GRANTS OFFICE
empowering communities

From Opportunity to Action: Building Your Grant-Ready Strategy

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Presented by Michael Paddock, Shannon Day, and Sam Rawdon (Grants Office) • With Jeanne Smith (Genetec)
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Welcome and Introductions

Michael Paddock:
Hello, everyone, and thanks for joining us for “From Opportunity to Action: Building Your Grant-Ready Strategy.” I'm Michael Paddock, CEO of Grants Office, and I want to welcome everyone to today's session. We've got a great session for you, but before we get started I want to very much thank our sponsor Genetec for sponsoring today's session and making it possible for us to bring you this information. Grants Office is absolutely thrilled to be working with Genetec on this webcast as well as on a grant support program that you'll be hearing more about from Genetec later on in this session.

Housekeeping

Michael Paddock:
A few housekeeping items for you. As many of you know, you can listen hands-free over your computer speakers or headphones. There's no need to dial in. That maybe an old housekeeping item, actually, now that I think about it — most of you probably are listening over your speakers or headphones. But if you do become disconnected, you can go to the audio and video menu at the top of your screen to access alternative ways to connect to the audio portion of today's session. Also, if you don't see a menu at the top, you can go to the show menu bar. There's a little chevron that drops down that'll show you that menu item as well.

You can ask as many questions as you'd like during the course of today's session. We'll get to as many as we can. If you don't see a question and answer interface, click on the three dots at the bottom right-hand corner of your screen to access the Q&A interface, and that'll pop right up for you. Also, the session is being recorded and the replay will be available. Kate has already put into the chat the link to the replay. The replay will be available after today's session, and Kate will provide that again probably a couple more times during the course of today's session where you can access the replay from today's session.

Today's Agenda

Michael Paddock:
All that is background for what we're going to be talking about today. Today is actually going to be a kind of level-setting background on grants. If you have a fair amount of experience in grants or if you're totally new to grants and funding — particularly grants for technology, but grants and funding generally — this maybe a good refresher orientation for you. A lot of folks have some experience in a particular area of grants, so you may have more experience in foundation grants and not as much in federal and state grants. You may be accustomed to going to one state agency to access funding, and this will give you more of an overview to make you a little more circumspect in terms of your understanding of grants and funding generally — where the grants come from, how they work, how they support a wide range of projects, and how to fund technology as part of a grant-seeking endeavor.

We'll talk about getting your project grant-ready, the title of today's session — ways to think about your project and how much the preparation that you put into your project will play out in the quality and competitiveness of your grant applications down the road. And then we'll hear more from Genetec about the Genetec Grant Support Team services as well.

I'm joined by a great group of panelists today. We've got Jeanne Smith, Program Manager for Grants and Contracts at Genetec, Shannon Day, Senior Grants Development Consultant here at Grants Office, and Sam Rawdon, Grants Development Associate also here at Grants Office. A great knowledgeable group of panelists, and very happy to have everyone here with us today. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Shannon Day to get us started. Shannon?

What Is a Grant?

Shannon Day:
Thank you, Michael, and hello, everyone. I'm glad you're able to join us today. As Michael said, I'm going to kind of start out level-setting if you are new to grants or if you just need a refresher. First, I want to define what a grant is. A common misconception is that grants are simply free money that you can use without restriction. As you well know, your organization's funding is limited, and it really must be used strategically, especially nowadays with so many budget cuts. Grants are really a great way to supplement that existing funding. But grants are really a call to action for an organization seeking to address a specific issue or issues that enables them to fulfill their mission through defined goals and objectives.

Grants can really enable those projects that would otherwise be impossible, which ultimately creates a positive impact on your community, and that really is the end result and the end goal of grants. I always like to think of grants as more of an investment in your community, and the return on investment may

be a match requirement, but it also is more likely reporting on the success of your project, so the grant funders can then turn around and say, “Hey, wow, this project benefited from our funding. Let's try to do this in other communities.”

Two Main Types of Grants

Shannon Day:
There are two main types of grants: competitive and entitlement grants. Competitive grants are usually what we think of when we think of grants. On your screen I have an example of both, but there are thousands of grants out there, so they fall into mainly these two categories.

