the decision makers from other agencies

and start the conversation today. Involving more stakeholders in your project will only increase your odds of success in the grant-funding arena.

A regional task force could serve as the guidance and governance authority for, and the fiscal recipient of, any grant funds.

*Another consideration:* Job creation is a high priority for the new administration. Will your project involve bringing on new employees to implement and manage a new system? Can the jobs be made permanent? Create a repeatable, annually fundable model.

The federal government is looking for regions to define how they plan to manage these NG9-1-1 challenges, and they're looking for a reason to fund them. Think big. You're not going to get *more* than you ask for.

### The Nitty-Gritty

After you've identified your true need, found your champions and supporters, built a cross-agency coalition and found a grant that you think will answer your need, it's time to tell your story in the form of a grant application. *Some tips to get you started:*

- Designate a point person to write the proposals and manage the grants.
- Determine how any grant funding your agency receives will be integrated into your overall plans.
- Read and follow the application directions.
- Tell a compelling story. Clearly state the reason you need the grant. Identify a realistic, worst-case scenario or incident that the project for which you're seeking funds would help your agency prevent or respond to. Then narrow the focus to the precise use of the grant. Include your goals and objectives.



- Write clearly. Be specific and concise. Include an introduction, summary and headings.
- Provide long- and short-term objectives. What is the target for success and how will it be measured?
- Include a budget, specifying administrative and program costs.
- Invest in the system now to show intent and commitment. (For more grant-writing tips, see p. 13.)

One common reason grant applications get rejected is that the applicant did not follow the directions. The need to read and follow the application directions cannot be overstated.

You must demonstrate advance planning. The SAFECOM Guidance for Federal Grant Programs states, “Planning activities help to prioritize needs, build capabilities, update preparedness strategies, allocate resources, and deliver preparedness programs across multiple disciplines and levels of government.”<sup>5</sup>

According to SAFECOM, multi-agency partnerships should facilitate planning activities, such as assessments of:

- Technology capabilities, specifically the identification and inventory of infrastructure and equipment;
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs);
- Training and exercises;
- Coordination and maintenance of mutual-aid channels; and
- Usage.

Be prepared to explain how the funds you’re seeking will be used to mitigate the risk of the disaster waiting to happen. And make sure you give the policy makers a way to spend the money wisely. Quantify the benefits. Create a budget and track how the money is spent. Be accountable.

In a message to his agency about the use of a \$3.3 million grant his

## Online Grant Resources

- **[www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/grant/default.htm](http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/grant/default.htm)**: *Fiscal Year 2010 SAFECOM Guidance for Federal Grant Programs* (SAFECOM Guidance). SAFECOM is not a grant-making body, but the guidance outlines recommended allowable costs and applications requirements for federal grant programs providing funding for interoperable emergency communications.
- **[www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)**: Grants.gov is your comprehensive source to find and apply for federal grants.
- **[www.dhs.gov/xgovt/grants/index.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xgovt/grants/index.shtm)**: This site offers links to grants and the appropriate contact person by state. You can also sign up for e-mail updates. The site includes an overview of FY 2010 preparedness grant programs.
- **[www.justice.gov/recovery](http://www.justice.gov/recovery)**: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided \$2.7 billion to the Office of Justice Programs; \$1 billion to the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program; \$225 million to the Office on Violence Against Women; and \$10 million to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.
- **[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome.html)**: Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO)—Weed and Seed, a community-based strategy sponsored by the DOJ, is foremost a strategy—rather than a grant program—that aims to prevent, control and reduce violent crime, drug abuse and gang activity in designated high-crime neighborhoods across the country. CCDO oversees the Weed and Seed initiative.
- **[www.commerce.gov/Grants/index.htm](http://www.commerce.gov/Grants/index.htm)**: This page on the Department of Commerce (DOC) site includes information about the NTIA/Public Telecommunication Facilities Program and other DOC grant programs.
- **[www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants\\_financing\\_263.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants_financing_263.html)**: This page contains a list of major grant programs that the DOT’s Federal Transit Agency sponsors.
- **[www.usda.gov/rus/telecom](http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom)**: The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Rural Utilities Service provides programs to finance rural America’s telecommunications infrastructure. Specifically, the Community Connect Grant program provides financial assistance to provide broadband in unserved areas to provide public safety services and foster economic growth.
- **[www.fema.gov/government/grant/index.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/index.shtm)**: This site includes information on the Commercial Equipment Direct Assistance Program (CEDAP), the Emergency Management Institute,

department was awarded, LESA director Tom Orr said, "This is what citizens and taxpayers expect of us: to conceptualize and develop new ways to address the same old problems in a manner that increases their feelings of safety and, at the same time, is done in a cost-effective manner. It means we are stretching every tax dollar as far as possible and assuring taxpayers that they are getting a return on their investment."<sup>3</sup>

