State-Level Safety: Grant Funding Options Colleges and Universities Should Consider

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Welcome and Introductions

Michael Paddock:

Hello, everyone, and thanks for joining us for State-Level Safety: Grant Funding Options Colleges and Universities Should Consider. I'm Michael Paddock, CEO of Grants Office, and I want to welcome everyone to today's session. It's a bit of a niche session, a little bit more specific than we sometimes get, but it should have some really good information for colleges and universities in particular, and maybe something actionable for you. Before we get too far into it, 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. We'll hear more from Genetec as we go through, but big thanks to Genetec for sponsoring today's session. I'm not going to run through the housekeeping items, because I think, while you were in the waiting area, you probably saw some of the housekeeping. Just to let you know, the session is being recorded, and the replay will be available about an hour or so after the session ends. There's also a resources page that's already up and live and will be available to you with additional resources, and we'll talk about that as well.

Okay, so what are we talking about today? We're talking about state-level grants, specifically for colleges and universities. It's easy to get kind of laser-focused on the two sides of state grants. There are federal grants — for research projects, for big infrastructure projects, for Strengthening Institutions Program, or SIP, funds — the big federal grants that are out there. They're millions of dollars and they're very attractive, and when the college wins it, it's a big win for the school. And then you have foundation grants, where, in particular with local foundations, you're making a case. Those grants tend to be smaller, but the foundations are more locally responsive, and you potentially have a whole team of people who are going after foundation grants for that purpose. State grants are kind of somewhere in the middle. They are more locally oriented than federal grants, for sure, and they tend to be larger than foundation grants. But they also have a defined goal, a defined objective, and a defined process, more so than a lot of foundation grants do. So they're kind of somewhere in the middle, and there is a lot of state funding that is available.

We'll talk a little bit about that. It's hard to determine exactly how much state funding is available. Some of it comes from federal agencies and is passed through the states. Some of it is initiated by the states. So it's a bit of a mix of different kinds of sources, different kinds of processes, and so on, and that's why we're having this conversation today. Then we're going to talk a little bit about the Genetec Grants Support Program and how you can get access to free support and resources through the Genetec team. Grants Office is very happy to be a part of the Genetec Grants Support Team, providing research and consultative support services under the Genetec program.

So without further ado, I'm going to introduce you to our panelists today. We've got Jeanne Smith, Program Manager for Grants and Contracts at Genetec, and Dr. Marc Smithers, Grants Development Associate here at Grants Office. Welcome to our panelists. They've got a lot of great information to share with you over the next little while, and we'll look forward to their presentations. One more point I want to make: if you have questions, feel free to submit those in the chat, and we'll get to as many questions as we can over the course of today's session. I want to make sure that you know you can submit those questions in the chat, and we'll get to them as we go through. Okay, with that, I'm going to turn it over to Marc Smithers to get us started. Marc?

Why State Grants Deserve Consideration

Marc Smithers:

Thanks, Michael, and thanks, everybody, for being here today. As Michael said, state grants can be one of the areas of grantseeking that's sort of overlooked, and so one of the things that we hope this session provides you with is some very actionable items that you can take back to your universities so that you can find some great opportunities for you. But as we get started, I think it's helpful to first talk about why state grants are something that deserve maybe some extra consideration.

Federal Funding Realities

When considering grant opportunities specifically for security technology, there aren't an abundance of options out there for higher education institutions to consider, particularly at the federal level. The primary areas that the federal government tends to fund at colleges and universities, as Michael said, are typically in areas like student learning or faculty research or workforce development. Looking at the most recent programs that agencies like the Department of Education have released, such as the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, or the most recent programs that were funded from the Higher Education Act, like, as Michael said, the Strengthening Institutions Program, you'll see that money is really going toward improving the educational experience or improving employment outcomes. There are not a lot of programs out there to explicitly fund technology, and even fewer that are interested in funding security technology just by itself.

A big reason why that is, is because security is seen almost as a kind of unfunded mandate — a piece of the student experience that's generally expected to be provided by colleges and universities through things like top-of-the-line security cameras or access control systems that can lock a campus down in the event of a security threat. These types of systems are expected to largely be provided by the colleges and universities themselves out of their own budgets, rather than seen as a benefit that the wider society should provide through grants or federal or state appropriations. Yet, as someone who worked in higher education for 14 years, I know full well that these kinds of technology solutions are not cheap, and those that are are not often worth investing in at all. Colleges and universities need to invest in worthwhile security technology to provide the kind of learning environment that students need to thrive and grow.

