

Seeking and Pursuing Federal Grants: Developing a Competitive Proposal

February 2024

Each year, 26 federal agencies award billions of dollars to states through hundreds of grantmaking programs. Though many of these federal dollars flow to states through block grants based on formulas and other rules, a significant amount of funding is available through competitive grant programs. How can North Carolina state agencies and their partners access more of this discretionary funding? What does it take to write a strong grant proposal?

For the virtual session, *Seeking and Pursuing Federal Grants: Developing a Competitive Proposal* (held on Feb 16, 2024), the NC Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) invited successful grant seekers from the state government, nonprofit, and research sectors to share tips and strategies for identifying and pursuing federal grants. Speakers described the activities underlying a competitive application, including planning, partnering, and writing processes, and the components of a strong application, including budgeting, program design, and measurable performance goals.

Speakers

Joe Edney, Director, Corporate Strategy, RTI International

Misty Herget, Chief Program Officer, NC Rural Center

Juli Kim (moderator), Philanthropy Liaison, OSP

Christy Sandy, Proposal Development Manager, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NC State University

Nicole Sullivan, Director, Reentry Services, Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, NC Department of Public Safety

Caroline Valand, Deputy Secretary, Partnership Engagement, NC Department of Public Safety

Discussion Topics

The following outline provides a high-level overview of topics discussed in the webinar. Timestamps denoting the beginning of topic discussions are provided for ease of access to specific segments of the recording, which is available [here](#).

1. Reasons state government agencies should pursue competitive discretionary grants (6:44)

- Access funding sources
- Develop or implement evidence-based practices
- Collect data and conduct research
- Develop partnerships

2. Strategies and tools for identifying federal grant opportunities (20:56)

- Navigating federal grant resources (e.g., Federal Register, Grants.gov, federal agency websites)
- Engaging federal grantmaking agencies
- Scoring federal grant opportunities for fit

3. Reasons for and ways to engage partners in pursuing federal grant opportunities (45:38)

- Building relationships
- Leveraging internal and external partners
- Defining partner roles

- Demonstrating diverse and authentic partnerships
- 4. Key components of a competitive grant proposal (1:06:47)**
- Timelines for developing a proposal
 - Common proposal components
 - Tips and strategies for developing proposal components
- 5. Creating the actual proposal (1:39:46)**
- Tips for writing
 - Role and importance of a review team
- 6. Post-submission processes (1:49:49)**
- What to expect after submitting a grant proposal
 - Learning from successful and unsuccessful proposals

Resources

The following resources were shared or mentioned during the program. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of information or resources. Descriptions are in alphabetical order and paraphrased from active links as of January 30, 2024. Links are organized by agency/organization.

Slide deck featured in the webinar

[Seeking and Pursuing Federal Grants: Developing a Competitive Proposal](#)

Presenter resources

- [Resource slide deck](#), Joe Edney, Director, Corporate Strategy, RTI International
- [Resource slide deck](#), Christy Sandy, Proposal Development Manager, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NCSU

[Federal Register](#)

The Federal Register provides official notice of federal laws, presidential documents (e.g., Executive Orders, Proclamations), and proposed and final administrative rules and regulations.

[Grants.gov](#)

Grants.gov houses information on over 1,000 grant programs for federal grant-making agencies. Managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Grants.gov is an E-Government initiative operating under the governance of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

[National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#)

A part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, NIH is the nation's medical research agency and is one of the largest public funders of research. Funding opportunities are published on the NIH [grants webpage](#).

[National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#)

NSF is an independent federal agency that supports science and engineering in all 50 states and U.S. territories. The agency administers grants to advance national research.

[NC Department of Public Safety \(NCDPS\)](#)

NCDPS works to safeguard and preserve the lives and property of the people of North Carolina through effective law enforcement, juvenile justice programs, emergency response and recovery, and homeland security preparedness.

- [The Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#) is committed to the reduction and prevention of juvenile delinquency by effectively intervening, educating, and treating youth to strengthen families and increase public safety.

[NC Office of Strategic Partnerships \(OSP\)](#)

OSP develops, launches, and enhances partnerships between state agencies and NC's research and philanthropic sectors. As part of this work, OSP develops resources about cross-sector partnerships. Examples include:

- [Philanthropy Liaison](#): The philanthropy liaison works to build, strengthen, and institutionalize relationships between state government and the philanthropic sector in North Carolina.
- [North Carolina Project Portal](#): A tool for sharing state agency research opportunities and needs and for people to express interest in partnering on those opportunities.
- [Highlights e-news and resources](#): A monthly communication that includes information on events, partnership opportunities, resources, internship opportunities, and more. [Subscribe](#) to Highlights.
- [Agency Contacts for Partnerships and Research](#): A list of state agency representatives who are designated as an initial point of contact for partnerships such as research projects, grant proposals, and other collaborative opportunities.

[NC Rural Center](#)

The NC Rural Center is an organization committed to the development, promotion, and implementation of economic strategies to improve the quality of life for rural North Carolinians.

[NC State University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences \(CALs\)](#)

Residing within NC State University, CALs is an academic institution that serves North Carolina through teaching, mentoring, research, and international programs. They conduct research to solve problems and inform communities and fields across the state, nation, and world.

[RTI International \(RTI\)](#)

RTI is an independent nonprofit research institute headquartered in the Research Triangle. RTI is a frequent recipient of federal grants and is open to collaboration with universities, research institutions, foundations, associations, businesses, governments, and NGOs. [Partner with RTI](#).