You don't have to go it alone. PSAPs around the nation are doing the same things you are and trying to find solutions to the same problems. For examples, see p. 9.

### The Bottom Line

Different federal grant programs are subject to different statutory requirements and authorities, so this article offers general guidance. But one rule applies: *You can get what you need by giving the government policy makers what they want.* ■

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3. Orr T: "LESA Completes Focus Blue Grant." *Director's Report*. 4(11):2, Nov. 20, 2009.
4. FY 2010 Preparedness Grant Program Overview: [www.dhs.gov/xgovt/grants/index.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xgovt/grants/index.shtm), accessed Jan. 8, 2010.
5. *Fiscal Year 2010 SAFECOM Guidance for Federal Grant Programs*: [www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/grant/default.htm](http://www.safecomprogram.gov/SAFECOM/grant/default.htm), accessed Jan. 8, 2010.

## More Online Grant Resources

National Fire Academy Education and Training, Assistance to Firefighters grants and much more. Search by audience, grant type or alphabetically.

- **[www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants)**: Funded at \$4.7 billion, the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas, to enhance broadband capacity at public computer centers, and to encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.
- **[www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/broadbandmapping.html](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandgrants/broadbandmapping.html)**: The State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program is a competitive, merit-based matching grant program that implements the joint purposes of ARRA and the Broadband Data Improvement Act. The program will provide up to approximately \$240 million in grants to assist states or their designees to develop state-specific data on the deployment levels and adoption rates of broadband services.
- **[www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov)**: The COPS Office, within the Department of Justice, awards grants to tribal, state and local law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime-fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding provides training and technical assistance to advance community policing at all levels of law enforcement.
- **[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/funding/aboutgrants.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/funding/aboutgrants.html)**: The Bureau of Justice provides formula grants, discretionary grants, earmark funding, and funding for payment programs to support state, local, tribal, and community efforts to build safe communities. One such grant program is the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Grant Program.
- **[www.federalgrantswire.com](http://www.federalgrantswire.com)**: Federal Grants Wire is a free resource for federal grants, government grants and loans. It currently indexes 2,254 federal grants and loans organized by sponsoring agency, applicant type, subject area and a convenient directory.

Links to additional grant information can be found on APCO's Web site at [www.apcointl.org/new/commcenter911/resource.html](http://www.apcointl.org/new/commcenter911/resource.html).



# STUDIES IN SUCCESS



## 3 Agencies Take Different Paths to Find Funding

By Courtney McCain

**P**ublic safety communications agencies hoping to upgrade equipment or hire more personnel have for years sought needed funds with grants or financial assistance from government agencies. One traditional option is funding from the biggest tamales in the public safety grant world: Those offered through the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). But there's a competitive catch: For every federal dollar granted, more than \$7 is refused. Some departments have full-time grant writers who know specifically which literal nuggets might interest federal agencies. But most do not. With that in mind, some vendors have put their competitive experience to work by offering grant-writing assistance to public safety agencies.

The grant success stories described here include examples from agencies that received vendor assistance and one that went it alone. The grant amounts the agencies obtained varied from a low of \$53,000 in a matching funds grant up to a \$3.3 million grant for a real-time crime center. Another agency is still waiting for word on its application, but the director is optimistic about its chances.

### Out of the Ashes

PlantCML, an EADS North America company, markets mission-critical communications and response technologies and assists public safety agencies seeking grants. And it's gone one better:

steering agencies toward lesser known funds they are more likely to obtain.

"There are incredible funds out there that are just sitting because no one knows about them," says Rob Clark, RFP contract manager for PlantCML. "If we're only thinking about the larger pots, we're missing all the others. If we're thinking linear, we're going to lose every time. We've got to be going through other avenues, and seeking out other grants that aren't as well-known."

