

GREENLIGHTS GRANT INITIATIVE

A PROJECT OF THE JUST KEEP LIVIN FOUNDATION



MCALLISTER
& QUINN

AASA
THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

just keep livin
FOUNDATION
GRADUATE

Federal Grant Writing 101

October 10, 2023

Presenter: Annie Kurowski, Vice President, McAllister and Quinn

salesforce

A Message from Matthew



Meet Your Facilitator



Annie Brown Kurowski, MSc
Vice President
McAllister & Quinn

- ❖ Manages a wide variety of small and large nonprofit and higher education clients that work across a broad spectrum of behavioral health and social services, justice and cultural interests.
- ❖ Specializes in providing clients with long-term strategic planning, project design, development, and management to support their organizations' mission, vision and budget priorities.
- ❖ Previously served as Deputy Director for Congressional and Legislative Affairs at the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Legislative Assistant on domestic policy for a Senator, and as Research and Professional Staff on the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

About McAllister & Quinn

Washington, D.C. – based consulting firm

- ❖ Founded in 2004
- ❖ Specialize in securing funding for a wide range of 200+ clients, including nonprofits, public agencies, healthcare organizations, higher education institutions, and advanced technology initiatives.

90+

Experienced staff from nonprofits, Congress, government agencies, colleges and universities

275+

Grant consultants, subject matter experts, coaches, reviewers, and agency specialists

\$1.8B+

In secured funding since 2010 from competitive sources

What We Will Cover:

Summary

- ✓ Where to start: Reading the *Notice of Funding Opportunity* (NOFO) and its requirements
- ✓ Creating a Project Team
- ✓ Creating the Project Timeline
- ✓ Planning: Developing a Concept Paper
- ✓ Writing: Developing and drafting the Narrative
- ✓ Creating a Budget & Budget Justification
- ✓ Submission and Agency Review Process
- ✓ Best Practices

Where to Start? Understanding the NOFO

- ❖ **Read through the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) completely.**
(Also known as a Solicitation, Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), or Notice Inviting Applications (NIA))
- ❖ **Read it again and highlight important sections:**
 - ❖ Deadline
 - ❖ Agency priorities & language (use the language of the NOFO)
 - ❖ Required Activities
 - ❖ Page limits, fonts, margins
 - ❖ Attachments (checklist)
 - ❖ Allowable & Unallowable expenditures
 - ❖ Review Criteria (scoring)

Sample NOFO: FY23 BJA STOP School Violence Grant

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Assistance

OMB No. 1121-0329
Expires 12/31/2023



BJA FY 23 Preventing School Violence: BJA's STOP School Violence Program

Assistance Listing Number # 16.839

Grants.gov Opportunity Number: O-BJA-2023-171666

Solicitation Release Date: March 15, 2023 2:00 PM ET

Step 1: Application Grants.gov Deadline: May 08, 2023 8:59 PM ET

Step 2: Application JustGrants Deadline: May 15, 2023 8:59 PM ET

Overview

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) seeks applications for funding to prevent violence in a K–12 school setting. This program furthers the DOJ's mission by supporting and assisting county, local, territorial, and tribal jurisdictions in improving efforts to reduce violent crime in and around schools.

This solicitation incorporates guidance provided in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) which provides additional information for applicants to prepare and submit applications to OJP for funding. **If this solicitation expressly modifies any provision in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide, the applicant is to follow the guidelines in this solicitation as to that provision.**

Eligible Applicants:

City or township governments, County governments, Independent school districts, Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized), Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education, Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education, Private institutions of higher education, Public and State controlled institutions of higher education, State governments, Other

Other

Units of local governments

Category 1:

- State governments
- Public and state-controlled institutions of higher education

Category 2:

- City or township governments
- County governments
- Units of local governments
- Native American tribal governments (federally recognized)
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- Independent school districts
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education

Private K–12 schools, including private charter schools, should apply as "nonprofits." Public charter schools should apply as "independent school districts."

Sample NOFO: BJA STOP School Violence Grant

Priority Areas

The Department of Justice is committed to advancing work that promotes civil rights and racial equity, increases access to justice, supports crime victims and individuals impacted by the justice system, strengthens community safety and protects the public from crime and evolving threats, and builds trust between law enforcement and the community.

1. Priority Considerations Supporting Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*

In support of this Executive Order, OJP will provide priority consideration when making award decisions to the following:

A. Applications that propose project(s) that are designed to promote racial equity and the removal of barriers to access and opportunity for communities that have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality.