Competitive Grants

Shannon Day:
For competitive grants, funds are awarded based on the quality of an applicant's proposal and how well it aligns with the funder's goals and criteria. The number of awards is also limited, with applicants competing against each other for a finite amount of money — hence competitive. Competitive proposals are usually pretty detailed and the process can be time-consuming. But if you're able to dedicate yourself to a successful proposal, it is incredibly rewarding.

Entitlement Grants

Shannon Day:
On the other side, we have entitlement grants — sometimes called formula funding because funds are distributed to recipients who meet predetermined criteria using a formula. For example, JAG on your screen uses a formula including population size and crime statistics that are reported to the FBI. These grants do still require an application that demonstrates your organization's eligibility and how the funds will be utilized, but it's far less focused on that unique need and the unique proposal itself.

Summarizing, competitive grants are about winning a contest — you submit the best proposal to receive an award. Whereas entitlement grants are about meeting the legal requirements, and you are entitled to those funds if you fit the criteria. The funding is usually formula-based rather than determined by a panel review.

How Funding Flows

Shannon Day:
There are also two ways that funding flows.

Direct Funding

Shannon Day:
First, on the left of your screen, is direct funding. This is where money flows straight from the funding agency to you. For this process, you submit your application directly to the federal funding agency, and post-award reporting is also submitted to that agency. So everything is done directly between you and the funding agency. The application materials are typically posted on that agency's website and very often on Grants.gov, which we'll talk about later, and you would direct any questions to that specific funding agency.

Indirect (Pass-Through) Funding

Shannon Day:
Alternatively, on the right of your screen, funding may pass through multiple agencies before reaching you. This indirect funding, or pass-through funding, is where money moves from the federal source down through the state or local government before being made available to your organization. While state and local authorities typically must apply for these funds, a lot of times these are also formula funding. They may retain a portion for their administrative overhead at the state or local level, but then each recipient is responsible for passing through the additional funds down to those sub-applicants and regranting those funds.

When dealing with pass-through or indirect funding, it is crucial that you, the applicant, know both the original source of the money and the specific agency you'll be communicating with to access it. This understanding is vital because intermediate agencies can change funding priorities. For example, the Department of Justice might give money to states to improve local criminal justice services, to keep it very general. The state government may then modify those federal requirements to an extent so it can fit that state's unique needs and priorities, because every state is different. And it will also decide whether the funds are going to be distributed through a competitive process or passed down through a formula process or direct funding. So it's really important that you know not only who is the source of funding, but who are you working with directly. You should be aware of the federal source of funding, but you will be applying to and communicating directly with your state's administering agency throughout the entire process.

Sources of Grant Funding

Shannon Day:
I want to dive a bit deeper into the sources of grant funding in the U.S. There are federal, state, and foundations. Just to note, the dollar values shown here cover all types of grant-making, not just those in

the safety and security space, which is what we're talking about today. There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to each type of funder.

Federal Grants

Shannon Day:
At the top we see federal agencies. Federal grants represent the largest funding pool. There are 26 federal grant-making offices at the federal level. Because these opportunities are typically open to applicants across the country, they are often highly competitive, and the application and proposal requirements are also significantly complex and can be quite demanding. But the abundance of opportunities and the substantial size of award amounts make them a really appealing and worthwhile option for organizations seeking major support.

State Grants

Shannon Day:
Next, we have state grants. They function very similarly to their federal counterparts because they're both funded through our tax dollars. But state grants do possess some distinct characteristics and advantages. Generally, the award size tends to be a little smaller compared to federal grants, but states are often easier to communicate with, have far less burdensome applications — and again, there are exceptions to every rule, so keep that in mind — but they also have smaller competition pools, as they're limited to folks within your state rather than the entire country.

Just remember that the total funding you see here of $100 billion-plus is across all states. Each state is different in how many grant funds are available and what those grants may be for. One state may focus on education initiatives all the time. One state may focus on public safety initiatives, but then a new governor comes in and says, “You know what, we need to focus on transportation,” or whatever the case may be. So it's important to know your state, where your state's budget dollars are going, and what types of grants are out there for your state.

Foundation Grants

Shannon Day:
And finally, foundation grants are provided by private, corporate, or community foundations and are typically smaller than federal and state grants. They have much more of a focus on community-based projects. The application load for foundations tends to be a little lighter — usually they are the easiest to apply for of the three grant funders, but again, there are exceptions. They also have a quicker turnaround, so a quicker decision and a quicker funding timeline. For local foundations, you also have a much smaller competition pool. Those foundations can be limited to the county or even a neighborhood, so that makes them attractive as well.