PlantCML's involvement in grant assistance was born during the 2007 California wildfires, when its REVERSE 911® emergency notification system was hailed as a lifesaver for many residents. But California agencies interested in acquiring that technology were suddenly up against another disaster: the tanking economy.

Plummeting property valuations meant decreased tax-based funding for public safety. And in the face of future fire seasons with little money to pay firefighters, REVERSE 911 took a backseat. Communications agencies reached out to PlantCML, and the grant writing assistance program developed.

### Meth Risk in the Land of Lincoln

"Money is usually tied to a risk," says Marge Bitetti, a certified grant writer who joined PlantCML two years ago, after years of experience with nonprofit agencies. "It's money to cover risk." But that's

only part of the story.

Recognizing how additional technology or specific personnel can aid the community by addressing that risk is one ingredient to a successful grant application. The key is to then identify which grants can help address an agency's specific issues, and writing the grant as a research-based document to prove that point.

One agency that hopes to benefit from a risk-related grant award is Coles County 9-1-1, based in central Illinois. The system is under consideration for a \$300,000 grant that will help fund needed technical upgrades and a consolidation of the county's 9-1-1 comm centers. The new PSAP would be located in the city of Mattoon, where Coles County 9-1-1 is currently based in a building with room for expansion.

The predominately rural area is steeped in history. The log cabin where Abe Lincoln once lived is located in that service area, bringing tourists who aren't necessarily familiar with the back roads of Coles County. The county needs the technology that would enable the comm center to trace the location of cell phone callers.

Coles County 9-1-1 Director Bernie Buttram is hoping to address those communication issues with a grant from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. The 50/50 matching proposal would help fund the needed comm center upgrades and hire more personnel. Those upgrades would assist in ferreting

out something else that has taken hold in Coles County: the methamphetamine trade.

Coles County asked PlantCML for assistance in writing the grant application. As active as many public safety administrators are within their service areas, sometimes it takes an outside view to see a community's needs.

"The government doesn't just give out money because you want new equipment," says Bitetti. "So we profile an area, determine what the problems are and write a grant around that. ... We worked on a 'Weed and Seed' grant [for Coles County]. Through research, we discovered the area has a meth problem. The grant was written for assistance to weed out the problem, then re-seed by providing education and public safety personnel to combat it."

Bitetti says, "We do the research and present that, along with ideas we have to fund ways to combat those risks.

You need to build a scenario that's true to the location,

and true to their needs." Bitetti serves as a guide for customers, but does not write the actual grants. That's up to the agency requesting those funds.

When Buttram first submitted the grant to the state, he wasn't certain how far the grant would go and initially thought it had disappeared into the failed proposal chasm. Then in late November 2009, he learned the grant was still being considered. "They just wanted more specific information," Buttram says. "We were told that unless we were looking to expand, the funding was likely to be denied."

Because Coles County will be expanding its PSAP, state grantors were interested. The grant needed to be retooled with more statistics not only from Coles County, but also from neighboring Moultrie County (which will consolidate), and spell out more clearly how many jobs would be added and whether Coles County would match funds (Buttram says it would be a 50/50 matching grant).



**FastFact**

## Grant Under Consideration for Coles County 9-1-1

**Amount of grant:** \$300,000

**Type of grant:** 50% matching

**Purpose of grant:** Funding for comm center consolidation and hiring of more personnel

**Grant agency considering proposal:** Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

An updated comm center, with NG9-1-1 technology and more personnel, would go a long way toward the community's battle against meth, Buttram says. The proposed investment will include the PlantCML VESTA® Pallas suite, REVERSE 911 and ORION™ ARIES mapped ALI solution. Short-term benefits include job creation and enhanced public safety. Long term, the benefits will include a safer county, better coordination between agencies and more efficient response times.

Buttram filled in those requested blanks and resubmitted the grant. The Coles County 9-1-1 Board and director will seek additional cooperation from Eastern Illinois University and Lake Land Community College.

Currently, Buttram is waiting for an answer, but he has hopes the grant may go through because the state showed interest in the initial proposal.

