

Supplementing your budget with GRANTS\$

By Cathy Parker

Additional grant sources are available through NTOA's Grant Program. If your team has a current membership with NTOA you are eligible to apply for equipment grants. Unlike some other funding programs, NTOA grants are specific to SWAT. Visit www.ntoa.org for more information.

Please refer to the chart on page 105 for a list of grant Web sites.

Is your department looking for a way to supplement a shrinking or non-existent equipment budget? Equipment can be expensive, especially when purchased for a whole team of SWAT members. The answer may be grant funding, as there are a number of organizations that provide financial assistance for SWAT teams. Now is the time to start preparing for the 2012 grant season.

What are grants? They are not simply free money. "Grants" is the generic term that refers to a variety of federal, state, local and corporate funding programs available to state and local governments to assist with big ticket purchases like vehicles and robots. These monies can also be used to procure personal protective equipment (PPE), search and surveillance equipment, lights/illuminators, less-lethal equipment or other resources such as advanced technology, training or additional personnel.

Given this, commanders should look carefully at how funding programs could fit into their counterterrorism planning. Grant

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programs that address specific operational areas such as communications interoperability, equipment acquisition, information sharing and analysis, investigative sciences or surveillance may be applicable to your department's counterterrorism needs.

Most grants have prerequisites and eligibility requirements that must be satisfied by your agency, but they are often a great way to bridge the gap between budget

shortfalls and the funds needed for various state and local projects. The overall strength and completeness of your application will increase your odds of success, yet sometimes even the strongest of applications can fail to achieve funding. As the amount of grants and funding decreases, the need to create an especially compelling case will become paramount.

Agencies should explore getting financial assistance wherever possible. The Office of Justice offers a variety of grants including the **Bullet Proof Vest (BPV) grant** which will pay for half of an agency's body armor. Other considerations the **Bureau of Justice Assistance**, and depending on a SWAT team's training and equipment needs, some funding may be available through the **Department of Homeland Security/FEMA**.

The Responder Knowledge Base (RKB) is an excellent Web site for first responders, as the RKB is a trusted integrated online source of information on products, standards, certifications, grants and other

equipment-related information. Additionally, it has links to the Authorized Equipment List (AEL) and Standardized Equipment List (SEL) providing current information on approved equipment for Homeland Security grants.

To keep current on available federal grants, go to www.grants.gov and sign up at the site for RSS feeds such as “new opportunities by agency” or “new opportunities by category” so you will be notified as grants are posted. This site provides information about competitive grants available from all federal agencies, along with grant descriptions, forms, instructions, helpful hints and support to apply and succeed in the grant process.

If you are applying for a federal grant, develop relationships with contacts from your **State Homeland Security, State Administrative Agency and your Bureau of Justice**. These groups have a lot of influence and information they can share with you regarding grant eligibility and requirements. They can also tell you whether there are unallocated monies available from past years of which you can take advantage. Inviting them out to your squad for a meet-and-greet to better understand your funding needs could go a long way in contributing to your success. These contacts can be found at the following Web sites below.

Another funding program for consideration is the **Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants**. The Community Policing Development Program in particular will allow you to sign up for email notification of grant opportunities.

The Edward Byrne Memorial State & Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program has a match requirement that can differ from state to state. The match is your agency’s share of the project costs in the form of cash or in-kind services.

Grant Web sites



Bullet Proof Vest (BPV)

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/programs/lawenforcement.htm>



Bureau of Justice Assistance

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/programs/law_enf.html



Responder Knowledge Base (RKB)

<http://www.rkb.us/FEMAGrants/DisplayFEMAGrants.cfm>



Bureau of Justice State Policy Advisor Contacts

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/resource/ProgramsOffice.html>



State Homeland Security Contacts

http://www.dhs.gov/xgovt/editorial_0291.shtm



State Administrative Agency Contacts (SAA)

<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/saa/index.shtm>



Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/>



Edward Byrne Memorial State & Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/byrne.html>



Walmart

<http://walmartstores.com/CommunityGiving/>



MetLife Foundation and LISC

<http://www.lisc.org/section/ourwork/national/safety/awards>

Application process

Once you find a grant matching your needs, you need to begin preparing for the application process by collecting the appropriate data. There are typically three main sections to each application and these include a program abstract, a program narrative and a budget detail worksheet and narrative. Your program narrative should be clear and concise, thoroughly explaining your department's needs and how funding will enhance your department's operations while piquing the interest of the reader. Within your narrative you should provide an assessment of the existing problem (including your community's demographics), identify target areas and include your departmental implementation plan, goals

and objectives and a budget summary. The ultimate goal is to build a strong case by explaining how this new equipment or capability will enhance your department's response and the adjacent communities. Including mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions/agencies will allow the funder to see a strong integration between your organization and nearby communities, thus reinforcing to the potential donor the benefit of providing your department with funding!

Other grant sources

As competition for obtaining grants has increased, available grant monies have decreased, so don't focus solely on government grants. Many private companies offer

grants as well. For example, Walmart helps communities by recognizing the efforts of their hometown police, fire and EMS teams with Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) grants. Under their "Safe Neighborhood Heroes" grants, each store location can provide up to \$3,000 toward the emergency response unit of its choice.

Another private source for consideration is MetLife Foundation and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). They have funded programs between community groups and police that promote neighborhood safety.

Many grant programs now offer the ability to apply online. This can dramatically simplify the process. Online applications also prevent you from submitting an incomplete application. Once your application has been submitted, an email confirmation receipt will follow.

Lastly, be sure you are not limiting your department's chances by relying on only one grant program. Applying for multiple grants simultaneously will increase your probability of success and potentially your funding pool, without jeopardizing any of your funding opportunities. ◀◀

About the author



Cathy Parker is employed with Applied Research Associates (ARA) as a senior manager of Strategic Planning and Development. If you would like a guide to preparing your grant, Cathy can be reached at 781-572-0143.

NTOA TEAM GRANTS

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www.ntoa.org

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