One of the downsides to foundations is that they're generally geared toward 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations because they do have that community focus. But there are some foundations out there that are exclusively for, for example, law enforcement agencies or fire departments, and there may be some foundations that will also fund government agencies like schools. So it's really something to consider when you're thinking about the sources of grants that you want to consider.

Federal Funding Landscape and Looking Ahead to 2026

Shannon Day:
Here you see some of the main sources of federal funding. I don't include all 26 agencies because you wouldn't be able to see any of them, but these are kind of the big guys. In the security, public safety, and criminal justice sector, most of our grants come from the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security. But you don't want to restrict yourself. I think checking out Grants.gov, if you've never looked at Grants.gov, is a great source of federal funding. You can poke around in there. They have some pretty good search filters. So you don't want to limit yourself and think, “Oh, I can only apply to Department of Justice if I'm a police department,” for example.

I do want to mention, because we are looking ahead to 2026, where we are and where we're going with the federal funding process. Another continuing resolution, or CR, was passed — I think it's been a couple of weeks now — and this is funding the government through the end of January. It included back pay for federal employees and reinstatement of federal workers who were fired during the shutdown, but really not a whole lot more than that. It did not include anything about continuing healthcare subsidies, those healthcare subsidies, energy credits, and a few other items that are expiring at the end of the year. That's going to be Congress's focus right now. So we will see more of the back-and-forth negotiations again in January, because as you see, this CR expires January 30. The budget deadline has been punted to that date.

Thanks to the filibuster, the annual budget is one of the only places where the minority party, in this case the Democrats, has leverage, as their votes are needed to pass the budget. We think it is very likely that Democrats will look to use that leverage in January, and we can't rule out short-term continuing resolutions as those negotiations happen. But at this point, because so many CRs have been passed, I don't think a full-year CR is in the cards for 2026. They're really going to want to pass a full federal budget.

Whatever happens, most grants come through the federal budget. The most likely place for reconciliation will be for additional JAG funding. We already know that the administration has asked for additional funding in the JAG program. We're also going to see additional funding in the COPS Office. Those of you in law enforcement are probably familiar with the COPS Office. But otherwise, we're going to need to see what Democrats and Republicans land on as far as other programs. I will say that the

budget process is never simple, but the annual discretionary budget is remarkably consistent across time, no matter the administration or the makeup of Congress. It is very hard to take away funding from popular grant programs. So we expect that the final 2026 budget will be in the range of around $1.6 trillion, as it is every year, and it will maintain the status quo. So there is no reason to be nervous, is what we're trying to say. It's going to be okay.

State Grants

Shannon Day:
Let's pivot a bit and talk about state grants, because as mentioned, in addition to federal grants there are potentially state funding opportunities. I've included a few examples just to give you an idea. Obviously not everyone on today's call is from Wisconsin or Tennessee or Washington, but this just gives you an example of the types of grants that may be out there.

Finding State Grant Opportunities

Shannon Day:
How do you find state grant opportunities? You can start with your State Administering Agency, or SAA. They are the folks who administer pass-through grants through the Department of Justice and through the Department of Homeland Security. These agencies also usually administer state-funded public safety, security, or first responder opportunities. So they're a really great place to start. Find your agencies, join their email subscription service or listserv so you know when a grant opportunity is available. A lot of state agencies also provide other resources. They provide some great webinars about specific grants or even just general how-to on using that state's application portal. They post FAQs, they often have office hours. So your state funder is a really great resource for you.

We also find a lot of state opportunities in places you wouldn't initially think of when you might be thinking about school safety or public safety or security — whatever your project is. Again, when, like I mentioned with federal grants, expand your search. Don't limit yourself to just — and I'm doing air quotes — “the places that you think fund criminal justice initiatives.” Start thinking about Department of Commerce, Department of Education, Department of Transportation, Attorney General's offices. I find so many interesting little state opportunities when I'm just doing my research — I'll come across an opportunity that's like, “How does anybody know this exists?” Think broadly, think creatively, and don't be afraid to reach out to these agencies. Join their listservs. It is one of the best resources for you — your state listservs.