### All in the Presentation

With some states requiring PSAP consolidation in an effort toward interoperability, more comm centers are facing needed technological upgrades. Many stimulus grants are contingent on agencies being willing to hire more personnel, which has proved a difficult balance



**FastFact**

## Grants awarded in Johnson County, Ind.

**Receiving agency:** Johnson County 9-1-1 Board

**Amount granted:** \$53,000

**Purpose:** 50/50 matching grant to purchase ORION MapStar

**Granting agency:** Phase II E-911 (Ensuring Needed Help Arrives Near Callers Employing 911, authorized through the U.S.

Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [NHTSA] and the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration [NTIA])

**Receiving agency:** Johnson County Sheriff's Department

**Amount granted:** \$850,000

**Purpose:** Additional telecommunications equipment toward increased interoperability

**Granting agency:** COPS Technology grant program, through the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services

during economic lean times.

Skirting the southern edges of Indianapolis, the four PSAPs in Johnson County, Ind., collectively field more than 61,000 calls to 9-1-1 annually. The suburban housing boom might have slowed, but vehicle traffic has always been heavy in an area where more interstate highways intersect than anywhere else in the U.S. Administrators with the Johnson County 9-1-1 Board knew the county needed to implement a new system to enable automatic location of wireless callers.

Their financial solution for purchasing the technology came through the Ensuring Needed Help Arrives Near Callers Employing 9-1-1 (ENHANCE 911) Act, authorized in 2004 through the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT's) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the U.S. Department of Commerce's (DOC's) National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

"We saw [PlantCML's] ORION™ MapStar as something that could identify the location of incoming wireless calls, and it fit with Phase II E9-1-1 grant for interoperability, strengthening communications and for helping emergency responders to locate a caller," says Jeremy Pell, chair of Johnson County's 9-1-1 board. "We knew we needed this technology, so we contacted AT&T to see what our options were."

He contacted AT&T sales representative Craig Bennett regarding those funding options. In turn, Bennett, who had heard about the grant-writing service offered by PlantCML, contacted Marge Bitetti, who worked with Bennett to develop the grant so Johnson County could acquire the solution.

"The success of a lot of these grants depends on how they're written," Bennett says. "You have an advantage when you're

working with people who understand the system, and who know what is available."

Bennett, who says he knows of other agencies with pending grants, says the entire process was very educational and illustrates that even in a competitive environment, agencies and companies nonetheless support each other through difficult economic times.

"I think a lot of agencies are frustrated because they've been turned down for grants," Bennett says. "They aren't aware of what's still out there and available to them. I get a lot of e-mails about grant money that is available, and there sure is a lot of money still out there, just left on the table."

Pell co-wrote the Phase II E9-1-1 grant as a 50/50 matching grant for \$53,000 (half of the projected \$106,000 cost of ORION MapStar). The grant, awarded to the Johnson County 9-1-1 Board, will cover all four of the county's current PSAPs, and that technology should merge smoothly when the PSAPs are consolidated, Pell says. In Indiana, recent legislation has mandated no more than two PSAPs per county by 2014.

In addition to the Phase II E9-1-1 grant, Pell says more funds will be awarded through a DOJ Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Technology grant program. That grant, for more than \$850,000, was written by Johnson County Sheriff Terry McLaughlin and awarded last year. The COPS grant will cover additional communications-related equipment for the largest of the county's PSAPs, based out of the sheriff's department.

"The bottom line is that we wanted to bring better service for our community," Pell says. "We looked at the benefits of ORION MapStar. These are tools that are needed to save lives, and it fits into the infrastructure that will be developed with the COPS grant."

With the success of the

ENHANCE 9-1-1 grant to fund ORION MapStar, Pell says he hopes to cover the remaining 50% with a DHS grant.

Pell adds that agencies working within the same jurisdiction should share grant information with each other, especially when all the departments can benefit from improvements made by one agency. "All of our agencies are much stronger if we work together. So we try to network those opportunities," Pell says.

Johnson County has an established tradition of receiving grants. Last year, White River Township Volunteer Fire Protection District (where Pell serves as chief) was awarded a \$650,280 grant for hiring through the DHS Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program.

"When we're seeking state and federal grants, we're going to taxpayer funds that have already been paid," Pell says. "I'd rather those funds come back to this county. [The funds are] already out there, but it's competitive to get them, and that's the intent. It's the department's responsibility to prove how much those funds are needed."