The reality is, though, that there just aren't many federal opportunities to turn to that provide the funding needed for these investments. The Office on Violence Against Women does offer one program that's specifically for campuses to consider, and we've actually done a previous webinar on that, which I would encourage you to view if you're interested. But beyond this one program, there's not much from federal sources that can be used for security technology. Now, that doesn't mean institutions should not look for grant funding. What it means is that they need to expand the scope of where they're looking, and that's where state opportunities become much more important.

Why You Should Consider State Opportunities

Even though there still are not a huge number of state-funded campus safety programs available, the ones that do emerge often have characteristics that make them very attractive for colleges and universities to consider. The first reason is they can be more responsive to regional needs. States are often under pressure to respond to concerns that are raised by their own communities, their school districts, their colleges, their local governments. If a state has experienced a particular safety issue, whether that's campus violence or emergency communications challenges or natural disasters, it can move much more quickly to create a targeted funding opportunity than a federal agency typically can.

The second reason these can be good ones to consider is that these opportunities do tend to have shorter application windows and award timelines as well. Many state opportunities are not as lengthy or complex as federal applications, and that makes them a particularly good entry point for institutions that are newer to grantseeking. In many cases, the time between submitting an application and receiving an award decision can be several months shorter than what you would normally see with a federal program, meaning that you could potentially get your funding much faster than you would from a federal program.

The third reason to consider them is because state opportunities can often be more technology-focused than technology-friendly. What I mean by that is that federal programs may list security technology as

an allowable expense, but recent state-funded campus security programs have actually called out things like access control systems and video surveillance and emergency notification systems and other technology investments as stated priorities for funding. That's a meaningful difference, because it tells applicants that the technology itself is not just permitted; it's something that the state is actively interested in supporting. The fourth reason to consider them is that these opportunities generally have less competition and more relevant peer pools. So instead of competing against institutions from across the country, applicants are generally competing only with the colleges and universities that are within their own state. Reviewers are also more likely to be familiar with the institutions that are applying and the challenges that those institutions face, giving them a clearer understanding of the exact need.

The Potential Drawbacks of State Opportunities

Now, as with most things in grantseeking, every advantage comes with a trade-off, and I don't share these drawbacks to discourage you from pursuing state opportunities. Understanding these challenges ahead of time, instead, can help you submit stronger applications, because you'll know where reviewers are likely to be looking for a compelling case. So with that first point, of states being more responsive to regional needs, there are some benefits to that, but that responsiveness can sometimes lead to what can be called a squeaky wheel syndrome. If a particular issue receives a lot of media attention or legislative interest one year, funding may quickly become available to address it. And that's great, right? It meets that need right away, very quickly. But if attention shifts to another issue the following year — and this often happens — that funding opportunity may disappear just as quickly. So the lesson here is essentially just to be prepared when a state announces a program that aligns with your needs. Don't assume that it will come around again next year.

Second, the shorter applications and award timelines obviously are great benefits to new grantseekers, but this can also give you less room to tell your story. Instead of having 10 or 15 pages to explain your need, to explain your project and your institution and its unique characteristics, you might only have a few pages, or maybe even just a few hundred words. That means that every sentence has to work all the harder to make your case. Your data needs to be more organized, your need needs to be more clearly defined, and your project needs to be maybe even more well thought out before you ever begin writing than in some of those contests where you have larger spaces to make your case.

Third, while it's encouraging that many state programs explicitly fund security technology, there's a flip side to that also. Technology projects often receive funding because they're tied to a specific appropriation or a response to specific recent events. And once those systems have been installed across the state, unfortunately, lawmakers then often shift their attention, and ultimately their funding priorities, to whatever the next emerging concern is. In other words, these opportunities can be really

excellent when they appear and meet a need right in that moment, but they may not be recurring. It's just another reason to be ready when they become available.

And finally, while competing only against institutions in your own state may sound like an advantage, it also means you're competing against organizations that have very similar needs. Many colleges are looking for the same types of projects, which include things like security cameras and access control and emergency communications, and reviewers might read dozens of proposals that essentially sound very alike. The institutions that stand out, then, are the ones that can clearly demonstrate why their situation is unique. Strong vulnerability assessments, meaningful campus data, and well-developed partnerships then become the factors that separate a good proposal from an even better one that gets funded.