To receive this consideration, the applicant must describe how the proposed project(s) will address potential racial inequities and contribute to greater access to services and opportunities

B. Applicants that demonstrate that their capabilities and competencies for implementing their proposed project(s) are enhanced because they (or at least one proposed subrecipient that will receive at least 40% of the requested award funding, as demonstrated in the Budget Web-Based Form) identify as a *culturally specific organization*.

To receive this additional priority consideration, applicants must describe how being a culturally specific organization (or funding the culturally specific subrecipient organization(s)) will enhance their ability to implement the proposed project(s) and should also specify which populations are intended or expected to be served or to have their needs addressed under the proposed project(s).

Culturally specific organizations are defined for the purposes of this solicitation as private nonprofit or tribal organizations whose primary purpose as a whole is to provide culturally specific services to racial and ethnic groups, including, among others, Black people, Hispanic and Latino people, Native American and other Indigenous peoples of North America (including Alaska Native, Eskimo, and Aleut), Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and/or Pacific Islanders.

Sample NOFO: BJA STOP School Violence Grant

Proposal Narrative

The Proposal Narrative should be submitted as an attachment in JustGrants. The attached document should be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point font; have no less than 1-inch margins; and should not exceed 15 numbered pages. If the Proposal Narrative fails to comply with these length restrictions, BJA may consider such noncompliance in peer review and in final award decision.

The Proposal Narrative must include the following sections:

a. Description of the Issue

Describe why this project/these proposed activities are necessary (significance/value) and/or address a need and include supporting data/information to support your statement.

b. Project Design and Implementation

Completely describe the strategy to address the needs identified in the Description of the Issue. Applicants should be specific when listing the proposed project activities and describe how they relate to the stated objective. Activities are the specific actions to be undertaken to fulfill the program's objectives and reach the program's goal and should not be vague generalities. Provide a detailed description of the method(s) to be used to carry out each activity, and include a description of all individuals/groups that are involved in the project and that will be served by the project.

The applicant must clearly outline the different school(s)/school district(s) where the project will be implemented and include letters of support for the project from those schools/school districts if another entity is submitting the application. Include a description of why these schools were selected. The applicant should demonstrate through description in the narrative, attached letters of support, or attached MOUs that the applicant has the full support of project partners related to the implementation of the project. Evidence shows that collaboration with law enforcement is critical to the success of projects pertaining to such activities as anonymous reporting systems and behavioral threat assessments. Applicants should demonstrate how they plan to coordinate and collaborate with these local partners.

c. Capabilities and Competencies

Describe completely the capabilities and competencies of the individuals that will be assigned to the project to accomplish the goal and objectives of the program. Résumés should be included as separate attachments and will not count against the 15-page limit. Describe the partners involved in the project and indicate their full support.

If the applicant is seeking priority consideration under Priority 1(B), it should describe within this section how being a culturally specific organization (or funding a culturally specific subrecipient organization at a minimum of 40% of the project budget) will enhance its ability to implement the proposed project(s), should also specify which populations are intended or expected to be served or have their needs addressed under the proposed project(s), and should include the website address (if applicable) and formal or informal mission statement or principles of the culturally specific organization.

d. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures

Note: An applicant is **not** required to submit performance data with the application. Rather, performance measure information is included as a notification that award recipients will be required to submit performance data as part of each award's reporting requirements. Some measures are presented as examples, while others are the exact measures that every recipient will be expected to address.

OJP will require each award recipient to submit regular performance data that show the completed work's results. The performance data directly relate to the goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in the "Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables" discussion. Applicants can visit OJP's performance measurement page at www.ojp.gov/performance for an overview of performance measurement activities at OJP.

Sample NOFO: BJA STOP School Violence Grant

Review Criteria

Merit Review Criteria

Applications that meet the basic minimum requirements will be evaluated by peer reviewers on how the proposed project/program addresses the following criteria:

1. **Statement of the Problem/Description of the Issue (20%)** - evaluate the applicant's understanding of the program/issue to be addressed.
2. **Project Design and Implementation (30%)** - evaluate the adequacy of the proposal, including the goals, objectives, timelines, milestones, and deliverables.
3. **Capabilities and Competencies (20%)** - evaluate the applicant's administrative and technical capacity to successfully accomplish the goals and objectives.
4. **Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures (5%)** - evaluate the applicant's understanding of the performance data reporting requirements and the plan for collecting the required data.
5. **Budget (15%)** - evaluate for completeness, cost effectiveness, and allowability (e.g., reasonable, allocable, and necessary for project activities).
6. **Sustainability Plan (10%)** - evaluate the applicant's sustainability plan to address how the project or technology will continue to operate and be maintained once the award funding has ended. This plan should not assume that additional funding under this program is available after the award period, but it should identify state, local, or possibly private funding to ensure the program or technology continues.