Despite the successes, Pell recommends caution, especially in the wake of a sobering recession that has drained many department resources, and forced many agencies into hiring freezes. "We're going to continue to look for opportunities to help fund our agency," Pell says. "But I don't want to get us into a commitment that the taxpayers can't continue."

### Mixing Grants for Cooperative Outcomes

Another law enforcement agency that has succeeded in receiving grants is also setting standards, using those funds to develop cutting-edge programs for its community. The Washington state-based Law Enforcement Support Agency (LESA) recently utilized a \$1 million federal COPS grant for rapidly

deployable video equipment for field personnel. LESA handles 9-1-1 communications and record keeping for many agencies in the Seattle area, fielding more than 800,000 calls annually.

The COPS grant enabled LESA to purchase Focus Blue, a GPS-enabled surveillance video camera with interactive displays that can be controlled through multiple, Web-based interfaces (including the comm center and the officer's laptop). The COPS grant, awarded for research and development, is geared toward assisting LESA with monitoring its service area.

The second grant, awarded several months ago, will incorporate Focus Blue in LESA's Real Time Crime Center, currently under development. LESA was awarded the \$3.3 million DOJ grant in September to develop the LARIAT (LESA Accelerated Response Using Integrated Analysis and Technology) Center.

"If you don't have a good idea that's new and different, something that's going to benefit your department and others, that grant won't be awarded," says LESA Deputy Director Mike Carson, who co-authored the LARIAT grant with LESA Director Thomas Orr.

LARIAT, which will operate alongside LESA's existing comm center in Tacoma, will link existing technologies of LESA's comm center with crime databases. Grant-funded crime and tactical analysts will monitor incoming 9-1-1 calls and quickly coordinate background data on that response area, information given by calltakers, suspect identifications, aliases and their associations. That will provide vital, real-time information for comm center personnel and field officers, who previously would have relied on memory and harried research on their own while handling their initial responsibilities.

"One thing we do well is technology," Carson says. "We have a lower ratio of staff here, and we've always leveraged that with technology."

Working with the latest comm equipment (including Focus Blue), the techno-savvy comm and field personnel are looking forward to the LARIAT program. "There's a lot of excitement in the comm center about LARIAT," says Kris Dessen, public relations officer for LESA. "When a call will come into 9-1-1, the LARIAT Center will be pulling up that background information and getting it to the field officers sooner."

The LARIAT grant award came at just the right time for other reasons. The law enforcement community in Washington is still reeling from the recent murders of five officers, and agencies are facing economic-based layoffs, as well. Carson says the LARIAT program could potentially save at least two jobs that otherwise would have been lost, saving years of priceless law enforcement expertise with local ties.

"[The LARIAT grant] has been a positive thing," Carson says. "The amount of work is going to be enormous, but we're optimistic."

The grant for LARIAT will fund the program for two years, Carson says, and that development phase will double as LARIAT's proving ground. "We want to prove the value of this new system before we ask our client agencies if they'll assist with funding it further," Carson says. "There are a number of directions we're considering beyond that."

Carson says he is certain, however, that future grants will be in the works for LESA. Following the successes of the grants for Focus Blue and LARIAT, the agency now has a grant writer who will assist them on a contract basis for future grant programs.

### Many Paths; One Destination

Each of the agencies discussed here identified a different need and found a different grant to help fund its solution. These stories exemplify the truism that there's no one right way. Money is out there. You just need to find a way to tap it, whether by writing your own grant application, asking for assistance from a vendor or hiring a grant-writing specialist to do it for you. ■

*Courtney McCain has worked as a paramedic and an air medical dispatcher. She is now a writer focusing on public safety issues. Contact her at [kemsnews@everestkc.net](mailto:kemsnews@everestkc.net).*



### FastFact

## Grants awarded to (LESA)

**Receiving agency:** LESA

**Amount granted:** \$1 million

**Purpose:** Purchase and implementation of Focus Blue

**Granting agency:** COPS grant program, through the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community-Oriented Policing Services

**Receiving agency:** LESA

**Amount granted:** \$3.3 million

**Purpose:** Development and two-year implementation of LESA's Accelerated Response using Integrated Analysis and Technology (LARIAT) Center

**Granting agency:** Recovery Act's Edward Byrne Memorial Grants Program, awarded through the U.S. Department of Justice

# MAKE YOUR CASE

## Grant-Writing Tips from a Grant Reviewer

By Charles Taylor



**H**ow do we get money from the government for our important projects? Speaking as both a grant reviewer and as someone who has written many a grant application, I can tell you the government likes to know where and how its money is going to be spent if a grant is approved. I once managed a project that involved federal, state and local money. I saw more of the auditors than I did of almost anyone else. A vague, poorly written grant application will get rejected.