Now, these aren't ultimately reasons to avoid state opportunities, but rather, I share them to make sure that you understand them, so that you can take advantage of them and ensure that you're prepared in advance. The more work you do before the application is released, the easier it becomes to overcome these challenges and distinguish your proposal from everyone else's. The reason that understanding these drawbacks is important is because understanding the funding landscape is valuable in itself. Knowing where opportunities exist is important, but understanding the challenges that come with those opportunities is ultimately what helps you become a stronger grantseeker. Knowing the drawbacks of state opportunities — they aren't reasons for you to avoid them; they're tools to help you better prepare for them. The more work you do before the application is released, the easier it becomes to overcome these challenges and ultimately to distinguish your proposal from everyone else's.

For example, if you know you'll have a very limited space for your project narrative, you'll know you need to spend time ahead of the application collecting data and refining your needs statement. If you know you'll be competing against institutions with similar projects, you'll know you need to invest in a stronger vulnerability assessment and to think really carefully about what makes your campus unique. If you know these opportunities may only come around once, you'll know you need to have budgets and partnerships and project plans that are ready, so you can respond quickly instead of scrambling once the notice is released. The institutions, again, that are most successful aren't necessarily the ones with the best writers; they're the ones that have already done the thinking, they've gathered their evidence, and they've built the relationships long before the application opens.

Where State Grants for Campus Safety Are Found

So this is why you should consider state opportunities, but a question you might be asking yourself is where state grants for campus safety are found. It's important to prepare, but it's important to know how to prepare, and that starts with knowing how to find the right opportunities. Now, hopefully it's obvious that one of the first steps you should take — I didn't even write this down — is to know what

higher education funding looks like in your state, and ultimately what agency is the largest funder of these. Now, the way these are organized differs state to state. Sometimes they're funded through a standalone agency, maybe called a department of higher education or a higher education agency. But sometimes this is housed within a larger department of education that has both postsecondary education under it and elementary and high school education under it as well. So know how this is organized in your state, and know how and where they post their grant opportunities.

Look Beyond Higher Education Agencies

One of the biggest mistakes I see institutions make, though, is limiting their search just to these higher education agencies. While those agencies certainly administer important funding opportunities, many campus safety grants actually come from agencies whose primary mission isn't higher education at all. For example, if you're looking at physical security or emergency preparedness projects, your state's homeland security agency could be a great place to start. Many of these agencies oversee programs that help organizations strengthen their security posture. The New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, for example — they're the office that administers the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, and this is one of those programs that Michael had mentioned that's actually a federal pass-through program. It funds the purchase and installation of security equipment for organizations that are considered at risk. Private universities in New Jersey are eligible recipients of funds from this program.

Similarly, emergency management agencies can be another excellent resource. Their focus tends to be on things like preparedness, emergency response, and resilience through natural disasters, and so it's not uncommon to see funding that supports campus emergency planning, or coordination with first responders, or support for victim services funded through that office. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, for example, has in the past administered a Campus Sexual Assault Program, and that funds campus response teams and law enforcement coordination and counseling services. Another type of agency to watch is your state's law enforcement or criminal justice agency. These agencies often receive federal pass-through dollars, just like the homeland security agencies that I mentioned before. They also can receive state appropriations that they distribute through competitive grant programs, though. An example of this would be Tennessee's Office of Criminal Justice Programs, which a few years ago offered a Higher Education Safety Grant that funded security equipment, technology, and training that was designed to improve campus safety and response capabilities.

Now, these are just three examples, and these programs aren't necessarily even offered every year. And these agencies are certainly not the only agencies worth monitoring. Depending on your state and the type of project you're proposing, you may also want to become familiar with agencies that are focused on public safety, public transportation, information technology, behavioral health, or even just general infrastructure. The important takeaway from this is: don't let the name of the agency determine from

the outset whether you think funding is going to be relevant to higher education. Instead, think about the problem the agency is trying to solve. If your project helps address that problem, there may be an opportunity worth pursuing. Now, a big part of the Genetec Grants Support Program is actually helping you find these kinds of opportunities, and I'll let Jeanne get into that later on.

Three Levels of Staying Current

One of the key ways to being competitive in these kinds of opportunities is simply by staying up to date on what's happening in your state. Three practical ways that you can stay current on state grant opportunities are these increasing levels of awareness, I call them. You don't need to do all of them at once, and you don't even need to do all of them, but each one can help you become more informed and ultimately better prepared when relevant funding's announced. The first level is just simply becoming familiar with the agencies in your state that might fund safety or security or just higher education initiatives in general. Visit their websites, sign up for their newsletters — sometimes they have listservs — and just periodically check their funding pages. The goal here is not to become an expert. The Genetec Grants Support Program is where we bring the expertise. Rather, this step helps you know where to look for news and, ultimately, who the major players are.

