



WRCOG Grant Writing Assistance Program Guidelines

Program Overview: The WRCOG Grant Writing Assistance Program (Program), launched in September 2017, is designed to assist members in preparing proposals for grant opportunities. WRCOG allocated funding for an initial pilot of the Grant Writing Assistance Program for its members. To provide a Program that best assists WRCOG members, WRCOG staff convened a Focus Group of member agency staff to provide feedback on Program specifics and develop Program Guidelines, which were approved by the WRCOG Executive Committee on September 11, 2017.

Grant Writing Consultants: WRCOG released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in March 2017 for consultants to serve on a “bench” to provide grant writing assistance to WRCOG member agencies. The bench of consultants is available to members on a first-come, first-served basis when funding opportunities for the selected grants become available. The consultants will assist members with the grant application process only, not with subsequent award management or project implementation. The following consultants were selected to assist our member agencies with grant preparation:

- Alta Planning + Design
- Blais & Associates
- KTUA
- National Community Renaissance
- WSP

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Program Guidelines: The Guidelines define the parameters of the Program, including the following items:

1. Eligible grants;
2. Expectation of member agencies accepting assistance;
3. Linkage to other WRCOG programs;
4. Screening process; and
5. Process to request grant writing assistance.

#1 - Eligible grants: For this pilot, the Program focuses on a few select grant opportunities. Eligible grants are as follows:

- [Active Transportation Program](#)
- [Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program](#) (Transportation Planning Grants & Adaptation Planning Grants)
- [Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program](#)
- [Clean Cities](#) related grants
- New planning grant opportunities

To maintain flexibility with the Program, “new planning grant opportunities” are included so that other grant opportunities related to planning may be considered. This category enables members to request assistance if any grant opportunities that focus on planning grants become available – such as those that help fund General Plans, Specific Plans, or Community Plans.

*Ineligible Grants: The Program is **not** intended to assist infrastructure grant opportunities, i.e., TIGER, HSIP, FASTLANE, etc.*

Assistance with Clean Cities grants is available for WRCOG Clean Cities Coalition members only. Assistance is available for grant opportunities related to Clean Cities activities, such as electric vehicle charging stations and city / county fleet purchasing. Funding for assistance with these grants will be allocated from Coalition funds. WRCOG administers the Coalition on behalf of participating member agencies which pay specific Coalition dues. This Program can increase the Coalition’s effectiveness by assisting Coalition members attain grant funding.

#2 - Expectation of member agency accepting assistance: WRCOG member agencies must submit a formal request using the [Application for Grant Writing Assistance](#) form to WRCOG. WRCOG will only authorize a consultant to provide assistance if a WRCOG member agency submits an Application to WRCOG for the eligible grant opportunities listed above.

In order for the Program to run effectively and utilize funds efficiently, the member agency accepting grant writing assistance must agree to the following:

- Define project parameters and provide consultant a basic project description
- Dedicate sufficient resources:
 - Obtain all necessary material on the information checklist provided by the consultant
 - Attend kick-off meeting to ensure consultant has needed information to prepare grant application
 - Respond to inquiries from the consultant in a timely manner
- Be the responsible party for grant submittal, including signatory on application and actual submittal of the application

It is expected that once the member agency is awarded the assistance for a grant application, and the consultant is selected to assist, all parties will participate in a kick-off meeting to discuss the proposal and share necessary information to begin work on the grant application. The consultant will prepare the grant application and all necessary exhibits, tables, etc., for review by the member agency staff. The member agency will then provide comments to be addressed by the consultant, and the consultant will then revise the application based on comments provided. Finally, the consultant will provide the member agency staff with a final draft for review and submittal.

#3 - Linkage to other WRCOG programs: To qualify for assistance through the Program, projects must meet the following specific criteria. First, grant proposals receiving assistance must show a nexus to the core components of WRCOG's [Economic Development and Sustainability Framework](#) (Framework). The Economic Development and Sustainability Framework is a foundational document for planning in Western Riverside County consisting of six core components adopted by the Executive Committee. In addition, grant proposals must also demonstrate a nexus to a regionally significant plan, such as WRCOG's [Subregional Climate Action Plan](#), the Western Riverside County Active Transportation Plan, and/or the RCTC Long-Range Plan. Lastly, a grant proposal is preferred to be multi-jurisdictional, but is not mandatory – this is to align with many grant opportunities that favor larger, regional projects.

#4 - Process to request grant writing assistance:

1. Member agency submits an Application, formally requesting grant writing assistance with a specific grant. WRCOG will leave it to the discretion of the member agency how this request is made, whether it is through the elected body, WRCOG representative, or other party to act on behalf of the City. WRCOG will assume that if it receives a request for assistance from a member agency representative, that representative is authorized to act on behalf of the member agency.
 - a. WRCOG prepared a [Grant Writing Assistance Interest Form](#) (Interest Form), to enable jurisdictions to indicate potential interest in receiving support for a specified grant funding category/categories, tentatively reserving a place in line for grant writing assistance. This is in lieu of the varying time tables for each grant opportunity and the first-come first-served nature of the assistance.
 - b. An Interest Form is not required, but recommended for those wishing to apply for assistance with grant opportunities which become available later in the Program cycle.
2. WRCOG staff will review the applications within seven calendar days and determine whether the request meets the guidelines, as noted below.
3. If the Application meets the criteria set in these Guidelines, WRCOG will work with the applicant to select a proper consultant from the list of pre-approved consultants.
4. Kick-off meeting will be held with agency and consultant.

#5 - Screening process: In order to ensure funds for the Program are utilized effectively and efficiently, an Application must be submitted to WRCOG for review. Upon receipt the Application will be reviewed to ensure Program criteria, as outlined above, are met, demonstrating a nexus to the Framework as well as a regionally significant plan, and the project will generate a competitive application, as assessed by such factors as being multi-jurisdictional. WRCOG and consultants will also confirm, based on timing of Application receipt, whether there is sufficient time to develop a competitive grant application.

The criteria set in these Guidelines, serve as basic standards for proposals to be evaluated. The selection of proposals for grant writing assistance will be at the discretion of WRCOG based on available funding, and WRCOG reserves the right to decide which proposals receive grant writing assistance.

Tentatively, no member will receive assistance on more than two grants. This is a soft limit as it will be based on the number of applications received.

Nothing in this Program will be construed as limiting member agencies from hiring other consultants to prepare grants on their behalf.