For purposes of this article, we're discussing two basic types of grants. The first is an equipment-specific CEDAP (Commercial Equipment Direct Assistance Program) grant. The second type of grant is project-oriented and usually involves equipment, installation and possibly software, construction, staffing, training, etc. You'll need to do your research to determine the best type of grant to fit the equipment solution or project you have in mind.

Before you start writing an application, do some research. *Ask yourself:* What do we hope to accomplish? Is our project eligible for funding? Are we talking to the right agency? Do we have a clear vision? If you know the answers to these questions, you can move on. *Next questions:* How big is the project? How long will it take to get it done? Last, but not least, when is the application deadline?

If you're just looking for grant



Burke County, N.C., used a homeland security grant to purchase this 34' communications and management trailer in 2001. It allows Burke County Emergency Communications to function nearly anywhere, independent of the county's fixed PSAPs. The county also purchased a Ford F350 truck to pull the trailer.

PHOTO C.A. PATRICK VOIGT

availability, check out the FEMA and DHS Web sites. Government-wide grant announcements are listed at Grants.gov. For additional funding sources, see pages 7 and 8 in this publication.

In this article, I discuss grant applications associated with public safety projects and offer some suggestions I hope you'll find helpful.

### Read the Application & Follow Instructions

Every agency that issues grant money has its own application and grading criteria. The instructions should be followed closely.

Recently, I spoke with a man who works for a local car dealer. He told me that his dealership had moved 500 cars during the recent "Cash for Clunkers" program. I mentioned that I had heard stories about dealers that weren't getting paid. He replied that his

dealership only had trouble with reimbursement for two cars. I asked him how he did it. "Simple," he said. "Our manager called everyone in and spent two hours explaining how to complete the required forms and then checked them closely before they were submitted." What a novel idea. It's called being prepared.

CEDAP grants usually require the applicant to respond to a questionnaire with specific questions about the agency's needs. Unless the application specifically states that no additional pages may be submitted, you may want to amplify your answers. For example, let's assume the first question is, "Have you conducted an all-hazard survey for your area?" If the answer is no, and the second question is "Why not?," then your answer had better be longer than six words. I once reviewed an application for which the answer to

this question was, “It was supposed to be done by the person that had the job before me.” What do you think my recommendation was for this grant application?

Many people think they’re constrained by the space provided on the form. Remember, the people who design forms rarely have to fill them out. Use the space you need to provide clear, complete answers.

### Be Specific

If you’re asked to provide an example of daily equipment use, offer real-world examples and be

The people who design forms rarely have to fill them out. Use the space you need to provide clear, complete answers.

careful not to sink your ship. Your agency may have to provide some equipment to complete the project. Be sure to indicate that your agency is prepared to provide the necessary support.

One application I reviewed had requested a complicated hazard mapping system. One requirement was that the agency always have a computer available and provide software support. The applicant stated that the agency chief’s secretary “had room on her PC” for the mapping system. Would you want your hazard-response system mixed in with e-mails and interdepartmental memos?

### Describe the Need

Your application must make the case that there’s a true need for whatever you’re requesting. Whether it’s being requested for law enforcement or fire suppression, the equipment should mesh

with frequent operations. Don’t ask for something that will reside on a shelf until a major event occurs. Make it a part of your regular operations and training programs. This is especially important if you rely heavily on volunteers to support your operation.

Interoperability and inter-agency cooperation are critical these days. Many applications require proof of an existing inter-agency agreement. Don’t quote from one that’s 10 years old. And don’t say that you’re part of some state system—unless you *are* the state. Talk to your counterparts in adjoining cities and counties to ensure that any mutual-aid agreements are comprehensive and up to date. Provide for opportunities to test any system equipment that would be funded by the grant.