The second level, if you want to get more advanced, is to create a simple monitoring routine and to stay current with news from these agencies. So just set aside a few minutes each month to review agency announcements, press releases, funding updates. You can also follow relevant agencies or professional associations, either in your state or in your region, because they tend to regularly share grant information. This helps you ensure opportunities don't catch you completely by surprise, but it also just gives you a wider sense of the kinds of conversations and priorities that these agencies are having.

The third level, if you want to be truly an expert in this space, is to pay attention to broader state priorities, and you can even start tracking where money's going. Watch for public discussions at the state level around campus safety or emergency preparedness or other issues that you feel like might lead to future funding. You don't need to become a policy analyst — again, this is where the Grants Support Program comes in. Rather, the goal is simply to develop an awareness of where attention and investment may be heading. Ultimately, the institutions that are most successful are the ones that have stayed engaged and informed over time, rather than just looking for grants when an urgent need arises.

Think Outside the Box

Before moving on to considering the programs themselves, I'd like to leave you with one final thought about finding opportunities. Don't limit yourself by thinking too narrowly about what a higher education safety grant should look like. Remember to think outside the box, to open yourselves to more unconventional state opportunities. Consider partnerships with other institutions. If colleges and

universities across your region are facing similar challenges, there might be some opportunities to collaborate on planning and training and information sharing or regional preparedness efforts. Even if the grant doesn't require a partnership, demonstrating collaboration can nearly always strengthen your proposal.

Also, don't overlook programs that are open to all nonprofits or public-serving institutions. Many state security grants aren't written specifically for colleges and universities, but that doesn't necessarily mean you're ineligible. If your institution meets the eligibility requirements and your project aligns with the funder's goals, it's worth taking a closer look. Finally, think about security-adjacent opportunities. Not every grant that improves campus safety has the word safety in the title. Programs that are focused on emergency preparedness, mental health, violence prevention, behavioral threat assessments, public health, or critical infrastructure — all of these can and have supported projects that ultimately make your campus safer. Sometimes the best funding opportunity isn't the one that seems like the most obvious fit. The more flexible you are in how you think about funding opportunities, the more doors you'll ultimately open for your institution.

Common Elements: Comparing State Opportunities

Five State Program Examples

So let's look at some specific program examples that can help further illustrate these suggestions a bit more. I've pulled five different state opportunities that have funded security technology at colleges and universities. Now, I'm not going to spend a great deal of time on each individual program, because my goal ultimately isn't for you to memorize these opportunities. Plus, we have folks here from many different states, from both public and private institutions, so we can't possibly cover all potential opportunities and eligibilities. Instead, I want you to start recognizing the different ways that states approach campus safety funding. So, as you'll notice, some of these programs are written specifically for colleges and universities. I've already mentioned Tennessee's Higher Education Safety Grant, but there's also Maryland's Campus Safety Grant.

These are both good examples of states that created funding opportunities specifically for higher education institutions and campus safety. Other states, though, take a much broader approach. New York's Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes program, for example, is open to a much wider range of nonprofit organizations, but colleges and universities may still be eligible applicants depending on their circumstances and mission. That's exactly why I encourage institutions not to limit themselves only to grants that have higher education in the title.

Of these examples, I want to specifically draw your attention to Ohio's, because I feel like that program provides one of the more interesting case studies, in that it demonstrates just how quickly state priorities can evolve. Throughout the many different cycles that they've run for this program, its priorities and eligibilities have changed. One year it was available only to public institutions of higher education. The following year, eligibility was expanded to include both public and private colleges and universities. And now, in its most recent iteration, the program shifted again and focused specifically on security upgrades for student organizations rather than campuses as a whole. Nothing about the need for campus safety changed dramatically during that period, but the state's priorities did. That's a really important lesson for grantseekers. Don't assume that because you weren't eligible one year, you won't be eligible the next. Likewise, don't assume that a program will continue to look exactly the same from one funding cycle to another.

States regularly adjust eligibilities and priorities, allowable expenses, and available funding based on the legislative direction and emerging needs that they are sensing.

I also want to point out something else that you'll notice in this chart. Some of the programs I'm including haven't been offered each year. Some, like the Oklahoma program, have not been offered since 2023. At first glance, that might make it seem outdated, but I actually think it's one of the best illustrations of why preparation matters. This particular program received its appropriation — its funding — from the Oklahoma state legislature on July 1, 2023. Applications were released September 1 of that year, and then they were due at the end of that month, September 30, 2023. In other words, if institutions weren't aware of these appropriations that were made in July of that year, colleges and universities would have had just one month to identify a project, to gather partners, to develop a budget, secure approvals, and ultimately to submit a competitive application.