Determining If a Grant Is a Good Fit

Shannon Day:
Now that we better understand the top sources of grant funding, their key differences, and where to search for them, it's important to consider how we can determine if a grant is actually a good fit for your needs before you put all the time and effort into applying. There are a few ways to check.

The most straightforward approach is to thoroughly examine the application guidance. This goes by a bunch of different names — they're called NOFOs, RFPs, RFAs, all kinds of acronyms, but it is the official grant application guidance. When you read through this guidance, you can even flip right to the budget section, and it will often contain an explicit list of allowable or unallowable costs. These criteria provide probably the clearest and most definitive answers regarding what the funder will or will not pay for — for example, will they fund equipment, or will they fund personnel.

If the guidance is less explicit on those cost details, you can also look at the funding priorities and the funder's objectives. By studying these areas, you can gain a strong sense of the appropriate types of projects that the grant is designed to support. Once you understand the funder's goals, it will help you gauge whether your project's purpose aligns with their mission.

Another highly effective and often overlooked method — this is one of my favorites — is to look at projects the agency has funded in the past. Many granting agencies publish summary information or abstracts of their past awards. Reviewing these examples can give you insights into the type of projects, the type of applicant, the scope, and even specific activities that the funder has awarded and is most likely to support. This will give you a valuable blueprint in your pursuit.

Finally, if you've utilized the other methods and still aren't really sure if the grant will cover your specific needs, call the program manager. You will never get an answer to a question that you don't ask. So I always recommend reaching out to the program manager with a quick phone call. I know nowadays a lot of people don't like to talk on the phone, but it really is the best method, because it's a back-and-forth conversation. But you can also send them a quick email — a brief, targeted email with clarifying questions so they can just tell you the answer to your question. This could save you valuable time in the long run, so you're not building this big beautiful application only to have it denied because they don't fund what you're requesting.

Now I will hand things over to Sam, who will go into greater detail on the specific types of projects and activities that grants will typically fund, and he'll also offer you some valuable tips for positioning your proposal effectively.

The Role of Technology in Grant-Funded Projects

Sam Rawdon:
Thank you very much, Shannon — all valuable information moving forward. I'd like to start by saying the importance of deciding if a grant is right for you. Obviously this is harkening back to those points that Shannon just touched on about checking guidance carefully and reviewing program priorities to find that right alignment with your needs. This is going to actually dovetail nicely into where we're going next, which is going to focus specifically on knowing the role that technology plays in grants themselves and how it can fit into a safety and security project for your organization.

Two Categories of Technology Grants

Sam Rawdon:
First, I would like to touch on how most grant programs are structured. When considering grants for technology purchases, they generally fall into two categories: those designed to fund specific technology-based solutions, and those intended to support a broader range of initiatives. As you can see from the graphic on the left, grants that are dedicated solely to technology are relatively uncommon. However, some programs do emphasize technology as a key element in achieving their broader goals and objectives.

Typically, grants that fund components such as contractual services, supplies, training, and personnel are more widely available. Other funding opportunities may also support broader improvement initiatives, whether those are focused on infrastructure, operations, or even organizational culture. While many may not be as technology-centered, they still contribute to creating a more effective and efficient project.

Grants Fund Holistic Projects, Not Just Products

Sam Rawdon:
While technology or equipment might represent one part of a comprehensive project, it's important to remember that successful proposals really show how these tools are going to integrate into the overall goals or mission of the initiative. Really, we like to say that grants fund holistic projects, not just the products themselves. You'll hear me say that several times throughout this presentation.

The graphic on the right is showing how a typical grant budget might be distributed across various components. The technology that you are requesting could be a major element, but other aspects — things like project management, staff training, or implementation support — should also be included in a proposal to create a more complete and well-rounded project. Ultimately, the takeaway here is that grants rarely fund technology alone. Successful proposals demonstrate how that technology is going to

support broader goals. So it's really about connecting your technology requests or needs to a wider project outcome, and including those supporting activities to create a balanced and more fundable plan.

Genetec's Integrated Security Solutions

Sam Rawdon:
With a better understanding of the role that technology plays in grant-funded projects, it's also important to consider how integrated security solutions like those offered by Genetec can enhance an organization's ability to prevent, monitor, and respond to incidents across its facilities. Just a couple of examples here.