Other Review Criteria/Factors

Other important considerations for BJA include geographic diversity, strategic priorities (specifically including, but not limited to, those priority areas already mentioned, if applicable), available funding, past performance, and the extent to which the Budget Web-Based form accurately explains project costs that are reasonable, necessary, and otherwise allowable under federal law and applicable federal cost principles.

Sample NOFO: BJA STOP School Violence Grant

Application Checklist

BJA FY 2023 Preventing School Violence: BJA's STOP School Violence Program

This application checklist has been created as an aid in developing an application. For more information, reference the [OJP Application Submission Steps in the OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) and the [DOJ Application Submission Checklist](#).

Pre-Application

Before Registering in Grants.gov:

- Acquire or renew your Entity's System Award Management (SAM) Registration Information (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Register in Grants.gov

- Acquire an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and a Grants.gov username and password (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Acquire AOR confirmation from the E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Find the Funding Opportunity

- Search for the funding opportunity in Grants.gov using the opportunity number, assistance listing number, or keyword(s)
- Select the correct Competition ID
- Access the funding opportunity and application package (see Step 7 in the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Sign up for Grants.gov email [notifications](#) (optional) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Read [Important Notice: Applying for Grants in Grants.gov](#)
- Read OJP policy and guidance on conference approval, planning, and reporting available at <https://www.ojp.gov/funding/financialguidetoj/iii-postaward-requirements#6g3y8> (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Application Step 1

Submit the **SF-424** and **SF-LLL** in Grants.gov

- In Section 8F of the SF-424, include the name and contact information of the individual who will complete the application in JustGrants and the SF-LLL in Grants.gov

Within 48 hours after the SF-424 and SF-LLL submission in Grants.gov, receive four (4) Grants.gov email notifications:

- a submission receipt
- a validation receipt
- a grantor agency retrieval receipt
- an agency tracking number assignment

If no Grants.gov receipt and validation email is received, or if error notifications are received:

- Contact Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726, 606-545-5035, Grants.gov customer support, or support@grants.gov regarding technical difficulties (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Within 24 hours after receipt of confirmation emails from Grants.gov, the individual in Section 8F of the SF-424 will receive an email from JustGrants with login instructions.

- Proceed to Application Step 2 and complete application in JustGrants

Application Step 2

Submit the following information in JustGrants:

Application Components

- Standard Applicant information (SF-424 information from Grants.gov)

Sample NOFO: BJA STOP School Violence Grant

- **Proposal Abstract***

- **Proposal Narrative***

Budget and Associated Documentation

- **Budget Web-Based form***

- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Financial Management and System of Internal Controls Questionnaire (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Disclosure of Process related to Executive Compensation (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Additional Application Components

- Tribal Authorizing Resolution (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Research and Evaluation Independence and Integrity (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Request and Justification for Employee Compensation; Waiver (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Timeline
- Memorandum of understanding (if applicable)
- Résumés of key personnel (if applicable)
- Applicant Disclosure of Proposed Subrecipients: Attach a list of proposed subrecipients of grant funding (if applicable)
- Organizational chart (if applicable)

Disclosures and Assurances

- **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)** (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

Disclosures and Assurances

- **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)** (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Applicant Disclosure of Duplication in Cost Items (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- DOJ Certified Standard Assurances (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- DOJ Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))
- Applicant Disclosure and Justification – DOJ High Risk Grantees (if applicable) (see [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#))

****Note: Items designated with an asterisk must be submitted for an application to meet the basic minimum requirements review. If OJP determines that an application does not include the designated items, it will neither proceed to peer review, nor receive further consideration.***

Review, Certify and Submit Application in JustGrants

- Any validation errors will immediately display on screen after submission.
- Correct validation errors, if necessary, and then return to the "Certify and Submit" screen to submit the application. Access the [Application Submission Validation Errors Quick Reference Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions to resolve errors prior to submission.
- Once the application is submitted and validated, a confirmation message will appear at the top of the page. Users will also receive a notification in the "bell" alerts confirming submission.