Think about the timing for a moment. If that program, or a program in your state, were to follow that same schedule, but this year, funding would be appropriated tomorrow, and then you would have to create a competitive project, develop that, and submit it within the next three months. And that is if you were keeping up on state funding news. If you didn't know about it, you probably wouldn't hear about it until late August, if not early September. There simply wouldn't be enough time to just start from scratch. The institutions in the strongest position would be the ones that have already completed their vulnerability assessments. They've already identified project priorities, they've talked with campus partners, and they've developed preliminary budgets before the opportunity was ever announced. And that's really the point of showing you these examples. They're not just examples of state programs; they're examples of how quickly these opportunities can appear, evolve, and then disappear. The institutions that consistently compete well have prepared long before the application was even released.

Three Themes in State-Run Security Programs

So I've noticed that, in reviewing the vast state landscape of security funding for campuses, available opportunities generally fall into three broad categories or themes. Understanding these themes can help you expand your search and better align your projects with the types of funding that states are actually offering. The first category that available opportunities tend to fall within is what I'd call campus security enhancement programs. These are the opportunities that many of us immediately think of when we hear "campus safety grant." Their primary purpose is to fund physical security improvements — things like access control systems or security cameras, lighting, or other technology that directly enhances campus safety. The challenge is that these programs are relatively uncommon. Many states don't offer them every year. Instead, they may appear every few years or be funded as one-time pilot initiatives or legislative appropriations. The School and Campus Safety and Security Grant from Oklahoma, which I just mentioned, is a great example of this type of program.

The second category focuses on protecting targeted or at-risk groups. These programs may still fund many of the same security enhancements, but eligibility is driven by who the organization serves, rather than simply the type of institution it is. New York's Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes program is a great example. The goal isn't just to improve security broadly; it's to help organizations that may be at greater risk because of their mission or the populations they serve. If your institution qualifies under programs like these, they can represent an excellent funding opportunity that many colleges and universities overlook.

The third category includes programs that are aimed at preventing or responding to relationship violence crimes. These would be crimes like sexual assault and domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. These programs tend to emphasize prevention and victim services and campus response and coordination with local law enforcement, and they emphasize those more than physical security technology. That's partly because the federal Office on Violence Against Women, which I mentioned earlier, already provides a dedicated campus grant program, so relatively few states have developed their own programs in this area. One state, Pennsylvania, offers a program called It's On Us, and that's a good example of how states are investing in this type of prevention education and campus support services. The reason I wanted to highlight these three themes is that they demonstrate an important point: not every security-related grant looks the same. Some programs fund technology directly, some focus on protecting vulnerable populations, and others prioritize prevention and victim support.

The more broadly you can think about your institution's needs, then, and how you can align them with state priorities, the more opportunities you're likely to find.

Tips to Improve Your Grantseeking Readiness

Five Steps to Prepare for the Next Program

So now that you know a little bit about the kinds of grants that are offered — I've talked a lot about how to prepare in advance — I want to give you some actual tips that you can take home and start using right away that'll improve your grantseeking readiness. These are five practical things that I think are really, really important to becoming more grant-ready, and none of these require an active funding opportunity, and that's exactly the point. The best time to prepare a grant proposal is before the application is released. First, conduct a vulnerability assessment. As we've discussed throughout today's webinar, many state programs require one, and most will accept assessments that have been completed within the previous three years. Even if an assessment isn't required, though, they can be one of the strongest ways to help you identify and document your institution's needs before you even begin writing. It helps you focus your efforts on documented needs and steps that you can take to address them. It helps you organize the parameters of your project.

Second, work on building a grantseeking team now, before any programs are announced. Most programs that fund campus security technology require at least a few offices to coordinate on that project. Typically this will involve folks from your campus security office or IT or student affairs. So don't wait for a program to be announced to then start building your team. Connect with folks in these offices now and get ahead of the game. Third, secure leadership approval and buy-in early. One of the biggest mistakes I see is grantseekers developing an excellent project, and then at the end they discover that campus leadership isn't prepared to support it. This is especially true with some federal programs that carry some law enforcement requirements that some institutions are not comfortable supporting. At the end of the day, remember, grants are awarded to institutions, not to individuals. And so the earlier that you involve the decision makers — the ones who make decisions on behalf of the institution the funds would be awarded to — the smoother your project development process will be.