Omnicast video management system can strengthen an organization's capacity to monitor activity across multiple areas in real time. The Synergis access control system provides greater oversight into who can access specific spaces, promoting a more secure environment and ensuring that only authorized individuals are permitted entry. Then the Sipelia communication management system helps streamline communication between key stakeholders as well as external partners, which ultimately demonstrates effective coordination and preparedness.

Thinking about these solutions, when pursuing funding for this type of technology, it's going to be important to focus not only on the technology or the infrastructure components to go along with them, but also on those broader objectives — whether it's improving operational readiness, enhancing communication protocols, or fostering an overall safer and more responsive environment.

Applying for Technology-Focused Grants

Sam Rawdon:
When applying for a grant that is particularly supportive of technology-based projects, it's important again to keep a few key principles in mind, just so that we are not losing sight of the bigger picture or losing the forest through the trees, so to speak.

Establish a Strong and Well-Defined Need

Sam Rawdon:
Perhaps the most important tip is to clearly establish a strong and well-defined need for the project. Simply saying that there is a lack of technology is not going to be enough in a funder's eyes to justify that funding. Rather, funders are more interested in understanding what the broader impact is — what societal or organizational benefit that the technology will help achieve. Something Shannon mentioned before about that societal benefit.

We should ask ourselves how the proposed solutions are directly addressing an issue or a challenge at hand. For example, rather than saying, “Our IT department is requesting expanded video surveillance capabilities,” a stronger justification might sound something like: “To increase situational awareness, improve emergency response, and enhance the safety of personnel and visitors, we are requesting funding for upgraded surveillance cameras and video management system enhancements.” This type of statement not only shows that need, but it also connects the technology requests to the project's overall goals as well as its expected outcomes.

Involve Vendors and IT Personnel Early

Sam Rawdon:
It's also going to be important to involve vendors such as those at Genetec, as well as IT personnel, throughout the process to ensure the success of the project. One practical step is to save price quotes from Genetec or other technology providers early in this planning phase. These quotes are really going to be invaluable when developing your proposal budget, and many grant applications may actually require them as supporting documentation, so something to keep in mind. Obviously IT and vendor teams will also play a critical role in the project's design itself as well as its implementation, helping translate these technical requirements into language we can all understand, since not all of us are fluent in technical jargon. So not only helping funders understand it better, but also helping with that language of aligning with the priorities as well as the expectations of the funders.

All in all, when applying for a technology-focused grant, it's all about clearly articulating the project's need by linking that request for technology to those broader organizational or societal benefits rather than just focusing on a lack of equipment that you may have. It's about engaging IT staff and vendors early on, gathering quotes and product information, to support not only the proposal narrative but also the budget itself.

Grant-Readiness Tips: Building Partnerships

Sam Rawdon:
Now with a more comprehensive understanding of the role technology plays in a grant application or proposal, I'd like to focus on some grant-readiness tips to help you in your project development. Going to again sort of harken back to what Shannon said before about reviewing grant guidance — when reviewing any grant guidance, look for opportunities to include partnerships or collaborations, even if a grant doesn't require them. Strong partnerships can really enhance your proposal by expanding the impact as well as the reach of your project.

Recruit these partners early on in the process so that they can actively contribute to the planning and the implementation of the project itself. Any partners that are involved late in this process will make

coordination a little bit harder and less effective. So get them on early for sure. Use this early engagement to establish memorandums of understanding, or MOUs, or letters of support. Really, it's about framing partnerships collaboratively. Rather than focusing on “What can you do for us?” it's better to reframe it as, “What can we achieve together? What do we bring to the table that we can all contribute so that the project is impactful and meaningful?”

Examples of Strong Partnerships

Sam Rawdon:
For example, if you are with a school district and you're looking into a school security initiative, involve school administrators, local law enforcement, parent-teacher associations, and community mental health organizations right from the start. Together you could develop something like emergency response protocols. You could implement safety training programs, or coordinate on mental health support services. Ultimately, this is showing a funder that you have a comprehensive as well as a collaborative approach to keeping students and staff safe.

Another example: if you're looking to implement a public safety project for a community crime reduction initiative, this could involve local law enforcement, possibly neighborhood associations, maybe even social services agencies — getting them on board from the start, which could mean jointly developing outreach programs, sharing data for targeted intervention, or coordinating safety workshops. All of this is going to demonstrate that united, community-focused approach within your proposal.