### Project Grants

Project-oriented grant applications may require a little more thought and work, but can result in a larger grant and more value for the agency or agencies involved.

Before you start writing, gather everyone from your agency who will be involved—don’t forget the personnel from purchasing and finance—in a room with a blackboard and a calculator to brainstorm your plan, complete with a budget, timetable, milestones, staffing requirements and contracts. Make careful notes. If you finish in less than a day, you *are* missing something.

A project grant application will need to contain specific information, and your preparation should be done in a specific order. I recommend the following:

Write a clear statement of the project objective. Then list all of the activities required to complete the project—in the order in which the tasks must be completed. Using this activity list as the basis, make your best estimate of how long it will take to complete each activity. With this information, you’ll be able to prepare a project timetable. Various scheduling programs are available, but I like Microsoft Projects. It takes getting used to but it can be a valuable resource. It forces you to plan ahead and account for every activity.

## 11 Steps to a Successful Grant Application

1. Do your research.
2. Do a needs analysis and demonstrate your need.
3. Write a clear, concise mission and/or goals statement.
4. Be realistic.
5. Establish a schedule.
6. Prepare a budget.
7. Read and follow the instructions.
8. Use the space you need to provide clear, complete answers.
9. Offer real-world examples.
10. Ensure your agency is ready to provide all necessary support.
11. Review the application. Review it again. And have someone else review it.

### Sample Gantt Chart: Activities

Task name	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
Planning		XXX						
Activity list			XXX					
Research				X				
Design					XX			
Specification					XXX			
Implementation					XXX	XXX	XXX	
Testing								XX
Cutover								X

### Sample Gantt Chart: Resources

Resource	Task	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5
Tom	Planning	XXX				
Dick	Planning	XX				
Dick	Activity list		XX			
Harry	Activity list		XX			
Mary	Design			XX		
Sue	Specification				XX	
Dick	Specification				XX	
Tom	RFP					XX

The schedule should have measurable milestones to track your progress.

Determine the resources (people) required for each task. Assign a person to each task. An important part of the application is outlining staffing requirements. It can be difficult to get grant money to pay personnel costs without a good justification. A Gantt chart, a graphical representation of the duration of tasks against the progression of time, can be helpful in assigning personnel to a specific task for a specific period of time (see examples above). Once tasks have been identified, you can assign resources. The Gantt chart will quickly show you how many people are required to perform the work. A completed Gantt chart is a good visual for any application, and it will help justify your request.

Prepare the project budget. Include all personnel and any hardware or services that you intend to purchase. We've been talking

about implementation costs, but don't forget that other parts of your agency, such as purchasing and finance, may be involved and should be accounted for. I've given very low grades to applications that say they will implement a million-dollar project with a part-time staff.

It's hard to say enough about the importance of preparing and submitting an accurate, realistic budget. When you're asking for money, you need to do it right. You need to account for all aspects of manpower, hardware, software, installation, maintenance and facilities. Prepare your calculations carefully. People who review grant applications have a pretty good idea of how much things cost. If local matching funds are required, be sure to include them in your calculations.

Don't ask for contingency money. This will almost always be disallowed by the funding agency.

Once you've written a clearly worded mission statement, you

can move on to performing the tasks listed above. *Remember:* The project must be attainable within limits imposed by the grant.

### Review, Review, Review!

Last, but certainly not least, review the application carefully. And use spell check. There's no excuse for grammatical mistakes or misspelled words. I've reviewed many grant applications that seemed to have been prepared in haste and never reviewed before they were submitted. This will cause your application to lose valuable points.

Have the application reviewed by someone unfamiliar with the project. Ask them if they understand what you're trying to accomplish. Do they have any questions? If questions are raised, be sure you address and answer them in the grant application. You won't be talking to the reviewer, so you must make your case clearly and accurately in writing.

Also be aware that preparing an application of any kind is not something that can be done in your spare time or over a weekend. Careful thought and organization will pay dividends in the long run.

I hope some of these suggestions have been helpful. Now get out there and start writing. ■

*Charles Taylor has more than 30 years of experience in public safety land mobile radio and is retired from the Ventura County Communications Department. Contact him via e-mail at [mrcharles@dslextrême.com](mailto:mrcharles@dslextrême.com).*

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