Fourth, as a preparatory exercise, I'd encourage you to try writing a brief needs statement. Now, this doesn't have to be polished. It certainly doesn't have to sound like something that you'd submit in a proposal. Just put your thoughts on paper. What problem are you trying to solve? Why does it matter? Who is affected by this problem? And how would you describe the kind of project that you feel would best address that problem? Having these ideas written down gives you a tremendous head start when the application actually opens. Lastly, I'd encourage you to build partnerships before you need them. Whether that's local law enforcement, emergency management, community organizations, or even other colleges and universities, strong partnerships demonstrate that your project will have an impact beyond your own campus. They also make it easier to secure letters of support and coordinate activities when the funding becomes available. A sample letter of support is actually included in our free white

paper resource that you'll receive for attending today's webinar. So this is a helpful way to start this process before a program opens.

When a Program Is Announced

All right, so let's assume all of your preparation has paid off. You've been monitoring your state agencies, you've done your planning, and one morning you open your email and find that the grant opportunity you've been waiting for has finally been announced. What do you do next? Well, the first step is to bring your team together. Again, grants are rarely successful when one person tries to do everything themselves. Inform the people who will help to implement this project and bring them in: campus security, facilities, IT, finance, procurement, leadership, or even external partners. Getting everyone involved early helps identify challenges before they become problems, and it ensures that everyone understands their role in the project. Next — and I would say, as you're doing the first step, also make sure you're confirming your eligibility.

This sounds like one of the simplest steps, but it is surprising how often institutions invest time in an application or planning only to discover that they don't meet basic eligibility requirements. So just take a few minutes when the program opens and carefully review who can apply, what projects are eligible, see if there are any matching fund requirements that might be a burden for your institution to meet, and whether there are any restrictions on allowable costs.

Once you've confirmed you're eligible and you've brought your team together, I'd encourage you to ask yourself a tough question first: Are we competitive? Read the funding announcement carefully and compare your project against the program's priorities. If the state is emphasizing physical security improvements and training, but your proposal really only focuses on physical security improvements, you might need to rethink your approach and build some training aspects into your proposal. From there, backwards-map your timeline. Don't just focus on the due date; focus on everything that has to happen before that date. This means building in time for collecting quotes for technology, obtaining leadership approvals and signatures, writing and revising the proposal — revision is really important — gathering those letters of support, and building in some time to address any unexpected delays. The earlier you establish internal deadlines, the less stressful the final week will be.

Finally, if at all possible, have someone outside your project team review the proposal before you submit it. A fresh set of eyes can identify unclear language, unanswered questions, or places where you've assumed the reviewer knows more than they actually do. External reviews are actually something that's already built into the Genetec Grants Support Program, which is free for Genetec customers. We can also help you map out proposal development timelines, confirm your eligibility for programs, and much more. And here's where I want to let Jeanne talk a bit more about this value-add program that's offered through Genetec. Before passing it to her, I want to just again remind you to take

full advantage of the workbook that will be available for download through your participation in this webinar. It has a lot of great resources to help you plan out in advance, before a program is announced, the things that were covered in today's webinar. So take full advantage of that, and I'll pass things over to Jeanne.

More About the Genetec Grants Support Team

Jeanne Smith:

Thanks so much, Marc. That was a lot of great information. You and I have worked together for several years now, and I have to admit I've learned quite a few things from you today, so I hope everyone else did too. Good afternoon to everyone, and thank you so much for attending. As Michael said at the top of this webcast, my name is Jeanne Smith, and I am the Genetec Grants and Contracts Office program manager. I would like to say a big thank you to Grants Office before we go any further, for allowing Genetec to be a part of today's webcast. Grants Office has been an indispensable and fantastic partner to Genetec in our grants program. Without Grants Office, this program would not be possible.

I'd like to take just a few minutes to tell you a little bit about our program. We offer this, as Marc said, free of charge to Genetec customers, in partnership with Grants Office. I'm excited to report — I did report this last week, if anybody was on that webcast, but I'm going to repeat it, because it bears repeating — that in less than four years in our partnership with Grants Office, we have gotten more than $30 million in grant awards for Genetec customers. So a big shout-out again to Grants Office for assisting us with that big accomplishment. Nothing comes without a cost, though, so you will be required to put in work. But financially speaking, it really will not cost you a dime, and you'll have the very best grants intelligence at your fingertips, as well as grants coaching, as Marc was saying. We'll help you shape your project, offer you proposal editing and review, and quite a few other services, which I'll talk about a bit as we go through this part of the presentation, and we'll help you out as much or as little as you need.