When preparing a grant application or proposal, look for those opportunities to highlight those partnerships. They can really strengthen your proposal by broadening that impact and that reach. Engage partners early to involve them in the planning, get those supporting documents that I mentioned previously, and frame any collaboration around shared goals instead of having just those one-sided benefits.

Building Strong Relationships with Foundations

Sam Rawdon:
As Shannon mentioned earlier, the federal funding landscape continues to be a little bit uncertain, with anything from shifting priorities to delayed appropriations, which is understandable. It's made a lot of organizations hesitant to pursue federal — and in some cases, maybe even some state grant funding right now. But foundation funding remains comparatively stable and responsive, which does make it a valuable and strategic avenue to look into a bit further. So with that in mind, it's going to be important to highlight some key practices for building strong and lasting relationships with foundations.

Mission Alignment First

Sam Rawdon:
We always begin by emphasizing mission alignment. Foundations want to know that we're not just seeking funding, but that we share their values as well as their long-term goals. When our outreach focuses on that genuine partnership rather than just the dollars, this is going to set the tone for a more collaborative relationship with them.

Communicate Clearly and Respect Their Time

Sam Rawdon:
We also keep our communication with them relatively straightforward and respectful of their time. Typically, foundations may not have the sizable staff that a state or federal agency that Shannon mentioned earlier might have. This may mean providing very concise summaries of your project, providing one or two very clear and succinct questions, and trying to stay away from any overly complicated requests. Since Shannon mentioned that sometimes award sizes may not be as big as a federal or a state grant, foundations do appreciate it when we get to the point and make these interactions more efficient.

Transparency Builds Credibility

Sam Rawdon:
Transparency is going to build credibility. It's important to highlight successes, yes, with a foundation, but we also want to be honest about any challenges that your organization might have had when it comes to implementing a program — what sort of outcomes you've had in the past, as well as acknowledging any lessons learned. This kind of openness with them is going to demonstrate that integrity, and it's really going to help foundations build trust with you so that they know that you are going to utilize their resources for that community or greater good.

Stay Engaged Year-Round

Sam Rawdon:
It's also going to be making sure that the relationship that you've built with them doesn't just end after you are awarded funding. Staying connected with them year-round could include quick updates on progress of the program that you've implemented that they've helped fund, and updates on the impact as well. This is going to show a foundation that their investment is really continuing to make that difference, and that we are committed to that ongoing partnership.

Let's say you're thinking of approaching a local community foundation that focuses on youth mental health. Open the conversation with them, maybe by highlighting that shared commitment to supporting teens through accessible mental health programming. Then sending a short, maybe two-paragraph

overview of what project you're looking at, rather than overwhelming them with a 20-page proposal, and providing maybe one or two key clarifying questions to truly understand a good fit with the foundation. When you're talking about past programs that you've implemented or any initiatives that you've had in the past, acknowledge maybe there was a pilot program that had lower participation than you had expected. Just briefly explain why it didn't work out as well as you had intended, and share any kind of adjustments that you had made to the program. If the foundation awarded you with that funding, sending maybe brief quarterly updates — maybe it doesn't even have to be quarterly, it could just be a few times a year — with any key metrics that you've recorded that you could share with them, and then maybe even a short story or a short testimonial from a participant of your project will really keep the foundation connected to that impact.

Thinking about it, we build strong foundation relationships by, again, leading with that mission alignment and that authentic partnership. It's all about communicating clearly and concisely, maintaining transparency about not only the successes that you've had but also the challenges that you have faced, and then continuing that engagement year-round so that the relationship will extend well beyond the grant itself.

Making Your Proposal More Competitive

Sam Rawdon:
Closing things out, these are going to be some helpful but crucial tips for making your grant proposal more competitive.

Focus on the Project, Not the Product

Sam Rawdon:
First, I've said it before, I'll say it again: grants fund projects, not just products. So instead of simply telling a funder what you need, explain why you need it. A strong needs statement is going to start with what your project goal is, and then identifying those resources that are required to achieve it. So essentially it's like putting the project first and the product second. Rather than saying something like, “Oh, we need $10,000 for radios,” frame it as: “To improve emergency response times in our community, we need $10,000 to equip first responders with interoperable radios and training, enabling faster and coordinated action during incidents,” or something along those lines.