If no JustGrants application submission confirmation email or validation is received, or if error notification is received:

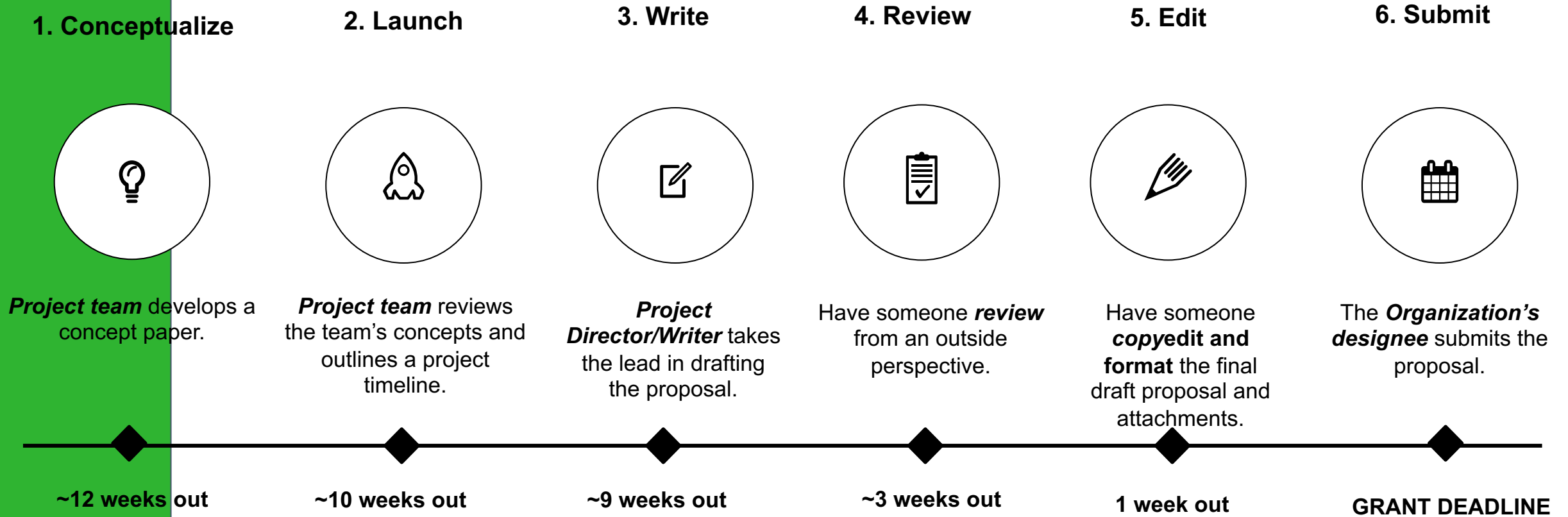
- Contact the JustGrants Service Desk at 833-872-5175 or JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov regarding technical difficulties. See the [OJP Grant Application Resource Guide](#) for additional information.

Creating a Project Team

❖ Skills and knowledge to have on a team:

- ❖ Program expert that has first-hand knowledge of the project and what the issues are that the applicant is seeking to address
- ❖ Experience in gathering data (internal and external data)
- ❖ Experience in building a budget
- ❖ Strong writing skills and attention to detail
- ❖ Knowledge of submission portal

Project Timeline Model



Planning: Develop a Concept Paper

❖ **Create a 1-page concept of your idea**

- ❖ Background: Set the stage with a short statement of the issue/problem/need
- ❖ Identify/describe the population (demographic, school(s), community)
- ❖ Project activities: What will the grant be used for? Why now?
- ❖ What is unique about your project/school/population?
- ❖ Have someone else review it—does it make sense? Is it clear?