Who Is Eligible for Grant Funding

Okay, so your first question might be whether you're eligible or not for grants, which is a good question. You can see, from the state level on down, if you work in the public sector, you're eligible to apply for grant funding. It's a pretty good bet that if you are watching this webinar today, you are part of the higher education arena, so I'm going to go out on a limb and say everybody listening to this webcast today is eligible for grant funding. That does not mean, however, that you are going to be eligible to apply for all grants. But Marc gave you some very good advice that you need to think a little bit outside the box. So, universities — there are some obvious ones, right? If it's a grant for higher education, you're going to be eligible for that grant. However, there are going to be some differences, right?

So private, nonprofit higher education institutions — well, you're going to be eligible for nonprofit grants that are out there, and you're going to want to think a little bit about, as Marc mentioned, perhaps state security grants, or your best opportunities might come from less obvious, security-adjacent grants. So you want to keep your eyes open and be aware that grants are in different buckets, and maybe the bucket you've been honed in on isn't going to be your best bet. But helping you determine which grants you're eligible to apply for is one way that our program can assist you.

Services

That part of the assistance comes from what you'll see listed on the top here: the funder prospecting report, which Grants Office provides to our customers free of charge. Like I said, it's a fancy way of saying that a grants development consultant from Grants Office will identify 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 this customized report that you can use as a tool in your grantseeking and selection. Our team also provides grants readiness coaching, consultation on your specific project, and assistance with developing and strengthening your grant proposals.

The Step-by-Step Process

All of that is part of a very simple step-by-step process, which I'll talk about now. The first step is to complete and submit what we call the Information Collection Tool, or ICT. So if you have your cameras at the ready — we're all used to taking photographs of these cute little QR codes — you can take a picture of this QR code, and this will give you access to the Information Collection Tool. Or you can request a link to the form; just send us a quick email to grantsoffice@genetec.com, and we'll get that out to you. The tool itself is really short and simple, and it takes less than 10 minutes to complete. We ask you for a bunch of contact information and a little bit about your technology needs and — very important — the problems you're trying to solve with that technology.

So when you're filling out the form, you need to keep in mind — and Marc talked to you a bit about this — the problems you're trying to solve, right? Grants tend to fund societal benefits rather than funding specific technology. So you want to jot down the outcomes that you hope to achieve. And no matter what your intended outcome is — if it's a reduction in school or community violence, or if it's improved law enforcement response time to an incident, or an increase in situational awareness — no matter what it is, you'll need to be able to show how the technology you're seeking will further that outcome. So even though, of the state grants that Marc talked about, there are some that identify technology specifically as something that they target for funding, no grant funder is going to want to fund technology for technology's sake, right? They want to know why you need that technology in the first place. You need to show that; that's your outcome. Think about Marc's needs statement that he

mentioned toward the end of his part of this presentation. Think that way. That's what you need to show — why you're asking for the funding for that technology.

So anyway, once you fill out the ICT as thoroughly as possible, you use the submit button at the bottom of the form and send it to the Genetec Grants Support Team, and we'll review it and send it to Grants Office so they can get started on your report.

Your ICT, then, will be assigned to the grants development consultant who will be an expert in your particular area or industry — in this case, higher ed. You might get Marc; we work with Marc frequently. Marc will take the information from the ICT and develop a customized report of best-fit funding opportunities, based on not just who you are and what you do, but your project outcomes and the technology you want to purchase to reach those outcomes, and also the size of your project and your location. He looks at everything. He looks at the grants landscape and bears in mind all of these things to come up with best-fit grants for you. So, once the report's ready, we'll send it to you and schedule a 30-minute consultative call to review the identified grant funding opportunities in your report. 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 the funder priorities. This will be something that Marc will have looked at as well when he's selecting these grants for you.

Oftentimes in a consultative call, things will come up. You'll say, "Well, now that we're talking about this, I think that these outcomes over here are actually more in line with what we're trying to do." If that's the case, Marc — or whoever the grants development consultant is who's worked on your report — will say, "Well, we can tweak this, right? We can go back and look at what else we have along these lines." Most often, though, they really hit the nail on the head, unless you've changed something when we're in the call, and that's fine. We can do that. So we'll make sure that your outcomes align with the funder priorities, and then we'll talk about next steps. The big thing, as you look over there in the call participants box, you'll see on the top of that list is the customer. The very important part of this call — that is you. So throughout the application process, the customer involvement is key. Make sure that you are involved in all of these calls, that you are willing to put in the work. If you do, this is a successful process.