Read the Guidance Carefully

Sam Rawdon:
Shannon has said it, so I will echo her statement: read the guidance carefully. Remember that grants are investments, as Shannon said — it is not exactly free money. Funders do expect a clear return on

investment through both application requirements as well as post-award obligations. Enter that process fully informed so that you're avoiding any unnecessary surprises later. For example, if a funder is requiring a detailed risk assessment or quarterly incident reports, make sure that your proposal includes both of those rather than just assuming that a standard plan is going to be enough. Read into it carefully, know what to expect.

Use SMART Goals

Sam Rawdon:
Additionally, use SMART goals. If you're unfamiliar with the acronym, SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-focused, and Time-bound. When you are framing your proposal, having clear and well-defined objectives demonstrates that you are serious about the project and applying for the funding, and it's also going to set a strong foundation for project success.

Seek Objective Feedback Before Submitting

Sam Rawdon:
Finally, it's really good to seek objective feedback before submitting. After working on a project for weeks, maybe even months, it may be easy to overlook errors or typos, unclear language, or acronyms — or there may even be some missing elements to it. So having that fresh set of eyes can really catch these issues, strengthen the clarity of your proposal, and ultimately improve your proposal's chances of success. Have a colleague that's outside of your department review the proposal, because they may catch some of that uncleared jargon — like what an ICR is, or incident command response. Funders may not know what that is, or they may notice gaps in an emergency preparedness plan, for example.

When writing a proposal, focus on the project, not just the product. Explain why those resources are needed to achieve those specific goals. Follow the funder guidance carefully, recognize that grants are investments with outcomes reporting or risk assessments, utilize those SMART goals to make these objectives not only actionable but also very clear, and then get that objective feedback for catching any errors or clarifying jargon before you submit.

With that, I'm now going to turn things over to Jeanne Smith to talk about the Genetec Grant Support Program. Jeanne?

The Genetec Grant Support Program

Jeanne Smith:
Thank you, Sam. Thank you, everyone, for attending today's webinar, and thank you, Shannon and Sam, for all that great information. As Michael said at the beginning of today's presentation, my name's

Jeanne Smith. I'm the Program Manager for Genetec's Grants and Contracts office. I'm going to take a few minutes to tell you about our grants program.

Program Overview

Jeanne Smith:
The Genetec Grant Support team is now into our fourth year in partnership with Grants Office. You heard from two of my partners on this webinar today. I'm very happy to say this partnership has helped our customers procure more than $20 million in grant awards thus far, providing information about grants and customized research, identifying available grant funding, and for those who've needed it, we've also consulted with them on project ideas and provided grant application assistance. Whatever level of assistance is required for customers seeking to fund Genetec solutions, these services are all provided at no cost and paid for by Genetec.

Who Is Eligible

Jeanne Smith:
Grants are available for publicly funded agencies and nonprofit organizations across the United States. The list you see on your screen is not exhaustive by any means — education, law enforcement, states, municipalities, healthcare, transportation. Any agency you can think of that's not-for-profit, there is funding out there. The one exception I can think of is the federal government, and I only mention them because I have had federal agencies reach out and ask about grant funding, and I've had to tell them they already received taxpayer dollars. It's called their budget. But if you are anyone else in the public sector, you are eligible.

That does not mean, however, that you're eligible for all grants. Grants can be viewed as different pots of money that are allocated for different purposes. Shannon talked to you about competitive versus formula grants. Eligibility can be determined by needs, by type of agency, geographic location, intended outcome, population, or any combination of these factors. Regardless of the grant opportunities you qualify for, however, if you are seeking funding for a technology-rich project that includes a substantive Genetec component, the Genetec Grant Support team is here to help you. And as I said earlier, this assistance is available at no cost to you.

What This Assistance Includes

Jeanne Smith:
What is this assistance? Working with Grants Office, our team provides funder prospecting, which is a fancy way of saying a Grants Development Consultant will provide the best-fit grants for you and your project using the Grants Office database of tens of thousands of available grants. From this research, you'll receive a customized report that you can use as a tool in your grant seeking and selection. Our

team also provides grant readiness coaching, consultation on your specific project, and assistance with developing and strengthening your grant proposals.