❖ **Contact the agency Program Officer (listed in NOFO)**

- ❖ Request a short meeting (30 mins) for feedback (if possible) & share concept paper
- ❖ Make any revisions to project based on the discussion

Writing: Developing & Drafting the Narrative

- ❖ **Create the outline based on the review criteria in the NOFO**
- ❖ **Focus on one section at a time**
- ❖ **Write clearly, use subheadings to help guide the reviewer**
- ❖ **Use tables, graphs and maps to break up the text**
- ❖ **Avoid acronyms-or use sparingly and define**
- ❖ **Find your 'hook' and what makes your school/district unique?**
- ❖ **Make it flow and use the language of the NOFO**

Creating a Budget & Budget Justification

- ❖ **Do not wait until the last minute!**
- ❖ **Align the budget with the narrative (activities, partners, personnel)**
- ❖ **Budget Categories in a Federal Grant Application:**
 - ❖ Personnel: Calculated as a percentage of time dedicated to the project
 - ❖ Fringe Benefits: Calculated using a fringe benefit rate for staff
 - ❖ Travel: Calculate airfare, hotel, per-diem, mileage
 - ❖ Equipment: Any one item that is over \$5,000
 - ❖ Supplies: Paper, pencils, printing, computers, software
 - ❖ Contractual: Evaluators, consultants
 - ❖ Indirect Costs: Costs associated with supporting the project (Operating)
- ❖ **Budget Justification is a word version of your budget. Summarize each category and explain how you derived at each calculation**

Submission and Agency Review Process

❖ **Create a file for submission (3-4 days from deadline)**

- ❖ All final documents in PDF (unless indicated otherwise in the NOFO) including attachments (resumes, budget justification, abstract, narrative, etc.)

- ❖ Have your passwords and logins handy

- ❖ Factor in time to input the budget and other federal forms

****Save your confirmation from Grants.gov and agency when submitted**

❖ **Agency Review Process**

- ❖ 5-6 months for review

- ❖ Respond to any questions from the program officer as soon as possible

Resubmitting

❖ Declination is part of the game!

❖ Review Feedback

- ❖ Agencies may not fund on the first submission
- ❖ Feedback improves the draft
- ❖ Carefully read the review summary and comments

❖ Revise

- ❖ Schedule a call to discuss next steps, such as reworking the proposal and coordinating a call with the relevant Program Officer (PO) at the federal Agency (if agency is amenable)

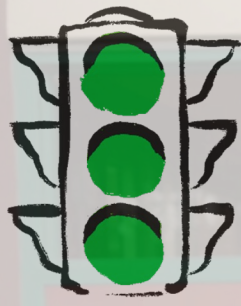
❖ RESUBMIT!

Best Practices: Writing

- ❖ **Write to the review criteria in the NOFO!**
- ❖ **Write directly to the agency goals and objectives stated in the NOFO — NOT what you want to fund**
- ❖ **Use the agency's language**
- ❖ **Follow the guidelines and structure provided in the application, provide only what is asked**
- ❖ **Focus on one or two areas and have a hook (what makes your program unique, innovative)**
- ❖ **Review narrative and budget (do they align?)**
 - ❖ Account for every budget category—and break down every expenditure for the justification—never too much detail in the budget justification

Resources for School Districts

- ❖ The Greenlights Grant Initiative provides tailored and free resources including webinars, memos, and other helpful tools:
 - ❖ General Grantsmanship and Specific Grant Opportunity Memos
 - ❖ [Getting Ready for Grants](#), [Top 5 tips for Putting Together a Competitive Grant Proposal](#), [Top 5 Tips for Identifying Good Fit Grants](#), [Five Commons Pitfalls for New Grant Seekers](#)
 - ❖ [BJA Stop School Violence](#), [COPS School Violence Prevention](#), [DoED Stronger Connections](#), [DoED 21st Century Community Learning Centers](#), [DOED School-Based Mental Health Services](#), [DoED Mental Health Services Professional](#), [OJJDP Enhancing School Capacity to Address Youth Violence](#), [SAMHSA Project AWARE](#), and [SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Training Grants](#)
 - ❖ Previous Webinars available on the Greenlights Grant Website include:
 - ❖ [Getting Ready for Grants – An Overview of Federal and State Grants and What’s Needed to Apply](#) from September 25, 2023
 - ❖ Upcoming Webinars include:
 - ❖ *How to Make Your Case with Data* on October 30, 2023
 - ❖ *Understanding Logic Models* on November 15, 2023
 - ❖ *How to Build a Grant Budget* on December 5, 2023



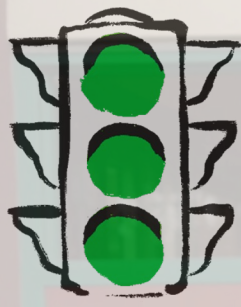
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Questions?



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Thank you for joining us!

Contact:
info@greenlightsgrantinitiative.org

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