So 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 that report. In other words, you might just need the report, right? You may go through the first call with us, but you take it from there, and that's fine. But support can run the gamut. You can ask for grant coaching and help with grant selection. We can advise you on project development. We can assist with responding to notices of funding opportunities, to the grants themselves. Perhaps you need assistance with proposal writing or with review and editing of your grant applications. You might need assistance with what material you need to gather with a particular grant in mind. Whatever it is that you need to help you provide a successful response, we're here to support. So,

as long as you remain committed and actively engaged, as I said in the last slide, we will supply as much or as little support as you need.

So that brings us to application submission. As the applicant, you must submit your own application, but that does not mean we disappear. At this point in the process, we are very happy to help you. We'll answer questions if you've never submitted an application, or if you run into a glitch, we're happy to help. We actually will sit on a Teams call with you if you need that kind of support, help you to identify glitches if you run into any, and provide whatever guidance you need to make sure that you get your application in and on time. Once it's in, we will track all applications to award, and hopefully we'll be the first ones with you to help celebrate once you receive an award. And that's it. That is the process. And now, Michael, I'm going to turn this back over to you.

Q&A Session

Michael Paddock:

Great, thanks very much, Jeanne, and thanks, Marc, for sharing your knowledge and insights with us. We have had a few questions that came in, and I want to get to as many as we can in the next couple of minutes.

Audience Questions

Q1: How can a university with little to no history of credible threats demonstrate the need for security funding?

Michael Paddock:

This one's an interesting one, and I think it probably cuts across a lot of the higher ed members of our audience today. For universities that have a need for security technology and equipment but have had little to no credible actual threats, how can we best demonstrate the need for funding?

Marc Smithers:

Yeah, that's a great question. I think there are a couple of different ways that you can go about it. Number one, you can highlight maybe the high-profile nature of some people that visit your campus. I know some campuses, depending on the size — again, this is all going to be sort of dependent on the kind of institution that's asking this — but if you host some political leaders on campus sometimes, or if you have a particular mission for serving students from underserved backgrounds or things like that, all of these things can sort of point to a need for tighter security without necessarily having to have a history of catastrophic incidents on campus or things like that. So that's one way that you could go about it.

Another way I would encourage you to maybe consider would be to, again, sort of let vulnerability assessments be the thing that really helps you understand the need that exists, because the vulnerability assessment itself is going to encourage you to think about the percentage of your campus that has video coverage, lighting — it's a way to sort of catalog all of the security mechanisms that are in place, and that will hopefully show you where some of the gaps are. From there, you also then build a case for: okay, this need exists, and this is the population that's being served through this, whether that's the students themselves or the wider community, especially if there's some coordination with local law enforcement that you could build into that project as well. That's where sort of the need exists — maybe not just within your campus but in the wider community itself. That's another avenue that you can consider. But those would be the two main things I think would be a helpful way to think about that.

Q2: What should I do if the project I have in mind will cost more than a state award?

Michael Paddock:

Okay, great. And one more question for you, Marc. It sounds like state opportunities offer smaller awards than federal ones. So what should I do if the project I have in mind will cost more than a state award?

Marc Smithers:

Yeah, that's another good question. Part of it will be dependent on how your project is conceived of. So if there's a way to piecemeal it — to focus on particular buildings rather than the campus as a whole, and do it almost in stages — that's what I would encourage people to think about. And then you could also think about maybe pulling in some development folks to see if there are any donors or foundations that they have relationships with that have a particular affinity for, whether it's a residence hall or something like that, so that instead of the grant itself needing to sort of play the entire game, they can play maybe two or three quarters, and the other quarters can be sort of covered by other sources. I think that's a good way to think about it.

Closing

Michael Paddock:

Great, got it. Well, again, I want to thank everyone for coming today. Thank our sponsor, Genetec, for sponsoring today's session and making it possible for us to bring you this information, and our presenters, Jeanne Smith and Marc Smithers, for sharing your knowledge and insights with us — a lot of great information today. Feel free to scan again the QR code, or send an email to grantsoffice@genetec.com if you're interested in engaging with the Genetec Grants Support Program. Kate, our intrepid webcast producer, has also added a ton of great information in the chat, so you'll see that all of this will be available to you as a follow-up. Don't feel like you have to scramble to get this

information right now, including the workbook. So, big thanks to Jeanne and Marc for sharing your experience and knowledge with us, and to all of you — I hope you found this a valuable use of your time, and we look forward to seeing you again on a future webcast. Have a great day, everybody.

— End of Transcript —

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