How the Process Works

Jeanne Smith:
If this sounds like a lot, don't worry, because we have developed a very simple step-by-step process. The first step is to complete and submit the Information Collection Tool, which is available by scanning the QR code on your screen, or you may request a link to the form via email from grantsoffice@genetec.com. The tool itself is short and really simple, and takes less than about 10 minutes to complete. We ask for contact information and a little bit about your technology needs and the problems you're trying to solve.

When you're filling out the form, keep in mind — and this is something that Sam hammered home to you, I think, several times in the presentation — grants tend to fund societal benefits rather than specific technology. So jot down the outcomes you hope to achieve. No matter what your intended outcome is — it could be a reduction in school or community violence, it could be improved law enforcement response time to an incident, or an increase in the prosecution of crime — you'll need to be able to show how the technology you're seeking will further that outcome. So no one's looking for cameras or access control for the sake of owning the technology, no matter how cool the technology is. And Genetec's technology is cutting-edge — it's pretty cool stuff. But why do you need the technology in the first place? That's your outcome.

Once you fill out the ICT as thoroughly as possible, you use the submit button at the bottom of the form to send it to the Genetec Grant Support team, and we'll review it and send it to Grants Office, and they can get started on your report. Your ICT is assigned to a Grants Development Consultant who is an expert in your particular area or industry. The consultant will take the information from the ICT and develop a customized report of best-fit funding opportunities based not just on who you are and what you do, but your project outcomes, the technology you want to purchase to reach those outcomes, the size of your project, and your location.

Once the report's ready, we'll send it to you and schedule a 30-minute call to review the identified grant funding opportunities with you. We'll discuss ways to hone your project to ensure it's a good fit with the identified opportunities, and we'll make sure that your outcomes align with funder priorities — that's something that Sam discussed with you right toward the end of his presentation, very important. And then we'll talk with you about next steps. Customer participation is key in these calls and throughout the application process. That's the key to success.

If you have a lot of grants experience, just not enough time to look for the grants themselves, your support could begin and end with the identification of grant funding sources. In other words, you may

just need the report. And if that's all you need, that's fine. You may want to go through the first call with us and take it from there. But support can run the gamut. For instance, you can ask for grant coaching and help with grant selection, or assistance with responding to Notice of Funding Opportunities, or perhaps you need assistance with proposal writing or with review and editing of your grant application.

As long as you remain committed and actively engaged, we'll supply as much or as little support as you need. As the applicant, you as a customer have to submit your own application, but our team is happy to provide any guidance you might need on the process, up to and including sitting with you on a Teams call as you submit your application if that's what you need. And if you think you'd be the first to ask us to do that, I promise you you wouldn't. We will track all applications to award and be with you to answer questions along the way. And hopefully we will be the first to celebrate with you when you are successful. That's our process. So thanks so much for allowing me to speak with you today. If you have any questions, feel free to put them in the chat. Now, Michael, I'll turn this back over to you.

Q&A Session

Michael Paddock:
Thanks very much, Jeanne. Great information. Thanks very much for sharing that. I'm going to go back to the screen you had — the Genetec QR code there to access support from the Genetec Grant Support Program. We don't have a lot of time, so I'm just going to go ahead and answer the first question. I answered in the Q&A one of the questions about what is a listserv.

Q1: Do you have suggestions for connecting with foundations that are invitation-only and do not accept unsolicited proposals?

Michael Paddock:
It's not that unusual — happens. Two quick ideas there. One is to send a letter describing your project to the foundation and just ask if they would have an interest. They'll reach back out to you if they do. The other is personal contacts. There is information in Grants Office Communities about contacts, so if you haven't been to Grants Office Communities, check it out about the contacts that are available. Going through the Genetec Grant Support Program, we can also provide that information to you — contacts at the foundations that you can reach out to. Either way, it's really about just quickly summarizing your project and asking if the foundation might have an interest. If they do, they'll reach back out to you.

Closing

Michael Paddock:
Those are all the questions we had. I want to thank our presenters for sharing their knowledge and insights with us today — Jeanne Smith, Program Manager for Grants and Contracts from Genetec,

Shannon Day, Senior Grants Development Consultant here at Grants Office, and Sam Rawdon, Grants Development Associate here at Grants Office — and all of you for your participation in today's session. Huge thanks to Genetec for sponsoring today's session and again making it possible for us to bring you this information. I hope you found this a valuable use of your time, and we'll look forward to seeing you again on a future webcast. Have a great day, everybody.

— End of Transcript —

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